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Isa Habibbayli
President of ANAS, Academician

**THE HEYDAR ALIYEV PHENOMENON:
THE SCALE AND MISSION OF A POLITICAL PORTRAIT**

“Azerbaijan is the meaning of my life”

Heydar Aliyev
National Leader of the Azerbaijani People

Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, an outstanding statesman and one of the most prominent figures in world politics, has become an eternal subject of research in the history of independent statehood, science, literature, and art. The life, struggle, and ideals of this remarkable personality have played a significant role both in the history and destiny of the nation and the country to which he belonged, and, in a broader sense, in the global political and historical processes.

It is impossible to objectively and comprehensively analyze the political and historical developments of Azerbaijan and the Soviet Union in the second half of the 20th century without considering the Heydar Aliyev factor. His participation, position, practical actions, views, and influence occupied a special place in the relations of both the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Soviet Union with leading world powers, political allies, neighboring states, and friendly nations.

Thus, Heydar Aliyev, who gained nationwide respect in his country as a source of national pride and as a true savior of the state, was recognized as an outstanding statesman at the level of the Soviet Union and was acknowledged internationally as one of the great masters of political leadership. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the majority of former Soviet leaders and members of the Politburo failed to achieve a significant role in the political life or governance of the newly independent Russian Federation, former Soviet republics, or international organizations, and many of them soon faded into historical oblivion as retired politicians.

Heydar Aliyev, however, overcoming enormous difficulties and obstacles, returned to the center of major politics at the demand of his people. He became one of the leading figures of the era of independence on the global stage and rose to the status of the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people.

It is no coincidence that Heydar Aliyev was metaphorically described as “the hero of our time” [28, p. 4]. Through this recognition, Heydar Aliyev earned a lasting place in world history and in the historical memory of his nation as a powerful statesman.

Therefore, the wise political vision, rich experience, unwavering determination, profound ideals, and lifelong struggle of Heydar Aliyev will continue to be studied and analyzed as valuable lessons derived from the history of statehood, illuminating the path of progress and development for states and peoples.

The biography of the outstanding statesman Heydar Aliyev represents, first and foremost, the biography of the nation to which he belonged, as well as a chronicle of global processes from the second half of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century. His meaningful and challenging life path, his ideals of independent statehood, and his struggle for national development constitute a genuine school of statehood and a lesson in Azerbaijani identity for the Azerbaijani people.

Heydar Alirza oglu Aliyev was born on May 10, 1923, in the city of Nakhchivan. His father, Alirza Karbalayi Jafar oglu Aliyev, worked in railway transportation in Baku and Nakhchivan. His mother, Izzet Aliyeva, was a homemaker who devoted herself to caring for a large family.

This family gave Azerbaijan prominent figures who made invaluable contributions to statehood, science, education, and culture. Among the distinguished representatives of the Aliyev family are the renowned scholar and academician Hasan Aliyev (1907–1993), People's Artist Huseyn Aliyev (1911–1991), Honored

Teacher Shafiqə Aliyeva (1930–2008), Corresponding Member of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences Agil Aliyev (1926–2006), Academician Jalal Aliyev (1928–2016), and Academician Rafiqə Aliyeva (1932–2017), who became widely recognized personalities in Azerbaijan and beyond its borders.

There is limited information available about the school years of Heydar Aliyev, the future outstanding statesman. However, it is known that Heydar Aliyev studied at Secondary School No. 1 in Nakhchivan, known as the International School, where he completed his education up to the seventh grade [16, 14, p. 15].

The following reflections by the National Leader himself about his school years provide a realistic insight into the education he received at Secondary School No. 1 in Nakhchivan and the teachers who influenced his intellectual and moral development:

“I am often asked who the people I respected most during my youth were. I have always answered: the teachers who taught me at secondary school. I have had many teachers. Many teachers and scholars taught me... However, the knowledge, upbringing, and impressions I gained from my teachers while studying at secondary school in Nakhchivan have always remained alive in my heart. The faces of each of those teachers are still before my eyes today” [21, p. 29].

Among those teachers whose memory remained deeply cherished for him, Heydar Aliyev particularly valued the contribution of Mahammad Rasizadeh, the elder brother of the prominent Romantic poet Huseyn Javid, who taught him Azerbaijani language and literature at Secondary School No. 1 in Nakhchivan:

“He was an excellent teacher. He was extremely demanding; he pushed us hard, but he taught us very well. He taught us Azerbaijani language and literature. Later, circumstances led me to use mainly the Russian language for many years. While working in the State Security Committee and later in the Central Committee, Russian was the dominant language. In Moscow, I spoke and wrote only in Russian. If, despite all this, I did not lose my ability to speak and write fluently in Azerbaijani, one of the reasons was the linguistic and literary education I received from my teacher Sheikh Mahammad” [Ibid].

Heydar Aliyev studied at the Nakhchivan Pedagogical School between 1936 and 1939. In order to acquire the teaching profession, he deeply studied all subjects and gained great respect from both his teachers and fellow students. During his years at the Nakhchivan Pedagogical School, he distinguished himself from his peers through his talent, extensive reading, and intellectual abilities.

The recollections of Zərqalam Aliyeva, who studied at the same institution during the same period, demonstrate that Heydar Aliyev attracted attention from his youth due to his exceptional abilities:

“Our military instructor Akim Abbasov (who later became a major general) used to say that Heydar would become the greatest military figure of the future, a general, even a marshal. Latif Huseynzadeh (teacher of Azerbaijani language and literature – I.H.) told him: ‘Heydar, you will become one of the great personalities of the future, and everyone will be proud of you.’ In other words, Heydar Aliyev’s greatness and extraordinary qualities attracted everyone’s attention even at that time... Heydar possessed unique leadership qualities.” [13, p. 130].

At the Nakhchivan Pedagogical School, Heydar Aliyev not only mastered the teaching profession but also actively participated in drama and painting circles, demonstrating remarkable abilities in these fields as well. One of his paintings is currently preserved in the Heydar Aliyev Museum in Nakhchivan.

At an art competition held at the Nakhchivan Pedagogical School, Heydar Aliyev won first place for his illustrations based on the works of the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin. In addition, he successfully performed the role of Qajar in the play *Vagif* by the renowned Azerbaijani poet Samad Vurgun, staged by the drama circle directed by Nakhchivan Drama Theatre director Ibrahim Hamzayev.

For this reason, the National Leader himself repeatedly emphasized with a sense of gratitude that the Nakhchivan Pedagogical School and the teachers who worked there played an important role in shaping his worldview and future perspectives:

“The education I received during that period helped me throughout all stages of my future life” [23, p. 136].

Heydar Aliyev graduated from the Nakhchivan Pedagogical School with honors. He was assigned to work at a rural school in Gishlaq village of Shahbuz district, where he worked as a teacher for only two or three months.

In 1939, after achieving excellent results in entrance examinations, he was admitted to the Faculty of Architecture of the Azerbaijan Industrial Institute (*currently the Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University – I.H.*). However, due to financial difficulties faced by his family, he completed only the first year and discontinued his studies, returning to Nakhchivan.

On October 15, 1941, by an order of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, Heydar Aliyev was appointed as a researcher at the Central State Archive of Nakhchivan. After working in this position for approximately seven months, he was entrusted with the position of Head of the Secret Department of the Central State Archive of Nakhchivan.

Soon afterwards, on July 14, 1943, he was promoted to the position of Head of the General Department of the Council of People's Commissars of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

Beginning his professional career in state security institutions at a young age, Heydar Aliyev officially joined the Ministry of State Security of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in May 1944 after being awarded the military rank of lieutenant. As an operational officer, he supervised the border areas of the autonomous republic with Iran, closely followed the political processes taking place in Southern Azerbaijan during those years, and successfully carried out special assignments related to this field.

Due to his professional abilities and effective performance, Heydar Aliyev was appointed Head of a Department at the Ministry of State Security of the Nakhchivan ASSR and promoted to the rank of senior lieutenant. Taking into consideration his professional competence and social activity, he became a member of the Communist Party in 1945 [9, p. 32].

He received specialized education at the Higher School for Operational Personnel of the Ministry of State Security of the USSR in Leningrad and graduated from this institution with honors in 1950. Upon completion of his studies, Heydar Aliyev continued his career as Head of the 5th Department of the Ministry of State Security of the Nakhchivan ASSR.

Demonstrating exceptional professional abilities, Heydar Aliyev was transferred to the central structure in August 1950 and began working at the Ministry of State Security of the Azerbaijan SSR. As Head of the 6th Division of the 2nd Department of the Ministry of State Security of the Azerbaijan SSR, he proved himself as a highly qualified security officer.

At the same time, between 1951 and 1957, Heydar Aliyev pursued higher education in history at Azerbaijan State University through correspondence studies and graduated with distinction. According to the memoirs of his fellow student at Azerbaijan State University, Dovlat Mammadov, Heydar Aliyev *"became the leader of the group ... and gained respect throughout the entire university"* [13, p. 143].

As a responsible officer of the State Security Committee of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev successfully carried out a number of state-important assignments both inside the country and abroad with a high level of professionalism. Consequently, he was promoted and appointed Head of the Counterintelligence Department of the State Security Committee of Azerbaijan in 1958.

During his service in the State Security Committee of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev achieved significant changes in the field of counterintelligence and successfully fulfilled numerous important state missions, becoming recognized as a highly professional specialist. In recognition of his achievements in this responsible field, he was awarded the "For Exemplary Service" Medal (2nd Class) in 1959 and the "Honorary Officer of the State Security Service" Medal in 1960.

Furthermore, his award of the Order of the Red Star on May 26, 1962, "for services in ensuring state security of the USSR," one of the significant distinctions of that period, demonstrated that Heydar Aliyev had already been recognized at the Soviet Union level as a highly professional figure within the state security system.

The awarding of the Honorary Diploma of the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR to the young security officer in 1964 was not only an expression of high appreciation for his difficult and responsible work but also reflected the trust placed in him by the state.

On March 2, 1964, Heydar Alirza oglu Aliyev was appointed Deputy Chairman of the State Security Committee under the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR. This appointment opened the way for representatives of the Azerbaijani people to occupy leading positions within the state security system.

Between 1964 and 1967, serving as First Deputy Chairman of the State Security Committee under the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR, Heydar Aliyev expanded the representation of Azerbaijanis within this important institution and increased their role. The State Security Committee of Azerbaijan was gradually strengthened with professional personnel and freed from elements that acted against Azerbaijani national interests.

In recognition of his special services, Heydar Aliyev was awarded the "For Exemplary Service" Medal in 1964, the 20th Anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 Medal in 1965, and was promoted to the rank of colonel. His participation in the advanced leadership training course at the F. Dzerzhinsky Higher School of the USSR State Security Committee in Moscow from February to May 1966 was also an important indication that he was being considered for higher-level leadership positions.

Following these achievements, the appointment of Heydar Alirza oglu Aliyev as Chairman of the State Security Committee of Azerbaijan in 1967 clearly demonstrated his growing authority both within the Soviet Union and in the republic.

Considering that he was the first Azerbaijani to be appointed Chairman of the State Security Committee of Azerbaijan during the Soviet period, this achievement reveals the exceptional capabilities and professional qualities of this experienced and talented personality.

By becoming Chairman of the State Security Committee of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev succeeded in overcoming the cautious attitude traditionally maintained toward Azerbaijanis during the Soviet era and ensured that the security institution served not only the interests of the Soviet Union but also the interests of Azerbaijan and its people. This marked the beginning of a new stage in Heydar Aliyev's political rise.

In March 1967, Heydar Aliyev was elected deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR from the Julfa district of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, and on October 30 of the same year, he was promoted to the rank of major general.

Throughout 1967, Heydar Aliyev was also awarded the 50th Anniversary Medal of the Soviet Militia, the 50th Anniversary Medal of the USSR Armed Forces, and the 50th Anniversary Badge of the State Security Committee.

By this period, Heydar Aliyev had already been recognized at the Soviet Union level as a politically reliable, ideologically committed, and highly capable leadership figure. He had gained acceptance among the highest state circles as a promising and influential political leader.

For all these reasons, Heydar Aliyev's appointment to the leadership of the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic was naturally welcomed both at the level of the Soviet Union and within the republic itself. As is known, at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan held on June 14, 1969, Heydar Alirza oglu Aliyev was elected First Secretary of the Central Committee. This marked the beginning of a new stage both in the development of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic and in the life and activities of Heydar Aliyev as an outstanding statesman. It was indeed *"the opening of a magnificent page in the history of Azerbaijan"* [7, p. 9].

As the leader of Soviet Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev expressed his firm position regarding the problems existing in the republic at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan on August 5, 1969, and presented a clear and specific program for overcoming them. This decisive position *"caused a wide resonance not only in the USSR but also beyond the borders of the Soviet Union"* [1, p. 221].

During his leadership of Soviet Azerbaijan from 1969 to 1982, Heydar Aliyev implemented large-scale reforms in political and ideological, economic, cultural, scientific, and literary spheres. As a result, Azerbaijan was transformed from one of the least developed republics among the 15 Soviet republics into one of the leading republics of the USSR.

Azerbaijan, which had previously lagged behind in many areas, achieved significant progress and was repeatedly awarded the Challenge Red Banner based on the results of nationwide socialist competitions. Furthermore, substantial achievements were gained in various sectors, particularly in agriculture and industry.

According to data based on official statistics, this period is characterized as a stage of economic growth and comprehensive development of Azerbaijan. During the first period of Heydar Aliyev's leadership, the republic overcame backwardness in agriculture and simultaneously developed into a major industrial center.

According to historians' research and analyses: *"During Heydar Aliyev's leadership of the republic between 1969 and 1982, more than 250 factories, plants, and production facilities were commissioned, creating 690,000 new jobs. Industrial sectors based on advanced technologies began to develop. Due to the significant development potential of mechanical engineering, chemical industry, petrochemical industry, construction materials, food industry, and other sectors, more than 45 percent of investments were directed toward the development of these areas"* [5, p. 15].

At the same time, science, education, and culture experienced rapid development in the republic. Through the determination and political will of the outstanding statesman Heydar Aliyev, the Azerbaijani language was included for the first time as the state language in the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic in 1978.

This achievement represented the successful continuation of the process of strengthening Azerbaijani national identity, which had begun only three months after his election as the leader of Soviet Azerbaijan, when Heydar Aliyev delivered a speech in his native language at the ceremonial meeting dedicated to the 50th anniversary of S. M. Kirov Azerbaijan State University.

At the same time, Heydar Aliyev, despite pressure from the Kremlin and political forces surrounding it, succeeded in organizing in 1982 the 100th anniversary celebration of Nariman Narimanov's birth not only as a prominent writer but also as a statesman, and ensured the erection of a monumental statue in his honor in Baku.

Similarly, the wide-scale celebration of the 600th anniversary of the great Azerbaijani poet and thinker Imadaddin Nasimi in 1973 and the erection of his monument in Baku in 1980 not only contributed to introducing this outstanding figure of Azerbaijani culture more deeply to the people, especially the younger generation, but also put an end to attempts by those seeking to appropriate his legacy.

In 1982, as the leader of Soviet Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev achieved the return to the homeland of the remains of Huseyn Javid, one of the founders of Romanticism in Azerbaijani literature, an outstanding Romantic poet and playwright who had been exiled to Siberia during the period of political repression under the accusation of nationalism and died there.

This was the first and only case in the Soviet Union when the remains of a person who had died in political exile were removed from one of the Siberian burial grounds and returned to his homeland.

Heydar Aliyev organized the farewell ceremony for Huseyn Javid at the building of the Institute of Manuscripts of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences in Baku, where the great artist had once lived. Representatives of the public, writers, poets, and scholars participated in this ceremony, and Heydar Aliyev himself personally attended the event.

Afterwards, Huseyn Javid was buried in his native city of Nakhchivan. This event was perceived as almost miraculous throughout the Soviet Union. Such an achievement could only have been realized by a determined, influential, patriotic, and visionary statesman like Heydar Aliyev.

The solemn celebration of the centenary anniversaries of the Azerbaijan State Academic Drama Theatre (1973), the magazine *Azerbaijani Woman* (1974), the 90th anniversary of the great composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli (1975), and the 780th anniversary of the outstanding Azerbaijani scholar and thinker Nasir al-Din Tusi (1981), along with Heydar Aliyev's remarkable speeches delivered at these events, contributed significantly to the formation of the Azerbaijani national worldview.

Heydar Aliyev's personal participation and profound speech at the 25th anniversary celebration of the Academy of Sciences held in 1975 became not only a significant historical event in the development of the Academy but also played an important role in strengthening scientific progress and the ideas of Azerbaijani identity in the country.

The awarding of the Order of Friendship of Peoples to the Academy of Sciences on this occasion represented the highest expression of state support and attention toward science, the Academy, and the scientific intellectual community.

Heydar Aliyev's participation and speeches at congresses of the Unions of Azerbaijani Writers, Composers, and Artists also contributed to the deepening of national and spiritual values and the development of the idea of Azerbaijani identity as a nationwide movement.

This process was further strengthened by the support provided, through various means, to figures such as academician Ziya Bunyadov, Hero of the Soviet Union, who viewed the incorporation of Azerbaijan into Russia as an act of occupation; People's Poet Bakhtiyar Vahabzadeh, who wrote the poem *Gulustan* about the division of Azerbaijan at the beginning of the twentieth century; corresponding member of ANAS Abbas Zamanov, who expressed opposition to the transfer of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic to Armenia; and many others who defended national historical and cultural values.

Those who attempted to obstruct this process by sending various reports to the central authorities in Moscow and writing anonymous letters were unable to achieve their goals.

Later, in an interview with journalists, Heydar Aliyev specifically emphasized that during the years when he held high positions in Azerbaijan's leadership structures, *"no dissident or anyone else had been punished for conducting anti-Soviet propaganda"* [2, p. 42].

In an interview with journalists in Moscow, Heydar Aliyev also expressed his critical attitude toward attempts to artificially create the image of a dissident in Soviet society:

"Once, in 1989, while a journalist was interviewing me in Moscow, we were discussing the period when I led Azerbaijan. He asked me whether there had been dissidents in Azerbaijan at that time or not. I replied that there had not been. He asked why. I said that we were not looking for dissidents. Naturally, if we had searched for them, many dissidents could have been found. For example, if we had looked for dissidents in Azerbaijan during those years, in the 1960s and 1970s, there would have been many."

The greatest dissident was Bakhtiyar Vahabzadeh. Even... when I was working in the Ministry of State Security, the issue of his arrest had been raised. Or Khalil Rza was one of the greatest dissidents as well. Because his works, as well as those of Bakhtiyar Vahabzadeh, expressed the truth. However, this truth contradicted the communist ideology of that time.

...Magsud Ibrahimbeyov and Rustam Ibrahimbeyov were genuine dissidents. However, we did not allow them to become dissidents.

...If at that time they were not persecuted, if, unlike in other places, they were not called dissidents, if they were not deprived of something for some reason, then it means that this was our achievement, ...the result of the policy we pursued during those difficult years [4, p. 90–91].

Undoubtedly, there were important factors behind Heydar Aliyev's policy of Azerbaijanism, which he implemented despite the strict requirements of the Soviet regime, and behind his ability to preserve and protect patriotic Azerbaijani intellectuals. First of all, the fair position of Heydar Aliyev, who gave an interview entitled *"Let Justice Prevail"* (*Pust spravedlivost pobedit*) published in the widely circulated Soviet and international newspaper *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, openly criticizing injustices and shortcomings in so-

ciety; the tireless and purposeful activity of the republican leader; and his deep confidence in himself and his people became the main points of support for the successful continuation of the chosen path.

In addition, the trustworthy relations established by Heydar Aliyev with Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and Yuri Andropov, Chairman of the State Security Committee and member of the Politburo, ensured the uninterrupted continuation of the pursued policy and the path of Azerbaijanism.

The visit of Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to Azerbaijan on September 30, 1970, and his second visit to Baku on September 24–27, 1982, the high-level organization of his reception by the leader of Soviet Azerbaijan, and the implementation of a number of carefully planned events on this occasion were among the significant political and historical events demonstrating Azerbaijan's prestige at the Union level during that period.

At the same time, the election of the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev as a candidate member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on March 5, 1976, his election as a full member of the Politburo on November 22, 1982, and his being awarded the title of Hero of Socialist Labour by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR dated August 24, 1979, demonstrated his exceptional authority among the leaders of the union republics within the USSR.

Regardless of the social system in which they occurred, these historical events, each of which remains a source of pride for our country and people, reflected both the special respect for the personality and activities of the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev and the high appreciation of the great achievements gained in the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

Among the 15 republics that were part of the USSR, only the leaders of three republics — Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan — managed to achieve both of the above-mentioned distinctions: membership in the Politburo and the title of Hero of Socialist Labour.

Therefore, the years when Heydar Aliyev led Soviet Azerbaijan represent a special period of development in the history of our people and our country.

A new stage in the biography of the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev began with the continuation of his activities in the Council of Ministers of the USSR. Thus, by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR dated November 23, 1982, Heydar Aliyev was appointed First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. This was a significant achievement of the leader of a union republic, who had reached such a high position in the leadership of the state known as the Soviet Union. As historians rightly note, *“Heydar Aliyev was the first person among the leaders of the Muslim republics of the USSR to rise to such a high position”* [15, p.70].

As a member of the Politburo and First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Heydar Aliyev led the transport sector of the Soviet Union and, at the same time, supervised the fields of education, healthcare, and culture. He resolved problems related to the construction of the Baikal–Amur Mainline (BAM), built for the development of the Far Eastern territories of the USSR, and in fact ensured the completion of the construction of this enormous railway project, whose progress had practically been halted.

Heydar Aliyev also considered it necessary to create conditions for new initiatives in improving governance within the Soviet state. At the proposal of Soviet leader Yuri Andropov, he prepared and submitted for discussion a draft law on ways to increase the powers and role of labour collectives in state administration. In addition, in 1984, under Heydar Aliyev's leadership, the draft law *“On the Main Directions of the Reform of General Education and Vocational Schools”* was prepared, and he delivered a report on this issue at a session of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

Heydar Aliyev was also involved in improving the Soviet healthcare system. He was one of the principal authors of the resolution of the Council of Ministers of the USSR *“On the Development of Public Health Protection and the Main Directions of the Restructuring of Healthcare in the USSR for the Period up to 2000.”*

As a member of the Politburo, Heydar Aliyev actively participated in implementing the Soviet Union's Eastern policy. He headed Soviet delegations visiting India, Syria, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, and Angola, and ensured the implementation of appropriate measures aimed at further expanding the USSR's relations with these countries.

In addition, Heydar Aliyev successfully carried out the responsible task of heading the State Commission for investigating the sensational tragedy caused by the sinking of the *Admiral Nakhimov* vessel.

The first period of the Kremlin stage in the biography of the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev was highly successful. Soviet leader Yuri Andropov highly appreciated Heydar Aliyev's services as "an outstanding figure of the Party and the Soviet state." As a member of the Politburo and First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Heydar Aliyev was awarded the title of Hero of Socialist Labour for the second time for his great services to the Communist Party and the Soviet state.

However, after Mikhail Gorbachev was elected General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on March 11, 1985, the attitude towards Heydar Aliyev in the Kremlin changed. Gorbachev's perestroika policy, many aspects of which Heydar Aliyev considered unsuccessful, as well as Gorbachev's decision to destroy viticulture farms throughout the country under the pretext of fighting alcoholism, which had a strong economic foundation, created tensions in their relations.

Most importantly, Mikhail Gorbachev, who lost his political image due to his incompetence in state governance, developed a jealous attitude towards Heydar Aliyev, a prominent statesman who enjoyed great authority within the Soviet leadership, throughout the Soviet Union, and internationally. As acknowledged in academic studies, "*Heydar Aliyev stood out in the Politburo for his fairness, objectivity, intellect, and principled position. Mikhail Gorbachev was often intimidated by his courageous speeches*" [26, p.260].

As a result, Heydar Aliyev, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and member of the Politburo, resigned from his positions on October 21, 1987, as an expression of protest against Mikhail Gorbachev's governance policy.

The activities of Armenian separatists close to Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow also played an important role in Heydar Aliyev's removal from office. It is not accidental that shortly after Heydar Aliyev was removed from the Soviet leadership, statements demanding the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh, an ancient territory of Azerbaijan, to Armenia began to be voiced by Armenians close to Kremlin circles. With the support of Mikhail Gorbachev and his associates, the First Nagorno-Karabakh War was provoked, resulting in the occupation of Azerbaijani territories.

It should be noted that during the period when Heydar Aliyev represented Azerbaijan in the Soviet leadership, he always demonstrated special attention and care towards Azerbaijan. He closely monitored the increase of the state budget of the Azerbaijan SSR and ensured the allocation of additional financial resources for the construction of a number of facilities in the republic.

The reconstruction of the Young Spectators Theatre, the construction of the Automobile Plant in the city of Ganja, and the establishment of resort centres along the Caspian Sea coast were practical expressions of the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR's caring attitude towards his native republic.

The most responsible period in the complex and honourable life path of Heydar Aliyev relates to the years 1987–1990, following his removal from membership of the Politburo and from the position of First Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers. As is known, during this period Heydar Aliyev, who had the status of a pensioner of union significance, was kept under surveillance by the Soviet leadership at a state residence near Moscow. Under the instructions of Mikhail Gorbachev, an artificially created campaign against Heydar Aliyev, known as "Aliyevshchina", was launched in *Pravda* newspaper and other central press organs, and fabricated articles directed against him were published and disseminated.

Unfortunately, during those years, the leaders of the Azerbaijan Republic, such as Abdurrahman Vazirov and Ayaz Mutallibov, who did not stand with their own people but instead supported the Kremlin's malicious policy towards Azerbaijan, followed the path of intensifying and expan-

ding the slanderous campaign initiated by the central authorities. Both the Soviet leadership and those governing Azerbaijan attempted to prevent Heydar Aliyev from returning from Moscow to his homeland through various measures. Preventing Heydar Aliyev's return to Azerbaijan was aimed at enabling the Soviet leadership and the Armenian separatists supported by them to fully implement their plans to divide our country, occupy our territories, and weaken our people.

Despite all difficulties and obstacles, during these years Heydar Aliyev constantly sought opportunities to return to Azerbaijan and participate in the national liberation struggle of his people. Risking his own life, on 21 January 1990 he left the state residence near Moscow where he was being kept under special surveillance and came to the Permanent Representation of Azerbaijan in Moscow, where he made a strong statement concerning the tragedy of 20 January. Through this decisive step, he ensured that information about the tragic events was conveyed to the international community.

Demonstrating true courage, Heydar Aliyev stated that the main perpetrators of the tragedy of 20 January were the leadership of the USSR and the leaders of the Azerbaijan Republic, thereby giving legitimacy and moral justification to the national liberation struggle of his people. At the same time, *"from the very first day of the struggle for independence, Heydar Aliyev, represented in the freedom movement through his ideas and portraits raised in the squares, firmly declared through his Moscow Statement that he participated in this responsible and honourable struggle"* [5, p.165].

Therefore, Heydar Aliyev's Moscow Statement of 21 January 1990 was rightfully called "the first proclamation of the Independence Act of the Republic of Azerbaijan." (Ibid., p.165)

Furthermore, while being under the control of the Kremlin leadership, Heydar Aliyev searched for ways to return to his native Azerbaijan. Nikolai Zenkovich, who worked in a responsible position within the Soviet leadership and the Kremlin apparatus, had the opportunity to observe the processes taking place there and to know closely the members of the Politburo. In his book *The Zig-zags of Fate*, he notes that Heydar Aliyev was fully determined to return to Azerbaijan:

"Despite being removed from politics, as always, Heydar Aliyev never abandoned his sense of responsibility for the destiny of his people. During days decisive for his homeland, Heydar Aliyev was ready to take risky steps, despite the possibility of unpleasant circumstances and dramatic situations" [27, p.124].

Eventually, his profound sense of patriotism prevailed, and on 20 July 1990 he returned to Azerbaijan by plane without the permission of the Kremlin.

Specifically, upon instructions from the Kremlin, Ayaz Mutallibov refused to allow Heydar Aliyev to reside in Baku. In order to avoid further obstacles and confrontation, on 22 July 1990 Heydar Aliyev secretly travelled by plane to the city of Nakhchivan. The population of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic welcomed the arrival of the prominent statesman with a genuine atmosphere of celebration. At a rally held in the main square of Nakhchivan in connection with Heydar Aliyev's arrival, 80,000 people participated and expressed their full support for the great son of the Azerbaijani people. (See: *Return (Chronicle)*. Baku: "Azərbaycan", 1996, p.758)

During that period, Heydar Aliyev stood together with his people in the national liberation struggle taking place in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and prevented the occupation of this ancient Azerbaijani region by Armenia. With the will and support of the population of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Heydar Aliyev was elected on 30 September 1990 as a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR from the Nehram electoral district and to the Supreme Soviet of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic from the M.F. Akhundov electoral district in Nakhchivan.

Presiding over the first session of the Supreme Soviet of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, Heydar Aliyev achieved the adoption of the decision at the session held on 17 November 1990 to accept the tricolour flag of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic as the official state symbol of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. This was one of the greatest historical events in the national liberation struggle of the Azerbaijani people.

At the same session chaired by Heydar Aliyev, it was also decided to remove the words “Soviet Socialist” from the official name of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and to rename the Supreme Soviet of the Nakhchivan ASSR as the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. This was clear evidence of Heydar Aliyev’s foresight in predicting the collapse of the USSR even during the period when Mikhail Gorbachev remained in power.

The adoption of the decision to recognise the tricolour flag of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic as the state flag of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, as well as the appeal to the supreme authorities of Azerbaijan to recognise this flag as one of the state symbols of the country, represents one of Heydar Aliyev’s historic services to the Azerbaijani people and the independent Azerbaijani state.

Moreover, Heydar Aliyev’s official application on 19 July 1991 to withdraw from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and his success in achieving this goal significantly contributed not only to the expansion of the national liberation movement in Azerbaijan but also throughout the Soviet Union.

Soon afterwards, with the dissolution of the USSR and the declaration of independence by the Republic of Azerbaijan on 18 October 1991, Heydar Aliyev’s far-sightedness was fully confirmed.

Furthermore, at the session of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic on 14 March 1991, a decision was adopted not to implement in the autonomous republic the decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR regarding the holding of a referendum on signing a new Union Treaty aimed at preserving the USSR, initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev. This step was also one of Heydar Aliyev’s historic contributions to the collapse of the USSR and the establishment of an independent Azerbaijani state.

Although Heydar Aliyev repeatedly stated that he had no intention of assuming any official position upon his return to his homeland, he at the same time demonstrated respect for the will of the people, especially during the most difficult periods. At the insistence and request of the population of the Autonomous Republic, he was elected Chairman of the Supreme Majlis of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic at the session of the Supreme Majlis held on 3 September 1991. Although Heydar Aliyev delivered speeches four times at the session of the Supreme Majlis of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and refused to accept the position, he was compelled to assume the post of Chairman of the Supreme Majlis as a result of the unanimous decision of 77 deputies representing the autonomous republic [19, p. 169–190].

As Chairman of the Supreme Majlis of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Heydar Aliyev saved this ancient land, an integral part of Azerbaijan, from occupation by Armenia. He ensured the peaceful withdrawal of Soviet army units stationed in Nakhchivan from the territory of the autonomous republic.

On 21 November 1991, Heydar Aliyev founded the New Azerbaijan Party, which would later play an exceptional role in the future history of Azerbaijan’s statehood. At a time when military groups resembling partisan detachments, controlled by various organizations and individuals, existed in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev established the State Defence Committee in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic by his decision of 7 September 1991.

The abolition of collective and state farms and the implementation of land reforms in Azerbaijan were also carried out for the first time under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev, Chairman of the Supreme Majlis of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, beginning in 1992 [22, p. 766].

The culmination of the struggle and ideals of Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, was the achievement of state independence by our country. In his speeches on various occasions, the Great Leader emphasized that the establishment of an independent state was a historic achievement of the Azerbaijani people and identified the preservation and strengthening of state independence as the most important task.

Unfortunately, however, Abulfaz Elchibey and Ayaz Mutallibov, who came to power at the beginning of the 1990s, failed to preserve the territorial integrity and socio-political stability of the Republic of Azerbaijan. As a result of Armenian aggression, 20 percent of Azerbaijan’s territories in Karabakh and surrounding regions were occupied, while Azerbaijanis living in Western Azerbaijan were expelled from

their ancestral lands. Consequently, nearly one million Azerbaijani citizens were forced to become internally displaced persons and refugees, scattered across Baku and various regions of Azerbaijan.

Unfortunately, the United Nations resolutions demanding the withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan remained unimplemented. Thus, a serious military and economic crisis emerged in the republic, and socio-political stability was disrupted. The successive “leaders” of the Azerbaijan Popular Front–Musavat alliance, as well as Ayaz Mutallibov, lacked the ability and competence to lead the Republic of Azerbaijan out of this difficult situation.

Under such extremely challenging and comprehensive crisis conditions, the only force capable of saving the Azerbaijani people from the threat of losing state independence was Heydar Aliyev, an outstanding statesman possessing vast political experience.

In 1991–1992, prominent intellectuals of Azerbaijan travelled from Baku to Nakhchivan, met with Heydar Aliyev, Chairman of the Supreme Majlis of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, and appealed to him to return to political power in order to save the country and the state from the danger of losing its independence. Although Heydar Aliyev repeatedly stated that he had no intention of holding a high state position, he did not accept these proposals each time.

However, the continuation of the loss of Azerbaijani territories in Karabakh and surrounding regions, as well as the real threat facing Azerbaijan’s independent statehood, eventually led the Great Leader to agree to the establishment of the New Azerbaijan Party.

In response to the appeal entitled “Azerbaijan Awaits Your Word”, published in the newspaper *Səs* on 16 October 1991 by 91 prominent Azerbaijani intellectuals, Heydar Aliyev gave a positive response through his article entitled “For a New Independent Azerbaijan.”

In the article “Azerbaijan Awaits Your Path”, prominent Azerbaijani intellectuals scientifically and politically substantiated the necessity of Heydar Aliyev’s return to power in order to prevent the loss of the state independence that had been achieved. They stated:

“The existing government is unable to fully control socio-political processes... Those who spoke about democracy in the streets and squares until yesterday do not understand what democracy truly means. Due to the political inexperience of the leadership, incompetence in governance, and the desire for power, certain forces from both inside and outside the country are using this situation for their own interests... The remaining economic potential of the republic is being destroyed, and our natural resources are being plundered. Hundreds of intellectuals and highly qualified specialists are leaving the country due to hopelessness about the future. Among political parties, there is no strong leader who, in the true sense of the word, has gained the deep trust and confidence of broad segments of the population, is capable of uniting people from different social groups around him, and possesses comprehensive and mature knowledge of all spheres of international and national life. If you agree to lead the New Azerbaijan Party, Azerbaijan awaits your word and your decisive decision” [6].

Taking into consideration the difficult situation that had emerged in the republic, particularly the threat of losing state independence, the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev stated in his article entitled “For a New Independent Azerbaijan”, published in the newspaper *Səs* on 6 November 1992, that he was ready to participate in the activities of such a party in the name of independent statehood:

“No one has the right to remain indifferent to the problems related to the present and future destiny of Azerbaijan. I believe that, under the conditions of democracy, political pluralism, and a system that forms the foundation of the future life and activities of an independent Azerbaijani state, the establishment of the New Azerbaijan political party mentioned in your appeal arises from an objective necessity.

Such a party, by actively participating in the socio-political life of Azerbaijan, can play a historic role in strengthening and developing the new, independent Azerbaijani state.

If such a party is established, I am ready to participate in its activities” [12].

Thus, on 21 November 1992, the founding congress of the New Azerbaijan Party was held in the city of Nakhchivan under the chairmanship of Heydar Aliyev. At the founding congress, which

took place at the Nakhchivan State Musical Drama Theatre named after Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, the establishment of the New Azerbaijan Party was officially announced, the party's Programme and Charter were adopted, and, most importantly, the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev was elected chairman of this political party through an open vote.

This event marked the beginning of major changes in Azerbaijani society during the period of independence. Indeed, as it has rightly been noted:

"The party founded by Heydar Aliyev, the eternal ideologist of the New Azerbaijan Party, successfully overcame all the challenges and difficulties of its time, proving its commitment to the people and confirming that it is the party of yesterday, today, and tomorrow" [14, p. 781].

The relations established by Heydar Aliyev, Chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, with the Republic of Türkiye and the Islamic Republic of Iran played a significant role in saving Nakhchivan from Armenian occupation and ensuring its socio-economic development. As the leader of the autonomous republic, Heydar Aliyev paid official visits to Türkiye and Iran, conducted negotiations, and signed relevant agreements. The visit of Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey Süleyman Demirel to Nakhchivan on 28 May 1992 was an important historical event of international significance. On the same day, the opening ceremony of the "Bridge of Hope" connecting Nakhchivan with Turkey was held in the village of Sederek of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. At the large-scale rally organized on the bridge on this occasion, Süleyman Demirel and Heydar Aliyev delivered historic speeches.

The Decree "On the Establishment of the World Azerbaijanis' Solidarity Day", signed by Heydar Aliyev on 16 December 1992 as Chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, was also an event of significant political and historical importance. It was precisely through this historic decree that the concept of world Azerbaijanis was revived in Azerbaijan and transformed into a broad-based movement.

Throughout his entire political career, Heydar Aliyev provided significant support for the development of Azerbaijani intellectual life. During the Nakhchivan period of his activities, he also undertook important initiatives aimed at promoting science, education, and culture. The grand celebration of the 110th anniversary of Hüseyn Javid, the prominent representative of Azerbaijani romantic literature, in Nakhchivan; the staging of dramatic works by local writers at the Nakhchivan Theatre; his meetings with figures of science, literature, and art; as well as his support for the activities of the newspaper *Şərq Qapısı* were manifestations of his attention and concern for strengthening the role of intellectuals in the development of society.

The visits of the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev to Nakhchivan State University twice in 1992, as well as his meetings with the academic staff and students, represented important steps towards the formation of a new generation of intellectuals in the autonomous republic during the period of independence. His participation on 11 October 1992 in the international scientific conference held at Nakhchivan State University on the topic "Organization of Economic Relations and Cross-Border Trade under the Conditions of Transition to a Market Economy" and his profound speech delivered there became a conceptual presentation of the political and economic foundations and strategies of the transition to a market economy in the region.

Furthermore, Heydar Aliyev's participation in the jubilee ceremony dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Nakhchivan State University on 12 November 1992 and his pragmatic speech, which reflected a far-sighted vision regarding the main directions and objectives of Azerbaijan's science and education policy during the independence period, contributed to bringing the urgent problems requiring solutions in these fields to public attention in the newly established historical stage of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The following statements expressed by Heydar Aliyev at the jubilee ceremony reflected a call to focus attention on the main directions of restructuring higher education in newly independent Azerbaijan through the example of Nakhchivan State University:

“Today, Azerbaijan, as an independent state, has the opportunity to establish independent relations with every country of the world and use these relations for the future development of its own country and state. In this regard, Nakhchivan State University is now an autonomous institution of higher education. It has more favourable conditions for developing relations with all higher education institutions of Azerbaijan and, at the same time, has opportunities to establish contacts with universities and scientific centres of all countries of the world. It is very encouraging that certain steps have already been taken in this direction; specific relations have been established between Nakhchivan State University and higher education institutions and scientific centres of the neighbouring Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Türkiye, and the participation of universities from Iran and Türkiye in today’s jubilee ceremony of Nakhchivan State University is evidence of this. I assure you that the Supreme Assembly and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic will provide the necessary support for the activities of Nakhchivan State University in this field and create the required conditions.

...Our recommendations are that you actively participate in the socio-political life of independent Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, which is an integral part of it, and organize your activities in accordance with the new requirements” [20, p.10].

Overall, the Nakhchivan period of Heydar Aliyev’s life and political activity occupies a special place both in his biography and in the political development of Azerbaijan. Indeed, *“the state-oriented and courageous decisions made, as well as the reforms implemented by the wise political leader during the period when he lived and worked in Nakhchivan, possess significant political and historical importance in terms of strengthening national statehood in Azerbaijan. During his activities in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Heydar Aliyev consistently demonstrated determination on issues of vital importance for the entire Azerbaijani people and the Motherland” [18, p.249].*

In the early 1990s, the Popular Front–Musavat government that came to power in Azerbaijan was unable to govern the country effectively, as it consisted of inexperienced and incompetent individuals lacking sufficient state management skills. During the period of 1991–1993, when Ayaz Mutallibov, who had never gained broad public legitimacy, and Abulfaz Elchibey, who lacked extensive experience in state administration, led the independent Republic of Azerbaijan, a profound crisis emerged in all spheres of social life. The young Azerbaijani state even faced the threat of losing its statehood.

At the beginning of May 1993, military units supported by Surat Huseynov and his followers launched an uprising, seizing control of several state institutions in the city of Ganja and surrounding areas. The country found itself on the verge of a civil war. In such a critical and challenging period, Heydar Aliyev, Chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, was invited to Baku by the leadership of the Republic of Azerbaijan to assume a state position. At the same time, the Azerbaijani people, through rallies held both in Baku and in many regions of the country, persistently demanded that Heydar Aliyev come to the capital and save the country from the difficult and complex situation in which it found itself.

Possessing extensive political experience, Heydar Aliyev arrived in Baku on 9 June 1993 at the insistence of the people in order to eliminate the threat to the country’s independence caused by the armed uprising. To become acquainted with the military-political situation on the ground, he first travelled under extremely difficult circumstances to the Ganja region, where the uprising had taken place, and after conducting the necessary negotiations there, he addressed the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan, informing the Azerbaijani people about the real situation and possible ways out of the crisis. The leaders of the existing government announced their resignation. On 15 June 1993, the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev was elected Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In his speech delivered on the same day at the Azerbaijani Parliament, Heydar Aliyev made decisive statements concerning the preservation and development of the country’s state independence:

"I will dedicate the remaining part of my life solely and exclusively to the development of the Republic of Azerbaijan as an independent state. In this regard, I would like to declare that the Republic of Azerbaijan will not lose its independence, will never again become part of any other state, and will not fall under the domination of any foreign state" [11, p.13].

Just a few days later, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Abulfaz Elchibey left Baku by plane and travelled to Nakhchivan, from where he went to his native village of Keleki. Beginning from 24 June 1993, Heydar Aliyev also started exercising the powers of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. According to the decision of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 29 July 1993 "On Holding a Nationwide Referendum on Confidence in the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Abulfaz Elchibey", a referendum was held on 29 August 1993, in which the citizens voted against expressing confidence in the president who had left office.

During the period when Heydar Aliyev exercised the powers of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, decisive measures were taken to restore state authority. As a result of these measures, the artificially proclaimed Talysh-Mughan Republic in the southern part of the country was disarmed and dissolved. Necessary state-level measures were implemented to restore socio-political stability and overcome the economic crisis.

The meeting held by the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev with intellectuals of the country at the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences on 21 September 1993, the discussions conducted there, and the statements he made created hope and confidence regarding the elimination of the socio-political crisis in the republic, prevented the outflow of intellectual potential abroad, and addressed concerns related to the future development of the Academy.

The Chairman of the Union of Writers of Azerbaijan, People's Writer Anar; scholars Shafayat Mehdiyev, Mahmud Ismayilov, Yagub Mahmudov, Maqsd Javadzade; and prominent figures of art, including Hasanaga Turabov, Farhad Khalilov, and Amaliya Panahova, delivered speeches emphasizing that the return of the distinguished statesman Heydar Aliyev to major politics and state administration was essential for the future of the independent Azerbaijani state and its people.

On 3 October 1993, in the presidential elections, the Azerbaijani people voted overwhelmingly for the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev. Thus, a new historical era began in the development of the independent Azerbaijani state.

The period from 1993 to 2003, during which the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev led the independent Republic of Azerbaijan, represents a crucial stage in the history of the country, characterized by rescuing the independent state from the threat of losing its sovereignty, preventing civil war, restoring socio-political stability, overcoming the military and economic crisis, and laying the solid foundations for future development. This historical period has been described as *"the era when the leaders of the world's greatest states took into account the position of the head of a small country"* [3, p. 21], *"the era of salvation"* [19, p. 20], and *"the period of building and developing an independent state"* [18, p. 392].

The most significant events of the presidential period of national leader Heydar Aliyev include the following:

As the head of the independent Azerbaijani state, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev made his first official visit to the Republic of Türkiye on 8–11 February 1994. This visit was a clear manifestation of Azerbaijan's policy of placing relations with the Republic of Türkiye and the Turkic world among the priorities of its interstate relations.

President Heydar Aliyev's visit to the People's Republic of China in March 1994 demonstrated Azerbaijan's determination to develop cooperation with Asian countries, while his official visit to Belgium in May of the same year signified the country's commitment to expanding cooperation with European states.

On 20 September 1994, on behalf of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev signed the International Oil Contract known as the “Contract of the Century”. The “Contract of the Century” is regarded as one of the most significant historical events of Azerbaijan’s modern era. Distinguished public figures have also characterized this agreement as “Heydar Aliyev’s Oil Contract”. The “Contract of the Century” laid the foundation for the oil strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Given its international scope and economic significance, the signing of the “Contract of the Century” under extremely difficult and complex circumstances represents one of the historic achievements of the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev before the Azerbaijani people. The “Contract of the Century” is a major historical document that has played an exceptional role in the future development of the Azerbaijani people and the independent Republic of Azerbaijan.

Under the new historical conditions, the implementation of land reforms and the reforms required by the transition to a market economy in the Republic of Azerbaijan constituted historic steps towards the establishment of an independent and democratic state. These measures, implemented through Heydar Aliyev’s well-considered and purposeful policy, represent significant contributions of the prominent statesman to the process of independent state-building.

Heydar Aliyev’s prevention of the attempted coup d’état on 4 October 1994 was a historic victory in preserving and strengthening independent statehood. As Commander-in-Chief, Heydar Aliyev also prevented the second coup attempt organized against Azerbaijan in October 1995, exposing the perpetrators of this act and their supporters, and thereby safeguarding the independence of the Azerbaijani state.

The adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 12 November 1995 through a nationwide referendum constitutes one of the most significant historical achievements of the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev in the process of building an independent state. It is not accidental that the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan has entered the history of the country as the “Heydar Aliyev Constitution”. The Constitution of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan is regarded as the masterpiece of the national leader Heydar Aliyev.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev highly assessed the adoption of the first independent Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, consisting of 12 chapters and 158 articles, as one of the most important steps towards strengthening state independence. He stated:

“I sincerely congratulate you and the entire Azerbaijani people on the adoption of the Constitution of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan through a nationwide referendum and would like to express my confidence that this Constitution will serve to strengthen state independence, protect the rights and freedoms of individuals and citizens, and establish and develop a rule-of-law state in Azerbaijan. The newly adopted Constitution is a Constitution that ensures the independence and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The new Constitution has created all the necessary foundations and provided all the guarantees for the establishment of a democratic, law-governed state and the formation of a democratic civil society in Azerbaijan ” [10, p. 6].

As a result of Heydar Aliyev’s initiatives and efforts, the Ceasefire Agreement was signed on 12 May 1994 with the aim of resolving the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict. This agreement represented a significant political event that provided Azerbaijan with the necessary time and opportunities to achieve the liberation of Karabakh from occupation. Under the leadership of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, the liberation of the Horadiz settlement of the Fuzuli region and 22 surrounding villages from enemy occupation on 5 January 1995 marked an important turning point in the struggle for the liberation of Karabakh. This victory strengthened the Azerbaijani people’s confidence that the occupied territories of Karabakh would eventually be liberated.

The adoption of a decision by 53 states at the 1996 Lisbon Summit of the OSCE recognizing the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan was a diplomatic success of Heydar Aliyev’s political strategy. Following the Lisbon Summit, the international community began to reconsider its position regar-

ding support for Armenia in the Karabakh issue, while objective information about Karabakh as an ancient Azerbaijani land gradually gained wider international recognition.

Upon the initiative of the head of state Heydar Aliyev, the death penalty was abolished in Azerbaijan in 1998. The abolition of the Main Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press (“Glavlit”), a Soviet-era censorship institution, based on the Presidential Decree “On Additional Measures in the Field of Ensuring Freedom of Speech, Thought and Information in the Republic of Azerbaijan,” represented one of the most important steps towards building a democratic state. Azerbaijan became the first among the Commonwealth of Independent States countries to abolish censorship. The first state-level initiative aimed at restoring the historic Silk Road was also put forward by Heydar Aliyev in 1998.

The prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev was re-elected President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 11 October 1998, receiving 76.2% of the votes. This was another expression of the nationwide respect and confidence of the Azerbaijani people in the national leader.

Between 1997 and 2000, President Heydar Aliyev ensured that the 1300th anniversary of the *Kitabi-Dede Gorgud* epic, one of the most magnificent literary monuments representing the national heritage of the Azerbaijani people, was commemorated at an international level — at the UNESCO headquarters and within the framework of the Summit of Heads of Turkic States. This event represented a major historical and cultural milestone in terms of preserving national and spiritual values, strengthening and developing the ideas of Azerbaijanism and patriotism in the independent Azerbaijani state.

By declaring the *Kitabi-Dede Gorgud* epic the “Mother Book” of the Azerbaijani people and referring to Dede Gorgud as “*our great ancestor and forefather*” [24, p. 179], prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev aimed, through the extensive and solemn celebration of the 1300th anniversary of this magnificent Oghuz monument, to further expand the implementation of the ideals of national spiritual self-awareness and Azerbaijanism, as well as to promote the Azerbaijani people and the independent Azerbaijani state on the international stage.

The following words delivered by the National Leader at the ceremony dedicated to the 1300th anniversary of the *Kitabi-Dede Gorgud* epic on 7 April 2000 once again confirm this objective:

“We celebrate these anniversaries so that our people can better understand their history. Secondly, so that the world may know what a rich history and culture we possess” [Ibid., p. 236].

One of the important measures implemented by Heydar Aliyev in the field of science was related to the meeting he held on 31 January 1997 with the leadership of the Academy of Sciences, full and corresponding members of the Academy, and prominent scholars, as well as the decisions adopted as a result of that historic meeting. During the meeting held at the Presidential Residence, discussions concerning the role of national science in serving the construction of an independent state, the moral responsibility and position of scholars before society, the necessity of rewriting the history of Azerbaijan in the 19th–20th centuries, and improving the social conditions of scientists, along with the measures taken at the state level, became an important turning point in the development of this academic institution.

In particular, the concept developed regarding the status of the Academy of Sciences contributed to further strengthening the scientific policy of the independent state. Heydar Aliyev emphasized the necessity of developing a new strategy for the Academy based on the principles of independence and contemporary requirements:

“Now Azerbaijan is an independent state. The Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan is the state scientific academy... It is not correct to take the former administrative system, methods, rules and regulations as a basis and repeat them. Therefore, when determining the strategy of the Academy for the development of science, you should approach this work precisely on the basis of these principles” [8, p.157–158].

With the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev dated 15 May 2001, granting the Academy of Sciences the status of the National Academy of Sciences, the posi-

on of this supreme state scientific institution was significantly strengthened, and discussions concerning the possible abolition of the Academy came to an end.

Another significant page in Heydar Aliyev's biography related to science concerns the election process for his membership as a full member of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences. Thus, the President of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, Academician Faramaz Magsudov, considering the outstanding services of the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev to Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani people, his role in saving the Academy of Sciences from abolition, and his exceptional attention and support towards scientists and the Academy, regarded the election of the head of state as a full member of the Academy in the field of political sciences as a moral responsibility of the academic community.

For this purpose, at the General Assembly chaired by Academician Faramaz Magsudov, prominent scholars- Academician Asaf Nadirov, former Rector of the Azerbaijan State Oil Academy Ismayil Ibrahimov, Director of the Institute of Geology Akif Alizadeh, Chairman of the Azerbaijan Economists Association Ziyad Samadzadeh, scientific adviser of the Nizami Ganjavi Institute of Literature Kamal Talibzadeh, Director of the Institute of Petrochemical Processes Musa Rustamov, Director of the Institute of Zoology Musa Musayev, and others — delivered speeches.

Based on Heydar Aliyev's unparalleled contributions to the independent Azerbaijani state, the Azerbaijani people, and national science, the speakers unanimously supported his election as a full member of the Academy of Sciences and expressed their approval by voting in his favour during the election held on this occasion.

Although the prominent statesman Heydar Aliyev did not accept the diploma confirming his full membership of the Academy, this event became an important page in the history of Azerbaijani science and left a lasting mark in the annals of the country's supreme academic institution.

In the new stage of Heydar Aliyev's political activity, the processes of establishing a legal and democratic state in Azerbaijan were further deepened. The adoption of the *State Programme for the Protection of Human Rights* in 1998 at the state level, the establishment of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the first time, and the creation of the Ombudsman Institution — the Commissioner for Human Rights — in 2002 were among Heydar Aliyev's significant contributions to the formation of a legal and democratic state.

Most importantly, the referendum held in August 2002, initiated by President Heydar Aliyev through his Decree on introducing amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, ensured further improvement of the governance system of the independent state. This process marked a new stage in the development of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

During this period, economic reforms were further expanded. In order to ensure the implementation of the "Contract of the Century", on 18 November 1998, within the framework of the OSCE Istanbul Summit, the Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Türkiye, and Georgia signed an agreement on the transportation of Azerbaijani oil through the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Main Export Pipeline. Several months earlier, on 17 April 1999, the commissioning of the Baku–Supsa oil pipeline and the launch of the construction of the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline represented a major success of the far-sighted policy pursued by Heydar Aliyev in the purposeful regulation of interstate relations.

Fulfilling the aspirations of the Azerbaijani people, Heydar Aliyev also participated in the presidential elections held in 2003. However, on 1 October 2003, addressing the Azerbaijani people, he called upon citizens, due to his health condition, to vote in the presidential elections for his worthy political successor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan and First Deputy Chairman of the New Azerbaijan Party Ilham Aliyev.

This address, which possessed profound historical and significant political importance, became an important state document that determined the future path of development of the Azerbaijani people. It represented the testament of the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people - a personality

whose entire life was devoted to Azerbaijan and who rendered exceptional services in the development of the country — addressed to the future of the state.

Heydar Aliyev's address to the Azerbaijani people resonated as a call from this outstanding personality to guide the nation towards Azerbaijan's future development trajectory:

"Addressing you, my compatriots, I call upon you to support Ilham Aliyev, the candidate for the presidency in the upcoming presidential elections, my political successor, and the First Deputy Chairman of the New Azerbaijan Party. He is a person with a high intellectual level, pragmatic thinking, excellent knowledge of contemporary world politics and economics, and a dynamic and initiative-driven personality. I assure you that both Ilham Aliyev and the New Azerbaijan Party will continue to unite the most worthy sons and daughters of our people around them and will accomplish significant work for the development of the Azerbaijani state and the prosperity of our people. I believe that Ilham Aliyev will be able to complete, with your assistance and support, the vital issues, plans, and projects that I have not been able to bring to completion. I trust him as much as I trust myself and have great hopes for his future" [16].

Ilham Aliyev, a new type of leader of contemporary history, achieved a convincing victory in the presidential elections and gained the right to continue and further develop the political course of Heydar Aliyev. Over the past 23 years since that period, under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, the path established by Heydar Aliyev has been creatively continued, taking into account the realities brought about by the new era, and has brought great victories to the historical chronicle of our country. The historic Victory achieved in the 44-day Patriotic War and the complete restoration of state sovereignty as a result of a one-day military operation, through the true military leadership skills of the Victorious Supreme Commander-in-Chief, represent the brightest events in the centuries-old history of Azerbaijan.

In this regard, the greatest service of the outstanding statesman Heydar Aliyev to the Azerbaijani people and statehood was his ability to raise, in the person of President Ilham Aliyev, a true leader of the new historical era and bring him to the forefront of global politics. Today, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev is recognised as one of the most influential leaders in the world. The comprehensive development of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan along an upward trajectory in all areas is a triumph of Heydar Aliyev's ideals of statehood.

The national leader of the Azerbaijani people, Heydar Aliyev, passed away on 12 December 2003 at the Cleveland Clinic in the United States of America. The nationwide farewell ceremony held in Baku on 15 December 2003 became a grand manifestation of the boundless respect and reverence of the Azerbaijani people for their great son and outstanding statesman Heydar Aliyev. The participation of prominent statesmen from around the world in the nationwide farewell ceremony and their high appreciation of the activities of this remarkable personality served as real confirmation of Heydar Aliyev's status as a great statesman of global significance.

The magnificent sculptural complex created by the People's Artist of Azerbaijan Omar Eldarov and erected above the grave of the National Leader reflects the eternity of Heydar Aliyev's genius.

As rightly noted, *"history has truly given Heydar Aliyev his deserved place as a statesman, a great patriot, and a genius Azerbaijani"* [25, p. 396]. The outstanding statesman Heydar Aliyev is recognised as the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people. The name of the Great Leader is mentioned among the names of the most powerful statesmen of the world, while the Azerbaijani people continue to see their great son Heydar Aliyev at the highest pinnacle and draw strength and inspiration from his great ideals.

Under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, our people are successfully advancing towards a brighter future guided by the ideals of independent statehood and Azerbaijani identity established by the outstanding statesman Heydar Aliyev. The policy pursued by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Victorious Leader of the Victorious Nation, Ilham Aliyev, based on his resolute political position and purposeful leadership, aimed at signing a Peace Agreement

between the independent Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia and opening the Zangezur Corridor, illuminates the path of our country and our people towards achieving even greater goals.

Thus, the ideals of independent statehood of Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, continue to live and prevail. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev confidently leads our people from one victory to another.

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CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL METHOD IN LITERARY STUDIES AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS IN AZERBAIJANI LITERATURE

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The article examines the theoretical foundations of the sociological method in literary studies, the stages of its formation, and the specific features of its application in Azerbaijani literature. The research is based on the concept that literature is not only an aesthetic phenomenon but also an artistic expression of specific historical, social, and cultural conditions. The study analyzes the main principles of the sociological method, including social determinism, the social function of literature, the author-text-reader relationship, and the interpretation of literary works within their social context. The article discusses the theoretical approaches of O. Comte, E. Durkheim, H. Taine, G. Lukacs, P. Bourdieu, and other scholars, while identifying the contemporary significance of this method in literary scholarship. The development of sociological approaches in Azerbaijani literature from the Enlightenment period to the Soviet and contemporary stages is demonstrated through specific examples. The scientific novelty of the research lies in presenting the sociological method not merely as a tool of ideological analysis but as a comprehensive methodological system that reveals the social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of literary texts. The findings of the study can be applied in literary theory, criticism, and socio-contextual analysis of artistic works.

Keywords: literary process, social context, cultural memory, artistic discourse, methodology.

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a field of artistic creativity that expresses the inner world, emotions, and intellectual perception of human beings. Along with serving as one of the most comprehensive spiritual documents reflecting the history, culture, and social structure of a nation, literature also reveals the modes of thinking, ideals, social relations, and value systems of each historical period. A literary text is not merely a product of individual imagination; rather, it is shaped by the social conditions, economic relations, and cultural environment that determine its formation. Therefore, the analysis of literature should take into consideration not only poetic form and language but also the social context that influences its emergence. For this very reason, the sociological method occupies an important place in literary studies. This method examines literature as an integral part of society, presents the writer as both an observer and participant of social processes, and evaluates a literary work as an aesthetic model reflecting the social reality of its time.

The primary objective of the sociological method is to understand the interrelationship between literature and society and to reveal the social essence of artistic creativity. This approach emphasizes that a writer portrays human destinies not only from the perspective of individual experience but also within the framework of the social relations that shape them. In this sense, literature serves as a mirror reflecting the individual's place in society, as well as their moral and social struggles. The object of sociological analysis is not limited to the content and form of a literary work; it also includes the conditions of its creation. The author's social background, ideological views, the historical period in which the work was written, the social environment of that period, and the reader's mode of perception are considered as interconnected elements. The sociological approach enables literature to be studied both as a social phenomenon and as a system of cultural values.



The emergence of the sociological method was the result of profound changes in social and intellectual thought during the nineteenth century. The rapid transformation of European society after the Industrial Revolution, the decline of traditional religious and feudal values, urbanization, and the growing process of social stratification required a new understanding of individual life and social relations. Human beings were no longer perceived solely as products of religious or metaphysical principles but rather as individuals shaped by concrete social conditions. This new perspective opened the way for a scientific understanding of human beings and society, fundamentally changing the direction of intellectual development. Systematic observation and scientific reasoning replaced belief and subjective impressions. Society came to be viewed not merely as a combination of moral and social relations but as a scientific reality requiring systematic study. This intellectual awakening created the foundation for the formation of sociology and, consequently, for the emergence of the sociological method aimed at exploring the social nature of literature.

The formation of the sociological method within such a scientific environment was a logical continuation of the intellectual and social developments of the period. However, its theoretical and philosophical roots can be traced back to earlier systems of thought and philosophical approaches focused on understanding the relationship between individuals and society. Before the emergence of the sociological method, the study of society was mainly conducted within philosophical and ethical frameworks. Philosophers such as Aristotle, Hobbes, Rousseau, and Kant attempted to explain the essence of social organization through concepts such as the state, morality, and freedom. In the nineteenth century, the development of science, particularly the growing influence of empirical approaches based on observation and experimentation in the natural sciences, made it necessary to study society according to similar scientific principles. Human behavior and social processes were no longer regarded as random phenomena but as elements of a dynamic and interconnected system governed by certain laws. This new perspective placed human beings and society at the center of scientific inquiry and paved the way for the formation of the sociological method.

MAIN PART

One of the first scholars to systematize the theoretical and scientific foundations of the sociological method was Auguste Comte. He conceptualized society as an organic system governed by objective laws and formulated this approach within the framework of “positivism.” According to Comte, *the cognition of social phenomena should be based exclusively on empirical observation and scientific analysis, since theological and metaphysical interpretations prevent the formation of an objective understanding of social reality* [15, p. 432]. His concept of “social physics” was intended to identify the principles governing social order and development. Within this theoretical framework, the primary function of science was defined not merely as the description of observable phenomena but as the discovery of their underlying laws and structural regularities. This epistemological shift represented a crucial stage in the emergence of the sociological method, establishing an empirical foundation for the analysis of human society and social relations.

A significant contribution to the theoretical consolidation and scientific institutionalization of the sociological method was made by Emile Durkheim. He introduced a fundamentally new methodological perspective for the interpretation of social reality. Durkheim argued that *society cannot be reduced to the mechanical sum of individuals, rather, it constitutes an independent reality characterized by its own laws, norms, and structures* [17, p. 346]. He defined this objective social reality as “social facts.” Although the concept may initially appear abstract, it refers to the collective patterns, norms, and institutions that regulate individual behavior and exist independently of personal intentions. Social practices such as participation in educational institutions, adherence to legal systems, observance of cultural traditions, and compliance with accepted behavioral norms represent manifestations of social facts, as they are shaped by collective consciousness and social structures rather than by individual choice alone.

This methodological principle became one of the fundamental factors distinguishing sociology from psychological approaches to human behavior. Durkheim demonstrated that social phenomena possess an autonomous social character and therefore require specific analytical methods appropriate to their collective nature. His theoretical propositions played a decisive role in establishing sociology as an independent scientific discipline. By integrating theoretical conceptualization with empirical research, Durkheim emphasized the necessity of studying social phenomena through systematic observation, factual analysis, and objective interpretation. His major works, including *The Division of Labour in Society* [17], *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* [16], and *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* [18], became foundational studies that established methodological principles for examining social structures, collective norms, and the moral foundations of society.

In order to provide a comprehensive explanation of social reality, Durkheim proposed a classification of society based on three fundamental levels.

1. Morphological structure – constitutes the objective and material foundation of society. It includes demographic characteristics such as population size and density, the specific features of settlement patterns, the structure of economic activity, the level of technological development, and the material conditions of everyday life. This level provides the basis for the formation of social behaviors and patterns of interaction. For instance, behavioral differences between urban and rural environments are not accidental, as spatial organization and population density significantly influence forms of social interaction and behavioral models.

2. Institutional system – encompasses the normative and organizational structure of society. Institutions such as the family, educational establishments, the state and legal system, religious organizations, and economic structures regulate interpersonal relations and ensure social stability. Without these institutions, shared norms and regulatory mechanisms would disappear, leading to social disorder. Even the simplest social norm performs an essential function in maintaining social order, and when these functions are disrupted, conditions of anomie, instability, and social crisis emerge.

3. Symbolic and moral system – represents the cultural and ideological dimension of society. It includes collective values, beliefs, religious perceptions, ethical principles, cultural symbols, and collective memory. This level shapes social identity and enables individuals to answer the fundamental question of “Who are we?” Symbols such as the national flag, traditional music, religious rituals, and moral values are not merely aesthetic or ethical elements. They represent forms through which society comprehends and expresses itself. *If the morphological structure constitutes the body of society and the institutional system represents its regulatory framework, then the symbolic system may be regarded as its collective consciousness and spiritual essence* [18, p. 341].

This three-dimensional classification enables a comprehensive analysis of society at material, normative-institutional, and cultural-symbolic levels. This approach defines not only the methodological foundations of sociology but also contributes to the theoretical frameworks of disciplines such as literary studies, philosophy, anthropology, and political science.

The sociological analysis of literature makes it possible to interpret literary works not merely as aesthetic objects but as artistic representations of the morphological, institutional, and symbolic dimensions of society. The morphological level corresponds to the representation of social space and environment within a literary work; the institutional level relates to interpersonal relations among characters and the reflection of social norms; while the symbolic level corresponds to the values, ideas, and cultural symbols created by the author. This approach introduces the conceptual instruments of the sociological method into literary studies, allowing texts to be examined not only in terms of plot and character systems but also as interactive representations of the structural and ideological layers of society. Consequently, the aesthetic and social functions of literary works can be studied simultaneously from a scientific and analytical perspective, providing a deeper understanding of the complexity of social reality.



Theoretical approaches demonstrate once again that the sociological method examines literature not merely as an aesthetic phenomenon but as a complex system in which social relations and ideological processes are formed and represented. The writer is both a product of individual creative ability and a bearer of the social environment in which he or she exists. A literary work represents the artistic and symbolic expression of this environment, while the reader functions as an active participant within this system. Such an approach introduces greater objectivity into literary analysis and clarifies the role of literature in the moral and intellectual life of society.

The philosophical and theoretical foundations of the sociological method require such a comprehensive perspective because literature represents the aesthetic expression of human thought shaped by social experience. When the writer's creative voice, society's value system, and the reader's consciousness intersect, literature becomes not merely an artistic phenomenon but also one of the most subtle forms of social thought.

Literature, while expressing the inner world of human beings through artistic language, also functions as a social document reflecting the historical, cultural, and moral development of society. As a product of a particular social environment, the writer conveys not only personal experiences but also the complexity of the social relations that shape these experiences. Therefore, the origins of a literary text should be sought not only in individual imagination but also in the structures of collective consciousness. This characteristic of literature requires its study not solely as an aesthetic phenomenon but also as a significant social phenomenon.

The sociological method considers literature as a functional component of society and reveals the role of social structures, ideological relations, and institutional mechanisms in the formation of literary texts. The writer is both an observer and a participant of this system; his or her creative work emerges at the intersection of individual and collective social experience. Thus, a literary work becomes not only a product of artistic imagination but also an aesthetic transformation of social realities.

In literary studies, the sociological method approaches a literary work not merely as an aesthetic phenomenon but as a representation of social structures, ideological relations, and historical processes. It interprets literature as a reflection of social life and examines the social relations, ideological conflicts, and collective experiences underlying characters, events, and artistic conflicts. According to this approach, literary characters and their actions embody the social environment in which the writer exists, while the literary text functions as a document reflecting the stability or crisis of society.

The theoretical roots of this approach can be traced back to ancient philosophy. Plato emphasized the educational function of literature, whereas Aristotle considered art as an imitation (*mimesis*) of reality. However, the sociological method as a scientific framework developed in the nineteenth century under the influence of realism and positivist thought. Hippolyte Taine interpreted the writer as a product of "*race, milieu, and moment*," emphasizing that *no literary text can exist independently of society* [20, p. 243]. Ferdinand Brunetière further developed this idea by comparing the evolution of literature to biological development and arguing that genres, themes, and forms change in accordance with social and intellectual transformations. Within realist aesthetics, literature was therefore regarded as a "natural reflection" of life, and the social essence of a work became an important criterion of its artistic value.

In the twentieth century, the most radical form of the sociological method emerged from the ideas of Marx and Engels. According to Marxist theory, literature represents a form of social consciousness and should be interpreted through economic relations and class structures. Georg Lukacs viewed the novel as an aesthetic representation of the fragmentation of bourgeois society, arguing that *the writer mediates between individual experience and broader social reality* [19, p. 198]. Lucien Goldmann expanded this perspective by considering the literary text as an artistic expression of the worldview of a particular social group. Pierre Bourdieu, through the concept of the "literary fi-



eld,” analyzed the mechanisms of literary production and the struggle for “cultural capital” among writers, readers, publishers, critics, and social institutions.

After the Second World War, sociological approaches in Western literary studies acquired new dimensions. Literature came to be understood not only as a reflection of social reality but also as a cultural form that engages with and questions this reality. Representatives of the Frankfurt School viewed art as an expression of critical consciousness and a sphere capable of resisting the mechanisms of mass culture. From this perspective, a literary work does not simply depict social reality; it also enters into dialogue with it, encouraging critical reflection and conscious engagement with social processes.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the sociological approach expanded into a broader cultural framework. Researchers began to interpret literature as a dynamic field expressing social emotions, ideological identities, and systems of values. From this perspective, literature functions simultaneously as an expression of social experience and as a form of its moral and cultural critique.

During the same period, new theoretical approaches emerged focusing on the relations between Western and Eastern cultures. These approaches examined how cultural power is constructed in literature, how stereotypes are formed, and what role literary texts play in these processes. Consequently, the sociological method gradually evolved from the analysis of social structures into a broader theoretical perspective concerned with the deeper dimensions of cultural relations.

The sociological method also considers the process of literary reception by examining the reader’s social position and cultural codes. Every reader interprets a literary work through the framework of personal social experience. Therefore, the social impact of literature is determined not only by the author but also by the reader, who re-evaluates social values and reconstructs personal perspectives through literary texts. This demonstrates the transformative potential of literature within society.

Contemporary sociological literary studies analyze literature not only through class and ideological relations but also within the contexts of identity, memory, gender, and cultural discourse. Literature artistically represents collective traumas, transformations of national consciousness, and changes in social values. In this sense, literature is not merely an interpretation of the past but also a moral and cultural projection of the future.

The scientific significance of the sociological method lies in its multidimensional analytical capacity. It enables literature to be examined at structural, functional, and ideological levels. At the structural level, it reveals the artistic manifestations of social relations, character systems, narrative structures, and social codes of language. At the functional level, it explores the influence of literature on society and its role in shaping social experience. At the ideological level, it investigates how literary works construct social consciousness and promote particular values. Thus, the sociological method views literature not only as a reflection of life but also as a force capable of transforming it.

The writer, in this context, acts as an interpreter of social processes, revealing hidden dimensions of society through artistic means. The theoretical foundations of the sociological method therefore enable literature to be understood as an aesthetic expression of human social existence. Literature preserves, transforms, and reconstructs the moral structures of society. The writer is both a participant in social reality and its moral critic, while the reader engages with this critical process by reconsidering his or her own social position.

The greatest significance of the sociological method lies in its refusal to separate art from life; rather, it perceives literature as a continuation of social existence itself. Literature is not merely an art of language but also a sphere where social consciousness, moral responsibility, and public awareness are formed. As both a research and cognitive instrument, the sociological method remains relevant as a scientific approach explaining social transformation while also contributing to this transformation.



The sociological method is based on several fundamental concepts, one of which is the principle of social determinism. According to this principle, the decisive factors shaping the emergence, form, and content of a literary work are not limited to the writer's individual talent but are closely connected with the socio-economic conditions of the society in which the writer lives and the ideology of the social group to which he or she belongs. The Pereverzev school explicitly argued that *"literature is a product of social origin"* [13, p. 320], emphasizing that the author's ideas and aesthetic choices are determined by the psychological and ideological demands of society.

Another important concept is class ideology. Throughout the history of sociological criticism, literary works have often been interpreted as expressions of the interests and ideas of particular social classes or groups. Especially within the Marxist tradition, literature was regarded as an aesthetic arena of class struggle, where hidden social meanings and ideological structures were identified. In Soviet criticism of the 1930s, the value of a literary work was frequently measured by the extent to which it served proletarian ideals.

Critics such as Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov also emphasized the social and functional nature of literature, arguing that art should contribute to social progress. Dobrolyubov stated that *"the value of literature should not be measured only by aesthetic beauty but also by its benefit to society"* [12, p. 418], reflecting his principle that criticism should serve life.

The social function of literature constitutes another fundamental concept within the sociological method. From a sociological perspective, literature serves not merely to provide aesthetic pleasure but also to educate society, shape public consciousness, and influence broad audiences. Belinsky described literature as a *"translator of the life of the people"* [11, p. 338], while Chernyshevsky emphasized that art should *"serve the benefit of humanity"* [14, p. 340]. Dobrolyubov likewise valued literary works for their ability to reveal the "true face" of society. These views highlight the educational, ideological, and social functions of literature. In Soviet literary doctrine, literature was officially proclaimed the "educator of the masses," representing another manifestation of this functional principle. Consequently, the influence of literary works on readers and society remains one of the central concerns of sociological criticism.

Another important principle of the sociological method is communicativity, namely the study of the relationship between the author, the text, and the reader. Whereas formalist and structuralist approaches primarily focus on the internal organization of the text, the sociological perspective regards literature as an act of communication. Every literary work establishes a dialogue between authorial intention and readerly interpretation. Bakhtin's concept of polyphony reinforces this view, suggesting that a literary text constitutes a dialogue of multiple social voices. As representatives of particular social groups, readers interpret texts through the lens of their own experiences. Similarly, Voloshinov argued that *"the meaning of a word emerges only through living social interaction."* Therefore, the sociological method examines not only the conditions under which a work is produced but also the circumstances of its reception. Although these ideas were later developed within reception theory, their foundations can be traced to the sociological perspectives of Bakhtin and Voloshinov. This approach demonstrates that literary works are dynamic phenomena whose social significance changes across different historical periods and interpretive communities.

Contemporary scholarship increasingly analyzes literary texts by relating their poetic features—such as genre, style, and character systems—to their historical and social contexts. This demonstrates that, when applied appropriately, the sociological method is capable of revealing both the aesthetic and social dimensions of literature. Its methodological flexibility has enabled it to remain relevant and adaptable to new theoretical developments. Moreover, the sociological method is not limited to the analysis of social classes and class relations; it also incorporates cultural and psychological perspectives, thereby providing a broader understanding of the ways literary works influence human experience and social consciousness.

In contemporary scholarship, the sociological method has moved beyond being merely a tool of class and ideological analysis and has developed into a flexible, multidimensional approach that examines socio-cultural transformations, moral values, and identity issues within transitional societies through the perspective of literature. In Azerbaijani literature, the sociological method has highlighted the social power of literature at different historical stages and demonstrated the significant role of artistic expression in shaping public consciousness.

Representatives of the sociological approach have interpreted literature as an artistic representation of social relations and an aesthetic form of historical processes, revealing the social and moral value of literary works. This perspective enables researchers to move beyond the surface structure of texts and identify the socio-ideological layers embedded within them, traces of the author's social environment, and mechanisms through which literary works influence readers and society. Thus, the sociological method has become a comprehensive research approach that allows the aesthetic and social dimensions of literature to be examined within a unified theoretical framework.

Within Azerbaijani literary studies, the sociological method has also produced significant results. Research conducted from the nineteenth century to the present demonstrates that Enlightenment criticism, ideological interpretations of the Soviet period, and contemporary multidimensional analyses all confirm the organic relationship between literature and society. *Major representatives of Azerbaijani literature have remained influential because their works reflected social problems and contradictions, and these works continue to acquire new meanings through sociological analysis* [4, p. 12]. Today, the sociological method remains relevant in literary theory, particularly in examining the reflection of rapidly changing social processes in literature. The impact of the digital era, social networks, globalization, and transformations in the function of national literature have further increased the importance of sociological approaches.

The formation of sociological thinking in Azerbaijani literature dates back to the nineteenth-century Enlightenment period. *During this era, literature was regarded as an important instrument for public education, moral improvement, and social reform* [7]. Mirza Fatali Akhundzadeh viewed art as a means of social renewal and the promotion of rational thought. In his dramaturgy, the conflict between individual conscience and social responsibility, as well as the struggle against outdated forms of thinking, constituted central artistic themes. Through satirical comedies, he criticized ignorant religious figures, oppressive social groups, and various stereotypes, using literature as both an aesthetic and social force.

Continuing Akhundzadeh's tradition, Jalil Mammadguluzadeh and the journal "Molla Nasreddin" (1906–1931) became prominent examples of sociological thinking in Azerbaijani literature. Through this publication, Mammadguluzadeh, Omar Faiq Nemanzadeh, Ali Nazmi, and Mirza Alakbar Sabir addressed major social problems such as corruption, hypocrisy among religious authorities, and social inequality. Sabir's satirical poetry exposed the suffering of ordinary people and social injustice, presenting literature as both an artistic form and a means of social criticism.

During the Soviet period, the sociological method was applied within the framework of official ideology and socialist realism. The doctrine of socialist realism, adopted at the First Congress of the Soviet Writers' Union in 1934, defined literature as a political and ideological instrument. *Writers were expected to depict socialist construction, the achievements of the proletariat, and the ideals of class struggle* [5, p. 18]. As a result, literature and criticism were subjected to ideological control, and during the period of "vulgar sociology," artistic value was often subordinated to political criteria. In Soviet Azerbaijan, this tendency was particularly strong; however, scholars such as Mir Jalal attempted to preserve the aesthetic dimensions of classical literature and resist purely ideological interpretations.

At the same time, many Soviet Azerbaijani writers succeeded in reflecting social issues through artistic means. Jafar Jabbarly explored women's emancipation and the conflict between traditional and modern values in his dramas *Sevil* and *Almaz*. Suleyman Rahimov portrayed class relations and revolutionary transformations in rural society in his novel *Shamo*. Mirza Ibrahimov depic-



ted the complex social landscape of collectivization in *The Great Support*. Other writers, including Samad Vurgun, Mehdi Huseyn, Ilyas Afandiyev, and Ismail Shikhly, addressed human destinies, the consequences of war, and moral dilemmas within the ideological framework of their time.

During the period of independence, the sociological method acquired new content and dynamics. With the removal of ideological censorship, Azerbaijani writers increasingly addressed issues such as national identity, historical reinterpretation, moral degradation, the ideals of independence, and social trauma. Since the 2000s, globalization, urbanization, migration, the social and psychological consequences of the Karabakh conflict, the experiences of refugees and internally displaced persons, gender issues, and the social conditions of youth have become significant themes in literature. Contemporary writers such as Anar [2], Elchin [3], Kamal Abdulla [1], and Afaq Masud [8] have analyzed post-Soviet realities within national and global contexts, introducing new social dimensions into Azerbaijani literature.

The sociological method enables literature to be studied not only from aesthetic but also from social and moral perspectives. In Bakhtiyar Vahabzadeh's play *The Gallows Tree* [9], the conflict between individual and collective conscience, human suffering, and the moral condition of society are artistically represented. The monologues in the work function as poetic forms of social reflection, expressing questions directed toward the self, society, and history, and becoming a voice of collective memory.

CONCLUSION

The sociological method remains one of the most significant methodological approaches in literary studies and continues to maintain its relevance by adapting to changing theoretical, scientific, and ideological paradigms. Its scholarly value lies in its understanding of literature as an inseparable component of social life and in its interpretation of literary texts as aesthetic and moral representations of social reality. The sociological method enables scholars to examine not only the aesthetic structure of literary works but also their social functions, ideological dimensions, and influence on public consciousness. It provides a framework for understanding literary works both as products of their historical context and as creative forces that contribute to the moral and ideological development of society.

The relevance of this research is particularly evident in the contemporary era, characterized by globalization, digitalization, and rapidly changing forms of social consciousness. Under these conditions, literature has become not merely an aesthetic phenomenon but also an important factor in the construction of cultural identity and social thought. As social structures, value systems, and moral priorities continue to evolve, understanding the social functions of literature becomes increasingly important. In this context, the sociological method offers a flexible and contemporary approach for examining literature as an aesthetic expression of dynamic social processes.

The scholarly significance of the sociological method lies in its multidimensional analytical potential. It allows literature to be studied simultaneously as a social fact and as a form of cultural and moral cognition. From this perspective, literature does not simply reflect society; it also serves as a means of understanding, interpreting, and transforming social reality. The writer functions not merely as an observer but as an active participant in the intellectual life of society, whose artistic expression transcends ideological boundaries and contributes to the redefinition of moral and social values. The reader, in turn, completes this process by engaging critically with the text and reconsidering personal social and ethical positions. Literature thus becomes a form of ongoing social dialogue.

One of the principal strengths of the sociological method in contemporary scholarship is its interdisciplinary and multidimensional character. It enables literary works to be examined not only through the lens of class and ideology but also in relation to identity, memory, culture, gender, and morality. Such an approach provides a deeper understanding of literature's role within systems of social values and highlights its function as a form of collective self-awareness, a repository of cultural memory, and an artistic expression of social transformation.



The significance of the sociological method is particularly evident in Azerbaijani literary studies. Historically, Azerbaijani literature has served as an artistic chronicle of social change and as a medium for exploring the relationship between the individual and society. From the Enlightenment period to the present day, Azerbaijani writers and critics have demonstrated that literature functions both as an expression of social problems and as a means of seeking their moral resolution. Consequently, sociological analysis allows literature to be understood not only as a reflection of the past but also as a theoretical framework that contributes to shaping the moral direction of the future.

Ultimately, the sociological method encourages the study of literature not merely as a mirror of society but as a form of social self-awareness and moral reflection. Its enduring value lies in its ability to establish a bridge between art and life, enabling a deeper understanding of human social existence through aesthetic cognition. Literature functions as the moral conscience of society, inviting individuals not only to feel but also to think critically and assume social responsibility. In this sense, the sociological method remains one of the most relevant and humanistic approaches in literary studies, providing a scholarly foundation for understanding the social mission of literature and its role in the moral development of both individuals and society.

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SOSIOLOJİ METODUN ƏDƏBİYYATŞÜNASLIQ METODOLOGİYASINDA KONSEPTUAL ƏSASLARI VƏ AZƏRBAYCAN ƏDƏBİYYATINDA TƏZAHÜR FORMALARI

Ş.Ş. Əliyeva

Məqalədə sosioloji metodun ədəbiyyatşünaslıq metodologiyasındakı nəzəri əsasları, formalaşma mərhələləri və Azərbaycan ədəbiyyatında tətbiq xüsusiyyətləri araşdırılır. Tədqiqatda ədəbiyyatın yalnız estetik hadisə deyil, həm də müəyyən tarixi, sosial və mədəni şəraitin bədii ifadəsi olduğu konsepsiyasından çıxış edilir. Sosioloji metodun əsas prinsipləri - sosial determinizm, ədəbiyyatın ictimai funksiyası, müəllif-mətn-oxucu münasibətləri və bədii əsərin sosial kontekstdə təhlili məsələləri nəzərdən keçirilir. Məqalədə O.Kont, E.Dürkheim, H.Ten, G.Lukaç, P.Burdye və digər nəzəriyyəçilərin elmi yanaşmaları təhlil edilir, həmçinin metodun müasir ədəbiyyatşünaslıqda qazandığı yeni məzmun müəyyən edilir. Azərbaycan ədəbiyyatında sosioloji yanaşmanın maarifçilik dövründən başlayaraq sovet və müasir mərhələlərdə keçdiyi inkişaf yolu konkret nümunələr əsasında göstərilir. Tədqiqatın elmi yeniliyi sosioloji metodun yalnız ideoloji təhlil vasitəsi kimi deyil, bədii mətnin sosial, mədəni və mənəvi qatlarını açmağa imkan verən kompleks metodoloji sistem kimi təqdim edilməsidir. Məqalənin nəticələri ədəbiyyat nəzəriyyəsi, ədəbi tənqid və bədii mətnlərin sosial-kontekstual təhlili sahəsində istifadə oluna bilər.

Açar sözlər: *ədəbi proses, sosial kontekst, mədəni yaddaş, bədii diskurs, metodologiya*

КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНЫЕ ОСНОВЫ СОЦИОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО МЕТОДА В МЕТОДОЛОГИИ ЛИТЕРАТУРОВЕДЕНИЯ И ЕГО ПРОЯВЛЕНИЯ В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ

Ш.Ш. Алиева

В статье исследуются теоретические основы социологического метода в методологии литературоведения, этапы его формирования и особенности применения в азербайджанской литературе. Исследование основывается на концепции, согласно которой литература является не только эстетическим явлением, но и художественным выражением определённых исторических, социальных и культурных условий. Рассматриваются основные принципы социологического метода – социальный детерминизм, общественная функция литературы, взаимосвязь автора, текста и читателя, а также анализ художественного произведения в социальном контексте. В статье анализируются научные подходы О. Конта, Э. Дюркгейма, И. Тена, К. Маркса, Г. Лукача, П. Бурдье и других исследователей, определяется современное содержание данного метода в литературоведении. На конкретных примерах показано развитие социологического подхода в азербайджанской литературе от периода просветительства до советского и современного этапов. Научная новизна исследования заключается в представлении социологического метода не только как средства идеологического анализа, но и как комплексной методологической системы, позволяющей раскрыть социальные, культурные и духовные уровни художественного текста. Полученные результаты могут быть использованы в исследованиях по теории литературы, литературной критике и социально-контекстуальному анализу художественных произведений.

Ключевые слова: *литературный процесс, социальный контекст, культурная память, художественный дискурс, методология*



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THE SHAMAN ARCHETYPE IN AZERBAIJANI MAGIC TALES: THE MOTIFS OF METAMORPHOSIS

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The article examines the vestiges of ancient shamanic worldviews within the structural and semantic framework of Azerbaijani magic tales, focusing specifically on the archetype of transformation and shape-shifting. The shaman and the dervish figure in magic tales are genealogically and functionally sacred mediators originating from the same mythic root, representing two distinct historical periods. In the archaic era, the shaman's magical capacities-such as journeying to the spirit world in a state of trance, healing the sick, foreseeing the future, and assuming various guises- underwent a transformation, being replaced in the narrative space of folktales by notions such as "talisman," "incantation," and "esoteric knowledge". Both figures serve as repositories of esoteric power capable of traversing the boundaries between Cosmos and Chaos. Drawing upon the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of Vladimir Propp, Mircea Eliade, Arnold van Gennep, Bahaeddin Ögel, Celal Beydili, and Seyfaddin Rzasoy, the study fundamentally establishes that the dervish and sorcerer (rammal) personas are genealogically folklorized derivatives of the archaic shaman-mediator. The investigation of shamanic/dervish transformations encountered in Azerbaijani folktales demonstrates that the dervish character is not merely a religious-mystical figure, but also the structural heir to archaic shamanic functions within the folktale. The dervish character in folktales is genealogically intertwined with the shaman archetype. The shaman's communion with the spirit world and mastery over natural forces have been transposed into the narrative realm as metamorphoses executed by the dervish through "talismans" and "sorcery".

Keywords: Azerbaijani folktales, shamanism, dervish, metamorphosis, archetype, zoomorphism.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of transformation (shape-shifting), emerging from the most ancient strata of mythological thought, functions as a universal motif within the ritual and epic systems of human culture. Within the creative heritage of Turkic peoples, this motif carries a significant functional-semantic weight, particularly at the intersection of archaic shamanic practices and the subsequent traditions of dervishism.

Transformation constitutes one of the fundamental structural formulas of the Azerbaijani epic folklore system. As a folkloric motif, it encompasses a rich array of types and forms. A product of mythological cognition, this motif involves the capacity of animate and inanimate beings to alter their ontological essence and external form, transitioning into a different hypostasis. As Lyudmila



Vinogradova notes, transformation is not merely a folkloric motif but also an artistic reflection of a people's mythical beliefs [16, p. 67].

As the scholar indicates, transformation serves as a motif wherein mythical beliefs are mirrored; furthermore, the essence of transformation lies in the transition into another being through the alteration of outward appearance. Vladimir Propp explained transformation during mediation as a "metamorphosis of the soul", while Sergei Neklyudov interpreted any transformation as the soul's reflection across various beings [17, p. 111]. Within the language of epic texts, where detailed elaboration is unnecessary, "don deyishdirme" (shape-shifting) can be expressed simply by the word "became" (e.g., "...became a bird..."). Thus, as a component of traditional folkloric artistic thought, the motif of metamorphosis is intrinsically linked to a series of ancient views and conceptions originating from mythological reasoning.

One of the fundamental mystical transformations in folklore is the shaman/dervish transformation. In shamanic (kam-shaman, dervish) practice, transformation is an act of mediation – a mechanism of shape-shifting used to transition from one realm (world) to another. Within the typology of mystical metamorphoses, shaman/dervish transformations occupy a unique position. In shamanic practice, transformation is primarily a mediatory act that enables a subject in a "liminal" (threshold) state to pass from one world (Cosmos) to another (Chaos).

Shamans are beings capable of establishing contact with other worlds. This connection is termed mediation; therefore, shamans are regarded as mediums and mediators. Through mediation, they can ascend to the heavens - the world of the gods - or descend into the underworld - the realm of the dead. Shamans who ascend to the sky are called "white shamans", while those who descend to the underworld are known as "black shamans". A shaman traveling to the underworld, the realm of the dead (the world of Chaos), was required to change his appearance, guise, or form to avoid recognition. This is because the shaman enters the world of the dead to retrieve the soul of a sick person and restore it to them. If the inhabitants or guardians of the underworld perceive him as a living being rather than a spirit, they may capture and detain him. Consequently, the shaman must undergo a metamorphosis to resemble the inhabitants of the chaotic realm.

Chaos is the world of the dead, and it is impossible to enter without "dying". Shamans or heroes who cross into Chaos while still in a living status do so through ritual death and shape-shifting/transformation [12, p. 360].

Depending on the situation – whether dictated by environment, conditions, or terrain – the shaman may transform into various animals, including birds, or even inanimate objects during the transition to Chaos, whether in the subterranean layers or the celestial spheres. This behavioral complex, which pertains not only to the shaman but to the epic hero in general, is scientifically defined as transformation.

As emphasized in S. Rzasoy's research, the primary space where transformation actualizes is the boundary between Cosmos and Chaos [12, p. 156].

At this threshold, the shaman adopts zoomorphic (animal), ornitomorphic (bird), or inanimate forms depending on situational demands. The notes of the 17th-century Russian traveler A. Brand regarding Tungus shamans confirm the semantic connection between the concept of "shaman" and that of "sorcerer" or "priest" [14, p. 220].

The term "shaman", of Tungusic origin, is primarily expressed by the lexical unit "qam" (kam, ham, oyun) in Turkic areas. In the Central Asian shamanic tradition, individuals



holding this status are also known by various regional names, such as "bakhshi", "falchi", or "perihan." Mircea Eliade characterizes the shaman's status through a complex array of activities: he is simultaneously a sorcerer with magical powers, a healer performing medicinal functions, and a mystic and bard who establishes direct contact with the spirit world. Professor Füzuli Bayat structures the semantic framework of the "qamlik" ritual upon the "client – Shaman – spirit" triad, highlighting the shaman's mediatory function [4, p. 222].

Shamanic elements have undergone evolutionary transformations over time, finding a place within folklore, particularly in magic tales (wonder tales). The mythical duties of the shaman – such as healing, communicating with spirits, and clairvoyance – have been transferred to folk heroes and the dervish character. The stages of "illness", "suffering" and the "acquisition of extraordinary knowledge upon awakening" inherent in the process of becoming a shaman share a typological similarity with the initiation period of the fairy-tale hero.

In Azerbaijani folklore, specifically within the fairy-tale genre, the dervish character possesses a distinct mystic-functional status. We contend that the dervish figure is genealogically a transformative derivative of the shaman. From this perspective, studying the instances of shape-shifting found in texts within the framework of the "shaman/dervish transformation" concept yields more fundamental scientific results.

In Azerbaijani folktales, these metamorphoses are typically realized through verbal (prayer, incantation, spell) or ritualized actions performed by dervishes, sorcerers, mythological beings (e.g., *Kupegiren gari* – the "pot-riding crone" ("The Witch in the Mortar")), or the heroes themselves. The transformations under study can be classified according to their catalytic factors as follows:

- Transformations resulting from verbal magic (the chanting of spells and incantations);
- Transformations conditioned by the violation of sacred prohibitions (taboos);
- Transformations arising from the acquisition of esoteric knowledge (secrets).

Metamorphosis in Azerbaijani tales serves two primary functions depending on the protagonist's intent:

1. Altruistic (Benevolent) Transformations: Aimed at rescuing the hero from a difficult situation or defeating an enemy.
2. Malevolent (Harmful) Transformations: Performed to harm individuals or render them passive (e.g., petrification/turning into stone).

Within this context, the concept of "tilsim" (talismanic spell) functions as a magical energy possessing destructive power. However, the revelation of the "secret" behind the *tilsim* results in the loss of its ontological potency. The ability of folktale heroes to assume multiple animal guises is a direct vestige of shamanistic capability. These transformations are temporary in nature; although the hero adopts various biological or inanimate forms (animal, plant, or object), their internal essence (existence) remains constant, eventually returning to its original anthropological form.

In the context of subject-object relations, the formulas of shaman/dervish transformation can be systematized into three primary groups:

1. Transition from anthropomorphic to zoomorphic or other forms (The transformation of a human into an animal or an object);
2. Transition from zoomorphic to anthropomorphic forms (The transformation of an animal into a human);



3. Internal anthropomorphic shape-shifting (A human assuming the guise of another human).

Particularly in the motif of an animal transforming into a human, the function of the "guardian spirit" (tutelary spirit) comes to the fore, preserving the traces of the shamanic belief system. On the other hand, a human assuming the identity of another human typically serves the purpose of strategic disguise or deceiving an opponent.

Textual Analysis and Case Studies

The conflict between Ibrahim and the Dervish in the folktale *"Yeddi dagh almasy"* (The Seven Mountain Apples) serves as a classic example of a shamanistic "transformation duel." The conflict between Ibrahim and the Dervish in the folktale *"Yeddi dagh almasy"* is a vivid local rendition of the international plot ATU 325 (The Magician and His Pupil). This narrative structure showcases a classic shamanic transformation duel, where the master and apprentice compete through successive zoomorphic shifts.

The protagonist Ibrahim's successive transitions into a bird, a crane, a mouse, a lion, a gazelle, a watermelon, and millet – countered by the rival Dervish in the guise of a hen – must be evaluated as a competitive display of magical potency. Ibrahim's eventual victory by transforming into a fox to defeat the Dervish proves that metamorphosis functions as a sophisticated combat tactic. In this narrative, Ibrahim acts as a shaman/dervish figure, undergoing multiple shifts in form:

"Ibrahim recited the spell and became a bird, flapping his wings towards the sky..."; "Ibrahim descended to the water... On the third attempt, he became a crane, stretching his beak to retrieve the rag..."; "He swiftly reached the ground and became a mouse, entering a hole..."; "Ibrahim realized he was cornered; he became smoke, exited the hole, and turned into a lion..."; "Leaving the lion's guise, Ibrahim became a gazelle..."; "Seeing he would be caught, he recited a spell and became a watermelon in the garden..."; "Observing the old Dervish cutting all the melons, Ibrahim quickly became a bird and ascended..."; "Ibrahim became a handful of millet scattered across the field, hiding one grain beneath a bush..."; "The Dervish became a hen with chicks and began to peck the grain. Ibrahim recited a spell, became a fox, emerged from under the bush, seized the Dervish by the throat, and strangled him" [3, Vol.2, 58].

Similarly, in the tale *"Simany naghly"* (The Tale of Siman), a gazelle captured by the protagonist in the forest transforms into an old woman (*qary*). The narrative emphasizes her polymorphic abilities: *"Do you see this wild rooster? This is an old woman who can enter the guise of any animal..."* [3, Vol.2, 34]. The polymorphic capabilities of the *qary* in this tale (manifesting as a gazelle, an old woman, and a rooster) represent distinct elements of an archaic shamanic substratum.

In Azerbaijani folktales, the most prevalent form of shaman/dervish transformation manifests in the motif of assuming a bird's guise (aviamorphism). The roots of this motif are embedded in the relationship between soul and body within the ancient Turkic belief system. Celal Beydili notes that according to ancient Turkic tenets, when the *"qut"* (soul/vital force) leaves the body, it enters the form of a bird and perches on the branches of the World Tree [5, p. 233]. The expression of the act of death as "flying away" (*usha barmys*) in ancient Turkic monuments proves that the soul was essentially conceived in the guise of a bird.

During cosmological journeys – particularly to communicate with celestial deities – shamans entered the guise of a bird at a ritual level. For this reason, shamanic attributes (clothing, feathers, masks) functionally symbolize the bird. As emphasized in the research of Kadriye Türkan, the goo-



se, crow, owl, and swan are the metamorphic figures most frequently utilized by shamans [14, p. 143].

Throughout the process of historical-cultural development, shamanistic transformations gradually evolved into Sufi-Dervish terminology and folkloric texts. According to the research of Ba-haeddin Ögel, the transformation of Ahmed Yasawi into a crane, Haji Bektash Veli into a pigeon, and Abdal Musa into a *keyik* (deer) represents a synthesis of this archaic substratum with Islamic mysticism [11, p. 29].

In the Azerbaijani folktale genre, the motif of assuming a bird's guise arises from the hero's need to overcome spatial barriers (the ability to fly) and to acquire esoteric knowledge. Phraseological units in the Azerbaijani language, such as "*qushu konmak*" (the perching of one's bird), serve as linguo-mythological vestiges of the soul's transition from an anthropological form to a zoomorphic one.

In the epic "The Book of Dede Korkut": In the tale of *Deli Domrul*, the Angel of Death (Azrael) transforming into a pigeon to distance himself from the scene [10, p. 242] shares a typological similarity with the shape-shifting rituals performed by shamans to rescue a diseased soul.

In the folktale "Yeddi dagh almasy" (The Seven Mountain Apples): The hero Ibrahim's transformation into a bird to overcome obstacles reflects a shamanistic journey on an archetypal plane and a "magical transformation" based on the dervishes' talismanic knowledge on a structural plane [3, Vol.2, 59].

In the tales "Khayin vezir" (The Treacherous Vizier) and "Nushaperi khanimyn naghyly" (The Tale of Lady Nushaperi): In these texts, transformation is presented primarily as *tilsim* (talismanic spell) and the knowledge of a *rammal* (soothsayer), representing a folklorized variant of the dervish figure [9, p. 146; 2, p. 22].

Chthonic and Totemic Metamorphoses: Guises of the Serpent, Gazelle, Rabbit, Fox, and Horse

In shaman-dervish transformations, animal symbols represent not only a change in physical appearance but also the appropriation of the mythological and functional energy inherent to that specific creature.

The Serpent Guise: Manifestation of Chthonic Power

In mythology, the serpent is the primary symbol of the underworld (the chthonic realm) and serves as one of the auxiliary spirits that guide the shaman during esoteric journeys. In Azerbaijani folklore, this form is actively utilized for both benevolent and malevolent purposes:

- Negative Function: In the tale of "*Melik Memmed and Melik Ahmed*," the motif of a father assuming the guise of a serpent to harm his own son demonstrates the dangerous aspect of transformation [3, Vol.1, 60].

- Positive and Protective Function: In the legend of "*The Enchanted Girl*," the motif of entering a serpent's guise to defeat a rival is based on the shaman's magical struggle executed through a protective spirit [3, Vol.3, 373]. Furthermore, in the tale of "*Nushaperi khanim*," the crone's infiltration into secret locations while in the form of a serpent stems from shaman-like behavior rooted in the serpent's attributes of permeability and secrecy [2, p. 11].

The Gazelle and Deer Guise: The Totemic Guardian Spirits

In Azerbaijani folklore, the figures of the gazelle and the deer represent not only grace and innocence but also function as totem-ancestors and guardian spirits. In shamanic mythology, the ma-



nifestation of the guardian spirit known as "*ine kal*" in the form of a deer confirms the sacred essence of this imagery [13, p. 23].

- Socio-Biological Function: The motif of women transforming into deer to nourish the abandoned with their milk is, in fact, a vestige of the ancient belief that totems protect their descendants. The permanence of the transformation (fleeing into the forest as a deer) resulting from the disclosure of a secret serves as a mechanism of punishment or a "return to origins" within this ancient belief system.

- Narrative Example: "*One night, a man saw his wife leave the house. He followed her and observed a herd of deer standing on a hill; his wife was milking them. Upon seeing the man, the woman turned into a deer and joined the herd. Later, when the man passed away and was buried in a domed tomb, the villagers reported seeing a deer approach the tomb. The deer, showing no fear of anyone, lay by the grave and wept. Eventually, the deer died there, and the relatives buried the deer in the same spot*" [2, p. 64].

The Rabbit Guise: The Guide and Auxiliary Spirit

The rabbit fulfills the function of a guide (*vol-gösterme*) during the journey to the spirit world in shamanic cosmogony. In the rituals of the Siberian Turks, the shaman's encounter with a rabbit while ascending to the seventh layer of the sky and utilizing its guidance points to the archaic roots of this figure [7, p. 301].

The *Rammal* (Soothsayer) and Dervish Connection: In the tale of "*Lal gyzyn naghyly*" (The Tale of the Mute Girl), the *rammal*'s appearance in the guise of a rabbit proves that this typology is directly linked to the shaman-dervish lineage. The figure of the *rammal* (talisman-master) carries the shaman's guiding spirit onto the folkloric plane through the "rabbit guise."

Narrative Example: In "*Lal gyzyn naghyly*," the girl tells the hero: "*The rabbit you encountered in the forest is my father's soothsayer. He helped me and brought me here. This palace also belongs to him. He always travels in the guise of a rabbit, coming to the aid of those in difficult situations*" [2, p. 146].

Strategic Function: The rabbit character in "*Simanyyn naghyly*" performs the same guiding function, leading the hero to his destination. This is a clear example of shamanic auxiliary spirits in folkloric texts transforming into dervish/*rammal* attributes [2, p. 39].

The Fox Guise: Symbol of Cunning and Transformation

In Azerbaijani folktales, the motif of transforming into a fox is directly linked to shamanistic transformations through its archaic roots. In shamanic mythology, beyond symbolizing cunning, the fox is an auxiliary spirit possessing the ability to cross difficult boundaries and acquire clandestine information.

The Sorceress and Metamorphosis: The fox character encountered in the tale "*Dostlughun sirri*" (The Secret of Friendship) is, in reality, the transformed guise of a sorceress [1, p. 239]. Here, the fox guise functions as an obstacle or a trial on the hero's journey. The verbal magic (spells/talismanic incantations) underlying such transformations proves that these characters belong to the dervish-sorcerer typology, and that the tradition of shamanistic shape-shifting has been preserved within the narrative structure of the folktale.

The Horse Guise: Sacred and Cosmological Medium

In shamanic cosmogony, the horse is regarded as one of the most vital sacred animals. It serves as both the primary meditative and physical vehicle during the shaman's journey to the "other



world" (the spirit realm). In Azerbaijani folktales, the horse functions as both a means of transport and a subject of transformation, reflecting a vestige of this ancient belief:

- Transmission and Shape-shifting: In these narratives, the hero's act of wrapping himself in a horse's hide to cross into the underworld, or the horse itself assuming supernatural forms (three-legged, winged, or fire-breathing), strengthens its role as a mediator between the chthonic and celestial realms.

- Transformation as a Means of Conflict: In the tale of "*Agh qush*" (The White Bird), the motif of the girl's father transforming into a blizzard and her uncle into a saddled horse [2, p. 110]. echoes the magical duels between shamans, where two practitioners battle in various guises. In this context, the horse guise is a strategic form selected either to deceive the opponent or to physically destroy the hero. "The motifs of aviamorphism found in tales like "*Agh qush*" align with the ATU 400 (The Quest for the Lost Wife) cycle, specifically involving the "Swan Maiden" motif. The exceptional functionality of the horse in texts such as "*Uchbygh Kosa*" (The Three-Mustached Kosa), "*Koroghlu*," and "*Uch gardash*" (The Three Brothers) makes it an inseparable part of the shaman/dervish transformation system.

CONCLUSION

The study of shaman/dervish transformations within Azerbaijani folktales demonstrates that the dervish character is not merely a religious-mystical figure but also the structural successor to archaic shamanic functions. Based on this research, the following scientific conclusions have been drawn:

- The dervish figure in these narratives is genealogically intertwined with the shamanic archetype. The shaman's ability to communicate with the spirit world and command the forces of nature has evolved within the narrative space into transformations executed by the dervish through "tilsim" (talismanic spells) and magic.

- Zoomorphic transformations (assuming the guises of birds, serpents, gazelles, horses, rabbits, and foxes) are not coincidental plot devices but are rooted in the mythological semantics of the respective animals. Entering a bird's guise symbolizes the mobility of the soul; the serpent represents a connection to the chthonic (underworld) realm; the gazelle signifies totemic guardianship; and the horse symbolizes cosmological guidance.

- The transformative capabilities of folktale heroes and dervishes result from their possession of esoteric knowledge (verbal magic). Within the plot, these metamorphoses function as mechanisms for testing the hero, defeating adversaries, or uncovering hidden truths (the disclosure of secrets).

- Unlike in legends, transformations in folktales are predominantly temporary. This confirms the principle of the hero maintaining their anthropological essence and returning to human form after a ritual journey – paralleling a shaman's return from an ecstatic voyage.

This research opens new perspectives for studying the syncretism of shamanic and Sufi elements in Turkic oral traditions and suggests that the dervish figure in Azerbaijani folklore serves as a key bridge between archaic rituals and Islamic mysticism.

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AZƏRBAYCAN SEHRLİ NAĞILLARINDA ŞAMAN ARXETİPİ: ÇEVİRLMƏ MOTİVİ

Ə.Ş. Əliyeva

Məqalədə qədim şaman dünyagörüşünün izləri Azərbaycan sehrli nağıllarının struktur və semantik müstəvisində, xüsusilə çevrilmə (cildləyişmə) arxetipi kontekstində tədqiq olunur. Şaman və sehrli nağıllardakı dərviş obrazı, genealoji və funksional baxımdan eyni mifik kökdən qidalanan, iki fərqli dövrün sakral vasitəçiləridir. Arxaik dövrdə şamanın trans halında ruhlar dünyasına səyahət etmək, insanları müalicə etmək, gələcəyi görmək və müxtəlif cildlərə girmək kimi sehrli qabiliyyətləri transformasiyaya uğrayaraq nağıl məkanında “tilsim”, “əfsun” və “gizli elm, sirləri bilmə” kimi sözlərlə əvəz edilmişdir. Hər iki personaj Kosmos və Xaosu adlaya bilən ezoterik gücün daşıyıcılarıdır. Tədqiqatda Vladimir Propp, Mirça Eliade, Arnold van Gennep, Bahaeddin Ögəl, Cəlal Bəydili və Seyfəddin Rzasoyun elmi-nəzəri konsepsiyalarına istinad edilərək, dərviş/rəmmal obrazlarının arxaik şaman-mediatorunun folklorlaşmış törəmələri olduğu fundamental şəkildə əsaslandırılır. Azərbaycan nağıllarında rast gəlinən şaman/dərviş çevrilmələrinin tədqiqi göstərir ki, dərviş personajı təkcə dini-mistik bir fiqur deyil, həm də arxaik şaman funksiyalarının nağıl strukturundakı varisidir. Məqalədə “Yeddi dağ alması”, “Simanın nağılı”, “Məlik Məmməd...”, “Sehrlənmiş qız”, “Nuşapəri xanımın nağılı”, “Lal qızın nağılı” və “Dostluğun sirri” kimi folklor mətnlərinin təhlili əsasında konkret heyvan cildlərinin (quş, ilan, ceyran/maral, dovşan, tülkü və at) daşdığı mifoloji-semantik enerjilər araşdırılır. Müəyyən edilmişdir ki, quş cildinə girmə ruhun hərəkətililiyini (qut anlayışını), ilan xtonik aləmlə əlaqəni, ceyran totemik hamiliyi, dovşan bələdçiliyi, at isə kosmoloji vasitəçiliyi simvolizə edir.



Nağıllardakı dərviş obrazı genealoji cəhətdən şaman arxetipi ilə sıx bağlıdır. Şamanın ruhlar dünyası ilə qurduğu əlaqə və təbiət qüvvələrinə hakimlik qabiliyyəti, nağıl məkanında dərvişin "tilsim" və "sehr" vasitəsilə icra etdiyi transformasiyalara çevrilmişdir.

Açar sözlər: *Azərbaycan nağılları, şamanizm, dərviş, metamorfoza, arxetip, zoomorfizm.*

АРХЕТИП ШАМАНА В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКИХ ВОЛШЕБНЫХ СКАЗКАХ: МОТИВ ТРАНСФОРМАЦИИ

А.Ш. Алиева

В статье исследуются следы древнего шаманского мировоззрения в структурно-семантической плоскости азербайджанских волшебных сказок, в частности, в контексте архетипа трансформации (оборотничества). Образ шамана и персонаж дервиша в волшебных сказках являются сакральными медиаторами двух разных исторических эпох, генеалогически и функционально происходящими из одного мифического корня. В архаический период магические способности шамана - такие как путешествие в мир духов в состоянии транса, исцеление людей, предвидение будущего и принятие различных обличий - претерпели трансформацию, сменившись в повествовательном пространстве сказки такими понятиями, как «талисман», «заклинание» и «тайное знание, ведение тайн». Оба они выступают носителями эзотерической силы, способными пересекать границы между Космосом и Хаосом. Опираясь на научно-теоретические концепции Владимира Проппа, Мирчи Элиаде, Арнольда ван Геннепа, Б. Эгеля, Дж. Бейдили и С. Рзасоя, в исследовании фундаментально обосновывается, что образы дервиша и гадателя (*раммала*) генеалогически представляют собой фольклоризированные дериваты архаичного шамана-медиатора. Изучение шаманско-дервишских перевоплощений, встречающихся в азербайджанских сказках, показывает, что персонаж дервиша - это не просто религиозно-мистическая фигура, но и структурный преемник архаических шаманских функций в сказочном пространстве. На основе анализа таких фольклорных текстов, как «Сказка о семи горных яблоках», «Сказка о Симане», «Мелик-Мамед...», «Заколдованная девушка», «Сказка о Нушапери-ханум», «Сказка о немой девушке» и «Тайна дружбы», исследуются мифологосемантические энергии, заложенные в конкретных животных обличиях (авиаморфизм/птица, змея, джейран/олень, заяц, лиса и лошадь). Установлено, что принятие птичьего обличия символизирует подвижность души (концепт *кут*), змея означает связь с хтоническим миром, джейран - тотемическое покровительство, заяц - функцию проводника, а лошадь - космологическое посредничество. Образ дервиша в сказках генеалогически тесно связан с архетипом шамана. Связь шамана с миром духов и его способность управлять силами природы трансформировались в сказочном пространстве в метаморфозы, осуществляемые дервишем посредством «талисманов» и «колдовства».

Ключевые слова: *азербайджанские сказки, шаманизм, дервиш, метаморfoза, архетип, zoomorfizm.*



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THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY AND MUSEUMS: DIGITALIZATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN MUSEUM ACTIVITIES IN AZERBAIJAN

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Museums, which are part of the creative economy, play an important role in the formation of a knowledge society and a knowledge economy. We examine museums as an integral part of both cultural and cognitive tourism and the integration of science, education and culture. The country's museums must necessarily operate in accordance with the requirements of the time and become an integral part of the creative industry. Museums are not only places where we go for entertainment and cultural leisure, they are also institutions that ensure the improvement of the cultural level, the promotion of cultural and scientific heritage, learning, enlightenment, as well as the improvement of the quality of life and social well-being of the local population. The article examines the experience of some museums, including some museums in Azerbaijan, in the application of digital and artificial intelligence technologies, and analyzes the prospects and threats in this area. The novelty of this study lies in its justification of museums' participation in building a knowledge society and its analysis of the prospects and threats of using digital and artificial intelligence technologies in museum activities. The scientific and practical significance of the study is enhanced by the author's proposed project, "Monitoring Museum Activities in Azerbaijan," since the project's implementation will, among other things, allow for an analysis of the state of digitalization in museum activities.

Keywords: digitalization, artificial intelligence technologies, Azerbaijan, museums, knowledge society.

INTRODUCTION

In our modern era, the concepts of "digitalization" and "artificial intelligence" have entered all spheres of public life, and the current society is called the "digital society". The cultural sphere, including museum activities, is no exception.

Considering museums as an important factor in the formation of a knowledge society, we believe that museums collect, create and popularize not only examples of cultural heritage, but also scientific knowledge. The main objective of the study is to examine the experience of museums of Azerbaijan in the application of digital and artificial intelligence technologies in their activities, as well as to analyze the prospects and threats in this area.

One of the priority tasks facing us is the development of a knowledge society, a knowledge economy and its component, a creative economy, in Azerbaijan. The development of museums in the republic, the widespread use of modern technologies in the work of domestic museums, the implementation by museums of projects aimed at educating the population, providing cultural leisure and, at the same time, attracting additional financial resources – all these tasks are of particular relevance. Along with the collection, storage, study and demonstration of museum objects, one of the areas of activity of museums is educational activities. In a period of constantly growing information flow, society needs comprehensive and accessible information. Museums are indispensable sources of such information. At this stage, it is necessary to conduct monitoring in order to find out the cur-



rent state of affairs in this area, and to develop a unified concept for determining the prospects for the development of museums.

Many museums around the world are using digital and artificial intelligence technologies extensively. Digitization creates new opportunities to attract visitors to museums, improve public relations, better preserve and pass on cultural and scientific heritage to future generations through digital archives, and generally increase the efficiency of museum work. For example, expanding public relations (PR) activities is one of the demands of today. In our dynamic and rapidly changing era, the activities of museums and any organization in general seem impossible without the necessary information. Through highly organized communication, the museum can get as close to visitors as possible and create various communication methods for them (audio tours, touch panels, information kiosks and centers, virtual tours, mobile applications, etc.). Using various communication technologies, the museum promotes its products and services and attracts visitors to the museum.

Experts note that digitalization and new technologies are fundamentally changing modern museum work, helping to overcome the limitations of physical space, expand the museum audience, and create new forms of contact with cultural heritage. Currently, digitalization opens up vast opportunities for presenting virtual museums and exhibitions, online catalogs and databases, mobile applications, social networks and online platforms, 3D models of museum objects with digital speeds, and other such museum products and services. People have the opportunity to get acquainted with the expositions without coming to the museum. Online catalogs and digital databases make museum collections accessible, allowing people to get detailed information about museum objects, view them, and learn about historical facts, thereby creating favorable conditions for more flexible research and educational processes. Mobile applications, on the other hand, turn smartphones into personal guides, providing audio guides, interactive maps, and additional information about exhibits.

In addition, in recent years, museums have been engaging with their audiences through social media, hosting online events, creating virtual communities, and attracting new visitors. 3D modeling allows for the creation of accurate replicas of artifacts, which are used in teaching, restoration, and even for creating replicas that people with disabilities can touch. Artificial intelligence is being applied in museums to analyze large amounts of data, automate routine tasks, generate personalized recommendations, and even restore damaged artworks. Automating routine tasks increases the efficiency of museum work, as museum staff have more time to do more creative work [21, p. 120].

Artificial intelligence is used in museum activities in the following ways:

- discovery of museum collections through computer vision technology;
- natural language processing for analyzing visitor feedback;
- application of predictive analytics to predict visitor numbers, spending, exhibition titles, and event schedules;
- infrastructure management: lighting, heating and security systems to reduce energy consumption and ensure safety;
- analysis of artworks and collections to determine authenticity and current condition;
- automation of routine tasks such as ticket management and event planning;
- analysis of visitor statistics and activity on social networks, evaluation of marketing campaigns for optimization of future strategies;
- creation of virtual tours of museums and galleries, preparation of training courses within the framework of exhibitions and events, including through chatbots;
- creation of visual content for promotion, PR-campaigns and other projects [20, p. 1517-1518].



Regarding the application of digital and artificial intelligence technologies in museums, in her article titled “Integrating AI in Museums. A New Phase in the Museum’s Transformation,” Yael Eylat Van Essen (Israel), a scholar who conducts research in the fields of museology, digital culture, art, the interaction of science and technology, design, and photo theory, writes that the integration of artificial intelligence into museums is in its initial stage. Digital transformation is bringing to museums a diverse set of experts, including those specializing in user experience (UX) and search engine optimization (SEO), innovation, content strategies, big data analytics, community management, machine learning (ML), natural language processing, and more, to help them fulfill new mission of museums. However, many museums still struggle to implement digital projects due to a lack of staff knowledge and skills in this area [15, p. 233-234].

The above is typical for most museums in Azerbaijan: small museums, especially those located in the regions, almost never use modern technologies due to the lack of necessary material resources and the lack of specialized staff in this field.

In the article, the scientist also touches on another important point: museums that digitize their collections provide documentation on the ownership of works of art and artifacts, thus determining the history and copyright of these objects. Here, all information is placed, from the creation of a cultural heritage specimen to its current location, and this is an important aspect for the preservation and understanding of cultural heritage. Yael Eylat Van Essen emphasizes that the availability of documentation, especially in the context of contemporary restitution and decolonization efforts, allows museums to fulfill their public functions in accordance with the principles of transparency, accountability, and inclusion. In this process, documentation of the belonging of objects can lead to the discovery of new information about the complex relationship between museums and historical injustice [15, p. 237].

Considering that samples of Azerbaijan's cultural heritage are kept in other countries, the application of artificial intelligence technologies in this area will facilitate the collection of information about samples that were once removed from the country.

One of the successful examples of the application of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in museums around the world in recent years is Refik Anadol's Living Architecture: Gehry project, which presented at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao in 2025. The audiovisual installation, prepared by Refik Anadol Studio, reinterprets Frank Gehry's architectural legacy through artificial intelligence and generative art. Large Architecture Model, LAM, uses leading-edge technologies to transform Gehry's architectural style into ever-changing landscapes of dynamic form, color, and movement. The visual solutions are complemented by a soundscape created by Kerim Karaoğlu, which incorporates sound and recordings of museum materials through artificial intelligence [7].

Another interesting project was implemented at the Palace of Versailles in Paris: using a mobile application or by scanning a QR code, visitors gain access to an interface that allows them to have a verbal dialogue with the statues, and thus the statues become the main characters of the tour, sharing their stories with people during the dialogue. During the exchange of information, a better understanding of the heritage of Versailles occurs, and new knowledge is gained through anecdotes, historical facts and often unknown details.

This new AI tool adapts to the audience, allowing visitors to move at their own pace, selecting sculptures and asking them as many questions as they want. Young or old, a specialist in the field or simply curious – everyone can participate in discussions via phone according to their interests and desires [4].

Here we can also talk about an interesting project. The aim of the “RePAIR” (Reconstructing the Past: Artificial Intelligence and Robotics meet Cultural Heritage) project, funded by the European Union’s “Horizon 2020” research and innovation program, is to develop technology that per-



forms the physical restoration of damaged works of art, which is considered one of the most complex and difficult stages of archaeological research. By creating and integrating new technologies in the fields of robotics, computer vision and artificial intelligence, it is possible to develop an intelligent robotic system for faster processing, comparison and physical restoration of large fragmented works.

The system is planned to be tested in Pompeii, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The project aims to restore two world-famous frescoes that were broken into thousands of fragments [12].

Among the projects demonstrating the research potential of artificial intelligence, the Vesuvius Challenge, a 2023 experiment to decipher the texts of ancient scrolls from Herculaneum, deserves special attention. When the eruption of Mount Vesuvius destroyed the city in 79 CE, it buried a library of hundreds of scrolls from one of the ancient villas (the “Villa of the Papyri”) under ash and pumice. The carbonized scrolls seemed hopeless to read, but nearly 2,000 years later, scientists were able to use artificial intelligence to reconstruct and read the texts, including masterpieces of ancient poetry, prose, and philosophical treatises that had been thought lost forever.

Another equally important project is the reconstruction of 16th-century frescoes at the Ferapontov Monastery (Vologda Oblast), where artificial intelligence helped recreate the lost (2024). Major institutions such as the Space Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow State University of Geodesy and Cartography, the National Research Center "Kurchatov Institute," and GosNIIR participated in the project. Scientists used the Stable Diffusion neural network to digitally restore the frescoes based on multispectral imaging and analogs. It is important to note that similar technologies are also used in China (the Dunhuang cave frescoes) and India (the Ajanta frescoes) [19, p. 480-481].

This is precisely the ethical aspect of using artificial intelligence in scientific research and creative activities: the researcher simply solves routine problems, tests certain theories, performs calculations, etc. using digital tools. In our opinion, artificial intelligence is not only a great opportunity, but also a very big threat! It is one thing to use leading technologies, various tools, and translation programs, but it is quite another to entrust the work entirely to artificial intelligence and, in fact, to release a product created on the basis of materials “stolen” from here and there under one’s own name. Currently, such unpleasant situations are widespread in science, journalism, culture, and other fields. Therefore, various tools should be applied to identify scientific works and articles created entirely through artificial intelligence. Otherwise, we will lose real scientists, researchers, and artists. We cannot sacrifice humans to artificial intelligence! This point once again confirms how urgent it is to approach the development of science and technology from a humanistic and ethical perspective.

2026 has been declared the “Year of Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence” in Kazakhstan. Noting that Kazakhstan has further consolidated its position as a leading model of digital transformation in the Eurasian region, Central Asian researcher Abdulhamid Hamid Al-Kba said that the revenues of the Astana Hub, which currently includes about 2,000 technology companies, will exceed 800 billion tenge (more than \$1.5 billion) in 2025, and the export of IT services will be close to \$1 billion. Stressing that despite all these global processes, Kazakhstan has not forgotten its cultural roots, Al-Kba added that the legacy of the poet and philosopher Abai Kunanbaiuly remains an ethical guide, and that this year this heritage has merged with technology in Turkestan, and that “smart” tourism is developing through virtual tours, augmented reality, and tourist flow management through artificial intelligence [6].

Digital and artificial intelligence technologies are also widely used in museums in Kazakhstan. For example, according to Kairat Blelov, a research fellow at the Karaganda Regional Museum of Fine Arts, the collection, which includes about 13,000 paintings and sculptures, graphics, and de-



corative and applied arts, has been completely digitized. As part of the exhibition “Ethics of the Great Steppe,” which opened last year, a statue of the famous Kazakh singer Madi Bapul and works by several artists were brought to life using neural networks [18].

Thus, digitalization and artificial intelligence are rapidly entering the activities of museums around the world. When it comes to our museums, it should be noted that multimedia resources (touch screens, various 3D models, video and audio devices, etc.) increase the interactivity and dynamism of museums, making these spaces more attractive to the population, especially the younger generation and children.

Emphasizing that no technique or the most perfect system can replace the solemnity of the museum atmosphere and the aura of a museum, Naila Aliyeva, a doctor of philosophy in culturology, adds, “but with all this, it is clear that: a) the future development of museums is closely linked to the development of the Internet system; b) the Internet opens up new opportunities for solving many urgent problems of museum work; c) with the emergence of computer technology that allows for the installation of virtual realities and the development of new electronic communications, museums are faced with the problem of improving the system of signs that form the basis of their communication” [5, p. 13]. The researcher also notes that the first museum in our republic to have a virtual version is the ANAS Huseyn Javid House-Museum (currently operating under the Ministry of Culture).

Modern technological tools are used in the country's major museums. This is reflected in the organization of the exposition, the preservation of the collection, the computerization of the collection (mainly through the KAMIS-complex automated museum information system program), and in various forms of service to visitors. For example, the National Museum of Azerbaijan literature named after Nizami Ganjavi has prepared video tours covering various topics in 5 languages (Azerbaijani, English, Russian, Persian, and Arabic) and posted them on its official website and YouTube channel. The “Media” section of the museum’s official website has sections called “Virtual Museum,” “Video Gallery,” and “Photo Gallery,” but no material has been posted in these sections, and the materials presented in the “Video Gallery” section have not been updated since early 2020 [9].

The lectures and videos presented in the “Online Lectures” section of the official website of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan have a direct educational function. In addition, the “Collections and Germs” section of the site presents photographs of a number of museum items and information about them [10]. However, the digitization of museum funds is one of the issues on the agenda. Such initiatives require financial resources. Of course, more can be done through certain grand projects or with the help of sponsors.

The official website of the National Carpet Museum provides information and relevant photos about the exposition located on the 3rd floor of the museum, as well as the jewelry fund, a virtual tour of the museum, a photo and video gallery, and announcements of organized exhibitions [1]. It should be noted that over the past six months, the official website of the museum has been working intermittently, which creates problems for local and foreign tourists, as well as researchers.

One of the modern trends in museum activities is visiting museums using audio guides without resorting to guides. In 2019, in order to organize excursions that meet modern requirements, the Ministry of Culture purchased equipment for audio guides in various languages from the French company ORPHEO Group for the Azerbaijan National Art Museum, the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum and the Gobustan State Historical and Artistic Reserve. Currently, it is possible to tour the halls of these places accompanied by audio guides. In the Carpet Museum, visitors can also tour the museum with a tablet.

The official website of the State Museum of Musical Culture of Azerbaijan provides comprehensive information about the funds and exposition, rare pearls of the museum collection (musical



instruments, sheet music, video collection), and relevant photo and video materials. The “Video Guide” section of the website highlights events held in the museum itself and in its 4 branches (Permanent Exhibition of Folk Musical Instruments, Niyazi's Apartment-Museum, Vagif Mustafazadeh's House-Museum and Gara Garayev's House-Museum) and presents various plots [13].

In addition, announcements of upcoming exhibitions and events, interesting information, educational videos, and materials are published on the websites of major museums, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok pages, and YouTube channels.

The museum that uses digital and artificial intelligence technologies the most widely is the Azerbaijan National Museum of Art. According to the director of the museum, PhD on Art Study Shirin Malikova, in recent years, the National Museum of Art has been implementing all exhibition projects using digital content and artificial intelligence capabilities, as well as animation and video projection. These tools both complement the curatorial idea of the exhibition and, in some cases, act as an artistic value as a digital work of art. The museum implements all these projects on its own, that is, the museum products are the fruit of the work of the Technology and Innovations Department.

The capabilities of artificial intelligence were first used at the exhibition “Western Azerbaijan in Our Cultural Memory,” which opened in December 2023. The exhibition presented, along with works of fine and decorative-applied art stored in three museums of the country, the magnificent interiors of the Sardar Palace in Irevan, which was razed to the ground in 1914, through artificial intelligence. When the palace was destroyed, some of the works and interiors that adorned it were taken to Georgia and are currently preserved in the Georgian State Museum of Art. The projection of photographs preserved in the archives of this museum is the first example of the use of digital technologies for the restoration of an architectural space in the history of museum work in Azerbaijan.

As part of the exhibition “Vajiha Samadova 100: Pages of an Artist's Life,” which opened in June 2024, portraits and landscapes were animated for the first time using artificial intelligence software, and the painting “On the Kura Bank” was displayed using the principle of animation. On a touch screen placed next to the animation created by the museum's artist Sevil Karimova, visitors could familiarize themselves with the artistic analysis of this work and photos of the sketches.

According to the concept of the exhibition “Sattar Bahlulzadeh – the wonderful tale of nature”, which opened in November of that year, the use of multimedia resources was also envisaged. For example, the world-famous artist's famous painting “Gulistan” was demonstrated in the form of a presentation-animation, and the artist's albums were presented in electronic format via a touch screen. In addition, the exhibition also included fragments of a documentary film about Sattar Bahlulzadeh.

The exhibition “Hello, Nowruz!” brings to life the elements of Nowruz: Fire, Wind, Water, and Earth, through photo and video projections and sound effects.

QR codes are being used in the permanent exhibition of the National Museum of Art. Through this innovation, visitors can access the electronic catalog of exhibits and get detailed information about them. The QR code also helps to keep statistics on the most popular works, which works and artists people are interested in, which has an impact on the preparation of future exhibition and lecture plans.

Sharing her thoughts on the role of artificial intelligence in the development of museums, Shirin Malikova said that “the fact that museum collections are accessible to everyone allows everyone to do whatever they want with works of art. This trend is still new, it is difficult to say anything at the initial stage. Today, we only observe that the works preserved in our collections are being widely used on social networks, “going out into the public.” The positive side of this is that with this method we can at least increase our knowledge in this field by involving the younger generations.



And it is likely that some of them will want to see the work they saw on social media in person and will visit the museum. Therefore, the popularization of collections through artificial intelligence programs is undoubtedly possible" [17, p. 14].

Various screens and equipment have been installed at the "Musical Instruments: Unity and Diversity" exhibition organized at the Heydar Aliyev Center, in our museums opened after restoration in Shusha, and in a number of other places. However, most museums in the country have still been left out of the digitalization process.

On November 8, 2025, on the 5th anniversary of the historic Victory in the 44-day Patriotic War, the Victory Museum was opened in Baku. The 8 exhibition halls titled "Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur. The Story of Centuries", "The Armenian-Azerbaijani Conflict. A Glimpse into History", "Patriotic War of 44 Days. The "Iron Fist" Operation", "Glorious Victory. The Liberation of Shusha", "The Heroes Walk", "Karabakh is Azerbaijan!", "The Restoration of State Sovereignty. 20.09.2023" and "Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur. Revival" used photo and video materials, interactive demonstrations, and exhibits specially prepared for the museum, models, LED monitors, and materials prepared using artificial intelligence. The museum also has an Auditorium hall for organizing seminars and conferences, various public events, a cafe and a library where books and research materials on the history and cultural heritage of Azerbaijan, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, the restoration and development of Karabakh are presented. In the future, it is planned to place the materials collected about each of our martyrs, as well as documentary films about the heroes of the Patriotic War, in the museum's database [11].

Despite its new establishment, the museum's official website has already been launched, where audio guides placed in each hall provide users with relevant information in Azerbaijani and English. A QR code has also been placed on the website to view the virtual map of the museum [16]. Of course, work on the site continues.

In recent years, the country's major museums have expanded their virtual activities in line with the realities created by the pandemic period. The preparation of virtual exhibitions and tours, the activity of pages on various social networks play an important role in attracting both local and foreign tourists to museums, which is one of the factors that increases the tourism potential of museums. However, most of our museums are poorly promoted in the international virtual space. The official websites of the relatively small museums of the republic, especially those located in the regions, are of a low standard, activity of museums on various social networks is unsatisfactory, and many museums do not have websites at all.

In our opinion, a single electronic database of the country's museums should be created to reveal the current situation in this area. If information about the addresses of museums, buildings, collections, events, etc., is placed here, it will make these places more accessible to the general public and will make a significant contribution to the process of disseminating relevant knowledge. The project "Monitoring of museum activities in Azerbaijan" that we propose can also be used to solve this issue [2, p. 13; 3, p. 60-64].

Modern museums act as large platforms that ensure the preservation, dissemination, development, exchange of scientific and cultural heritage, the preservation and creation of scientific knowledge, and the expansion of intercultural dialogue. Museums promote their activities in the virtual space through Google, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and other large digital platforms. Currently, in addition to websites, museums must have activity on social networks, because nowadays people get information about this or that place through websites and social networks and decide to visit them. When examining the current state of museums' activities on Internet platforms during monitoring, the following table can be compiled by entering individual links for each museum (Table).



Table

Activities of museums on Internet platforms

№	Museum	Official website	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube	Wikipedia	TikTok
1.	National Museum of History of Azerbaijan	http://azhistorymuseum.gov.az/	https://www.facebook.com/azhistorymuseum/?locale=az_AZ	https://www.instagram.com/nmuseumofhistoryofazerbaijan/	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4efJGvWGglbXlRASgdyHA	https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milli_Az%C9%99rbaycan_Tarixi_Muzeyi	https://www.tiktok.com/discover/milli-az%C9%99rbaycan-tarix-muzeyi
2.	Azerbaijan National Museum of Art	https://nationalartmuseum.az/	https://www.facebook.com/nationalartmuseum.az/	https://www.instagram.com/nationalartmuseum.az/	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCiZME4KIyKrAngawyhqDQ/featured	https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/Az%C9%99rbaycan_Milli_%C4%B0nc%C9%99s%C9%99n%C9%99t_Muzeyi	https://www.tiktok.com/discover/milli-inc%C9%99s%C9%99n%C9%99t-muzeyi
3.	Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum	www.azcarpetmuseum.az Currently not working (10.06.2026)	https://www.facebook.com/AzerbaijanMilliXalcaMuzeyi/	https://www.instagram.com/azerbaijannationalcarpetmuseum/?hl=ru	https://www.youtube.com/@AzerbaijanNationalCarpetMuseum	https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/Az%C9%99rbaycan_Milli_Xal%C3%A7a_Muzeyi	https://www.tiktok.com/@nationalcarpetmuseum
4.	Zaqatala Museum of History and Local Lore	Not available	https://www.facebook.com/p/Zaqatala-Tarix-Diyar%C5%9F%C3%BCnasl%C4%B1q-muzeyi-100067626376180/	Not available	Not available	https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaqatala_Tarix-Diyar%C5%9F%C3%BCnasl%C4%B1q_Muzeyi	Not available

Using this table as an example, we can analyze the relevant data for all museums in the republic. For deeper and more extensive analysis, links to pages in other languages should also be noted. Then, the level of updating of the information posted on these pages should be analyzed, because there are pages that are not updated for months or years. Activity on other platforms can also be examined. Based on the table we propose, the current situation in this area will be clearly revealed.

CONCLUSION

Thus, professional and proper use of digital and artificial intelligence technologies increases the efficiency of every field, including museum activities. However, we should also note that the widespread application of artificial intelligence technologies poses information security and ethical problems for museums. The solution of these issues must be regulated from a legal perspective.

Therefore, while noting that museums can effectively and ethically use artificial intelligence to preserve cultural heritage and ensure its transmission from generation to generation, as well as to enrich the visitor experience, Turkish researchers emphasize that “artificial intelligence should be implemented as a supporting tool without ignoring ethical values; it should be designed inclusively to eliminate accessibility barriers; employees should be integrated into the use of artificial intelligence to avoid employment problems for museum employees; Data approval details should have an important place in the accurate representation of cultural heritage; social trust should be increased



through public awareness activities; universities and technology companies should work together to prepare society for this and contribute to the cultural heritage; the literature should be enriched not only with qualitative but also quantitative and experimental studies” [14].

When discussing the application of artificial intelligence in interactive museum exhibitions and visitor experiences, Chinese creative and visual design experts point out that museums should focus on improving attractive quality elements such as personalized experiences, instant feedback, and interactive technologies in their exhibition designs. These elements significantly enhance visitor satisfaction and engagement. To create the most immersive environment, advanced interactive technologies such as virtual reality and surround sound should be actively implemented.

To further enhance visitor learning and cultural literacy, museums should combine expert commentary with multilingual support. Providing multimedia audiovisual materials can enrich the presentation of exhibits and engage visitors from diverse backgrounds. Museums should continually optimize the content and format of exhibitions based on visitor feedback to maintain their relevance and appeal. Innovative exhibition design methods should be employed, including elements such as interactive games and role-playing games [8, p. 165].

All this is also relevant for museums of Azerbaijan. To understand the state of affairs in this area in our republic, we have proposed the “Monitoring of Museum Activities in Azerbaijan” project. Along with other questions, by completing the table we have provided, we will be able to clarify the state of digitalization of museum activities in the country. Furthermore, conducting relevant research using specific museums and their practical activities in the field of digital and artificial intelligence technologies is of particular importance for future development.

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BİLİKLƏR CƏMİYYƏTİ VƏ MUZEYLƏR: AZƏRBAYCANDA MUZEYLƏRİN FƏALİYYƏTİNDƏ RƏQƏMSALLAŞMA VƏ SÜNİ İNTELLEKT

N.R. Cəfərova

Kreativ iqtisadiyyatın parçası olan muzeylər biliklər cəmiyyəti və biliklər iqtisadiyyatının formalaşmasında mühüm rol oynayır. Biz muzeyləri həm mədəni-dərketmə turizminin, həm də elm, təhsil və mədəniyyətin inteqrasiyasının tərkib hissəsi kimi araşdırırıq. Ölkə muzeyləri müasir dövrün tələblərinə uyğun fəaliyyət göstərməli və kreativ sənayelərin parçasına çevrilməlidir. Muzeylər yalnız əyləncə və mədəni asudə vaxtı təmin edən məkanlar deyil. Müasir muzeylər mədəni səviyyənin artırılması, mədəni və elmi irsin yayılması və təbliği, tədris, maarifləndirmə, habelə yerli əhəlinin həyat səviyyəsi və sosial rifahının yaxşılaşdırılmasına yönələn tədbirlər həyata keçirir. Məqalədə dünyanın, o cümlədən Azərbaycanın bir sıra muzeyində rəqəmsal və süni intellekt texnologiyalarından istifadə təcrübəsinə nəzər salınır, bu sahədə perspektiv və təhlükələr təhlil edilir. Tədqiqatın yeniliyi biliklər cəmiyyətinin qurulmasında muzeylərin iştirakının əsaslandırılması, muzey fəaliyyətində rəqəmsal və süni intellekt texnologiyalarının istifadəsinin imkanları və təhlükələrinin təhlilindən ibarətdir. Araşdırmanın elmi və praktiki əhəmiyyəti müəllif tərəfindən təklif olunan “Azərbaycanda muzey fəaliyyətinin monitorinqi” layihəsi sayəsində artır. Bu layihənin həyata keçirilməsi digər amillərlə yanaşı, muzey fəaliyyətinin rəqəmsallaşdırılması sahəsinin mövcud vəziyyətini üzə çıxararaq təhlil etməyə imkan yaradacaq.



Açar sözlər: *rəqəmsallaşma, süni intellekt texnologiyaları, Azərbaycan, muzeylər, biliklər cəmiyyəti.*

ОБЩЕСТВО ЗНАНИЙ И МУЗЕИ: ЦИФРОВИЗАЦИЯ И ИСКУССТВЕННЫЙ ИНТЕЛЛЕКТ В МУЗЕЙНОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНЕ

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Являясь частью креативной экономики, музеи играют важную роль в формировании общества знаний и экономики знаний. Мы рассматриваем музеи в качестве неотъемлемой части как культурно-познавательного туризма, так и интеграции науки, образования и культуры. Музеи страны должны функционировать в соответствии с требованиями времени и стать неотъемлемой частью креативных индустрий. Музеи – это не только места, куда мы приходим за развлечениями и культурным досугом, это также учреждения, реализующие мероприятия, направленные на повышение культурного уровня, популяризацию культурного и научного наследия, обучение, просвещение, а также улучшение качества жизни и социального благополучия местного населения. В статье рассматривается опыт ряда музеев, включая некоторые музеи Азербайджана, в применении цифровых технологий и технологий искусственного интеллекта, а также анализируются перспективы и угрозы в этой области. Новизна исследования заключается в обосновании участия музеев в построении общества знаний и анализе возможностей и угроз использования цифровых технологий и технологий искусственного интеллекта в музейной деятельности. Научная и практическая значимость исследования повышается благодаря предложенному автором проекту «Мониторинг музейной деятельности в Азербайджане», поскольку реализация проекта, помимо прочего, позволит выявить и проанализировать состояние сферы цифровизации в музейной деятельности.

Ключевые слова: *цифровизация, технологии искусственного интеллекта, Азербайджан, музеи, общество знаний.*



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THE TRADITION OF THE FUNCTIONAL APPROACH IN LINGUISTICS: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND MAIN FEATURES

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The article discusses the theoretical foundations of the functional approach tradition in linguistics, its historical development, and main features. The article pays special attention to the relationship between linguistic form and communicative function. The study is based on functional linguistic theory. To demonstrate how language is structured and interpreted for communicative purposes, the research draws on discourse-based models, including functional discourse grammar. The analysis shows that functional linguistics considers language as the main means of communication. Within the framework of the functional approach, meaning, context, and speaker intention play a central role in the formation of grammatical structure. The article emphasizes the main features of the functional approach, including context dependence, discourse direction, and the integration of form and function.

The study also traces the historical evolution of functional linguistic theory and shows its development from early European functional traditions to modern discourse-oriented models. The main features that characterize functional linguistics are functionality, discourse orientation, contextual dependence, speech acts, information structure, and form-meaning relationship, which explain the communicative and dynamic nature of language. In functional linguistics, language is studied not as a formal-grammatical system, unlike structuralism, but mainly as a communicative and functional tool.

The results confirm that linguistic forms are systematically conditioned by communicative functions, which are reflected in speech acts and changes in information structure. In general, the article concludes that functional linguistics provides a broad theoretical framework for explaining language as a dynamic, context-adapting system in which form and function are mutually and inseparably interconnected.

Keywords: functional approach, communicative purpose, functionality, context, information structure, discourse, speech act

INTRODUCTION

There are various theoretical approaches in modern linguistics related to the emergence and nature of language. Among them, the functional linguistics approach to explaining the nature of language stands out, since here the nature of language is explained on the basis of the triad of function-meaning-context. Unlike the structuralist view, this theory approaches language not only as a formal-grammatical system, but also as a social tool serving a communicative purpose. Therefore, the structure of language is closely related to the context, the intention of the speaker and the communicative purpose.

After the death of Ferdinand de Saussure, who is considered the father of modern linguistics, a radical view was put forward in linguistics with the work “*Cours de Linguistique Generale*” published in 1916. It was noted that language is not just a list of words and sounds, but a system of structured signs, one of which is different from the other. Thus, F. de Saussure claimed that meaning does not arise from any internal relationship between words and objects, but from contradictions within the language system. At the same time, the author revealed the difference between *Lan-*



gue (abstract system) and *Parole* (individual expression). This idea created the basis for structural analysis in a number of disciplines. In linguistics, this prompted a move from diachronic (historical) analysis to synchronous (systematic) study of language as a functional system at a given moment [25]. Thus, functionalism in linguistics emerged in the Prague School of Linguistics in the 1920s and 1930s under the influence of F. de Saussure's systemic-structuralist approach to language [29, p. 23-28]. Here, functionality in language is discussed as an important element for understanding the structure of language and the processes occurring in it. Given that language is fundamentally a tool, its structure should be analyzed and understood based on the function it performs. These functions include the transmission of meaning and contextual information. Functionalism considers language elements and their functionality to be essential for understanding the structure of language and the processes taking place in it. There are several theories within the framework of the functional approach. These theories are based on the idea that language is essentially a tool. In this regard, it can be considered more appropriate to analyze and understand the structures of language based on the functions they perform. This also includes the task of conveying meaning and contextual information. In functional linguistics, the positions of the speaker and the listener, as well as the communicative needs of the speaker and the language community, are systematically considered.

In this study, many methods were used to investigate the theoretical foundations and main features of the functional approach in linguistics. The theoretical-analytical method was mainly used to investigate and interpret functional linguistics and clarify its conceptual foundations. In addition, the descriptive method is applied to present the main features of functional linguistics, especially its focus on language as a means of communication and the construction of meaning in context. The comparative method is used to compare functional approaches with structural and formal linguistic paradigms and to highlight fundamental differences. In addition, the historical-genetic method is used to trace the development of functional linguistics from early structuralist ideas to later functional theories, thereby revealing its intellectual evolution. This diachronic perspective allows for a clearer understanding of how functional explanations emerged in response to the limitations of formalist models. Textual and discourse analysis are also included to demonstrate how linguistic function is realized in actual language use in a communicative context. The combination of these methods provides a comprehensive examination of both the theoretical principles and empirical manifestations of functional linguistics. Overall, this integrated methodological design provides a balanced foundation for examining the functional paradigm in linguistic theory.

The purpose of the article is to examine the main features of the functional approach tradition in linguistics by tracing the historical development of functional linguistic theory and to provide information about its role in linguistics. At the same time, the purpose of our article is to compare functional linguistics with structuralist and formal linguistic approaches, to analyze the relationship between linguistic form and communicative function in discourse. In order to achieve our goal, the theoretical principles of functional linguistics are investigated, the characteristic features are regulated, and the main features of the existing approach are clarified on the basis of relevant examples. Therefore, the research study examines the conceptual basis and important features of functional linguistics and demonstrates its role in the study of language.

MAIN PART THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The functional linguistics tradition, which explains the essence of language on the basis of the triad of function, meaning, and context, considers the idea that language units are not formed randomly, but to fulfill specific communication needs as its basis. In this way, the study of language is not limited to the description of grammatical rules. According to the functional approach, the study of language includes the description of grammatical rules and how it is used in the process of real communication. Thus, the dynamic and changing nature of language comes to the fore.



In the context of the functional approach in linguistics, various theoretical models have been formed. Examples of these include functional grammar, systemic functional linguistics, referential role grammar, and functional discourse grammar. The functional nature of language is interpreted at different levels in each of these models. For example, in functional discourse grammar, language is analyzed at the discourse level, not at the sentence level, unlike other theoretical models. Therefore, the discourse act is accepted as the basic unit. For example, in systemic functional linguistics, language is considered a social semiotic system. Proponents of this theory emphasize that language is built based on various functional choices.

In functional linguistics, the main features of language are clarified based on its communicative function and social use. Functionalism, in contrast to structuralism, is a theoretical approach to linguistics that focuses on external performance, i.e. how language is used in real contexts, rather than on internal competence. Systemic functional linguistics, a theory centered around the concept of language function, has its roots in J.R. Firth's "*London School*" of the late 1940s and early 1950s [8, p.242-259]. SFL moved away from formal syntax and began to analyze language as a socio-semiotic system driven by communication and purpose. Systemic functional linguistics considers the syntactic structure of language, but its function is considered the main element of language analysis. SFL examines how social context affects language and how the nature of language is limited by the demands of the context. The key concept in SFL is strata. SFL formulates language as a socially oriented, meaning-making system organized into interconnected strata or levels. Within this theory, language is divided into 4 strata:

1) Context-this level is considered the highest and most abstract level compared to the others. The context level includes the field (what is happening), tenor (the relationships between social roles and participants), and mode (whether the communication is oral or written, a dialogue or a monologue, and whether it is online or face-to-face).

2) Semantic strata- Here, information is clearly explained, instructions are given, or questions are asked. After the context is established, the speaker constructs the meaning according to the situation. For example,

A) Context: (Field)-living room

B) Tenor-the attitude of the host towards the guests

C) Mode- informal, oral form of communication

Michael Halliday, in his Systemic Functional Linguistics theory, which he developed starting in 1960, claimed that the structure of language is aligned with its social function. Here, the functions of language as both text creation and expression of social relations are emphasized. In his opinion, language serves three *Metafunctions* (these are considered the main elements that make up the semantic strata):

1. Ideational-represents the world and experience.

2. Interpersonal-performs different social roles

3. Organizes the text-discussion. It is related to the organization of the idea we want to convey. The flow of information is structured in such a way that the sequence of words acquires a whole, coherent textual meaning [17, p. 33-37].

3) Lexical-grammatical strata-In other words, the combination of words and grammar. In the strata, meaning is expressed through vocabulary and grammar.

4) Phonology-Graphology. Finally, in this stratum, language is physically formed. It exists in speech in the form of sounds (phonology), and in the form of written symbols.

Thus, it can be concluded that language moves from social situation to meaning, from there to words and grammar, and finally to words and grammar (move).

Referential-role grammar was created in the 1980s by William A. Folley and Robert D. Van Valin, Jr. The foundation of the theory was laid with the work "*Functional Syntax and Universal Grammar*" published in 1984. This theory characterizes the approach to syntactic and grammatical



description from a functional perspective [23, p. 99]. It was later developed by Robert Van Valin and became an official school of linguistics. The word *referential* is associated with its meaning in the real world. That is, it indicates what the linguistic unit belongs to or refers to. The word *role* in the name of the theory indicates what function the participant in the sentence performs. This theory combines meaning, syntax, and communicative function. Referential role grammar is a theory that explains the nature of a sentence in linguistics, as well as the function of the words in it. This theory emphasizes the role of words in a sentence rather than their form.

This theory is based on the communicative functions of language. Proponents of this theory argue that syntax is closely related to grammar, semantics, and pragmatics [11]. Instead of looking at words alone, linguists look at the roles they play in a sentence. For example, who performs or receives an action, what means are used to express actions in a sentence, etc. In referential role grammar, the meaning of words is transmitted to the grammar, that is, the structure of the sentence we write and speak, without any obstacles or grammatical layers (deep structure, surface structure). In structural linguistics, the meaning of a sentence is emphasized, before being pronounced, through several complex transformations. This is in stark contrast to Noam Chomsky's multi-structured theory of Derivational Grammar [6]. The theory on which referential role grammar is based and directly derived is Charles J. Fillmore's Case Grammar. As in this model, in referential role grammar there is a semantic representation using semantic case roles. In this case, the semantic representation is transformed into a syntactic surface structure without any intermediate syntactic investigation. However, the details of the transformation differ significantly. One of the main differences is that pragmatic factors can play a role in the transformation. The theory of Referential Role grammar follows the line of Charles J. Fillmore's division of the sentence into "*modality*" and "*proposition*" parts, considering predicates and arguments separately. It also considers their modifiers such as tense, manner, and modality differently. However, it does not accept, like Ch. Fillmore, that grammatical relations are universal [10].

Functional grammar was developed by Simon C. Dick in the 1970s and 1980s and later transformed into Functional discourse grammar in the 1990s. Functional grammar considers language as a socio semiotic system. Functional grammar also studies how each sentence, which combines form with meaning, presents an idea and how to relate to the presented idea. In addition, it explains how the text is created and connected [1, p. 38].

Functional discourse grammar is a more systematic model of the functional approach. Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG), like its predecessor, was developed by Simon C. Dick and later improved by H.C. Keyes and C.L. Mackenzie. Unlike Systemic Functional Grammar, it presents itself not as a full discourse-analytic model, but rather as a grammar model integrated with a deeper theory of verbal interaction [7, 19].

Unlike Structural Grammar, Functional Discourse Grammar does not explain language as a system of rules, but as a means of communication. In Functional Discourse Grammar, language is a living system that explains people's social relationships and thoughts. In this case, the real conditions of speech use are brought to the fore. That is, the speaker's intention, the listener's situation and the communication environment are considered. According to this theory, when people speak, they first think about what they want to say, and then express that idea through language. In other words, this theory focuses more on the communicative purpose of the sentence than on its structure. That is, the sentence *Do not touch it* [30, p. 34]. - has a command purpose. *It is still hot* [30, p. 34]. - is a sentence used to provide information. The structure of both sentences is different, but the main issue is that they fulfill a specific function.

In FDG, language is explained based on discourse acts and is based on a four-level structural model: 1. Interpersonal 2. Representational 3. Morphosyntactic 4. Phonological. In this model, pragmatic, semantic, and formal aspects of language are explained within a single system.



One of the main features of functional discourse grammar is the “discourse act”. Unlike many language theories that accept the sentence as the main unit of analysis, discourse act is considered the main unit of analysis in FDG. According to this theory, language works on a top-down structure, and the main unit is not the sentence, but the discourse act [19, p. 1-5]. By top-down, we mean that the presentation moves from the speaker’s communicative intention to the pragmatic, semantic, morphosyntactic, and phonological levels.

Contextual integration is considered another of the main features of FDG. FDG includes a contextual component that is the cause of information received from previous discourse, physical, and socio-cultural environments that can affect subsequent language choices.

The common feature of these approaches is that, taking the communicative function as a basis, language does not come to the fore in the triad of function, meaning, and context, as we mentioned earlier. At this time, form and meaning are brought into focus, considering contextual dependence. Along with these, concepts such as multilevel analysis, speech acts, information structure of a sentence, etc. play a major role in functional linguistics.

Main features

1. Functionality. The main purpose of functional linguistics is to explain what communicative functions language units perform.

Functionality is a polysemantic terminological unit that investigates the broad typology of the functional approach to language and grammar in contemporary linguistics. Let us justify our idea with examples [2, p. 99].

Open the other books [21, p. 116].

Could you open the other books?

Both sentences have the same purpose. The speaker wants the listener to open other books, but the grammatical structure of both sentences is different because they have different communicative functions. According to the principle of functionality, grammar depends on what the speaker wants to achieve communicatively and socially. The use of the modal verb *could*, the structure of the interrogative sentence, the inverted word order are not random grammatical choices. All of these help to express politeness and help to establish social interaction. Therefore, grammar does not consist only of formal structure, but on the contrary, it serves communication and function. Let's look at another example:

The crew paved the entire stretch of highway [23, p. 15].

(The crew paved the entire stretch of highway).

The entire stretch of highway was paved (by the crew) [23, p. 15].

(The entire stretch of highway was paved (by the crew)).

The first sentence presented is in the present tense, while the second sentence is in the present tense, but the information we want to convey in the second sentence is that the entire highway was paved. That is, the grammatical form is chosen according to the communicative function. Let's analyze another example:

Pass the salt-command

Can you pass the salt-request

In this regard, T.Givon [16, p. 153] analyzed the same expression in different sentences *as an example of a continuum between imperative and interrogative*. Referring to it, many authors have noted that this expression can have different functions in different contexts [12, p.83; 13, p.170; 14, p.172;28, p.182].

2. Context dependent principle

According to this principle, the same expression or entire sentence can acquire different functional meanings in different situations. That is, the meaning of language units is not based only on grammatical form but is also determined by the citation in which they are used. This means that the same sentence can express different communicative meanings in different contexts. [15, p.28-35] This



feature is almost not found in structural linguistics. Let us illustrate our idea with the following examples:

He never came back out [27, p. 330].

The initial meaning of the sentence is its apparent meaning. (literal meaning) This sentence expresses a general truth. "He will never come back again." That is, it is impossible for him to return. The meaning expressed here is not to state a simple fact. On the contrary, it is to accept the truth. The informative function is quite weak. The third meaning is the Pragmatic meaning. This sentence also has the following meaning: "*I will never have a father again*".

Let's consider the example in context:

"He never came back out. I remember my mom pulling me away from the house, still screaming, and by then I was screaming, too".

"Daddy...no- "he called out hoarsely....

"Please, God... let me do it over... please... I'll jump...please, God... I'll do this time... please let him come out..." [27, p. 330].

A broader-social thematic context. The next meaning contained in the sentence is the contextual meaning within the dialogue. This means that the meaning of the expression does not depend on its grammatical structure. The meaning of the expression is formed depending on who said it to whom, in what situation and within what discourse. According to this principle, the same phrase or entire sentence can acquire different functional meanings in different situations.

3. Discourse orientation

Meaning is not formed only within a single sentence, but within several consecutive sentences, that is, within the text. Therefore, language is studied not only at the sentence level, but at the level of the entire text. In this case, language units form meaning by acting in a connected manner. Language should be analyzed not in separate sentences, but in the form of coherent speech. The presented sentence acts because of the previous discourse and can integrate the idea of the entire novel.

Elder Bauman and Elder Jung received the baskets handed to them by Elder Weber, and, after a short prayer, passed them to each of the tables, the adults being served first. Then they came to the children's tables and finally to me [31, p. 63].

In this sentence, *they* refer to the words of Elder Bauman and Elder Jung. The functional approach pays more attention to how sentences are connected in real discourse, not separately.

4. Speech act theory is another important component of the functional approach that explains the pragmatic function of language. It states that any sentence does not only convey information but also expresses a certain action. Expressions do not just provide information but also perform an action. For example:

I apologize [4, p. 85]-Performs the act of apologizing.

I promise that I am healed [20, p. 144]-Performs the act of making a promise.

Can you help me – [22, p. 104] It is not just a question sentence. At the same time, it expresses a request. This approach plays an important role in explaining the pragmatic function of language [3, p. 94-107; 26, pp. 22-25]. Thus, language means action in communication.

5. Information structure is one of the main concepts of functional linguistics. By dividing information within a sentence into two parts, topic and focus, the communicative purpose is conveyed more effectively [18, p. 89-92]. That is the information in a sentence is divided into parts such as foreground (*focus*) and background (*topic*) information. Within the same sentence, topic and focus can change depending on the pronunciation.

For example, *The stranger entered the abandoned house* [24, p. 33].

Topic: The stranger

Focus: entered the abandoned house

The abandoned house was entered by the stranger.

Topic: The abandoned house



Focus: was entered by the stranger

Into the abandoned house, the stranger entered.

Topic: The abandoned house

Focus: the strangers entry

Thus, sentence emphasis and word order are elements that indicate the importance of the information.

Discussions

The idea that language units are formed to fulfill specific communication needs is characteristic of functional linguistics. Therefore, within the framework of this theory, the study of language is not limited only to grammatical rules. Because in functional linguistics, the essence of language is considered with reference to the relationship between function, meaning and context. At this time, language is explained based on communicative goals, and its structure is associated with its function. Within the framework of this approach, language units act as elements that perform specific communicative functions. Therefore, rather than the structure of the language, its function, contextual expression and communicative role are considered.

The application of functionalism in contemporary linguistics continues to develop in sociolinguistics and discourse analysis in the field of linguistics. Within the framework of this approach, such features of language as functionality, contextual dependence, discourse orientation and multi-level structure are distinguished. Therefore, it is emphasized here that we should understand language not in isolation, but as part of the communicative and cultural environment. The analysis conducted shows that theories within the framework of functional linguistics investigate and explain how language works in the process of real communication. Therefore, unlike structuralism, linguistic units are not only considered structural elements but also considered as tools that perform specific communicative functions. According to this approach, grammatical forms are selected in accordance with the speaker's intention and communicative purpose. From this we conclude that the structure of the language is closely related to the situation in which it is used.

The main features of the functional approach listed above play an important role in explaining the communicative nature of language and also confirm (justify) that language is a dynamic and use-oriented system. Thus, functionalism is one of the most important directions of modern linguistics and facilitates understanding the role of language in the real communication process.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of the study is its theoretical nature. The propositions presented in the study were formulated based on an analysis of existing scientific literature, without being verified by corpus data or experimental methods. Testing these results on empirical materials in future studies may allow for further clarification of their validity.

CONCLUSION

According to the results of this study, the functional approach in linguistics is not an autonomous system of primarily formal rules.

- The article shows that the functional approach is based on the idea that language serves as a means of communication.
- The analyses conducted from this point of view show that functional linguistics is pragmatic and discourse based. It combines cognitive perspectives. The article emphasizes that grammatical structures are shaped by communicative needs and contextual factors.
- The main features identified include a greater focus on the function of language, the dependence of meaning on context, the integration of linguistic form with communicative purpose, and the analysis of language in discourse rather than in isolated sentences. It demonstrates a clear theoretical difference between structuralist and formal lin-



guistic approaches: while the formal model emphasizes internal grammatical structure and rule-governed systems, functional approaches emphasize meaning and communicative effectiveness.

- The historical development of functional linguistic theory, from its early functional ideas in the Prague School to modern discourse-oriented frameworks such as functional discourse grammar, and its emergence as a response to formalist paradigms, is explained in the article.
- The research emphasizes that different grammatical realizations are caused by differences in speech acts, politeness, context, and information structure.
- The article confirms that there is a systematic relationship between form and communicative function.
- The article confirms the idea that language is built on the relationship of function, context and meaning within the framework of the functional approach. Thus, grammatical forms are selected in accordance with the speaker's intention, and therefore the structure of the language depends on the situational context. Therefore, functional linguistics, which acts as an important theoretical direction in modern linguistics, explains language as a communicative, contextual and multi-level system and shows how language is used in the process of real communication.

As a result, functional linguistics sees language as a dynamic context-sensitive system in which form and function are inextricably linked within discourse.

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DİLÇİLİKDƏ FUNKSIONAL YANAŞMA ƏNƏNƏSİ: NƏZƏRİ ƏSASLAR VƏ ƏSAS XÜSUSİYYƏTLƏR

R.Q. Abdurahmanova

Məqalə dilçilikdə funksional yanaşma ənənəsinin nəzəri əsaslarından bəhs edir. Həmçinin onun tarixi inkişafı və əsas xüsusiyyətləri araşdırılır. Məqalədə linqvistik forma və kommunikativ funksiya arasındakı əsaqəyə xüsusilə diqqət yetirilir. Tədqiqat funksional linqvistik nəzəriyyəyə əsaslanır. Dilin kommunikativ məqsədlərlə necə strukturlaşdırıldığını və şərh olunduğunu nümayiş etdirmək üçün tədqiqat işi funksional diskurs qrammatikası da daxil olmaqla diskurs əsaslı modellərə əsaslanır. Təhlillər göstərir ki, funksional linqvistika dili əsas ünsiyyət vasitəsi kimi qəbul edir. Funksional yanaşma çərçivəsində məna, kontekst və natiq niyyəti qrammatik strukturun formalaşmasında mərkəzi rol oynayır. Məqalədə kontekstdən asılılıq, diskurs istiqaməti, forma və funksiyanın integrasiyası da daxil olmaqla funksional yanaşmanın əsas xüsusiyyətləri vurğulanır.



Tədqiqat həmçinin funksional lingvistik nəzəriyyənin tarixi təkamülünü izləyir və onun erkən Avropa funksional ənənələrindən müasir diskurs yönümlü modellərə qədər inkişafını göstərir. Məqalədə qeyd olunur ki, dilin kommunikativ və dinamik təbiətini izah edən funksionallıq, diskurs yönümlülük, kontekstual asılılıq, nitq aktları, informasiya strukturu, forma-məna əlaqəsi funksional dilçiliyi səciyyələndirən əsas xüsusiyyətlərdir. Bu kimi xüsusiyyətləri ehtiva etdiyinə görə funksional dilçilikdə dil strukturlaizmdən fərqli olaraq formal-qrammatik sistem kimi deyil əsas etibarlı ilə kommunikativ və funksional vasitə kimi tədqiq edilir.

Əldə edilən nəticələr lingvistik fomalara kommunikativ funksiyalarla sistemə şəkildə şərtləndiyini təsdiqləyir, bu da nitq aktlarında, informasiya strukturunda dəyişikliklərdə aynın şəkildə öz əksini tapır. Ümumilikdə, məqalədə funksional dilçiliyin dilin forma və funksiyaların qarşılıqlı və ayrılmaz şəkildə olduğu dinamik, kontekstə uyğunlaşan bir sistem kimi izah etmək üçün geniş nəzəri çərçivə etdiyi qənaətinə gəlinir.

Açar sözlər: *funksional yanaşma, kommunikativ məqsəd, funksionallıq, kontekst, informasiya strukturu, diskurs, nitq aktı*

ТРАДИЦИЯ ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНОГО ПОДХОДА В ЛИНГВИСТИКЕ: ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСНОВЫ И ОСНОВНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ

Р.Г. Абдурахманова

В статье рассматриваются теоретические основы функционального подхода в лингвистике, его историческое развитие и основные особенности. Особое внимание уделяется взаимосвязи между языковой формой и коммуникативной функцией. Исследование основано на функциональной лингвистической теории. Для демонстрации того, как язык структурируется и интерпретируется в коммуникативных целях, в исследовании используются дискурсивно-ориентированные модели, включая функциональную дискурсивную грамматику. Анализ показывает, что функциональная лингвистика рассматривает язык как основное средство коммуникации. В рамках функционального подхода значение, контекст и намерение говорящего играют центральную роль в формировании грамматической структуры. В статье подчеркиваются основные особенности функционального подхода, включая контекстную зависимость, направление дискурса и интеграцию формы и функции.

В исследовании также прослеживается историческая эволюция функциональной лингвистической теории и показано ее развитие от ранних европейских функциональных традиций до современных дискурсивно-ориентированных моделей. В статье отмечается, что основными характеристиками функциональной лингвистики являются функциональность, дискурсивная ориентация, контекстная зависимость, речевые акты, информационная структура и взаимосвязь формы и значения, которые объясняют коммуникативную и динамическую природу языка. Поскольку функциональная лингвистика содержит такие особенности, она изучает язык не как формально-грамматическую систему, в отличие от структурализма, а главным образом как коммуникативный и функциональный инструмент.

Полученные результаты подтверждают, что языковые формы систематически обусловлены коммуникативными функциями, которые отражаются в речевых актах и изменениях информационной структуры. В целом, статья заключает, что функциональная лингвистика предоставляет широкую теоретическую основу для объяснения языка как динамической, контекстно-адаптирующейся системы, в которой форма и функция взаимно и неразрывно взаимосвязаны.

Ключевые слова: *функциональный подход, коммуникативная цель, функциональность, контекст, информационная структура, дискурс, речевой акт*



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THE HISTORY OF THE NAJAF SCIENTIFIC SEMINARY AND ITS ROLE IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL LIFE OF IRAQ

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The Arabic term ḥawza, which originally meant “specialization” or “domain,” was historically used in the Islamic world in a geopolitical context to describe regions predominantly inhabited by Muslims. In the modern period, however, the use of the term has become almost exclusively confined to Shia religious circles, referring specifically to religious institutions that teach jurisprudential sciences and are affiliated with the Jaʿfari school of thought. One of the oldest and most renowned seminaries of Shia Islam developed in Najaf a development that was by no means accidental. Najaf city is located in southern Iraq and is considered one of the holiest cities in the Islamic world. Most scholars agree that the establishment of the hawza in Najaf dates back to the relocation of great Shia scholar Sheikh al-Ṭusi from Baghdad to Najaf. A historical analysis of these developments reveals that al-Hawza al-ʿIlmiyya has long held a central role in the socio-political life of Iraq and the broader Middle East. The article analyzes the sources and literature related to the history of the Najaf seminary and identifies its similarities and differences with other religious seminaries using the comparative-analytical method.

Keywords: Iraq, Najaf, Hawza, Sheikh al-Ṭusi, Saddam Hussein

INTRODUCTION

The city of Najaf, also known as “Al-Ashraf”, is located in southern Iraq and is considered one of the holiest cities in the Islamic world. Western authors have frequently referred to it as “the heart of the world” or “a world within a city” [13, p. 18]. The Arabic term “Najaf” denotes a hill or a place inaccessible to water, a reference to the city’s geographical location on a high plateau. Najaf’s status as a sacred city is directly linked to the martyrdom of Ali ibn Abi Talib in Kufa in 661 CE. Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad and the first Imam according to Shia Muslims, was buried secretly in Najaf to prevent his grave from being desecrated by enemies. Before Ali’s burial, the area that would become Najaf was a quiet region inhabited by tribal communities and several Christian monasteries. According to works by Shia scholars and historians such as Sheikh al-Mufid, the first shrine over Ali’s grave was constructed by the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid. Following this initial structure, various rulers across centuries added to the building and adorned the shrine with rich decorations in Ali’s memory. Special attention was given to Najaf during the rule of the Buyid dynasty, a period in which the city began to emerge as a transnational site of pilgrimage renowned for both its sanctity and scholarly significance [8, v.3, p. 425]. Many Muslim pilgrims, drawn to the holy shrine from near and far, chose to settle in its vicinity. Among them were numerous scholars and jurists. However, the exact point at which Najaf transformed into a center of Shia Islamic scholarship remains a subject of historical debate. Some historians equate Najaf’s development as a holy city with its rise as a center of learning, tracing the seminary’s earliest roots back to the time when the Prophet Muhammad dedicated the courtyard of the mosque in Mecca to teaching and learning. Following His Appointment as Caliph, Ali Relocated the Islamic Capital to Kufa in 656 CE. Ali, who was referred to by the Prophet Muhammad as “the gate to the city of knowledge,” brought with him the intellectual core of Islam to Kufa [6, p. 2]. According to several historians, at that time Najaf and Kufa were considered a single urban entity. Therefore, from the



moment Ali relocated to Kufa, the region including Najaf can be seen as having emerged as a center of Islamic learning. Ali's burial in Najaf after his death contributed to the city's continued attraction for scholars and jurists in subsequent periods. As expressed by Muhammad Jawad Fakhruddin, "the Mashhad al-Sharif was the initial nucleus for the establishment of the Najaf seminary." In response to the claim made by Muhammad Mahdi Bahr al-Ulum that "Najaf was intellectually barren before Shaykh al-Tusi's migration there" Fakhruddin argues that "denying the scientific activity that began in Najaf before Shaykh al-Tusi's arrival is unacceptable," and he supports this assertion with several arguments. First, Fakhruddin cites a 10th-century travelogue that mentions a small group of individuals living near the shrine of Imam Ali in 988 CE, who were engaged in study and teaching. Second, he presents a 10th-century poem in which the people of Najaf are described as "people of peace, knowledge, and nobility."

MAIN PART

Nevertheless, despite such claims, many historians regard the official foundation of the Najaf seminary as beginning with the migration of one of Shiism's greatest scholars, Shaykh al-Tusi, from Baghdad to Najaf. Born in 995 in the city of Tus in Iran, Shaykh al-Tusi spent the first 22 years of his life there before migrating to Baghdad in 1017 to study under prominent scholars [4, p. 15]. There, he was trained in rationalist approaches to Shi'a jurisprudence. Shaykh al-Tusi's migration itself highlights Baghdad's prominent role as a center of Shi'a education at the time. During this period, Baghdad was under the control of the Buyids (r. 934–1055), a dynasty known for its sympathy toward the Shi'a. The Buyids granted Shi'a scholars considerable freedom to practice and expand their intellectual activities. As a result, scholars were not subjected to persecution and could freely express their beliefs and ideas. Consequently, Baghdad became the primary center of Shi'a education during this era. However, in 1055, the Seljuks entered Baghdad, initiating a period of intense sectarian conflict. Shi'a scholars came under attack, and their homes and libraries were burned. Naturally, one of the first to be targeted was the renowned scholar of his time, Shaykh al-Tusi. His books were brought to the city square and burned on multiple occasions. In the aftermath of these events, Shaykh al-Tusi made the decision to leave Baghdad and relocate to Najaf. He spent the remainder of his life in Najaf, dedicating himself to the teaching of Islamic sciences, thereby laying the foundation for the great educational institution that continues to operate to this day. In his work "al-Amali", Tusi provides details about the dates of his lectures, his teaching methods, and the number of students in attendance. The historian Muhammad Mahdi al-Asifi also claims that Shaykh al-Tusi constructed a building in Najaf specifically for the seminary. The migration of Shaykh al-Tusi to Najaf in 1058 set in motion a trend that led other prominent scholars of the time to follow him. For this reason, Tusi's relocation is widely considered a pivotal moment in the city's history. However, it should be noted that some researchers, such as Zachery Mirza Heern, distinguish between the founding of the "hawza" in Najaf and the period when Najaf rose to prominence as a major intellectual center [6, p. 4]. According to Heern, although Najaf has a long and multifaceted scholarly tradition and has consistently been a center of Shi'i thought, it has rarely functioned as the leading center of Shi'i scholarship. Setting aside the period of Shaykh al-Tusi and his students, Heern argues that it was only in the early 19th century that Najaf emerged as a renowned center of Shi'i education. In fact, most of Najaf's significant academic achievements have taken place in the last two centuries. Another scholar, Roy Mottahedeh, similarly notes, "We know very little about the curriculum and structure of the educational system in Najaf prior to the 19th century." Meir Litvak also emphasizes that the historical emergence of Najaf as a leading intellectual center began only in the 19th century [11, p. 10].

Following Sheikh al-Tusi, the Najaf seminary experienced a prolonged period of stagnation that lasted approximately a century, continuing until the era of Muhammad ibn Idris al-Hilli (1148–1201). Several factors contributed to this stagnation. First, Shaykh al-Tusi had introduced new and

innovative methodologies and discussions within the fields of “*usul al-fiqh*” (principles of jurisprudence) and jurisprudence more broadly. However, jurists who came after him saw it as their duty merely to adopt his methods without subjecting them to critique or further development. But the weakening of the Buyid dynasty and the subsequent rise of pressure from the Seljuks also contributed to the stagnation of Najaf’s religious-academic development. Following this period, the city of Hillah began to emerge as a new center of scholarship, particularly through the influence of Ibn Idris al-Hilli. The religious-academic institution founded by Ibn Idris in Hillah eventually overshadowed Najaf to a certain extent. Ibn Idris challenged the prevailing principle of unconditional adherence to previous Ja‘fari jurists, including Shaykh al-Tusi. Ibn Idris al-Hilli’s critical approach gave rise to a new era of intellectual competition among different centers of learning, ultimately leading to greater scholarly advancement. Interestingly, during this period, Hillah not Najaf was preferred by many major scholars as the center of their academic and religious activities.

Historical analyses show that al-Ḥawza al-‘elmiyya has played an important role in the socio-political life of not only Iraq but also the entire Middle East since its inception. For the first time, during the reign of the Elkhaniids and Jalayrids, attention was paid to the city of Najaf as a ideological centre and the religious seminary located there, and the seminary's influence on the socio-political life of society increased. The 14th-century traveler Ibn Battuta, who visited Najaf, wrote: We headed toward the cemetery located at the Gate of Hadra, where the grave of Imam Ali lies. Opposite the cemetery stood a beautifully constructed madrasah. This large religious school, inhabited by Shia students, provided visiting guests with meals twice daily for three days” [7, p. 200]. Such accounts show that even during this time, Najaf remained a significant center of learning for Shia Muslims, attracting students from various regions. However, despite these contributions, Najaf continued to remain in the shadow of other centers of learning. One of the main reasons for this was the recurring droughts that plagued the city. The absence of a consistent water source was among Najaf’s most pressing problems. This issue led many residents to migrate to other cities and resulted in a decline in the number of pilgrims visiting the shrine.

Najaf Seminary during the Safavid period

With the Safavid expansion into Iraq in 1508, the Najaf Seminary became one of the central arenas of Sunni-Shia rivalry. This major event triggered two important developments: first, it increased interest in religious cities as instruments of proselytization; second, it elevated the social and political status of religious scholars, who gradually became central to state ideology and governance. Naturally, the Safavids began to pay special attention to the Najaf Seminary. Against this backdrop, as both the Safavids and Ottomans increasingly invoked religion in their political struggles, the Shia jurists of Najaf (and neighboring Karbala) became divided over the state's use of religion and the risks associated with such instrumentalization [9, p. 27]. On another front, a second period of stagnation within the Najaf Seminary began with the spread of the “Akhbari” movement across Shia religious centers, including Najaf. The Akhbaris rejected rationalist approaches to jurisprudence and theology, labeling them as “*bid‘ah*” (heretical innovations). Their influence spread rapidly throughout Najaf, other Iraqi seminaries, Iran, and Bahrain, attracting many jurists. Additional factors that contributed to Najaf’s scholarly decline toward the end of the 16th century include the Ottoman conquest of Iraq, fear among scholars of relocating to the region, persecution of Shia clerics, and the outbreak of plague. In comparison, Karbala benefiting from better water resources began to attract more pilgrims, especially after the construction of the Husayniyya Canal. Karbala holds particular significance for Shia Muslims as the site of the “Tragedy of Karbala”, one of the most pivotal events in Islamic history. Following the Afghan invasion of Isfahan in 1737, many Shia scholars fled and settled in Karbala. As a result, Karbala began to eclipse other centers of learning and emerged as the principal scholarly hub for Shia Islam during that period.



The turbulent years in the Najaf seminary in the 19th and 20th centuries

The 19th century marked a “renaissance” for the Najaf Seminary, even though the city remained under Ottoman rule. The construction of the “Hindiya Canal” in 1840 significantly mitigated the city's long-standing water shortage, leading to an increase in pilgrim visits and revitalizing the city's economy. Another key factor in this revival was financial support from the Shia state of “Awadh”, located in southern India, which was established in 1722. After Awadh was annexed by the British in 1860, members of its royal family the wealthy “Nawwabs” migrated to Najaf and made substantial donations to religious and educational institutions. As a result, the center of Shia scholarship shifted from Karbala to Najaf during this period. Karbala's resistance to Ottoman authority culminated in a brutal massacre by Ottoman forces in 1843, prompting many scholars, students, and prominent Iranian Shia jurists who had migrated to Karbala to instead relocate to Najaf. Moreover, compared to Karbala, Najaf was less exposed to Wahhabi incursions, further reinforcing its status as a safer and more stable religious center.

The 19th century is also characterized by the decisive victory of the “Usuli” school over the “Akhbari” school. Eventually, a hierarchy of “mujtahids” was established, including the institution of “Marja’ al-Taqlid al-Tamm”, which denotes a mujtahid with full authority over the entire community. The influence of the “Marja” increased as believers began to pay a significant religious tax “Sahm al-Imam” (“the Imam’s share”) to the marja’ they followed [14, p. 4]. For many Shi’a Muslims, the opinion of the marja’ became the “final word” on religious issues. As a result, the marja’ gained immense influence and became a powerful unifying force. This marked the complete triumph of the Usuli school over the Akhbaris. As the influence of maraji’ (plural of marja’) grew, their involvement in political matters occasionally increased [12, p. 1]. Notable examples include Ja’far Kashif al-Ghita’s fatwa during the Russo-Iranian war and Muhammad Hasan Shirazi’s intervention in the “Tobacco Rebellion” in Iran. Describing the situation of the Najaf seminary during this period, Meir Litvak writes: “Unlike other centers of Islamic learning in the Muslim world, the hawza in Najaf was not established or regularly funded by political elites to provide them with legitimacy or legal personnel. Instead, they grew from the bottom up through the efforts of the ulama’, functioning primarily as centers of education and scholarship. They were not supported by land endowments (waqf) but were sustained mainly through “zakat” taxes and donations from the faithful.” As a result, there was no centralized organization or religious hierarchy regarding education, finance, or administration in Shi’a educational centers. This stood in stark contrast to the situation of the ulama’ in Iran. Thus, the defining characteristics of the Shi’a scholarly communities in Najaf were not political or communal leadership, but rather their focus on education and knowledge production [5, v.6, p. 178].

During the golden age of the Najaf seminary, great scholars such as Bahr al-Ulum and Ja’far Kashif al-Ghita were involved in the educational process. It is important to note that Ja’far Kashif al-Ghita possessed a level of influence that no previous mujtahid or jurist had attained. Alongside him, other scholars also contributed to Najaf’s revival, including Muhammad Taqi Isfahani, Muhammad Husayn Isfahani, Muhammad Mujahid Tabataba’i, Muhammad Ibrahim Kalbasi, and Shaykh Murtada Ansari. Shaykh Murtada Ansari (1781–1864) played a particularly significant role in the development of the Najaf religious and scholarly center through his scholarly contributions. After the death of Muhammad Hasan Najafi (1787–1850), known as “Sahib al-Jawahir”, Ansari became the marja’ not only in Najaf but across all Shi’a regions. Shaykh Ansari authored nearly 40 scholarly works. Among them, “al-Makasib al-Muharrama”, dealing with trade and various types of contracts, and “Rasa’il”, a work based on the science of “usul al-fiqh” (principles of jurisprudence), became foundational texts for Shi’a religious education, including the seminary in Najaf.

Between 1908 and 1920, there was a growing trend of activism within the Shi’a sect, and mujtahids emerged as key players in politics. This was the result of the revival of Usuli jurisprudence, the centralization of Shi’a leadership, and the influence of modernist Islamic thinkers. In the

early 20th century, the involvement of mujtahids in Iraq in Iran's internal affairs led to strained relations between the Qajar dynasty and the ulama' in Iraq. The importance of the constitutional period in Iraq stems from two primary factors. First, it provided Shi'a mujtahids with the opportunity to develop a political theory that laid the groundwork for their participation in state affairs. Second, the constitutional era gave Iraqi Shi'as the chance to discuss and express the ideas defended by Islamic modernists, to disseminate them beyond the seminaries, and ultimately to attempt their implementation in their own country. The increasing European pressures and occupations that had been growing stronger in Iran and Ottoman territories since the Constitutional Revolution acted as a catalyst. The occupation of Muslim lands by European powers accelerated religious and legal activism and allowed Shi'a mujtahids to emerge as leaders of Muslim opposition in Iraq. However, the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 had a more profound impact on Arab Shi'as, who viewed the Iranian revolution as a domestic issue and remained largely unaffected by it.

Starting in 1908, Arab Shi'as began to participate in political discourse and gained the opportunity to address fundamental issues related to religion and nationhood, as well as to express ideas championed by Islamic modernists. The restoration of the Ottoman constitution also marked the beginning of secular education for Shi'as in Iraq. Beginning in 1909, public primary schools for boys were opened in Baghdad, Kadhimayn, Najaf, and Hillah.

The first Shi'a school in Baghdad, "Maktab al-Taraqqi al-Ja'fari al-'Uthmani", later known as "al-Madrasa al-Ja'fariyya", was established in December 1909. This initiative came from Ali Bazar-gan, a Sunni educated in Shi'a communal affairs, and Ja'far Abu al-Timman, a wealthy Shi'a merchant from Baghdad who would later play a significant national role in Iraq. They obtained a "fatwa" from the mujtahid Muhammad Sa'id al-Habbubi regarding the necessity of providing modern education for young Shi'as. The school, which served 300 students, was funded by the Shi'a communities of Kadhimayn and Baghdad merchants [13, p. 56].

Despite these efforts, the Iraqi authorities imposed restrictions on pilgrimages and funeral burials in cities like Najaf and Karbala, thereby damaging their economic independence and attempting to bring Shi'a religious institutions under state control. It is well known that the 1958 military coup initiated a period of major upheaval that altered Iraq's political system and social structure. The monarchy established by the British in 1921 was replaced by a republican form of government. Since their uprising against the British in 1920, the Shi'a religious community had maintained a relatively quiet stance, but they now feared that various predominantly secular political forces and movements were aiming to eliminate Islam from public life if left unchallenged.

In these years, the activities of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr stand out. His reformist vision for the hawza opened the door to the modernization of the curriculum. It was known that at the time, the Najaf seminary prioritized only fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and usul al-fiqh (principles of jurisprudence), while neglecting other branches of Islamic sciences. Sadr was also concerned about the irregular attendance and lack of academic seriousness among the students. He emphasized that before claiming the title of "alim" (scholar), students should complete their courses with distinction [1, p. 212]. He proposed the development of new textbooks, arguing that the old texts were unsuitable for contemporary students. According to Sadr, textbooks should be designed to facilitate a student's gradual understanding of the topic from fundamental concepts to advanced levels. His plan involved not only using modern textbooks but also establishing Western-style universities where students would be responsible for completing certain courses and passing regular examinations. To realize these reforms, he assisted in the establishment of the "Usul al-Din College" in Baghdad in 1964 and helped design its curriculum. He later authored three textbooks for first- and second-year students on the Qur'an, usul al-fiqh, and Islamic economics. Nevertheless, his reform efforts faced strong resistance both from students and supporters of the traditional system [3, p. 220].

After the Ba'ath Party came to power on July 17, 1968, a new phase of confrontation began between the Shi'a leaders Muhsin al-Hakim and Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and the central govern-



ment in Baghdad. The regime faced two influential figures: al-Hakim, who symbolically led the global Shi'a community, and al-Sadr, who possessed significant political and intellectual influence. The government's first step was to restrict their religious activities. The closure of Jawadayn primary and secondary schools and the "Usul al-Din" College in Baghdad, the confiscation of land and funds allocated for the construction of Kufa University, the expulsion of hundreds of non-Iraqi students from the Najaf seminary, and the enactment of a law requiring Iraqi seminarians to be drafted into the military were all part of this policy. The subsequent struggle against the government of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and its impact on the socio-political life of Iraq demonstrate the role of the Najaf seminary in the political life of the country.

CONCLUSION

After the death of Muhsin al-Hakim, the Ba'ath regime intensified its efforts to reduce the influence of the Najaf seminary by expelling non-Iraqi students (who constituted the majority) and closely monitoring Iraqi students. Until its fall in 2003, the Ba'ath regime sought by all possible means to limit the scope and development of the Najaf religious seminary. Following the overthrow of the Ba'ath regime, a new phase of development began in the history of the hawza. The guarantee of freedom of expression created conditions for scholars in the Najaf seminary to propose new ideas, thereby stimulating the advancement of the hawza.

An examination of the educational system in the Najaf seminary reveals that Islamic thought is continuously renewed within this institution, and there is a constant intellectual stimulus and scholarly exchange between teachers and students. Students pursue knowledge with a passion for science and gain practical experience in the field of "sharia" law. They do not seek office, government positions, or material gain. To graduate, students must be well-versed not only in the latest developments in Shi'a (Ja'fari, Ithna'ashari) thought but also in the field of sharia.

In fact, education in the hawza is a lengthy and demanding process. Students come from various age groups; some accept a modest stipend and free accommodation, remaining in the seminary for thirty to forty years to complete their studies. The maraji' also lead very simple and modest lives. Classes are generally held at "Al-Hawza Al-Ilmiyya", in halls dedicated to the sacred shrines, or in the homes of the maraji' themselves. The patronage relationship between teachers and students is a defining feature of educational life in Al-Hawza Al-Ilmiyya. Although students typically become disciples of a particular marja', their livelihood is supported by stipends they receive from their patrons. Students' professional careers depend not on their graduation from Al-Hawza Al-Ilmiyya itself, but directly on the "ijtihad" certificates they obtain from their teachers.

The Najaf Seminary in Iraq is one of the most influential centers of learning in the Shiite world. The environment here influences the formation of scholars, especially through independent thinking, scholarly debate, and in-depth jurisprudential research. For example, Abu al-Qasim al-Khoyi and Sayyid Ali Sistani, who were formed under the influence of this environment. Abu al-Qasim al-Khoyi grew up in Najaf and became one of the greatest jurisprudential scholars of the 20th century. Thousands of students later attended his classes, and his scientific method became one of the main directions of the Najaf school. Ali al-Sistani also grew up in the Najaf environment and became a world-renowned religious leader. The fact that the Najaf school remained relatively independent of state power and its cautious and measured approach to political issues influenced his way of thinking. For this reason, Sistani preferred to provide direction to society while maintaining religious authority. In short, the Najaf seminary's tradition of open scholarly debate, its emphasis on independent ijtihad, and its long-standing classical education system have created conditions for scholars trained here to possess both deep scientific knowledge and the ability to think independently.

In conclusion, an analysis of these developments demonstrates that "Al-Hawza Al-Ilmiyya" occupies a central position in Shi'a Islam [2, p. 120]. Its framework encompasses intellectual rene-



wal, political activism, schematic reform of doctrinal beliefs, and, fundamentally, the defense of Shi'ism itself. It is evident that Najaf is not only a center of enlightenment and intellectual activity but also a base for the dissemination of Shi'a ideas and political movements. Najaf Seminary plays an important role in the socio-political life of Iraq, and the fatwas and calls issued by religious leaders in particular have an impact on maintaining stability in the country. The scholars here have gained influence in political processes by guiding the people's position on issues of elections, social unity and security. In addition, the seminary has significant international influence. The seminary is one of the most influential religious education centers in the Shiite Islamic world and accepts students from various countries. This seminary has a great influence on Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and other countries, especially through the scholars it has trained in the field of religious sciences. Najaf is considered one of the main Shiite religious centers, which has both cooperation and differences of opinion with the Qom Seminary. At the same time, it has established inter-sectarian dialogue relations with Sunni religious institutions such as Al-Azhar University. In modern times, Najaf is known as an international religious center that plays an important role in political and social issues in addition to its religious influence.

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НӘСӘФ ЕЛМІ СЕМІНАРИЯСИНІН ТАРИХІ ВӘ ОНУН İRAQIN İCTİMAİ-SİYASİ HƏYATINDA ROLU

N.M. Qafarlı

Ərəb sözü olan "hövzə", ilkin olaraq "ixtisaslaşma" və ya "sahə" mənasını ifadə edirdi və tarixi olaraq İslam dünyasında əsasən müsəlmanların çoxluq təşkil etdiyi bölgələri təsvir etmək məqsədi ilə geopolitik kontekstdə istifadə olunurdu. Lakin müasir dövrdə bu termin demək olar ki, yalnız şiə dini dairələrində işlədilir və xüsusi olaraq fiqh elmlərini öyrədən, cəfəri məzhəbinə bağlı dini təhsil müəssisələri ifadə edir. İslamının ən qədim və nüfuzlu seminariyalarından biri Nəcəfdə inkişaf etmişdir və bu inkişaf heç də təsadüfi deyildir. Nəcəf şəhəri İraqın cənubunda yerləşir və İslam dünyasının ən müqəddəs şəhərlərindən biri hesab olunur. Əksər tədqiqatçılar razılaşırlar ki, Nəcəfdə hövzənin yaradılması Bağdaddan Nəcəfə köçən böyük şiə alimi Şeyx əl-Tusi ilə bağlıdır. Tarixi analiz göstərir ki, əl-Hövzə əl-'elmiyyə uzun müddətdir ki, İraqın və geniş mənada Yaxın və Orta Şərqlin sosial-siyasi həyatında mərkəzi rol oynamışdır. Məqalədə Nəcəf seminariyasının tarixi ilə bağlı mənbələr və ədəbiyyat analiz olunur və digər dini seminariyalarla müqayisəli-analitik metod əsasında oxşarlıqları və fərqlilikləri müəyyən edilir.

Açar sözlər: *İraq, Nəcəf, hövzə, Şeyx əl-Tusi, Səddam Hüseyn.*

ИСТОРИЯ НАДЖАФСКОЙ НАУЧНОЙ СЕМИНАРИИ И ЕЁ РОЛЬ В СОЦИАЛЬНО-ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ ЖИЗНИ ИРАКА

Н.М. Гафарли

Арабский термин «хауза», первоначально означавший «специализация» или «область», исторически использовался в исламском мире в геополитическом контексте для описания регионов, преимущественно населенных мусульманами. Однако в современный период использование этого термина стало почти исключительно ограничиваться шиитскими религиозными кругами, относясь конкретно к религиозным учреждениям, преподающим юридические науки и связанным с джафаритской школой мысли. Одна из старейших и наиболее известных семинарий шиитского ислама возникла в Наджафе развитие, которое отнюдь не было случайным. Город Наджаф расположен на юге Ирака и считается одним из самых священных городов исламского мира. Большинство ученых сходятся во мнении, что основание хаузы в Наджафе восходит к переезду великого шиитского ученого шейха ат-Туси из Багдада в Наджаф. Исторический анализ этих событий показывает, что аль-Хауза аль-Ильмия долгое время играла центральную роль в социально-политической жизни Ирака и Ближнего Востока в целом. В статье анализируются источники и литература, касающиеся истории семинарии в Наджафе, и с помощью сравнительно-аналитического метода выявляются её сходства и различия с другими религиозными семинариями.

Ключевые слова: *Ирак, Наджаф, Хауза, Шейх аль-Туси, Саддам Хусейн.*



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GENRE AND STYLE FEATURES OF COMPOSER KAMAL AHMEDOV'S "REQUIEM"

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The aim of this study is to examine the genre and stylistic features of composer Kamal Ahmadov's Requiem, focusing on its modal-harmonic structure, melodic-rhythmic development, and individual compositional style through a theoretical and analytical approach. The work is dedicated to the memory of the victims of the January 20, 1990 tragedy, and its poetic text is based on bayati, one of the oldest genres of Azerbaijani folk poetry. The dramaturgical development of the composition is shaped by two principal thematic sources: a four-voice lament theme derived from Zabul-Segah intonations and a mugham-based theme constructed from the melodic elements of the Humayun mode.

The analysis demonstrates that the synthesis of vocal and symphonic expression forms the core emotional content of the work, conveying collective national grief and spiritual devotion to the martyrs. From a textural perspective, free imitative polyphony alternates with homophonic-harmonic writing, while chromatic development plays a significant role in intensifying the dramatic tension. The research methodology is grounded in music theory and contemporary musicological approaches; the empirical basis of the study includes the notated score, relevant scholarly literature, and interviews conducted with the composer.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the first systematic scholarly analysis of Ahmadov's Requiem within Azerbaijani musicology. The practical significance of the study consists in the applicability of its findings to musicological research, higher music education, and the analytical study of contemporary vocal-symphonic works.

Keywords: vocal-symphonic composition, mugham intonation, modal-harmonic structure, polyphonic texture, memorial music.

INTRODUCTION

The requiem originated within the Western musical tradition as an integral component of Roman Catholic liturgical practice. In Christian doctrine, the requiem is defined as a sacred vocal-instrumental composition based on a fixed religious text and intended for performance during funeral rites or memorial services for the deceased. As a genre, it is traditionally grounded in the Latin liturgical text of the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead. The dramatic and expressive potential inherent in the requiem has historically encouraged composers to reflect the aesthetic principles of their respective stylistic periods, resulting in works characterized by complex formal organization and richly developed polyphonic textures [8].

In contrast, Azerbaijani composers have approached the requiem not as a strictly liturgical form, but rather as a genre capable of conveying memorial, ethical, and philosophical ideas. As emphasized in musicological scholarship, the adaptation of Western sacred genres such as the requiem within Azerbaijani professional music has contributed to the emergence of new compositional models grounded in national modal and intonational thinking [7]. From the second half of the twentieth century onward, Azerbaijani composers increasingly turned to monumental vocal-symphonic forms, incorporating requiem-like structures enriched with elements of national musical language, thereby redefining the genre within a distinct cultural and aesthetic context.

Although compositions explicitly titled Requiem are relatively rare in Azerbaijani music, a substantial body of works with a pronounced memorial orientation can be identified. In the creative practice



of Azerbaijani composers, requiem-related imagery and expressive features do not perform a liturgical function; instead, they are primarily directed toward the commemoration of martyrs, war victims, and national heroes, thereby reinforcing collective historical memory. Within such compositions, individual grief is transformed into a symbol of shared national sorrow, while music functions both as a medium for artistic reflection on historical tragedy and as a means of addressing fundamental philosophical concepts such as death and immortality, destruction and eternity. As noted by art historian and musicologist Leyla Mammadova, contemporary Azerbaijani vocal–symphonic works often incorporate emotional intensity, dramaturgical development, and structural principles characteristic of the requiem genre, even when not explicitly labeled as such [3]. This tendency reflects a broader compositional approach in which Western genre models are reinterpreted through national aesthetic values and expressive priorities, resulting in original memorial forms embedded within the Azerbaijani musical tradition.

The requiem spirit can be discerned in works such as Fikrat Amirov's *Martyrs*, in certain monumental compositions by Arif Melikov, and in other memorial works by Azerbaijani composers. One of the most significant examples of this tradition is Kamal Ahmadov's *Requiem*, dedicated to the memory of fallen martyrs. In this composition, structural elements of the Western requiem tradition are combined with melodic means characteristic of Azerbaijani music, resulting in an original work with a distinctive sonic identity.

The central research problem of this study concerns the scholarly examination of the genre and stylistic features of Kamal Ahmadov's *Requiem*, with particular emphasis on the characteristic elements of its musical language. The study aims to analyze the work's modal–harmonic structure, melodic development, and rhythmic organization, while simultaneously identifying the composer's individual stylistic traits as manifested within the composition.

The relevance of this article primarily derives from its research object. Kamal Ahmadov's *Requiem* is examined here for the first time as a subject of scholarly and analytical inquiry within Azerbaijani musicology, a fact that underscores both the novelty and necessity of the topic. The investigation of the work's genre and stylistic characteristics contributes to a clearer understanding of the position of the requiem genre within national musical culture, while also offering deeper insight into contemporary developmental trends in Azerbaijani composition.

Furthermore, the study is presented for the first time in the format of an academic article, thereby facilitating a systematic theoretical examination of the composer's creative output. Beyond establishing a theoretical foundation for future research, the article also serves to promote a more comprehensive recognition of Azerbaijani compositional practices within both local and international musicological communities.

Research Methods

In order to investigate the musical language of Kamal Ahmadov's *Requiem*, methods of music theory and analytical analysis were employed, alongside comparative analytical approaches. The study systematically examines the work's modal–harmonic structure, melodic and rhythmic characteristics, as well as the composer's individual stylistic features. In addition, interviews and archival materials were consulted to obtain supplementary information, thereby enabling a more comprehensive and multidimensional presentation of the musical analysis. This methodological framework makes it possible to identify the musical structure and creative stylistic principles underlying Ahmadov's *Requiem*.

MAIN PART

General Overview of the Work

The theme of mourning occupies a distinctive place in Kamal Ahmadov's compositional output. His *Requiem* for choir and symphonic orchestra represents one of the most significant works in which this theme is developed. The composition is dedicated to the cherished memory of the vic-



tims of the January 1990 tragedy, who sacrificed their lives for their homeland, and its text is based on bayati, a genre of Azerbaijani folk poetry. The tragic fate of the martyrs, the profound pain and suffering of the people, and an atmosphere of mourning form the central imagery of the work, imparting a deep sense of sorrow and grief throughout the composition.

During the 1990s, while working at the Philharmonic in his native city of Nakhchivan, Ahmadov initially composed *Requiem* for an orchestra of folk instruments. The work was performed at the Heydar Aliyev Palace, one of Nakhchivan's principal cultural centers, where it achieved considerable success. During this performance, a reciter was added to the composition, delivering bayati verses in a recitative manner, which was met with strong audience approval. In the same period, the work was repeatedly broadcast on Nakhchivan State Television under the title *Martyrs Symphony*. Subsequently, Ahmadov invited his close friend, Professor Elbeyi Maqsudov—Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences and a member of the Azerbaijan Writers' Union—to compose bayati texts specifically for this work. After the texts were written, the composer added a choral part, later reworking the *Requiem* first for chamber orchestra and ultimately for large symphonic orchestra. In its final symphonic version, the work was further enriched through the inclusion of a solo tenor part based on the bayati texts. The present study examines this final version for soloist, choir, and symphonic orchestra.

One of the defining features of *Requiem* is that its entire development is structured around two principal themes. The first, which constitutes the core of the work's dramaturgy, is a four-note "lament" theme derived from the intonations of the Zabul-Segah mugham. The second is a mugham-based theme constructed from elements of the Humayun mode. In a previous study on Ahmadov's *Cavid Symphony*, it was noted that during his student years the composer developed a creative style that would play a significant role throughout his oeuvre, particularly in fostering polyphonic development, and that a four-note intonational cell emerged as a distinctive personal invention [1]. Ahmadov employs this same intonational cell in *Requiem*, where it becomes the principal thematic material and acquires the expressive character of a lament.

Within the orchestral palette, the lament theme is primarily carried by the string section, while the mugham theme is predominantly assigned to the woodwind instruments. The lament theme is presented mainly in half-note values, whereas the second theme appears in eighth notes and, at times, in quintuplet figures articulated through sixteenth-note durations. As both themes undergo transposition across different pitch levels, the composer frequently employs the principle of resonance, which contributes to a sense of unity and structural coherence within the composition.

Requiem constitutes a work of unified emotional content, in which the people's anguish over the martyrs and the expression of these emotions as well as the generalized image of martyrdom are conveyed through the synthesis of vocal performance and symphonic musical language. Rather than adhering to a classical formal structure, the composer employs a free imitative form. Throughout the work, polyphonic and homophonic-harmonic textures are integrated in close interaction. Among the various types of polyphonic writing, the composer most frequently utilizes imitative techniques during thematic transitions, thereby generating heightened dramatic development.

As in many of Ahmadov's works, the use of key signatures in *Requiem* is largely conventional. Drawing upon the freedoms of modern musical language, the composer intensifies chromatic development to such an extent that tonal ambiguity and departure from a fixed tonal center become characteristic features of the work. The modal foundation of the entire composition is dominated by the Humayun mugham. Among Azerbaijani mugham modes, Humayun is recognized as the mode that most profoundly conveys feelings of sorrow and grief. As the eminent composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli observes in *The Fundamentals of Azerbaijani Folk Music*, "Humayun, in terms of its artistic and spiritual impact, evokes a relatively deeper sense of sadness in the listener" [2]. For this reason, the composer deliberately chose this mode as the primary modal basis of the work.



The transitions between thematic materials are presented in the form of waves or phases. Following an initial wave that depicts a mournful and hopeless atmosphere, the composer applies a stylistic approach characteristic of his creative language: within each phase, dynamics are continuously intensified, the orchestral palette is gradually enriched through the inclusion of additional instrumental timbres, the dramatic character is heightened, and the texture is progressively expanded toward the climax. Despite these transformations, the overall atmosphere of mourning remains intact throughout the composition. Between these waves, very brief symphonic transitions—often consisting of only two measures—are inserted. Although limited in duration, these transitions play a significant role in enhancing the overall dynamic momentum of the work.

Ahmadov consistently places strong emphasis on the harmonic background of the orchestra, presenting it with particular richness. In *Requiem*, special attention should be drawn to the ostinato accompaniment provided by the piano and harp. The piano performs harmonically functional chords in a steady rhythmic pattern, continuing throughout the composition and forming an ostinato foundation. The harp supports this texture through continuous arpeggiated chords, another type of ostinato. Together, these rhythmic patterns evoke the heavy, measured footsteps of the people accompanying the martyrs on their final journey.

The choral part, which occupies a central role in the composition, is presented through several compositional techniques. These include the gradual entrance and withdrawal of voices, the doubling of soprano and alto as well as tenor and baritone parts, the assignment of the mugham theme to female voices and the lament theme to male voices in the form of vocalises, among others. The frequent recurrence of the word “martyrs” in the bayati texts sung by the choir serves to emphasize the work’s central narrative. The solo tenor part is narrative in character and is based on a recitative style of singing; the bayati texts are performed primarily through declamation, resembling the traditional lament (ağı) vocal manner.

Analytical Analysis of the Work by Sections

Requiem opens in an *Adagio* tempo with an extremely somber atmosphere, featuring unison passages in the cello and double bass (at the octave), a heavy rhythmic ostinato in the piano, and arpeggiated chords in the harp. This sonic texture immediately evokes a sense of despair in the listener and establishes the leading expressive image of the work from its very first measures.



Sample 1. Introductory section-Adagio [9]

In this passage, the composer employs the principle of gradual textural and timbral intensification, introducing different orchestral timbres in a sequential manner. While the accompanying background continues, the principal thematic material—the lament theme—is introduced after two measures in the viola section. In the final measure of the theme, an imitative response a perfect fourth higher is presented in the second violins. In the concluding measure of this imitation, the theme is transferred to the viola and cello. At the same point, the choir makes its first entrance into the composition: the soprano and alto voices perform the theme as a vocalise, set at the interval of a perfect fourth.



Sample 2. Lament theme [9]

Beginning from measure 15, noticeable changes in the musical texture emerge. The choral part comes to a halt, and a mugham-based theme constructed on Humayun intonations (Theme II) is introduced in the English horn and first clarinet in the form of a quintuplet figure. Accompanied by this material, the solo tenor enters for the first time with its thematic line.

Sample 3. Theme of solo tenor [9]

The tenor's theme represents an entirely new melodic idea and is not derived from the intonational material of any previously stated theme in the composition. Two measures later, the quintuplet motif is slightly expanded and transferred to the bass clarinet. Subsequently, the same quintuplet figure reappears in the original instruments following the same principle. This method of presentation creates the impression of a thematic relay, in which the material is passed successively from one instrumental voice to another.

When the intonation is introduced in the bass clarinet, the same thematic material is simultaneously presented in its entirety in the first violins at the same pitch level. The cello and double bass perform the lament theme in unison octaves. To conclude the first wave, a two-measure orchestral transition is introduced. Within this brief passage, the composer achieves a rich developmental effect through the principle of resonance: while the mugham theme is articulated by the bass clarinet, contrabassoon, first trumpet, tuba, and first violins, chordal accompaniment is provided by the viola, second trumpet, and trombone. This is followed by a polyphonic transformation of the mugham theme in the English horn and first clarinet. As a result, the leitmotif evoking the memory of the fallen martyrs briefly intensifies and then subsides.

The second wave begins with the thematic material of the solo tenor. In the accompaniment, the primary role is assumed by the first violins, which present the mugham theme, and by the flutes sounding an octave higher, followed by the oboe and second clarinet. The quintuplet figure reappears, progressing chromatically within the intervallic framework of a perfect fourth at its original



pitch level. At the conclusion of this section, another two-measure orchestral transition is introduced.

From measure 30 onward, the initial elements of intensified dramatic development become perceptible. The third wave opens with the lament theme in the cello and double bass, performed in unison. The solo tenor presents its theme once again, this time beginning on the pitch A, accompanied by the mugham theme in the English horn and first clarinet.

From rehearsal number 7 onward, the lament theme in the string section continues through stepwise chromatic ascent by semitone, articulated in parallel chords (four–six chords).

This gradual ascent is also observed in the thematic material of the solo tenor. The musical content of this theme is recitative in character, as if the soloist were delivering a lament (*ağı*) against the orchestral background. Following the unison presentation of the mugham theme in the oboe and second clarinet, a chromatic quintuplet figure is articulated in two consecutive measures.

The chords presented in A minor in the first and second violins undergo modulation to F minor beginning in measure 39. Three measures later, the dynamic tension intensifies. Both principal themes are distributed across different instrumental and vocal parts, generating an increasingly dense polyphonic texture. At this point, the choir enters: the soprano and alto voices are doubled at the interval of a third and derive their material from the mugham theme, while the tenor and baritone voices are likewise doubled at the interval of a fifth, deriving their material from the lament theme. The soprano and alto function in a recitative, narrative role, whereas the tenor and baritone serve a background function through vocalise. The bassoons replicate the choir's recitative material in unison, further reinforcing the thematic texture.

Sample 4. The choir part [9]

From rehearsal number 11 onward, the dramatic tension intensifies further and the score begins to increase in complexity. In the choral texture, the soprano voices and violas perform the mugham theme at the interval of a sixth, while the tenor and baritone voices present the lament theme at the interval of a fifth. The viola, divided (*divisi*), doubles the tenor and baritone theme at the same pitch level. The first and second violins, also divided, repeat the same chordal thematic material together with the French horn. In the woodwind section, the mugham theme is treated imitatively.

From rehearsal number 12 onward, the development moves increasingly toward the climax. The cello and double bass join the viola in presenting the lament theme. Overall, the first and second thematic materials are continuously articulated across a variety of timbres. This sonic texture rises and subsides in a manner reminiscent of ocean waves.

In order to create the dissolution of the melodic flow, the composer employs the principle of gradual diminuendo, reducing the number of timbres, lowering the dynamic level to piano, and significantly simplifying the score. The choral texture is replaced by the solo tenor's recitative passages, while the mugham-derived figures that had previously expanded into melodic material are once



again presented as brief phrases. Accompanied by an organ-point texture in the first flute and first clarinet, the lament theme appears for the final time in the second violin and cello. In the closing measures of the work, the sound gradually fades through diminuendo until it becomes almost imperceptible. The complete exhaustion of melodic energy evokes a symbolic farewell to the martyrs.

CONCLUSION

The conducted research demonstrates that Kamal Ahmadov's Requiem has been examined for the first time as an object of scholarly analysis within Azerbaijani musicology, thereby enabling an in-depth investigation of the work's genre, stylistic, modal-harmonic, and melodic-rhythmic characteristics.

1. The analysis reveals that the developmental trajectory of the composition is constructed around two principal thematic sources: a four-voice "lament" theme based on the intonations of the Zabul-Segah mode, and a mugham-based theme grounded in the elements of the Humayun mode.
2. These themes convey the emotional content of the work, expressing the people's spiritual attachment to the martyrs and their collective grief through the synthesis of vocal and symphonic means of expression.
3. Textural analysis indicates that the composition predominantly employs a free imitative form, in which polyphonic and homophonic-harmonic writing are applied alternately or in parallel, while chromatic development serves to intensify musical tension.
4. The thematic materials are developed according to a "wave-phase" principle, culminating in a climax through the gradual enrichment of orchestral timbres. Within the orchestral texture, the piano's chordal ostinato and the harp's arpeggiated ostinato provide rhythmic support. The choral part is structured through the gradual entrance and withdrawal of voices and is unified by the recurring leitmotif of the word "martyrs."
5. Kamal Ahmadov's Requiem integrates Western requiem structures with national intonational and modal traditions, functioning as a memorial vocal-symphonic work that transforms the idea of martyrdom into an artistic symbol.
6. The composition not only reflects the composer's individual stylistic identity but also serves as an important medium for presenting the richness and diversity of Azerbaijani musical culture at the international level.

In conclusion, Kamal Ahmadov's Requiem constitutes a significant theoretical contribution to Azerbaijani musicology while simultaneously providing a practical foundation for future research. The analysis systematically reveals the work's artistic and emotional value and clarifies the position of the requiem genre within national musical culture.

Recommendations

1. The present study, based on a systematic analysis of the Requiem, provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for future research in the fields of musicology and composition. The findings enable comparative analyses between this work and other national and international requiem compositions.
2. The results of the research may be utilized to promote the work at the international level and to enhance the visibility of Azerbaijani compositional art within global musical culture. To this end, it is recommended that the work be disseminated through performances, concert programs, and scholarly publications.
3. The music-theoretical and analytical methods, as well as contemporary musicological approaches applied in the analysis of the Requiem, may contribute to the development of more complex and innovative analytical frameworks in future studies.
4. A detailed examination of the orchestral and choral scores of the Requiem is of significant importance for music education and the enrichment of performers' repertoires. Such study supports



both the preservation of national musical traditions and the development of students' musical expression and technical skills.

5. The scholarly analysis of Kamal Ahmadov's Requiem may serve as an important teaching resource for students pursuing education in the field of music.

6. This research creates opportunities for more comprehensive future analyses of the composer's works across various musical genres.

7. The knowledge obtained through this study constitutes a valuable resource for future researchers and practitioners, who may draw upon its findings in academic articles, diploma theses, and doctoral dissertations.

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BƏSTƏKAR KAMAL ƏHMƏDOVUN "REKVIYEM" ƏSƏRİNİN JANR VƏ ÜSLUB XÜSUSİYYƏTLƏRİ

R.Y. Məmmədova

Tədqiqatın məqsədi bəstəkar Kamal Əhmədovun "Rekviyem" əsərinin janr və üslub xüsusiyyətlərini, lad–harmonik quruluşunu, melodik–ritmik inkişaf prinsiplərini və müəllifin fərdi yaradıcılıq üslubunu nəzəri-analitik baxımdan araşdırmaqdır. Əsər 1990-cı il 20 Yanvar faciəsi qurbanlarının xatirəsinə həsr olunmuşdur və poetik mətn Azərbaycan xalq poeziyasının ən qədim janrlarından biri olan bayatıya əsaslanır. Kompozisiyanın dramaturji inkişafı iki aparıcı tematik mənbə üzərində qurulur: Zabul-Segah intonasiyalarından yaranan dörd səslə "ağı" teması və Humayun ladinin melodik elementlərinə söykənən muğam tipli tema.

Təhlil göstərir ki, vokal və simfonik ifadənin sintezi əsərin əsas emosional məzmununu ümummilli hüznü və şəhidlərə mənəvi bağlılığı formalaşdırır. Faktura baxımından sərbəst imitasiyalı polifoniya homofon-harmonik yazı ilə növbələşir, xromatik inkişaf isə dramatik gərginliyi gücləndirir. Tədqiqat musiqi nəzəriyyəsi və müasir musiqişünaslıq metodlarına əsaslanır; empirik baza kimi partitura materialı, elmi ədəbiyyat və bəstəkarla aparılmış müsahibələrdən istifadə olunmuşdur.

Tədqiqatın elmi yeniliyi Kamal Əhmədovun "Rekviyem"-inin Azərbaycan musiqişünaslığında ilk dəfə sistemli şəkildə elmi obyekt kimi təhlil edilməsidir. İşin tətbiqi əhəmiyyəti nəticələrin musiqi



qişünaslıq tədqiqatlarında, ali musiqi təhsilində və müasir vokal-simfonik əsərlərin analitik öyrənilməsində istifadə oluna bilməsindən ibarətdir.

Açar sözlər: *vokal-simfonik yaradıcılıq, muğam intonasiyası, lad-harmonik quruluş, polifonik faktura, memorial musiqi.*

ЖАНРОВО-СТИЛЕВЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ «РЕКВИЕМА» КОМПОЗИТОРА КАМАЛА АХМЕДОВА

Р.Я. Мамедова

Целью настоящего исследования является теоретико-аналитическое изучение жанрово-стилистических особенностей *Реквиема* композитора Камала Ахмедова с акцентом на его ладо-гармоническую структуру, мелодико-ритмическое развитие и индивидуальные черты авторского стиля. Произведение посвящено памяти жертв трагических событий 20 января 1990 года, а его поэтический текст основан на *баяты* одном из древнейших жанров азербайджанской народной поэзии. Драматургическое развитие композиции формируется на основе двух ведущих тематических источников: четырёхголосной «плачевой» темы, восходящей к интонациям Забил–Сегях, и мугамной темы, построенной на мелодических элементах лада Хумаюн.

Анализ показывает, что синтез вокального и симфонического начал определяет основное эмоционально-смысловое содержание произведения, передавая коллективную национальную скорбь и духовную преданность памяти шахидов. С фактурной точки зрения в сочинении чередуются свободная имитационная полифония и гомофонно-гармоническое письмо, тогда как хроматическое развитие играет существенную роль в усилении драматического напряжения. Методологическая основа исследования опирается на музыкально-теоретические положения и современные музыковедческие подходы; эмпирическую базу составляют нотный текст произведения, профильная научная литература и интервью с композитором.

Научная новизна исследования заключается в том, что *Реквием* Камала Ахмедова впервые рассматривается как объект системного научного анализа в азербайджанском музыкознании. Практическая значимость работы состоит в возможности использования её результатов в музыковедческих исследованиях, системе высшего музыкального образования и аналитическом изучении современных вокально-симфонических произведений.

Ключевые слова: *вокально-симфоническое творчество, мугамная интонация, ладо-гармоническая структура, полифоническая фактура; мемориальная музыка.*



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AZERBAIJAN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SECURITY POLICY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS: BILATERAL RELATIONS DURING THE PRESIDENCY OF ILHAM ALIYEV (2003–2021)

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This article examines the development of German-Azerbaijani relations during the presidency of Ilham Aliyev (2003–2021) through the prism of the security architecture of the South Caucasus. The main objective of the article, based on official sources, is to assess Germany's energy and security interests in the region and the development of bilateral relations. The analysis of German security policy is conducted chronologically based on Bundestag resolutions of 2009, 2012, and 2015. The article also examines discussions in the German parliament during the Second Karabakh War in 2020, as well as Germany's position on the South Caucasus in the resolution adopted by Germany in 2020 as part of its security policy in the South Caucasus in the context of new geopolitical realities after the 44-day war.

Keywords: Azerbaijan-Germany relations, South Caucasus, regional security, Bundestag transcripts and resolutions, Ilham Aliyev, Second Karabakh War.

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) stands as one of the most significant strategic partners in Europe for the Republic of Azerbaijan, which plays a central role in the economic and political architecture of the South Caucasus. Following the restoration of its state independence, the European vector-specifically relations with the FRG-became a priority direction in Azerbaijan's foreign policy strategy. The deep historical roots of these ties began to take shape as early as the beginning of the 19th century with the establishment of German settlements (such as Helenendorf, Annenfeld, etc.). The initial foundations for modern diplomatic rapprochement between the two countries were laid on the eve of German reunification. Relations entered an official plane in January 1992 with the FRG's recognition of Azerbaijan's independence, followed by the establishment of diplomatic relations in February of the same year. The fact that Azerbaijan's first embassy in Europe commenced its operations specifically in Bonn, and the pivotal role played by the prominent diplomat Huseynaga Sadigov in this process, underscores the special importance official Baku attaches to its partnership with Germany. In the initial phase spanning 1992-1993, the establishment of economic cooperation and direct air transport links formed the cornerstone of the future strategic partnership [7, p. 10-11].

A New Era of Strategic Cooperation with Germany: Ilham Aliyev and Protecting Political Succession in the Post-2003 Era

The change of political leadership in 2003 marked the beginning of a new stage in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, characterized by the resolute preservation and modernization of the strategic course towards Germany set by Heydar Aliyev. As the worthy successor to the political course of Heydar Aliyev, I. Aliyev has attached special importance to relations with the FRG within Azerbaijan's foreign policy. While serving as Prime Minister, I. Aliyev characterized Azerbaijan's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures as a continuation of H. Aliyev's policy and particularly emphasized the support of the FRG in this matter. Within this framework, during the opening ceremony of the “EUPES–Azerbaijan” German-Azerbaijani joint venture on October 2, 2003, his statement “I belie-



ve that we will need Germany's support regarding Azerbaijan's integration into the European family, and we do feel this support" [8, p. 215-217]. is a manifestation of the significant support provided by Germany on both political and economic levels towards Azerbaijan's entry into the European economic space.

From the mid-2000s onward, the course toward integration into the Euro-Atlantic space began to take on a more dynamic character within Azerbaijan's foreign policy. During President I. Aliyev's first official visit to Germany on August 24-26, 2004, during his meetings with German President Horst Köhler, Chancellor G. Schröder, and the head of the Bundestag's Caucasus Group Kristof Bergner, and the chairman of the Bundestag's foreign relations committee Volker Rühe, the situation in the South Caucasus, Azerbaijan's integration into European structures, the peaceful resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and regional security issues were discussed. The discussions held with Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder during the visit were remembered for their important messages in terms of both bilateral relations and the future of the region. Chancellor G. Schröder confirmed the main principles of Germany's South Caucasus policy and noted: "Germany has recognized and will recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict must be resolved peacefully." Germany's unequivocal support for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and its support for the resolution of the problem within the framework of international law at these meetings prove that Germany is interested in changing the status quo in the South Caucasus and ensuring stability [1, p. 2].

During this period, the Federal Republic of Germany acted as one of the primary European states supporting official Baku's strategic course. Specifically, the statements made by the new FRG Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Detlef Lingemann, in February 2005 demonstrated FRG's resolve in this matter. In a press conference, the Ambassador noted: "The FRG government welcomes Azerbaijan's rapprochement with and accession to Euro-Atlantic structures, and is ready to continue supporting Azerbaijan on this path in the future." [1, p. 1]. Particularly, the views expressed during the visit of the German Bundestag delegation to Baku in May 2005 reaffirmed the strategic nature of the relations. For instance, Manfred Carstens, the Chairman of the Bundestag's Budget Committee, noted: "Germany is ready to provide Azerbaijan with all kinds of assistance in its integration into Europe, and Azerbaijan can be certain of this" [3, p. 7].

The visit of President Ilham Aliyev to the FRG on September 22, 2006, as a significant indicator of his policy of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, constituted an important stage in the development of diplomatic and economic ties between the two countries. The primary purpose of the visit was to participate in the "**International Bertelsmann-2006**" forum held in Berlin. During the first session organized within the framework of the forum, titled "The Balkans and the Black Sea Region as a Litmus Test for Europe" the head of state shared his strategic views regarding Azerbaijan's role on regional and international levels. In his speech at the "**International Bertelsmann – 2006**" forum held in Berlin in 2006, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev voiced important theses on this issue and noted that "the South Caucasus region, especially in terms of transporting the rich hydrocarbon resources of the Caspian Sea, is of strategic importance for Europe's energy security. Azerbaijan is now fully ready to act as a reliable and long-term partner in ensuring this security by becoming a global oil and gas supplier. However, the most serious geopolitical obstacle to lasting stability and European-South Caucasus integration in the region is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; therefore, Europe must play a more active and decisive role in the process of restoring peace and the rule of law in the region." Utilizing this authoritative platform, I. Aliyev brought Azerbaijan's principled position on the **Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict**, based on international law, to the attention of the international community. This visit, while strengthening Azerbaijan's position as a reliable partner within the European space, also served to deepen bilateral relations with Germany [4, p. 1].

During President Ilham Aliyev's official visit to Germany in February 2007, the course of integration into the Euro-Atlantic space was once again declared a persistent priority of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. This visit confirmed the high level of political ties between the two countries. In the meeting held with Chancellor Angela Merkel on February 14 as part of the visit, Azerbaijan's economic progress, the democratization process, and the future of relations with the EU were discussed. The parties noted the necessity of raising cooperation in the field of energy security to a new stage, and Germany expressed its support in this direction. Ilham Aliyev also participated in a business forum and the discussions titled ***"Azerbaijan in the 21st Century Development and Security Perspectives,"*** organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Berlin in February 2007, succeeding in promoting a closer acquaintance with the country in Germany [5, p. 1].

The factor of Ilham Aliyev has held particular significance in the development of relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the FRG. It is precisely as a result of the consistent and pragmatic foreign policy course he implemented that bilateral ties have ascended to a new stage, and political dialogue has further intensified. In this context, the adoption of an important resolution by the German parliament in 2009 titled ***"Strengthening Security, Stability, and Democracy in the South Caucasus"*** was not of a coincidental nature. While reflecting Germany's position on ensuring stability and security in the region, as well as strengthening democratic values, the document in question serves as a clear indicator of the importance attached to the deepening of Azerbaijan-Germany relations. The primary focus of this document was directed toward the reinforcement of stability, security, and democratic values in the region. Simultaneously, the necessity of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the framework of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity was explicitly stated. The resolution declares that lasting peace in the region is only possible if the internationally recognized borders of states are respected. In the large-scale debates held in the German Bundestag, the South Caucasus region remained in the spotlight as a strategic partner of Europe and a key link in energy security [18, p. 3].

The analytical document titled ***"Recalibrating Germany's and EU's Policy in the South Caucasus,"*** published by the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and extensively discussed in Berlin in July 2010, substantiates the necessity for Germany to assume the role of a primary political patron and "advocate" for the South Caucasus within the European Union. The author, Stefan Meister, notes that the "Eastern Partnership" initiative, put forward by Poland and Sweden, remains incomplete without Germany's active support. Germany's stance on this matter is regarded as the only force capable of bridging the internal strategic divisions within the EU specifically the rifts between "Old" and "New" Europe regarding relations with Russia. This DGAP document provides a critical analysis of Germany's traditional "Russia first" doctrine. It states that German foreign policy has long remained in the shadow of Russia, and Berlin has struggled to pursue an independent, "two-track" policy (engaging both with Russia and directly with regional countries) in the post-Soviet space without being constrained by the Russian factor. This "Russia-centric" approach is seen as having limited Germany's strategic opportunities in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. The document concludes by emphasizing that for the EU to be successful in the South Caucasus, Berlin must assume absolute leadership and recalibrate its relations with Russia in a way that does not hinder the strategic ties established with other regional states, particularly Azerbaijan. The document characterizes Germany's South Caucasus policy as that of an "economic giant, yet a politically hesitant actor." It provides empirical evidence demonstrating that Azerbaijan is the absolute economic hub for Germany in the region, holding a strategic position in the country's energy security (ranking as Germany's 6th most important oil supplier at the time). The 7 core pillars proposed in the document reflect a fundamental shift in Berlin's regional outlook:

1. ***Role as an "Advocate" within the EU:*** Germany should utilize its economic power and political influence to act as the primary patron for the South Caucasus and Trans-Caspian region within the EU, strengthening the region's role as a strategic bridge for Europe.



2. **“Two-track” Policy:** FRG must rethink its traditional Eastern policy; while maintaining a partnership with Russia, it should simultaneously develop independent and parallel bilateral relations with other post-Soviet countries that are not contingent upon the “Russia factor.”
3. **Azerbaijan-centered Balancing:** Moving away from the old Georgia-centric policy, Germany should establish a strategic partnership in energy and economics with Azerbaijan, the region's “economic engine.” Furthermore, Germany should take a proactive role in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, even advocating for the EU to take over France's co-chairmanship in the Minsk Group.
4. **Southern Energy Corridor:** To ensure direct European access to Caspian resources, relations with Baku and Ashgabat must be elevated to the highest level, with active support provided for Trans-Caspian pipeline projects.
5. **Strategic Coordination with Türkiye:** Türkiye should be recognized as a key regional state, and the Berlin-Ankara axis should be strengthened to establish peace in the South Caucasus. Discussions regarding Turkey's EU membership should not hinder this strategic cooperation.
6. **Independent Decision-making from Russia:** Although Russia remains an important partner, Germany should not sacrifice the EU's strategic interests for the sake of a “conflict-free relationship” and must limit Moscow's ability to veto decisions regarding the region.
7. **Transatlantic Coordination:** US involvement in the region and the Obama administration's “reset” policy should be utilized coordinately by Germany, synchronizing the activities of Washington and Brussels in the region [15, p. 12-14].

The working visit of President Ilham Aliyev to Germany on February 3–4, 2012, held significant importance in terms of strengthening Azerbaijan's strategic partnership with both Germany and the European Union as a whole. Among the primary topics discussed during the meetings, alongside bilateral relations, the decisive role of the Caspian region in Europe's energy security and several pressing regional and international issues were brought to the forefront. Within the framework of the visit, the head of state participated in the 48th Munich Security Conference and expressed our country's position during the debate titled “Energy, Resources, and the Environment: New Security Parameters.” In his speech, Ilham Aliyev particularly emphasized the significance of the energy corridors established at Azerbaijan's initiative, stating that the massive pipeline projects delivering Caspian oil to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea serve not only the welfare of the Azerbaijani people but also create strategic dividends for international partners. He declared that this successful infrastructure has prepared a solid foundation for new and even larger-scale projects to be implemented in the future [15, 13].

Germany's foreign policy in the South Caucasus is fundamentally anchored in its national interest of maintaining a stable “security belt” along Europe's eastern periphery, where the resolution of protracted conflicts is viewed as a prerequisite for regional integration. In the process of evolution of the security policy of the Federal Republic of Germany in the South Caucasus, the position paper **“20 years of conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh: a new impetus for the peaceful resolution of the conflict”** adopted by the CDU/CSU faction in February 2012 is of particular conceptual importance. The structural analysis of the document shows that official Berlin has for the first time functionally integrated the geoeconomic interests of the European Union (EU) and regional security dilemmas in relation to the region. The leadership of the faction openly declares that ensuring stability in the South Caucasus is directly conditioned by the interests of Germany and the EU as a whole in diversifying energy sources, in particular ensuring long-term security of gas supplies through direct pipeline projects with Azerbaijan. The seven-point action program proposed to the federal government in the document reveals the model of a multilateral regional order in Germany's South Caucasus strategy. The geopolitical essence of the document is based on the need to redistribute the influence of transregional actors. Thus, German conservatives have tried to increase Brussels' collective weight in the region by proposing to replace France's individual and unilateral mediation status with

hin the OSCE Minsk Group with institutional representation of the EU and to expand the mandate of the EU Special Representative. At the same time, the document proposes using the lever of the EU-Russia security dialogue, modeled on the “Meseberg Memorandum”, to draw the Russian Federation, which is interested in preserving the status quo and stimulating the regional arms race, into a constructive channel. The proposal to eliminate Yerevan's military-strategic dependence on Moscow (the need for the presence of Russian military bases) through the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations in order to neutralize the impact of the conflict on the regional security architecture is the most proactive geopolitical element of the document. By accepting Ankara's regional geopolitical weight and responsibility and supporting its constructive participation in resolving the Karabakh conflict, official Berlin implicitly determined in 2012 that the future fate of the region depends on the consensus of the great powers [19].

Under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, the German direction of Azerbaijan's foreign policy entered a qualitatively new stage, where the strategic line established by the National Leader Heydar Aliyev was continued with a more resolute defense of national interests. One of the most significant indicators of this political succession is the diplomatic progress achieved within the German Bundestag regarding Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. In the resolution ***“Demanding respect for human rights in Azerbaijan”*** adopted by the German Bundestag in June 2015, upon the motion of the CDU/CSU and SPD factions, the severe internal political challenges facing Azerbaijan were highlighted. It was stated that 586,000 internally displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories occupied by Armenia since 1993, as well as 250,000 Azerbaijani refugees from Armenia, created a serious economic, social, and political burden for the country. The resolution also noted that the Azerbaijani government had taken significant steps toward improving the conditions, resettlement, education, and employment of these refugees. Compared to the 2009 resolution, this document explicitly identified Armenia as the occupying party, which was met with serious dissatisfaction from the Armenian side [20].

The working visit of President Ilham Aliyev to Germany on January 20–21, 2015, conditioned the transition of these relations to a new qualitative stage on both political and economic levels. The political significance of the visit is characterized by discussions held with the highest-level representatives of the German leadership. President Ilham Aliyev's meetings with members of the German-Azerbaijani Forum and deputies representing various factions of the Bundestag brought the role of parliamentary diplomacy in interstate relations to the forefront. In these meetings, Azerbaijan's integration into European structures and the prospects of cooperation within the framework of the “Eastern Partnership” program were the primary topics of discussion. During the visit, in meetings held with both Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the ways to resolve the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were reviewed in detail. The Azerbaijani head of state particularly emphasized the necessity of restoring the country's territorial integrity based on the norms and principles of international law, while the German side noted Azerbaijan's role in maintaining stability in the region. The high-level meetings held in Berlin in January 2015 reaffirmed Azerbaijan's growing role in Europe's changing energy and security architecture, especially following the Ukrainian crisis. The statements by Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Ilham Aliyev demonstrate that the relations between the two countries are of global rather than merely bilateral significance. In Chancellor Angela Merkel's speech, Azerbaijan's indispensable role in diversifying Europe's energy supply was specifically emphasized. Against the backdrop of the events in Ukraine, Germany's and Europe's overall attempts to reduce energy dependence on Russia turned the “Southern Gas Corridor” (TANAP and TAP projects), initiated by Azerbaijan, into a strategic alternative for the continent. President Ilham Aliyev declared that by undertaking both the political will and the primary financial burden in the implementation of these projects, Azerbaijan is reshaping the energy map of Europe. This cooperation is a vital guarantee for industrial giants like Germany in terms of the security of energy sources. On the political



level, both leaders demonstrated that they are like-minded regarding the preservation of regional stability. Ilham Aliyev conveyed our country's principled position on the resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict the necessity of eliminating the fact of occupation and implementing the UN Security Council resolutions to the international audience with academic and legal foundations. Chancellor Merkel, in turn, noted that Germany supports mediation efforts for the peaceful resolution of this conflict and emphasized the importance of European structures playing a more active role in this process [11, p. 335-342].

The official visit of German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel to Azerbaijan in August 2018 marked the transition of bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level active strategic alliance. Chancellor Merkel's statement, "Azerbaijan is Germany's largest trading partner in the region," formally consolidated Azerbaijan's central role in Germany's South Caucasus policy. This visit is also characterized as the beginning of a new era in the architecture of institutional cooperation between Azerbaijan and the European Union. A statistical analysis of bilateral economic ties clearly demonstrates Azerbaijan's dominance in the region. By the end of 2017, Azerbaijan accounted for approximately 66% of Germany's total trade turnover with the South Caucasus countries. Currently, the presence of nearly 150 German-origin enterprises in the country and the participation of German companies in state projects exceeding \$1 billion signify the depth of economic integration. This dynamism constitutes a vital component of the \$25 billion total investment portfolio placed into the Azerbaijani economy by the European Union since the country's independence. On a strategic level, Azerbaijan is valued as a "powerful factor" and an indispensable partner in the diversification of Europe's energy map. The commissioning of the "Southern Gas Corridor" was assessed as a decisive step in ensuring the continent's energy security, while the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line was presented as a crucial logistical artery optimizing trade links between Europe and Asia. These projects further solidify Azerbaijan's status as a regional economic locomotive. During the visit, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, the most pressing issue for regional security, was a primary topic of discussion. The German side reaffirmed its principled position regarding the resolution of the problem within the framework of international legal norms and the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, declaring its readiness to increase diplomatic efforts in this direction. In conclusion, these high-level contacts have internationally re-legitimized Azerbaijan's position as a reliable strategic partner of Europe and the geopolitical center of the South Caucasus [25]. The Azerbaijan-Germany Business Forum on "Energy and ICT," scheduled for October 2018, is viewed as the next step toward transforming this political will into practical economic outcomes [21, p. 150-151].

The scientific-practical discussions held in Berlin in 2018 on the theme "Azerbaijan-Germany Relations: Shared History and Perspectives" demonstrate that Germany's security priority in the South Caucasus is built upon the insurance of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and the diversification of energy routes. Evaluating the military conflicts in the region as a direct threat to the European security architecture, German political circles officially acknowledge Azerbaijan's decisive role within this architecture. In particular, the economic-strategic ties established through the Southern Gas Corridor are the primary factor conditioning Germany's assumption of a more active diplomatic role for the sake of peace and stability in the region [6]. The visit of Johannes Kahrs, the head of the German Bundestag's parliamentary group for the South Caucasus, to Azerbaijan in May 2019 stands as a clear example of the development of bilateral relations on a parliamentary level. As noted in the official statement by the head of the delegation, Johannes Kahrs, the FRG holds strategic interests in deepening relations with Azerbaijan across all fields, particularly within political and economic platforms. This visit and the views expressed therein once again reaffirmed Azerbaijan's central role in Germany's South Caucasus policy and demonstrated the existence of a direct and sincere dialogue between the legislative bodies of both countries [16].

The Second Karabakh War in the Foreign Policy Debates of the German Bundestag



On October 29, 2020, the Second Karabakh War and the new geopolitical realities emerging in the South Caucasus became the subject of extensive discussion at the meeting of the German Bundestag. The discussions held in the German Bundestag on October 29, 2020, at the joint request of the CDU-CSU and SPD factions during the Second Karabakh War, on the topic of ***“Strengthening the EU's capacity to act in the field of foreign and security policy for an immediate ceasefire and a sustainable peace settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh”***, are of particular importance in terms of Germany's security policy in the South Caucasus. Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas from the SPD party, who presented the government's foreign policy line in the discussions, made an extensive report and justified the Federal Government's perspective on the Second Karabakh War within the framework of Germany's security policy in the South Caucasus. The humanitarian crisis resulting from the war was highlighted in the speech of the German Foreign Minister. H. Maas expressed great concern over the damage to civilian infrastructure and the intensification of the flow of internally displaced persons within the region. It was noted that the federal government had allocated 2 million euros in humanitarian aid in the initial stage through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in order to mitigate the effects of the crisis and that this financial support was planned to be increased taking into account the difficulties of the winter season. During the discussions, the German side emphasized that a military solution to the conflict was unacceptable and that the international community would not accept the parties' attempts to gain leverage in the future negotiation process through tactical advantages on the battlefield. H. Maas stated that Baku and Yerevan should cease military operations without setting any preconditions and resume political dialogue within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group. One of the central lines of the discussions in the Bundestag was the position of regional powers, especially Türkiye, on the participation of the war. Minister H. Maas and deputies representing the relevant factions sharply criticized Ankara's active military-political support in the conflict and its steps that contributed to the regional escalation. The German side accused Türkiye of failing to adhere to its international legal obligations and its responsibility to maintain regional stability as a member of the OSCE Minsk Group. It was emphasized in the discussions that in order to prevent the crisis from developing into a regional war, Ankara should weaken its military support and direct its existing influence to de-escalation. In conclusion, H. Maas touched upon the future role of the European Union in the South Caucasus region and expressed the intention of the structure, through the Eastern Partnership program and special representative institutions, to participate as a more active partner not only in maintaining the military status quo in the region, but also in the processes of recovery, reconstruction and economic and political reintegration in the post-conflict phase [22, p. 23429-23430].

During the discussions in the Bundestag, Armin-Paulus Hampel, foreign policy representative of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) faction, criticized the traditional framework of the approach of Germany and other parties, which approach the military crisis in the South Caucasus more through the prism of regional and global geopolitical scenarios. The deputy linked the escalation of the conflict to the strategies of regional powers, especially Turkey, in the Middle East and North Africa, and brought to the parliamentary level the claims behind the diplomatic curtain about Ankara's intention to keep Russia strategically busy in the Caucasus: "There are rumors that this conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan was deliberately ignited by Turkey in order to keep Russia busy in the Caucasus and thus ensure Turkey's freedom of action in Syria and Libya. Time will tell to what extent this is true and can be confirmed, it is still uncertain. But it is not difficult to imagine it." A.P. Hampel, assessing the scale of the crisis in a wider geographical area, drew attention to the factor of the multi-million (more than 15 million) ethnic Azerbaijanis living in Iran. He warned that if this factor gets out of control, it will affect Tehran and, as a result, create a huge explosion risk that could engulf the entire region. He directly referred to four well-known UN Security Council resolutions and clearly stated that these territories are recognized by the international community as sovereign territory and an integral part of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In his speech, the German politician



accused the Federal Government and the European Union (EU) of making statements but not fulfilling their legal obligations. Although the official documents on the partnership priorities signed between the EU and Azerbaijan contain direct clauses on supporting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan, he sharply criticized Germany's failure to take these principles into account in practical policy. The MP emphasized that Azerbaijan's objections to Germany on this issue are completely legitimate. Regarding Germany's position in the Karabakh war, the MP said: "As for Germany's position: we can try to offer ourselves as a mediator there, but this is the maximum we can do. We can only offer our role as a mediator. We have no mechanism, no tools to intervene in the conflict. Although the agreement on priorities between the European Union and Azerbaijan clearly states that the EU supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan, you have been criticized by Baku. Azerbaijanis rightly criticize that Germany, the leading EU country, is unaware of this official document. Unfortunately, we have to prove them right in this matter." Touching on the mechanisms for resolving the conflict, A.P. Hampel stressed the importance of recognizing that European structures do not have real influence in the region. He summed up the impotence of German foreign policy, claiming that the key to resolving the crisis lies not in European capitals, but only in strategic compromises and a common denominator between Ankara and Moscow: "Germany does not have the necessary means of influence and we must admit that we cannot intervene in this conflict. Everyone knows that the solution to this problem does not lie in Berlin; the key lies in Ankara and Moscow. These two governments must come to a common denominator and find a solution in the Caucasus as soon as possible. We do not have such great interests there to protect. The most important and decisive point is that we do not have the strength to participate in this geopolitical game. This is, in essence, a declaration of the bankruptcy of German foreign policy in the context of the Caucasian conflict." [22, p. 23430-23431].

Y. D. Vadephul, objecting to the passive approach of AfD representative Armin-Paulus Hampel to the region, argues that Germany has real geopolitical and security interests in the South Caucasus. He puts the tension in this geography on the same level as other hot spots in Europe and states: "Unlike you, I am of the opinion that official Berlin has absolutely real interests in this region; because this is another war that has broken out in Europe after the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine and the severe interstate conflicts that we are facing elsewhere, for example in the Eastern Mediterranean. For this reason, it is entirely in the interests of both Germany and Europe to take action and put forward initiatives to resolve the problem." Y. D. Vadephul, appreciating the line of the German Foreign Ministry and the Chancellery to maintain a balanced dialogue with the parties to the conflict, refers to the Madrid Principles of 2007 as the main international-legal basis for resolving the crisis.

Y. D. Vadephul emphasizes the need for the implementation of the six components of the Madrid Principles in an equal and unconditional manner in order to ensure sustainable peace in the region. This framework includes the following fundamental steps:

1. The return of the regions surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan;;
2. Determination of an interim status that ensures the security and self-government of the region;
3. Creation of a corridor that ensures geographical and logistical connectivity between Armenia and Karabakh;
4. In the future, the final legal status of the region will be resolved through an expression of will (self-determination of the people);
5. Determination of the right of internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their native lands;
6. Formation of security guarantees, including international peacekeeping operations.

Y.D. Vadephul specifically touched on the role of Türkiye as an external factor increasing regional tensions. Large-scale military support provided by Türkiye to Azerbaijan and unofficial in-



formation about mercenaries allegedly brought from Syria cause serious concern in Germany. Y. Vadeful assessed this policy of Türkiye, a member of NATO, as an attempt to ignite the hotbed of conflict, and declared that the strategic patience of Western states with Ankara's geopolitical steps is already running out [22, p. 23432].

Dr. Gregor Gysi, one of the leading figures of the Left (Die Linke) faction in the German Bundestag, touched upon the historical roots of the ethno-political conflict in the South Caucasus and recalled that during the Soviet period, Nagorno-Karabakh was formed as an autonomous entity within Azerbaijan through the Caucasus Committee of Nagorno-Karabakh by Stalin's decision, and this legal status remained unchanged until the collapse of the USSR. Touching upon the fact that the Republic of Armenia took control of other Azerbaijani territories in order to create a geographical and strategic connection (corridor) after the unilateral declaration of independence in the region in 1991, Dr. Gregor Gysi gave a principled legal assessment of this process. Just as Gysi resolutely characterized the West's Kosovo policy and Russia's steps towards Crimea as a violation of international law, Armenia's military-political activities in the territories of Azerbaijan were similarly defined as a "violation of international law." Although G. Gysi officially admitted that the Armenian side occupied Azerbaijani territories under the pretext of creating regional communication lines, he defended the importance of changing the current status quo only through peaceful, political-diplomatic methods in resolving the problem. However, trying to place the main responsibility for the activation of the military stage on Azerbaijan and Türkiye, which provided him with military-political support in the fall of 2020, G. Gysi demonstrated a critical position, claiming that the strategy of liberating all territories by using military force in this just war contradicts the Madrid Principles of the OSCE Minsk Group. Dr. Gregor Gysi emphasized that Germany cannot remain neutral in this regional crisis and demanded that Berlin take a more decisive, different political position on the conflict. The biggest political demarche in the MP's speech was aimed at Türkiye's regional role and Germany's domestic arms export policy. Referring to the historical events of the Ottoman Empire and the relevant resolution of the Bundestag dated 2016, G. Gysi claimed that Turkey should remain completely out of this conflict for ethical and moral reasons and strongly condemned Turkey's claims that it sent military forces and mercenaries from Syria to the region.

During the discussions in the Bundestag, the approach of Manuel Sarrazin, a representative of the Greens (BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN) faction, is characterized by the recognition of the international community's historical responsibility for the regional crisis and a critical analysis of the passivity of the European Union (EU) in its policy in the South Caucasus. The most important point of M. Sarrazin regarding the war is his open statement that Western diplomacy bears joint responsibility for preserving the status quo that has developed over decades. M. Sarrazin emphasized that the international community has long come to terms with the reality that the problem remains unresolved and, although it has observed that the moment when the Azerbaijani side will resort to military means is approaching, has not exerted the necessary political pressure on the parties to change the situation diplomatically. Although Manuel Sarrazin acknowledged that the unconstructive position of the Armenian governments (both previous and current administrations) during the 26-year negotiation process deserves serious criticism, he argued that this does not give legitimacy to the military advance of official Baku and defended the importance of stopping military operations in order to return to political dialogue. Assessing the changes in the geopolitical arena, M. Sarrazin characterized this war as a dangerous manifestation of the tendency of the use of force to become a means of conducting politics and called it a negative signal for the security architecture of Europe's "Eastern Partnership" in the South Caucasus. M. Sarrazin also noted that leaving the fate of the South Caucasus solely to the sphere of influence of Russia and Türkiye is contrary to the geopolitical interests of Europe and Germany.

In the discussions in the Bundestag, the speech of Dr. Barbara Hendriks, a representative of the Social Democrats (SPD), another leading party in the ruling coalition, on the historical and legal



dimensions of the conflict is of particular importance. Linking the historical roots of the regional crisis to the period after the First World War and the stage of the formation of the USSR, Dr. Barbara Hendriks drew attention to the chronological sequence in determining the administrative-territorial affiliation of the region. One of the most important points in the deputy's speech was the unequivocal recognition of the sovereignty and international legal superiority of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the context of the final legal settlement of the issue, despite the unfounded Armenian claims that the Armenian population in Nagorno-Karabakh constitutes a demographic majority. Referring to the decision adopted by the Communist Party of Russia in July 1921, Dr. Barbara Hendriks noted that the principle of keeping Nagorno-Karabakh within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic was established, and Azerbaijan's international legal claim (or right of sovereignty) over the region followed from this. This was also confirmed by the relevant UN resolutions of 1993. The SPD representative said that this historical legacy was not limited only to the decisions of the Soviet era, but was also confirmed and firmly established by the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council of 1993, which are important acts of the modern international system. At the same time, touching upon the artificial change in the demographic structure of the region, H. Hendriks said that although the share of the Armenian population was approximately 75 percent at the initial stage, this indicator became monoethnic and reached 100 percent as a result of the forced expulsion and ethnic cleansing of the local Azerbaijani population. Correlating the humanitarian consequences of the conflict with official statistics, the deputy officially confirmed from the Bundestag podium that, according to official data from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 700 thousand Azerbaijanis from Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding regions occupied by Armenia have become internally displaced persons and refugees. In this context, the parliamentarian's official reference to the "Madrid Principles", which have served as the main basis for resolving the conflict since 2007, is particularly noteworthy.

The speech of Steffen Kotre, a member of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) faction, representing the right-wing radical opposition, demonstrates an approach based on a sharply pro-Armenian and anti-Turkish position, which is completely different from Germany's balanced foreign policy course. S. Kotre tried to characterize the legal military operations carried out by the Republic of Azerbaijan to liberate the territories of the Second Karabakh War in 2020 as an "aggressive war" that violates international law, and described Armenia's aggressive policy as a "just defensive struggle". The AfD representative tried to transfer the process to a purely ideological level, interpreting Türkiye's legal geopolitical support for Azerbaijan in the context of "neo-Ottomanism" and "support for international terrorism". Another striking point in the speech was the complete distortion of the historical and legal status of the region. Thus, in order to question Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Karabakh, S. Coutre presented the 1921 chronology as the subjective will and "arbitrariness" of Joseph Stalin, thereby choosing the line of denying the legal and administrative succession of the Soviet era and the territorial integrity imperative of modern international law. Undoubtedly, this is an example of how the position of the right-wing populist circles in the Bundestag on the Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the 44-day Patriotic War is approached not from the perspective of the fundamental principles of international law, but from an anti-Islamic, anti-Turkish and Eurocentric ideological perspective.

The speeches of representatives of the leading political parties represented in the German Bundestag (CDU/CSU, SPD, AfD, FDP, Greens, Left) and Foreign Minister Heiko Maas during the Second Karabakh War (44-day Patriotic War) in the fall of 2020 are of great importance for Germany's regional security and conflict management in the South Caucasus. A systematic analysis of parliamentary debates shows that Germany's South Caucasus policy was formed under the influence of a sharp imbalance between the norms of international law and the new geopolitical realities emerging in the region. The most important feature of the debates is the existence of an unshakable legal consensus on the sovereign belonging of Nagorno-Karabakh among the different political par-

ties represented in the Bundestag. The military-political support provided by Türkiye to Azerbaijan by the deputy leader of the Christian Democrats' faction, Johann Wadephul, and other coalition representatives became the target of sharp criticism. The German political elite viewed Türkiye's active intervention in the regional conflict to such an extent as a direct threat to its own close-neighborhood policy and the security interests of the European Union in the South Caucasus. These criticisms, in fact, stem from the fear of the weakening of the West's institutional mechanisms of influence in the region (OSCE, EU) and the South Caucasus falling into the sphere of influence of regional powers. On the other hand, in the speeches of Armin-Paulus Hampel, foreign policy spokesman for the right-wing-conservative Alternative Party (AfD), and other critics, the 30-year inaction of the West and the OSCE Minsk Group, as well as Russia's dual role in the conflict, were exposed. A. P. Hampel and his colleagues clearly emphasized that the key to resolving the conflict is no longer in the hands of Brussels or Berlin, but directly in the hands of Türkiye and Russia. The fact that the Russian Federation maintains regional dependence by arming both sides and manages the conflict for the sake of its geopolitical interests was openly voiced from the Bundestag.

In our opinion, Germany's view of Türkiye's strengthening in the region as contrary to its interests, but its inability to bypass Turkey in resolving the crisis, has revealed deep cracks in Germany's foreign policy between liberal values and realism. The fact that the actual resolution of the conflict is subject to the military-diplomatic consensus along the Ankara-Moscow line confirms that Germany remains a mere passive observer in the South Caucasus security architecture.

The resolution titled ***“Support for the preparation of a long-term peace settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh,”*** passed by the CDU-CSU parliamentary group the primary conservative bloc in Germany's Bundestag on November 24, 2020, directly following the intense combat operations of the Second Karabakh War, serves as a cornerstone document that codifies FRG's official strategic stance regarding the reconfigured security landscape of the South Caucasus in the post-conflict era. Consistent with the foreign policy doctrine of the FRG, this text firmly defines the prolonged status quo in Karabakh and its adjacent administrative districts, sustained by the Republic of Armenia, as an unlawful occupation that violates fundamental international legal norms. This stance reaffirms the FRG's legislative dedication to upholding the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity for the Republic of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized boundaries. Conversely, the resolution places significant analytical emphasis on mechanisms designed to halt regional escalation. Specifically, it evaluates the trilateral declaration signed on November 10, 2020, which followed the most severe and destructive military confrontations in the area in recent history, along with the ceasefire framework it established. The document characterizes these developments as a crucial and unavoidable practical measure aimed at initiating de-escalation, thereby reducing tensions in the South Caucasus and creating a foundation for enduring stability. The resolution particularly focuses on the geopolitical roles of Russia and Turkey in the conflict. Berlin expects both countries to fully support the sovereignty of Armenia and Azerbaijan, avoiding a position based solely on unilateral interests. Türkiye's significant military and political support for Azerbaijan, combined with allegations of the deployment of Syrian mercenaries, has raised serious legal concerns. The text emphasizes that Türkiye's attempts to implement its foreign agenda through exclusive negotiations with Moscow, bypassing existing multilateral frameworks such as the OSCE Minsk Group, undermine the peace initiative [23].

CONCLUSION

The place of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the security policy of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the South Caucasus and the dynamics of the evolution of bilateral relations in the chronological period covering 2003–2021 demonstrate Germany's attempts to create a balance between regional national interests and the norms of international law. Under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan's active foreign policy and energy diplomacy strategy has taken the



FRG's perspective on the region out of the context of a mere post-Soviet crisis zone and elevated Azerbaijan to the level of a reliable partner within the scope of diversification in the strategic architecture of European energy security and trans-Eurasian logistics corridors. The article examines the fundamental resolutions adopted by the German Bundestag on regional security and the Karabakh conflict (especially the resolutions of 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2020, which coincided immediately after the Second Karabakh War) as important in terms of tracking the evolution of the FRG's legal and political position on the issue. The structural analysis of the aforementioned documents proves that the German legislature and state elite, with an unshakable consensus across parties, characterized the status quo of Karabakh and its surrounding administrative districts maintained by Armenia as a fact of occupation contrary to international law, and unequivocally recognized the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. However, although human rights, strengthening of civil society and humanitarian calls, which are elements of the doctrine of liberal values, are often prioritized in the documents, the principle of inviolability of Azerbaijan's sovereign borders is preserved in the legal sphere. The first official visit of President İlham Aliyev to Germany on August 24–26, 2004, created the basis for a legal and political inventory of relations against the background of new geopolitical realities. Following this, the participation of the Azerbaijani head of state in the International Bertelsmann Forum in 2006 ensured the integration of official Baku with the intellectual and strategic think tanks of Europe and the direct attention of the Western elite to the challenges of regional security. As the highest political and diplomatic peak of bilateral relations, the official visit of Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel to Azerbaijan in 2018 demonstrated the growing importance of Azerbaijan as an energy producer in the South Caucasus in Germany's geopolitical balancing policy in the South Caucasus region. The high-level negotiations held within the framework of this visit put into motion two main pillars of Germany's regional security interests: reducing Europe's energy dependence through the "Southern Gas Corridor" and maintaining a peaceful regional order in the region. The discussions taking place in the Bundestag against the backdrop of the 44-day Patriotic War of 2020 and the resolution adopted on November 24, 2020 also confirm that Germany has been forced to accept the decisive hegemony of the Ankara-Moscow military-diplomatic line in the settlement of regional crises.

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ALMANIYA FEDERATİV RESPUBLİKASININ CƏNUBİ QAFQAZDA TƏHLÜKƏSİZLİK SİYASƏTİ ÇƏRÇİVƏSİNDƏ AZƏRBAYCAN: İLHAM ƏLİYEVİN PREZİDENTLİYİ DÖVRÜNDƏ İKİTƏRƏFLİ MÜNASİBƏTLƏR (2003–2021)

C.P. Məmmədli

Bu məqalədə İlham Əliyevin prezidentliyi dövründə (2003–2021) Almaniya-Azərbaycan münasibətlərinin inkişafı Cənubi Qafqazın təhlükəsizlik arxitekturası prizmasından araşdırılır. Rəsmi mənbələrə əsaslanan məqalənin əsas məqsədi Almaniyanın regiondakı enerji və təhlükəsizlik maraqlarını və ikitərəfli münasibətlərin inkişafını qiymətləndirməkdir. Almaniyanın təhlükəsizlik siyasətinin təhlili Bundestaqın 2009, 2012 və 2015-ci il qətnamələrinə əsasən xronoloji ardıcılıqla aparılır. Məqalədə həmçinin 2020-ci ildə İkinci Qarabağ müharibəsi zamanı Almaniya parlamentində aparılan müzakirələr, eləcə də Almaniyanın 2020-ci ildə Cənubi Qafqazda təhlükəsizlik siyasətinin bir hissəsi olaraq 44 günlük müharibədən sonrakı yeni geosiyasi reallıqlar kontekstində qəbul etdiyi qətnamədə Almaniyanın Cənubi Qafqazla bağlı mövqeyi araşdırılır.

Açar sözlər: *Azərbaycan-Almaniya münasibətləri, Cənubi Qafqaz, regional təhlükəsizlik, Bundestaqın stenoqramları, parlament qətnamələri, İlham Əliyev, İkinci Qarabağ müharibəsi.*

АЗЕРБАЙДЖАН В РАМКАХ ПОЛИТИКИ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ ФЕДЕРАТИВНОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ ГЕРМАНИЯ НА ЮЖНОМ КАВКАЗЕ: ДВУСТОРОННИЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ В ПЕРИОД ПРЕЗИДЕНТСТВА ИЛЬХАМА АЛИЕВА (2003–2021)

Дж.П. Мамедли

В данной статье рассматривается развитие германо-азербайджанских отношений в период президентства Ильхама Алиева (2003–2021 гг.) через призму архитектуры безопасности Южного Кавказа. Главная цель статьи, основанной на официальных источниках, — оценка энергетических интересов и интересов безопасности Германии в регионе и развития двусторонних отношений. Анализ политики безопасности Германии проводится в хронологическом порядке на основе резолюций Бундестага 2009, 2012 и 2015 годов. В статье также рассматриваются дискуссии в немецком парламенте во время Второй Карабахской войны в 2020 году, а также позиция Германии по Южному Кавказу в резолюции, принятой Германией в 2020 году в рамках ее политики безопасности на Южном Кавказе в условиях новых геополитических реалий после 44-дневной войны.

Ключевые слова: *азербайджано-германские отношения, Южный Кавказ, региональная безопасность, стенограммы и резолюции Бундестага, Ильхам Алиев, Вторая Карабахская война.*



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TURKSOY: AS A KEY FACTOR OF CULTURAL COOPERATION IN THE TURKIC WORLD

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TURKSOY is one of the key international institutions playing an important role in the development of cultural cooperation across the Turkic world. Established in 1993, the organization operates to preserve, develop, and promote shared cultural values among Turkic states and peoples on the international stage. International festivals, conferences, exhibitions, and cultural days organized within the framework of TURKSOY strengthen cultural dialogue among Turkic states and communities. The organization's activities such as the international commemoration of prominent figures of the Turkic world, the implementation of the "Cultural Capital of the Turkic World" project, and the promotion of shared cultural heritage at the UNESCO level make a significant contribution to reinforcing cultural cooperation.

The article emphasizes that, in the contemporary period, TURKSOY's activities are closely linked to the processes of cooperation developing within the Organization of Turkic States (OTS). The cultural projects implemented by TURKSOY, as well as its efforts to preserve and promote common heritage, provide moral and cultural support to the objectives of the OTS. In this regard, TURKSOY functions as the cultural pillar of the Organization of Turkic States, ensuring long-term cooperation among Turkic states and peoples.

Keywords: cultural diplomacy, organization, cultural projects, common cultural heritage, integration

INTRODUCTION

Culture is precisely one of the most fundamental indicators reflecting the identity and history of any nation. In the contemporary era, marked by the rapid intensification of international integration, the preservation and development of cultural heritage carry strategic importance at both national and regional levels. From this perspective, the Turkic world occupies a distinct position. This is because Turkic states and peoples residing in various geographical regions are bound to one another by a common language, history, traditions, and cultural values.

Following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the Republic of Azerbaijan, which gained its independence, engaged in extensive international activities for the successful implementation of cultural relations, as in all other fields of engagement, and signed crucial agreements on the development of cultural cooperation with various states. From this perspective, the new stage of relations with the Turkic world played a vital role in foreign policy. With the emergence of independent Turkic states after the fall of the USSR, the initial steps for cooperation were taken, extensive work was carried out in the humanitarian and cultural spheres, and simultaneously, congresses of the Turkic states were convened.

In this direction, TURKSOY, which was established with the purpose of promoting cultural cooperation among Turkic states and peoples, is considered one of the primary platforms. The organization's activities are not limited solely to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage; at the same time, they serve to strengthen mutual cooperation and friendship within the Turkic world. Through various events, exhibitions, festivals, and projects, TURKSOY creates opportunities for



Turkic states and peoples to share their cultures with one another and strengthens their common cultural identity.

MAIN PART

The Establishment of TURKSOY and Its Fields of Activity

TURKSOY (initially named the “Joint Administration of Turkic Culture and Arts” and later called the International Organization of Turkic Culture) has played a major role in the development of Azerbaijan’s cultural relations with Turkic states and peoples. TURKSOY acts as a coordinator of the spiritual and cultural relations among the independent Turkic states of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Türkiye, as well as semi-autonomous Turkic entities in other countries. The agreement to establish TURKSOY, the first cooperation organization founded in the Turkic world, was reached during negotiations held between representatives of the Turkic peoples in Istanbul and Baku in 1992. On July 12, 1993, at a meeting held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, the agreement “On the Operating Principles and Establishment of TURKSOY” was signed among the independent Turkic states [3, p. 1]. The republics of Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Khakassia, Tuva, and Chuvashia of the Russian Federation, the autonomous region of Gagauz-Yeri, as well as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus joined this agreement as observer countries [8, p. 720]. Following this, TURKSOY officially commenced its activities, and the foundation for the development of friendship and cultural unity relations among all Turkic peoples was laid.

It should be noted that TURKSOY draws upon the shared languages, cultures, histories, and arts of the Turkic-speaking countries. Operating to introduce these shared elements to the world, TURKSOY continues its activities by drawing strength from Ismail bey Gasprinsky’s ideology of “Unity in tongue, deed, and thought,” aiming to unite Turkic states and peoples on a single platform [17, p. 3]. In particular, TURKSOY annually brings together painters, photographers, artists, composers, poets, scholars, media representatives, theater troupes, and music groups from the Turkic world. At this point, it is necessary to recall the instructive counsel of Dede Korkut: “First, you must cultivate this land. Second, you must protect the land from enemies. If you do not cultivate the land, there is no need to protect it. If you do not protect the land, it is not worth cultivating!” [16, p. 21]. Indeed, this is precisely what culture is. To possess it, one must protect it, and at the same time, pay attention to it. If you do not introduce your culture, it is not worth protecting. If you do not protect it, it is not worth introducing.

The foreign policy course formulated by the National Leader Heydar Aliyev played a decisive role in the process of expanding the activities of TURKSOY as a cultural cooperation platform of the Turkic world. Heydar Aliyev consistently supported the preservation of the history, native languages, literature, culture and art, and traditions of the Turkic peoples. From this perspective, he always paid special attention to Azerbaijan’s active participation in the work of the TURKSOY organization. Thus, the respect shown toward national culture and spiritual heritage by H. Aliyev, who played a major role in the comprehensive development of Azerbaijani culture, manifested itself in all areas he addressed. In one of his speeches, H. Aliyev stated: “A nation is recognized, respected, and distinguished among the peoples of the world by many characteristics. The highest and greatest of these characteristics is culture” [5, p. 40]. It should be noted that throughout all his periods in power, H. Aliyev always kept the development of our culture at the center of attention.

As a logical continuation of the strategic line formulated at the state level, TURKSOY, by cooperating with international organizations, particularly with UNESCO, has ensured the promotion of the shared cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples on a global scale. The signing of the agreement “On Mutual Cooperation” between TURKSOY and UNESCO in Istanbul on June 8, 1996, carried special significance in this direction. Thus, the agreement included provisions reflecting broad principles of cooperation between both organizations in the fields of culture, art, science, and education



for the preservation of the historical and cultural heritage of Turkic-speaking countries and peoples [9, p. 265].

During the IV Summit of the Heads of Turkic States held on October 21-22, 1996, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, when the Tashkent Declaration was signed among the presidents, TURKSOY was tasked with preparing a calendar of historical days related to Turkic civilization, and exploring the possibility of involving international organizations in the field of culture, particularly UNESCO, in holiday celebrations. It was also instructed to prepare an action plan for the joint commemoration of the 1450th anniversary of the Great Turkic Khaganate [14, p. 170]. Considered the UNESCO of the Turkic world, TURKSOY cooperates not only with UNESCO but also with international organizations such as the UN, CoE, ICESCO, and CIS.

It should be noted that alongside the scope of TURKSOY's activities, Azerbaijan's literary and artistic cooperation with Turkic states and peoples also developed rapidly. Congresses also played a special role in expanding the relations of cooperation. At the III Congress of Writers of the Turkic World held in Baku on November 6, 1996, the National Leader Heydar Aliyev stated the following: "Today, very remarkable events are taking place in the life of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In the first half of the day, the III Congress of Writers of the Turkic World opened in Baku, and in the second half, the next meeting of the TURKSOY International Organization begins its work. Over the past period, TURKSOY has come a long way, achieved good results, and demonstrated to both Turkic-speaking states and the world that it has a very vital and grand future" [7, p. 23]. As can be seen, Heydar Aliyev attached special importance to the cultural and literary unity of the Turkic world. His high appraisal of TURKSOY's activities is a clear indicator of Azerbaijan's active and initiative-taking position within the Turkic world.

In particular, the holding of the VII Congress of Friendship, Brotherhood, and Cooperation of Turkic States and Peoples on July 2, 1999, in Denizli, Türkiye, acted as a logical continuation of the previous congresses and distinguished itself from the earlier ones. During the speeches at this congress, which was dedicated to the scientific and cultural integration of the Turkic world, it was especially emphasized that with the dissolution of the USSR, the newly emerged Turkic states and their historical relations of friendship among brotherly states and peoples had entered a significant stage.

In the final document adopted at the last session of the congress held on June 4, the importance of further intensifying scientific relations, student exchanges, and cultural ties among Turkic states, training highly qualified personnel, continuously organizing annual olympiads in the fields of culture and sports, and establishing the Academy of Sciences of the Turkic World was explicitly noted. In addition, it was decided at the congress to effectively utilize joint capabilities for the international protection of the rights of Turkic peoples in Mountainous Karabakh, Northern Iraq, Western Thrace, Syria, Kosovo, and Eastern Turkestan, and for a fair resolution [18, p. 84]. This document demonstrates that the adopted decisions were aimed both at strengthening scientific-cultural integration and at defending the rights of Turkic states and peoples at the international level.

It should be noted that studying the culture, history, and literature of the Turkic peoples and promoting them globally is one of the primary directions of TURKSOY's activity. In this direction, as a result of TURKSOY's activities, the adoption of the decision regarding the celebration of the Novruz holiday as a common holiday of the Turkic peoples plays a special role. The holding of the VIII Congress of Friendship, Brotherhood, and Cooperation of Turkic States and Communities on March 24, 2000, in Samsun, Türkiye, was of great assistance in this field. More than 500 delegations from 33 Turkic states, autonomous republics, autonomous regions, and communities participated in the congress [19, p. 147]. Cultural problems of a regional scale, as well as crucial issues related to cooperation in all fields, were discussed at the congress.

Alongside the state policy directed toward the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of the Turkic world, the "Heydar Aliyev Foundation" also plays a vital role in this field. Today, the "Heydar Aliyev Foundation" has rendering immense services toward the realization of Heydar



Aliyev's cultural policy. Thus, under the leadership of the President of the "Heydar Aliyev Foundation," Member of Parliament, and Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO and ISESCO, Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva, action programs for the development of culture and art are being implemented. The events dedicated by the Foundation to the global recognition of Azerbaijani culture and the promotion of our national-spiritual values are highly significant. As a result of the Foundation's services, our cultural pearls such as "Mugham," "The Art of Azerbaijani Ashiq," and the "Novruz" holiday have been inscribed by UNESCO onto the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity [5, p. 68]. In this regard, the celebration of the Novruz holiday by TURKSOY in 2010 in Paris, the capital of France, at the headquarters of UNESCO, carries special significance [5, p. 39]. These facts demonstrate that Heydar Aliyev's policy in the field of culture is being systematically continued today. The activities of the "Heydar Aliyev Foundation" contribute significantly to the international promotion of Azerbaijani culture and the preservation of our national-spiritual heritage.

Cultural Projects and Initiatives Implemented Within the Framework of TURKSOY

Since the inception of TURKSOY, the organization of various traditional events among Turkic states and peoples has carried special significance. This includes the joint celebration of pan-Turkic holidays, the anniversaries of prominent figures bestowed upon world culture by the Turkic peoples, the milestones of national epics, key historical events that occurred in the lives of our nations, and other events. For example, in the late 1990s, major cultural events were held to commemorate the 1,300th anniversary of the *Book of Dede Korkut*, the ancient heroic epic of the Turkic peoples, the 1,000th anniversary of the *Manas* epic, the 150th anniversary of the Ashig Alasgar, and the 100th anniversary of *Leyli and Majnun*, the first mugham opera of the East composed by the great Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov. These celebrations demonstrated that the cultures of the Turkic peoples share common roots [11, p. 202]. The joint celebration of these anniversaries and the shared cultural heritage reflects the strength of the spiritual unity among the Turkic peoples.

It should be noted that following the organization of TURKSOY, very crucial literary and cultural events took place in the lives of the Turkic states and peoples. The holding of the Summits of the Heads of State of Turkic-Speaking Countries has made great contributions to the work of TURKSOY and to the preservation and further strengthening of pan-Turkic culture. Over this past period, both bilateral and multilateral cultural relations among Turkic states have been strengthened. At the VIII Summit of the Heads of State of Turkic-Speaking Countries held on November 17, 2006, in Antalya, Türkiye, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, delivered a speech and highly appraised the activities of TURKSOY in bringing Turkic peoples closer to one another [6, p. 66].

The establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (CCTS) at the initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, has been one of the crucial steps taken toward the integration of the Turkic world. According to the Nakhchivan Agreement signed at the IX Summit of the Heads of State of Turkic-Speaking Countries held on October 3, 2009, in the city of Nakhchivan, the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (Turkic Council) was established by Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. The primary objective of the Council consisted of promoting comprehensive cooperation among Turkic states [12, p. 74]. According to Article 4 of the Nakhchivan Agreement, the Organization of Turkic States, as its affiliated institution, cooperates within the framework of TURKSOY for the purpose of developing cooperation in the fields of science, education, culture, and art, achieving international recognition of the common values of the Turkic world, and strengthening cultural integration among Turkic states [1].

During the summit, President Ilham Aliyev stated in his speech: "I am confident that the result of the summit will be excellent... We are united by a shared history and historical cultural roots... Since our cultures are closely interconnected, cooperation in the humanitarian field must deve-



lop even more rapidly. In this field, I would like to highly appraise the activities of the TURKSOY organization. In the coming years, we must further strengthen the activities of TURKSOY. We propose the creation of a TURKSOY fund. Its financial security should be ensured, and this fund should be engaged in the restoration of historical monuments and the development of intercultural relations throughout all Turkic lands. In short, the fund should bring our peoples even closer together through practically effective works. There are many Turkic-speaking peoples in the world, and friendship and brotherhood among Turkic-speaking peoples will also strengthen our countries” [10, p. 7]. The speech of President Ilham Aliyev demonstrates that cooperation among Turkic states and peoples, based on a shared history and culture, must be strengthened, and this unity must be further reinforced with practical steps.

The primary objectives of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States, as defined by the Nakhchivan Agreement, included such matters as strengthening mutual trust among the parties, maintaining peace in the region and the world, achieving economic growth, social and cultural development, as well as expanding mutual relations in the fields of science, education, and culture. The activities carried out in this direction manifested themselves clearly in the work of a number of organs and organizations affiliated with the Turkic Council. It should be noted that the direct integration of TURKSOY, which is one of those organizations, into the Turkic Council on the very day of the council’s establishment carried special significance.

Following the establishment of the Turkic Council, Azerbaijan’s international cultural prestige was further strengthened. The holding of the XXVI meeting of the TURKSOY Permanent Council in Baku on October 16-17 of that year, within the framework of the proclamation of Baku as the Capital of Islamic Culture in 2009, is a clear manifestation of this. At the meeting, decisions were adopted regarding the implementation of a general program for the preservation and development of the cultural values of Turkic states, and the renaming of TURKSOY as the International Organization of Turkic Culture [2].

Starting from 2010, based on the practice of UNESCO, TURKSOY laid the foundation for the tradition of celebrating the anniversaries of prominent literary, cultural, and artistic figures of the Turkic world and, accordingly, declaring commemorative years dedicated to these personalities [13, p. 79]. Thus, 2010 was declared as the “Year of Ahmed Zeki Validi Togan” on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Bashkortostan historian, Turkologist, and leader of the Bashkir independence movement Ahmed Zeki; 2011 as the “Year of Abdullah Tukay” (Tatarstan, RF); 2012 as the “Year of Mirza Fatali Akhundzade” (Azerbaijan) and the “Year of Nikolai Katanov” (Khakassia, RF); 2014 as the “Year of Magtymguly Pyragy” (Turkmenistan); 2015 as the “Year of Haldun Tanner” (Türkiye) and the “Year of Semen Kadyshev” (Khakassia, RF); 2017 as the “Year of Molla Panah Vagif” (Azerbaijan); 2018 as the “Year of Gara Garayev” (Azerbaijan), the “Year of Chingiz Aitmatov” (Kyrgyzstan), and the “Year of Magjan Jumabayev” (Kazakhstan); 2019 as the “Year of Ashik Veysel” (Türkiye) and the “Year of Imadaddin Nasimi” (Azerbaijan); 2020 as the “Year of Abai Kunanbayev” (Kazakhstan); 2021 as the “Year of Nizami Ganjavi” (Azerbaijan) and the “Year of Yunus Emre” (Türkiye); 2022 as the “Year of Toktogul Satylganov” (Kyrgyzstan), the “Year of Fikret Amirov” (Azerbaijan), and the “Year of Suleyman Celebi” (Türkiye); 2024 as the “Year of Magtymguly Pyragy” (Turkmenistan); and 2026 as the “Year of Ziya Gokalp” (Türkiye), and solemn anniversary events for the mentioned personalities were held [16, p. 66]. Thereby, their creative works are promoted throughout the entire Turkic world.

One of TURKSOY’s most acclaimed initiatives, the “Cultural Capital of the Turkic World” project, has been a highly remarkable event for the Turkic world. Aimed at promoting our countries and cities possessing rich cultural heritage to the world, this project was supported at the Summit of the Heads of State of Turkic-Speaking Countries held in Istanbul in 2011 [4, p. 302]. Within this framework, Astana (Kazakhstan) in 2012, Eskisehir (Türkiye) in 2013, Kazan (Tatarstan) in 2014, Merv (Turkmenistan) in 2015, Sheki (Azerbaijan) in 2016, Turkistan (Kazakhstan) in 2017, Kasta-



monu (Türkiye) in 2018, Osh (Kyrgyzstan) in 2019, Khiva (Uzbekistan) in 2020, Bursa (Türkiye) in 2022, Shusha (Azerbaijan) in 2023, Anau (Turkmenistan) in 2024, Aktau (Kazakhstan) in 2025, and Andijan (Uzbekistan) for 2026 were selected as the cultural capitals of the Turkic world [16, p. 32]. This project carries great significance in terms of promoting our cities at the international level, as well as further strengthening cultural relations among Turkic states and peoples.

The International Organization of Turkic Culture has also achieved significant accomplishments in the fields of science and education. From this perspective, TURKSOY's cooperation strategy with higher education institutions carries special significance. Thus, the cooperation documents signed by TURKSOY with the Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University, the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, and the Girne, Girne American, Eastern Mediterranean, and Near East Universities of Northern Cyprus create great opportunities for the activities of this organization [15, p. 97]. In addition, the organization of prestigious events by TURKSOY, such as the Photographers' Meeting, Painters' Meeting, Opera Days, Press Awards, Congress of Literary Magazines of the Turkic World, Sculptors' Meeting, Silk Road Festival, Silk Road Poets' Meeting, Turkic World Museums Forum, and the Leathercraft Festival of the Turkic World, also carries special significance [15, p. 130]. These activities demonstrate that TURKSOY systematically develops mutual relations in the field of education, just as it does in the fields of culture and art, among Turkic states and peoples.

The establishment and activity of TURKSOY once again confirm that multilateral literary and cultural cooperation among our peoples and countries has yielded significant results, primarily in the direction of the restoration, preservation, and further development of our shared culture, history, and national-spiritual values. From this perspective, the creation of TURKSOY has been highly successful for the purpose of studying, preserving, and interconnecting the national-cultural heritage of Turkic states and peoples.

CONCLUSION

Consequently, TURKSOY is one of the primary institutions playing a vital role in terms of the preservation, development, and international promotion of shared cultural values in the Turkic world. The festivals, conferences, anniversary events, and scholarly publications organized by the institution, together with the commemoration of prominent figures in the literature, culture, and arts of the Turkic world, the designation of commemorative years in their honor, and cultural initiatives such as the *Cultural Capital of the Turkic World*, further strengthen the spiritual unity among the Turkic states and peoples. TURKSOY's activities demonstrate that a shared language, literature, art, and historical heritage are among the strongest factors uniting the Turkic states and peoples. At the same time, cultural cooperation creates a reliable foundation for political and economic relations, strengthening friendship and strategic partnership among states. In the modern era, the activity of TURKSOY serves to ensure long-term cultural integration among Turkic states and peoples by strengthening the cooperation processes shaped within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS). From this perspective, the activity of the TURKSOY organization carries vital importance not only for today but also for the future development prospects of Turkic states and peoples.

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TÜRKSÖY: TÜRK DÜNYASINDA MƏDƏNİ ƏMƏKDAŞLIĞIN ƏSAS FAKTORU KİMİ

F.N. Şahmaliyeva

TÜRKSÖY türk dünyasında mədəni əməkdaşlığın inkişafında mühüm rol oynayan beynəlxalq təşkilatlardan biridir. 1993-cü ildə yaradılmış təşkilat türk dövlətləri və xalqları arasında ortaq mədəni dəyərlərin qorunması, inkişafı və dünyaya tanıtılması istiqamətində fəaliyyət göstərir. TÜRKSÖY çərçivəsində keçirilən beynəlxalq festivallar, konfranslar, sərgilər və mədəniyyət günləri türk dövlətləri və xalqları arasında mədəni dialoqu gücləndirir. Təşkilat tərəfindən türk dünyasının görkəmli şəxsiyyətlərinin yubileylərinin beynəlxalq səviyyədə qeyd edilməsi, “Türk Dünyasının Mədəniyyət Paytaxtı” layihəsinin həyata keçirilməsi və ortaq mədəni irsin UNESCO səviyyəsində tanıtılması mədəni əməkdaşlığın möhkəmlənməsinə böyük töhfə verir.

Məqalədə vurğulanır ki, müasir dövrdə TÜRKSÖY-un fəaliyyəti Türk Dövlətləri Təşkilatı (TDT) daxilində formalaşan əməkdaşlıq prosesləri ilə sıx bağlıdır. TÜRKSÖY tərəfindən həyata keçirilən mədəni layihələr, ortaq irsin qorunması və tanıtılması istiqamətində görülən işlər TDT-nin məqsədlərinə mənəvi dəstək verir. Bu baxımdan TÜRKSÖY Türk Dövlətləri Təşkilatının mədəni dayacağı kimi türk dövlətləri və xalqları arasında uzunmüddətli əməkdaşlığı təmin edir.

Açar sözlər: *mədəni diplomatiya, təşkilat, mədəni layihələr, ortaq mədəni irs, integrasiya.*



ТЮРКСОЙ: КАК ОСНОВНОЙ ФАКТОР КУЛЬТУРНОГО СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА В ТЮРКСКОМ МИРЕ

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ТЮРКСОЙ является одной из международных организаций, играющих важную роль в развитии культурного сотрудничества в тюркском мире. Основанная в 1993 году, организация осуществляет деятельность, направленную на сохранение, развитие и продвижение общих культурных ценностей тюркских государств и народов на международном уровне. Международные фестивали, конференции, выставки и дни культуры, проводимые в рамках ТЮРКСОЙ, способствуют укреплению культурного диалога между тюркскими государствами и народами. Отмечание на международном уровне юбилеев выдающихся деятелей тюркского мира, реализация проекта “Культурная столица тюркского мира”, а также продвижение общего культурного наследия на уровне ЮНЕСКО вносят значительный вклад в укрепление культурного сотрудничества.

В статье подчёркивается, что в современный период деятельность ТЮРКСОЙ тесно связана с процессами сотрудничества, формирующимися в рамках Организации тюркских государств (ОТГ). Культурные проекты, реализуемые ТЮРКСОЙ, а также работа по сохранению и популяризации общего наследия оказывают духовную поддержку целям ОТГ. В этом контексте ТЮРКСОЙ выступает культурной опорой Организации тюркских государств, обеспечивая долгосрочное сотрудничество между тюркскими государствами и народами.

Ключевые слова: *культурная дипломатия, организация, культурные проекты, общее культурное наследие, интеграция.*



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SUSTAINABLE URBAN PLANNING APPROACHES IN THE POST-CONFLICT TERRITORIES OF THE KARABAKH ECONOMIC REGION

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Sustainability has become a key idea in modern global development, affecting how we design cities, make energy policy, and grow the economy. Post-conflict conditions significantly intensify the importance of sustainable urban planning, as rebuilding efforts are required to restore not only urban infrastructure but also social cohesion, environmental balance, and economic vitality. The Karabakh economic region of Azerbaijan offers a compelling example of such large-scale post-conflict reconstruction. This paper explores sustainable urban planning approaches applied in post-conflict cities of the Karabakh economic region, with a focus on energy efficiency, environmental resilience, functional zoning, and social inclusivity. Long periods of occupation led to the near-total destruction of urban landscapes and infrastructure. The findings demonstrate that sustainable urban planning is not only a technical solution but also a strategic instrument for restoring urban identity, enhancing resilience, and ensuring balanced development in post-conflict territories.

Keywords: sustainability, urbanization, social impact, urban assessment, effective governance.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainability has become central to contemporary global development, influencing methods for socioeconomic growth, energy policy, and urban planning. As cities continue to expand and face increasing environmental pressures, sustainable urban planning has emerged as a critical framework for creating resilient, inclusive, and resource-efficient urban environments. This importance becomes even more pronounced in post-conflict contexts, where the reconstruction process must address not only the physical restoration of urban fabric but also the social, environmental, and economic rehabilitation of affected territories.

Post-conflict urban environments are often characterized by extensive destruction of housing, infrastructure, and public spaces, alongside long-term population displacement and weakened local economies. In such settings, conventional reconstruction strategies focused solely on physical rebuilding are insufficient. Instead, integrated planning approaches that combine energy efficiency, environmental resilience, functional zoning, and social inclusivity are required to ensure long-term sustainability and stability [15, p. 141-145]. Urban planning in post-conflict regions therefore plays a dual role: responding to urgent recovery needs while simultaneously shaping future-oriented development trajectories. The Karabakh economic region of Azerbaijan represents a distinctive and large-scale example of post-conflict urban regeneration. Decades of occupation resulted in the near-total destruction of cities, settlements, and infrastructure, leaving behind vast areas of abandoned and degraded urban land. Following the restoration of territorial integrity, the reconstruction of Karabakh has been positioned as a strategic national priority, guided by the principles of sustainable development and the concept of creating “green” and “smart” cities and villages. This approach aims to transform the region into a model of sustainable post-conflict development through the integration of renewable energy systems, energy-efficient buildings, environmentally sensitive planning, and inclusive urban environments.



Against this background, this paper explores sustainable urban planning approaches applied in the post-conflict cities of the Karabakh economic region. Particular attention is given to strategies related to energy efficiency, environmental resilience, functional zoning, and social inclusivity within newly developed master plans. The study argues that sustainable urban planning in the Karabakh economic region is not merely a technical response to destruction but a strategic instrument for restoring urban identity, strengthening resilience, and ensuring balanced and long-term development in post-conflict territories.

MAIN PART

Theoretical Foundations of Sustainable Urban Planning

The concept of sustainable development emerged in the second half of the 20th century as a response to the growing environmental, social, and economic challenges caused by accelerated industrialization and urbanization. One of the key stages in the development of this concept was the publication of the report "Our Common Future" by the World Commission on Environment and Development, which defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the opportunities of future generations [9, p. 43]. This definition became the theoretical basis for the further development of the concept of sustainability in various fields, including urban planning.

In the context of urban planning, sustainable development is viewed as the integration of three interrelated dimensions: environmental, social, and economic [15, p. 141–145]. Environmental sustainability aims to reduce the negative impact of the urban environment on natural ecosystems, rationally manage land and energy resources, and implement energy-efficient and climate-adaptive solutions [7, p. 1–13]. Social sustainability involves creating an inclusive urban environment, ensuring equal access to housing, infrastructure, and public spaces, and strengthening social cohesion and quality of life [8, p. 430–435]. Economic sustainability is associated with the creation of a viable urban economy, supporting employment, and the efficient use of urban space [6, p. 45–60].

The theoretical foundations of sustainable urban development are based on a number of key principles, including compact development, functional mix, the prioritization of public transportation and pedestrian connections, and the energy efficiency of buildings and utility systems [6, p. 45–60]. These principles aim to reduce spatial fragmentation of cities, alleviate traffic congestion, and create a balanced urban structure. The development of "green infrastructure," including parks, green corridors, and nature-based solutions that contribute to improving environmental conditions and adapting cities to climate change, also plays an important role [15, p. 141–145]. Modern scientific approaches emphasize that sustainable urban development is not limited solely to technical and planning solutions. It requires integrated institutional management, an interdisciplinary approach, and the active participation of local communities in planning and decision-making processes [14, p. 61–68]. Within this concept, the city is viewed not only as a physical structure but also as a socio-cultural system, the development of which should be oriented toward long-term sustainability, adaptability, and the preservation of the identity of the urban environment. Thus, the theoretical foundations of sustainable urban development form the conceptual basis for planning and transforming cities in various contexts, including post-conflict areas. The principles of sustainability allow us to consider urban planning as a strategic tool aimed at creating balanced, sustainable, and viable urban systems in the long term [9, p. 43; 15, p. 141–152].

Problems of Reconstruction and Resilience in Post-Conflict Cities

Rebuilding post-conflict cities is a complex and multi-layered process that extends far beyond the physical restoration of destroyed buildings and infrastructure. Modern scientific approaches view reconstruction as a comprehensive transformation of the urban system, encompassing the social reintegration of the population, the restoration of economic activity, environmental rehabilitation, and the building of institutional resilience [15, p. 141–145]. In this context, urban resilience, un-



derstood as a city's ability to adapt, recover, and develop after extreme shocks, including armed conflicts, becomes a key concept [11, p. 36]. Post-conflict cities typically face a number of systemic challenges: large-scale destruction of housing stock, degradation of utility and transport infrastructure, loss of economic base, demographic imbalances, and weakened institutional governance. These factors create a vulnerable urban environment in which traditional approaches to urban development prove insufficient. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to integrating resilience principles into recovery processes, which entails a shift from short-term reconstruction to long-term strategic development [2].

The Karabakh economic region of Azerbaijan represents a unique example of post-conflict recovery, distinguished by the unprecedented scale of destruction and, at the same time, the opportunity to develop a fundamentally new model of sustainable development. The prolonged occupation caused the engineering, social, and transportation infrastructure to become unusable, and a large percentage of the cities and settlements in the area were almost completely destroyed. According to government agencies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the level of destruction of the built environment in a number of cities has reached critical levels, requiring not fragmentary reconstruction but a comprehensive urban rethinking of the territory [13]. A distinctive feature of the urban rehabilitation of the Karabakh economic region is its planning, essentially from scratch, based on the principles of sustainable and green development. According to strategic government documents, the region was designated as a zone for the implementation of energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy sources, and intelligent urban infrastructure management systems [5]. This approach allows for the integration of sustainability principles at the early stages of planning, significantly increasing the adaptive potential of emerging urban systems.

Table 1 highlights that the reconstruction of the Karabakh economic region is challenged by the near-total destruction of urban fabric, landmine contamination, environmental degradation, and the complex task of reintegrating displaced populations. These challenges require comprehensive master planning, coordinated institutional frameworks, and the integration of environmental remediation and resilient infrastructure into the rebuilding process. Overall, successful reconstruction in Karabakh depends on balancing the urgency of rapid recovery with long-term sustainability, resilience, and social inclusivity.

Table 1.**Main Challenges of City Reconstruction in the Karabakh Economic Region**

Challenge Category	Description of the Challenge	Implications for Urban Reconstruction
<i>Scale of Physical Destruction</i>	Large parts of cities and settlements were almost completely destroyed, including housing stock, public buildings, transport infrastructure, and utility networks	Necessitates comprehensive master planning, high capital investment, long implementation periods, and phased reconstruction strategies rather than incremental renewal
<i>Landmine Contamination and Safety Risks</i>	The extensive presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance across urban and peri-urban areas limits access to land and delays construction activities	Slows down reconstruction timelines, increases costs, and requires close coordination between urban planners and demining authorities
<i>Return and Reintegration of Population</i>	Large-scale displacement created demographic gaps and disrupted social net-	Urban planning must ensure livability, economic viability, and social inclusivity to sup-



	works. Returning populations require not only housing but also employment, services, and social infrastructure	port sustainable resettlement and prevent secondary migration
<i>Institutional and Governance Complexity</i>	Reconstruction involves multiple actors, including state institutions, local authorities, international partners, and private investors	Requires strong coordination mechanisms, transparent decision-making, and consistent regulatory frameworks to ensure effective implementation
<i>Balancing Speed and Sustainability</i>	Social pressure for rapid reconstruction may conflict with long-term sustainability objectives	Emphasizes the need for strategic planning that integrates energy efficiency, climate resilience, cultural heritage protection, and smart technologies

The concept of sustainability in the context of Karabakh takes on not only environmental and technical but also socio-spatial significance. The return of the population to the restored cities requires the creation of a safe, comfortable, and socially inclusive urban environment that promotes the restoration of urban identity and trust in the space. In this context, priority is given to creating jobs, developing public spaces, restoring cultural heritage, and ensuring access to basic urban functions [15, p. 141–145]. Thus, the challenges of restoring and resilience in post-conflict cities in the Karabakh economic region confirm that sustainable urban development is a system-forming element of reconstruction. In the context of the almost complete destruction of the urban environment, resilience becomes a strategic tool that allows not only for the restoration of lost functions but also for the formation of a qualitatively new development model focused on long-term stability, adaptability, and balanced growth in the region [2; 15, p. 141–152].

Formation of Urban Planning Context in the Karabakh Economic Region

Shaping the urban development context in post-conflict regions relies not only on the universal principles of modern urban planning but also on national territorial development priorities. In Azerbaijan, this process is closely linked to state strategic documents that define the restoration of liberated territories as one of the key objectives of the country's socio-economic policy. In this context, urban planning is viewed as a tool for spatial integration, sustainable development, and population reintegration [4, p.12-15].

In post-conflict contexts, the principles of comprehensiveness, phased planning, and sustainability are particularly important. According to the State Committee for Urban Development and Architecture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the restoration of cities in the Karabakh economic region is being carried out based on master plans and development concepts focused on energy efficiency, environmental safety, and the functional balance of the urban environment [13]. These principles are complemented by the creation of modern engineering infrastructure and comfortable public spaces. The formation of a new urban context for the Karabakh economic region is taking place amid the almost complete loss of the previous urban structure of most settlements. The prolonged occupation has led to the destruction of housing, public buildings, and transport infrastructure, as well as the degradation of the urban planning structure.

In terms of the degree of preservation of the urban environment, cities in the Karabakh economic region can be divided into three main categories.

1. Cities with almost completely destroyed buildings, where reconstruction is carried out essentially from scratch. Such cities are characterized by the development of new master plans, the formation of a street and road network, and functional zoning based on modern principles of sustainable development. This approach is widely used in the planning of the cities of Aghdam and Fuzuli, where reconstruction is aimed at creating a compact, energy-efficient, and socially oriented urban environment [13].

2. Cities with partially damaged urban fabric, where individual elements of the planning structure or engineering infrastructure remain. In these cases, the urban planning context is formed through a combination of reconstruction of surviving elements and new construction. The primary objective is to integrate the surviving fragments into a renewed spatial model, thereby preserving the continuity of the urban structure and simultaneously enhancing its functional quality [1, p. 88–89].

3. The city of Shusha occupies a special place, regarded as a unique historical and cultural center and an "open-air museum." In accordance with state programs, the development of Shusha is focused on the priority preservation of the historical planning structure, architectural heritage, and cultural landscape. Urban planning solutions here are restoration and conservation in nature and are aimed at minimal intervention in the historical environment, while simultaneously developing cultural tourism and the city's public functions [10, p. 4–7]. The evolution of the urban development landscape in the Karabakh economic region is marked by a distinct strategy, reflecting the extent of urban decay and their functional and cultural particularities. The utilization of local data and national strategic documents facilitates the adaptation of international sustainable urban development concepts to the region's actual realities, hence providing more effective and informed urban rehabilitation.

Urban reconstruction in the Karabakh Economic Region follows a differentiated approach based on the degree of destruction and the functional-cultural significance of each city. Three main models can be identified: full reconstruction from scratch in heavily destroyed cities such as Aghdam and Fuzuli; integrated reconstruction in partially damaged cities, combining preserved elements with new development; and a conservation-oriented model in Shusha, where planning prioritizes heritage protection and minimal intervention. This context-sensitive strategy allows sustainable urban development principles to be adapted to local conditions, ensuring that reconstruction efforts respond effectively to both spatial realities and cultural specificities of the region. Table 2 highlights the differentiated typology of urban reconstruction approaches in the Karabakh Economic Region, distinguishing between cities rebuilt from scratch, partially reconstructed urban structures, and heritage-oriented conservation models.

Table 2.

Typology of Urban Reconstruction Approaches in the Karabakh Economic Region

Category	Urban Condition	Planning Strategy	Key Characteristics
Cities with Almost Completely Destroyed Urban Fabric	Extensive destruction with little to no remaining urban structure	Reconstruction from scratch through new master plans with preservation of key urban structure and distinctive architectural features	Comprehensive overhaul utilizing intelligent, sustainable, and energy-efficient urban systems
Cities with Partially Damaged Urban Structure	Partial destruction of residential, public, and infrastructural elements with some surviving structures	Integrated approach combining reconstruction of surviving elements with new development	Hybrid urban form with integrated old–new fabric and phased redevelopment
Heritage-Oriented City (Conservation Model)	Presence of culturally significant urban fabric requiring protection (e.g., Shusha)	Preservation of cultural identity and authenticity with controlled, tourism-oriented development	Restoration- and conservation-based planning with minimal intervention



Implementation of Sustainable Urban Planning Approaches in Karabakh region

In Azerbaijan, the sustainable development agenda has been consolidated in recent years not only through international frameworks but also through national priorities. In the document "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities of Socio-Economic Development," sustainability is directly linked to two key areas: "The Great Return" and "a clean environment and green growth" [12]. At the same time, Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur regions are positioned as areas for accelerated implementation of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and "smart city/smart village" concepts, providing a framework for sustainable post-conflict planning. The social component of sustainable urban development in the Karabakh economic region is closely linked to the implementation of "The Great Return" program and the reintegration of internally displaced persons. Unlike traditional urban modernization, which focuses on infrastructure renovation, the Karabakh case involves the restoration of urban communities that have been absent from their territories for almost three decades. There are a number of important areas where sustainability concepts are applied in the social realm:

First, settlement planning and housing provision. Modern energy efficiency, accessibility, and social inclusion criteria are taken into consideration when designing new residential neighborhoods. A progressive settlement approach that is coordinated with the development of social services, transportation infrastructure, and jobs is provided by master plans. This strategy encourages the development of sustainable urban communities and inhibits the emergence of residential districts with only one purpose. A total of 34,500 apartments and private houses are planned to be built and commissioned in liberated territories by the end of 2026 as part of first phase of reconstruction and settlement efforts. These housing units are part of a broader effort to resettle internally displaced persons (IDPs) in stages back to their ancestral lands, with built infrastructure meeting modern standards of safety, accessibility and sustainability [4]. The Great Return Program's **second phase** will be completed by 2040 and will be divided into three stages, spanning 2026–2040.

Second, the creation of social infrastructure. Early in the planning process, new districts are designed to incorporate public areas, cultural facilities, administrative buildings, medical facilities, and educational institutions. This illustrates the knowledge that equal opportunity and access to essential services are just as important to a sustainable city as housing.

Third, employment and economic integration. Programs for economic development, such as agro-industrial clusters, tourism growth (particularly in Shusha), and renewable energy initiatives, are linked with decisions on urban planning. Establishing employment close to residential areas lowers the chance of re-migration and guarantees long-term demographic stability.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of sustainable urban development approaches in the Karabakh economic region shows that post-conflict reconstruction is being implemented on the basis of an integrated and multi-layered territorial development model. The reconstruction process is not limited to the physical restoration of destroyed settlements, but also includes demographic planning, social infrastructure development, environmental regeneration, energy efficiency, and cultural heritage preservation.

First, the housing strategy is based on a phased settlement model synchronized with the State Program on the "Great Return." The first phase, planned until 2026, envisages the construction of 34,500 residential units, while the master plans of individual cities, particularly Aghdam, project a long-term demographic capacity of approximately 100,000 residents. This demonstrates that reconstruction is oriented not only toward the short-term return of the population, but also toward the long-term development of a sustainable urban environment. Second, the development of social infrastructure is integrated into the early stages of planning. Educational institutions, medical centers, and public facilities are planned in parallel with residential development. This approach supports the formation of functionally complete urban districts rather than isolated residential areas, thereby strengthening social sustainability and spatial balance. Third, the environmental component reflects



a transition toward a “green” reconstruction model. Forest restoration, the creation of green belts, the application of energy-efficiency standards, and the integration of renewable energy sources are considered structural elements of the new master plans [3]. In cities with almost complete destruction of the built environment, such as Aghdam, green infrastructure becomes one of the main spatial frameworks for future development. Fourth, cultural regeneration, particularly in Shusha, is carried out through restoration, conservation, and the preservation of historical urban morphology. The restoration of monuments and cultural sites performs not only an architectural function, but also a symbolic role by strengthening cultural identity and creating conditions for the development of cultural tourism.

Thus, the reconstruction of the Karabakh economic region demonstrates a comprehensive approach that combines spatial, demographic, environmental, social, and cultural factors. The proposed model differs from traditional urban modernization practices, where reconstruction usually involves the upgrading of existing infrastructure. In the case of Karabakh, reconstruction is associated with the creation of a new territorial structure based on sustainable development principles. A key strength of the current model is the synchronization of housing construction with the development of social infrastructure. This reduces the risk of forming incomplete or low-quality settlements and increases the viability of new districts from the initial stages of resettlement. At the same time, long-term sustainability will depend on the parallel development of the economic base, employment opportunities, and effective institutional coordination.

The environmental orientation of reconstruction reflects Azerbaijan’s strategic transition toward green development. However, the effectiveness of renewable energy systems, energy-efficient infrastructure, and climate-sensitive planning will depend on long-term management mechanisms and consistent implementation. Demographic projections also present both opportunities and challenges. Although official targets foresee a significant return of the population, the actual dynamics may be more gradual. Therefore, flexible planning decisions and phased project implementation are essential to avoid infrastructure overcapacity or underutilization. In a broader theoretical context, the experience of the Karabakh economic region demonstrates the potential of transforming a post-conflict territory from a space of reconstruction into a platform for sustainable territorial development. The integration of social, environmental, economic, and cultural components corresponds to the international “Build Back Better” principle, while also reflecting Azerbaijan’s national strategic priorities. This makes the Karabakh case an important example of how post-conflict urban reconstruction can be directed toward long-term sustainability, resilience, and cultural continuity.

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QARABAĞ İQTİSADI RAYONUN MÜNAQİŞƏDƏN SONRAKİ ƏRAZİLƏRİNDƏ DAVAMLI ŞƏHƏRSALMA YANAŞMALARI

R.R. Mahmudov

Dayanıqlılıq müasir global inkişafın əsas ideyalarından birinə çevrilərək, şəhərlərin layihələndirilməsi, enerji siyasətinin formalaşdırılması və iqtisadi inkişaf modellərinin qurulmasına mühüm təsir göstərir. Münaqişədən sonrakı şəraitdə dayanıqlı şəhərsalmanın əhəmiyyəti daha da artır, çünki bərpa prosesi yalnız şəhər infrastrukturunun yenidən qurulmasını deyil, eyni zamanda sosial həmrəyliyin, ekoloji tarazlığın və iqtisadi fəallığın bərpasını da əhatə etməlidir. Azərbaycanın Qarabağ iqtisadi rayonu bu baxımdan genişmiqyaslı post-münaqişə yenidənqurma prosesinin əhəmiyyətli nümunəsini təqdim edir. Bu məqalə Qarabağ iqtisadi rayonunun post-münaqişə şəhərlərində tətbiq olunan dayanıqlı şəhərsalma yanaşmalarını araşdırır və enerji səmərəliliyi, ekoloji dayanıqlılıq, funksional zonalaşdırma və sosial inklüzivlik prinsiplərinə xüsusi diqqət yetirir. Uzunmüddətli işğal dövrü şəhər landşaftının və infrastrukturun demək olar ki, tamamilə dağıdılmasına səbəb olmuşdur. Tədqiqatın nəticələri göstərir ki, dayanıqlı şəhərsalma yalnız texniki həll mexanizmi deyil, eyni zamanda şəhər kimliyinin bərpası, dayanıqlılığın gücləndirilməsi və post-münaqişə ərazilərində bəsləndirilmiş inkişafın təmin edilməsi üçün strateji alətdir.

Açar sözlər: *davamlılıq, urbanizasiya, sosial təsir, şəhər qiymətləndirməsi, effektiv idarəetmə.*



ПОДХОДЫ К УСТОЙЧИВОМУ ГОРОДОСТРОИТЕЛЬСТВУ НА ПОСТКОНФЛИКТНЫХ ТЕРРИТОРИЯХ КАРАБАХСКОГО ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО РАЙОНА

Р.Р. Махмудов

Устойчивое развитие стало ключевой идеей современного глобального развития, влияя на то, как мы проектируем города, формируем энергетическую политику и развиваем экономику. Постконфликтные условия значительно усиливают важность устойчивого градостроительства, поскольку необходимы работы по восстановлению не только городской инфраструктуры, но и социальной сплочённости, экологического баланса и экономической жизнеспособности. Карабахский экономический регион Азербайджана является убедительным примером столь масштабной после конфликтной реконструкции. В данной статье рассматриваются устойчивые подходы к градостроительству, применяемые в постконфликтных городах Карабахского экономического района, с акцентом на энергоэффективность, экологическую устойчивость, функциональное зонирование и социальную инклюзивность. Длительные периоды оккупации привели к почти полному уничтожению городских ландшафтов и инфраструктуры. Результаты показывают, что устойчивое градостроительство-это не только техническое решение, но и стратегический инструмент восстановления городской идентичности, повышения устойчивости и обеспечения сбалансированного развития на постконфликтных территориях.

Ключевые слова: устойчивое развитие, урбанизация, социальное воздействие, оценка городов, эффективное управление.



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DIGITAL SOCIOLOGY: A MODEL FOR FORECASTING SOCIAL TRENDS BASED ON BIG DATA AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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The article won third place in the article competition for young researchers on the "Opportunities for the Use of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technologies in the Humanities and Social Sciences," dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

The study presents a methodological approach to forecasting social trends through the integration of big data and artificial intelligence within the contemporary stage of digital sociology. The core argument is that rapidly changing social processes cannot be sufficiently explained by traditional statistical methods alone, which creates a need for new models that combine big data analytics with the capabilities of artificial intelligence algorithms. The research proposes a three-pillar model consisting of data construction, processing and analysis, and interpretation and forecasting stages. The data construction phase focuses on structuring and ensuring the reliability of information collected from diverse sources, including social networks, media platforms, official statistics, and surveys. During the processing and analysis stage, natural language processing, machine learning, and deep learning techniques are employed to identify latent social patterns and behavioral models. The final stage involves linking the findings to theoretical frameworks and forecasting future social processes. The article also addresses key challenges such as the bias of artificial intelligence detectors and issues related to data quality.

Keywords: digital sociology, big data, artificial intelligence, forecasting, social trends.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, the orientation of digital sociology toward the prediction of social trends on the basis of big data and artificial intelligence derives its relevance from several factors. Social media, online platforms, and digital technologies have become an inseparable part of daily life, directly influencing the behavior of society, political participation, information consumption, and the formation of public opinion. In this environment, the flow of information is massive, rapid, and complex; tracking it through traditional methods becomes difficult. Artificial intelligence algorithms, by processing big data, make it possible both to monitor social changes in real time and to predict the direction of future processes probabilistically. For this reason, such an approach carries strategic significance both for the enrichment of sociological theories and from the standpoint of state policy, security, information management, and social stability.

Serious scholarly research has been conducted in this field. For instance, the study by Leitgöb et al. (2023) provides a theoretical and methodological foundation for the use of big data and machine learning in sociology [11]. Garip and Macy (2025) systematically analyze the current applications and future prospects of machine learning in sociology [7]. Molina and Garip (2019) demonstrate how machine learning methods can be applied in sociological research and how they open up new empirical possibilities [13]. Verhagen (2024) examines the integration of machine learning into sociological model construction, combining theoretical modeling with technological approaches [19]. Heiberger (2022) demonstrates the possibilities of predicting gender and uncovering research

tendencies through machine learning [9]. Borch and Min (2022) analyze the explainability of machine learning algorithms from a sociological perspective, explaining new forms of human-machine interaction [5]. The overall significance of these studies lies in the fact that they expand the possibilities of traditional theoretical and empirical approaches in sociology, creating conditions for the study of deeper, more complex, and multidimensional social processes through big data and machine learning. At the same time, this work makes an important contribution to the future methodological transformation of the field through the integration of artificial intelligence tools into sociological model construction, questions of explainability, and the reliability of empirical research.

The aim of our study, in turn, is to construct a methodological model for the real-time tracking of social trends and the prediction of future directions of development by integrating big data and artificial intelligence algorithms in digital sociology.

MAIN PART

Digital Sociology As a Current Field of Modern Sociology

Digital sociology is a new direction of contemporary sociological thought, having taken shape against the backdrop of the rapid development of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (hereinafter AI). Alongside the application of sociological theory and methods to the study of the digital environment, this concept also encompasses the transformation of digital technologies themselves into objects of sociological analysis. In other words, digital sociology is concerned both with the study of new social spaces such as the internet, social media, and digital platforms, and with the investigation of the impact of these spaces on the values, relationships, and social structures of society. This concept entered sociological discourse as a result of the global spread of the internet at the end of the twentieth century and the transformation of social media platforms into an inseparable part of life at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and at a later stage it was further strengthened by the capabilities of big data and artificial intelligence [1]. The intellectual roots of digital sociology trace back to the 1980s and 1990s. During this period, along with the widespread expansion of the internet, sociologists began to work with concepts such as "virtual community," "online communities," and "digital culture." The first studies were conducted mainly on internet forums, electronic mail groups, and early online networks. At this stage, digital sociology was characterized more by the adaptation of classical social theories (for example, Habermas's theory of the public sphere or Giddens's theory of structuration) to the digital plane. As digital technologies created new forms of social interaction, sociologists sought to expand the methodological base in order to track and classify these changes [2].

From the 2000s onward, the rapid rise of social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and at a later stage Instagram and TikTok) launched a new stage of digital sociology. During this period, the concept of "big data" came to occupy a central position in sociological research, since the behavior, comments, and connections of millions of users provided unprecedented empirical material on a scale never seen before [4]. In the 2010s, digital sociology began to be recognized as a distinct field in its own right. At this stage, not only the study of the online environment but also issues such as the impact of artificial intelligence algorithms on society, digital inequality, information security, cyberculture, and online political participation came to the fore [3]. To summarize, digital sociology became a broad direction that requires not only the application of new methods but also the reinterpretation of sociological theories.

Today, many leading universities around the world are developing digital sociology as an independent field of specialization. For example, the London School of Economics offers programs in digital social research, focusing on social network analysis and digital economic relations. In the United States, Stanford and Harvard universities study issues of online political mobilization, disinformation, and digital democracy within the framework of digital sociology. At the University of Sydney in Australia, specialized centers for digital ethnography and internet cultures are in operati-



on. Digital sociology also exists as a separate doctoral field at Stockholm University and Umeå University in Sweden. These developments, in turn, demonstrate that digital sociology is already a global academic field, developed along different empirical directions in various regions. Digital sociology employs classical sociological methods in combination with new technologies. The most widely applied methods here are social network analysis, the statistical processing of big data, natural language processing (NLP), digital ethnography, web scraping, and text mining. These approaches encompass both quantitative and qualitative methods and make possible the multidimensional analysis of behaviors observed in the digital environment. By means of these methods, a broad range of topics is investigated, including the formation of public opinion, the dynamics of disinformation and propaganda, as well as digital identities and the online mobilization of social movements, along with changes in patterns of cultural consumption and the digital behavioral models of young people. In addition, digital inequality, the relationship between gender and technology, and the impact of artificial intelligence on the labor market and on changes in social structure are also at the center of digital sociology's attention.

The Capability of Digital Sociology: On the Example of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data

Artificial intelligence and big data, as two inseparable concepts, occupy an important place in contemporary social research. Big data refers to the large-scale and highly varied information gathered from diverse sources – social networks, electronic archives, the digital databases of state and non-state institutions, as well as the everyday online activities of users. However, owing to the volume and complexity of this data, processing it through traditional statistical methods is virtually impossible. It is precisely at this point that artificial intelligence "enters the stage": AI algorithms, by processing big data, make it possible to extract meaning from it, to uncover relationships among various variables, and to construct predictive models. In other words, AI is the principal technological instrument that reveals the potential of big data, and for this reason their connection is built upon a direct and mutual interdependence. In digital sociology, AI and big data open new possibilities in the measurement and explanation of social phenomena. For example, in the analysis of social network dynamics, big data consisting of the posts and comments of millions of users is collected, while artificial intelligence is used to determine the trajectory of the formation of public opinion from this data. This, by combining both quantitative and qualitative analysis, makes it possible to process information on a scale that classical sociological methods could not encompass.

At present, in sociological research artificial intelligence plays an important role in the detection of disinformation, since by processing big data it makes it possible to track the dynamics of the spread of fake news. By analyzing the semantic and structural features of content on social networks, AI algorithms are able to identify manipulative posts in real time. This, in turn, creates new research possibilities for sociology from the standpoint of protecting public opinion, information security, and the transparency of democratic processes. The vast majority of research conducted worldwide in this analogous field demonstrates how artificial intelligence and big data play an interactive role in social media and disinformation networks. For example, Shao et al. created the "Hoaxy" platform and analyzed the structure and spread dynamics of disinformation circulating on Twitter; as a result, it was revealed that fake news began to spread 10–20 hours ahead of fact-checking and that the core of disinformation consisted only of active users [16]. Another study, conducted by Joshi et al., demonstrates the role of social bots and intra-group connections in the spread of disinformation; fact-checking methods lag further behind, and the central nodes of fake news prove to be more active [10]. In addition, Drolsbach and Pröllochs, in their study, analyzed 91,452 disinformation messages on the X platform (formerly Twitter) by separating them into "AI-sourced" and "human-sourced." There it was determined that disinformation generated by AI has a higher probability of going viral, is distributed more from small accounts, and is more oriented toward entertainment in terms of content. This study shows that the characteristics of disinformation created by AI

are different, and that these differences open new possibilities for social network analysis [6]. Additionally, in another article by Joshi et al., explanatory methods such as the Domain Adversarial Neural Network (DANN) and LIME were used for the analysis of disinformation across various platforms. This approach is aimed at enhancing artificial intelligence's capacity to detect disinformation in different social media environments [10]. The results of this type of research show that artificial intelligence is not content merely with detecting existing disinformation, but also becomes an important instrument for predicting the trajectory of its spread in the future. In digital sociology, prediction means determining the direction of social processes in advance, and here the power of AI algorithms manifests itself in processing big data to determine the line of development of trends. This is invaluable both in the defense of public opinion against manipulation and in the preservation of the stability of democratic institutions, because foreseeing among which groups and at what speed disinformation will spread creates a strategic advantage from the standpoint of social policy and information security. The significance of this method lies in the fact that social policy, state governance, and public organization can be built upon predictions. In other words, prediction grants sociology not only a retrospective but also a prospective outlook. With the application of artificial intelligence, prediction in digital sociology becomes more precise and reliable. This is because AI algorithms, by using big data, are able to uncover invisible relationships among different social variables. For example, the probability that rising messages of discontent on social networks in a given country will turn into political protests can be predicted. This creates conditions for obtaining advance information about social stability, public security, and even electoral behavior. In a broader sense, predictions carried out with AI support are able to display a general map of social trends. Long-term social trends such as demographic changes, urbanization processes, the transformation of young people's value and identity orientations, and changes in patterns of cultural consumption are modeled by means of AI.

A Model for the Prediction of Social Trends: The Integration of Big Data and Artificial Intelligence in Digital Sociology

In the contemporary era, one of the most important challenges of sociological research is the timely tracking of rapidly changing social processes and the prediction of the direction in which they will develop in the future. In an environment where the abundance of information and digital traces is increasing rapidly, traditional methods are not sufficient on their own. In this respect, the potential of big data and the processing power of artificial intelligence algorithms bring to the fore an integrative prediction model, which represents a new approach in sociology. By means of such a model, the dynamics of public opinion on social networks, the direction of media discourses, and changes in statistical indicators are analyzed within a single analytical framework and, by being connected to theoretical foundations, a map of future social trends is formed. This can be seen visually in Figure 1:

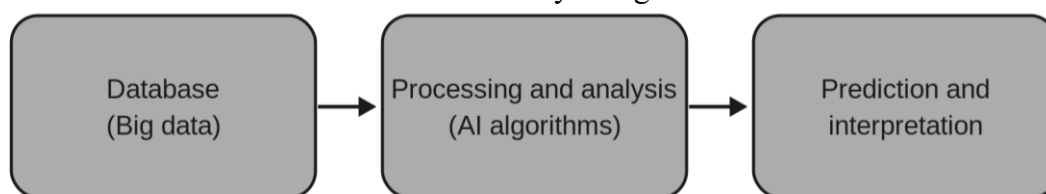


Fig. 1. The Prediction of Social Trends

As can be seen from the figure, the first column of the model designed for the prediction of social trends is the database. Here, the collection of big data from various sources plays the principal role: content shared on social networks, online media resources, the statistical indicators of state institutions, and survey results. At this stage, the main issue is not merely the quantity of data, but its quality, reliability, and representativeness. This is because data coming from social networks may sometimes be of a manipulative character, official statistics may have certain limitations, and



surveys may face methodological errors. For this reason, the collection of data must be carried out not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of the diversity and quality of sources.

The construction of the database can be carried out through a combination of various methods. First of all, large volumes of data are collected from social networks and media platforms by means of web scraping and API integrations. Subsequently, methods of data cleaning and normalization are applied to identify and separate out duplicate, incomplete, and manipulative information. Statistical weighting and sampling methods are used to increase the representativeness of official statistical data and surveys. For the assessment of quality, reliability checks, comparison of sources, and triangulation are applied. Thus, as a result of the integration of various technical and methodological approaches, a database that is both broad and reliable is formed (Table).

Table

Stages of Constructing the Database

Stage	Explanation
Web scraping and API integration	Web scraping extracts data from the open pages of websites, while an API makes it possible to obtain structured data through the official interface provided by the platforms.
Data cleaning and normalization	This is the process of eliminating errors, duplicates, and gaps in the collected data and converting it into a standard format. This ensures that data coming from various sources is unified within the same units of measurement and structure.
Statistical weighting and sampling	Weighting adjusts the distribution of data to conform to real demographic indicators, while sampling means the selection of representative groups from a broad population.
Comparison of sources and triangulation	This is a method of verifying reliability by comparing data obtained from different sources on the same topic. In particular, triangulation, by combining results coming from different methods and sources, makes it possible to obtain a more precise and reliable result.

The second column is the stage of processing and analysis, in which artificial intelligence algorithms come into play. For example, by means of natural language processing (NLP), the semantic analysis of texts circulating on social media is carried out, and emotional tone, thematic orientations, and discourse structure are determined. Machine learning models, in turn, are able to uncover hidden patterns among millions of observations, identify behavioral models, and group them. At this stage, both quantitative analysis (the statistical analysis of digital trends) and qualitative analysis (the semantic interpretation of public discourse) are carried out in parallel. Thus, rather than being content merely with data collection, the internal logic of social processes is revealed through the analytical capabilities of artificial intelligence, and the stage of preparation for prediction is completed (Figure 2).

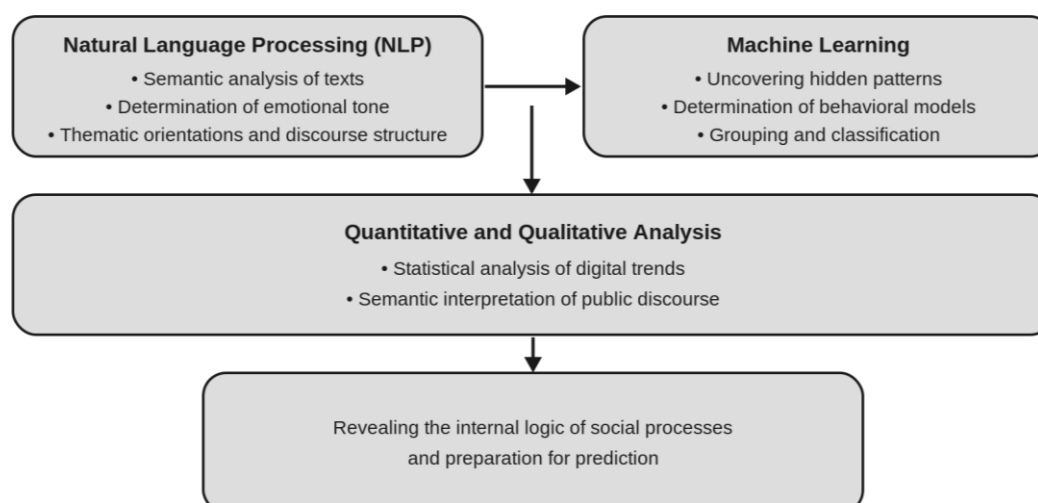


Fig. 2. The Processing and Analysis Stage: Artificial Intelligence Algorithms

In the processing and analysis stage, the significance of artificial intelligence is even greater. Traditional statistical programs (SPSS, PSPP, JASP, etc.) are very useful for the analysis of structured and relatively small-volume data, but they face limitations in managing the complexity and volume of big data. The millions of observations collected from social networks, media platforms, and various digital sources carry non-linear relationships, multidimensional patterns, and layers of semantic meaning that are difficult, and sometimes impossible, to detect through traditional statistical methods. Artificial intelligence algorithms, by contrast, processing both quantitative and qualitative big data simultaneously, are able to uncover hidden patterns, learn behavioral models, and, with their predictive capability, indicate the direction of future social trends more precisely. At the same time, although the R program offers powerful tools for processing big data, it has limitations in processing very large-volume, real-time streaming data and in constructing complex deep learning models. Artificial intelligence algorithms, by contrast, make it possible to uncover non-linear relationships in this type of data and to produce predictions with higher precision.

Among the tools that can be most widely used for artificial intelligence in digital sociological research are libraries such as *TensorFlow*, *PyTorch*, *scikit-learn*, *NLTK*, and *spaCy*. These tools create broad possibilities for processing big data, analyzing natural language, and constructing predictive models.

The final column is the prediction and interpretation stage, in which the results generated by artificial intelligence are linked to sociological theories. The prediction stage does not merely yield technical results; it also requires their scientific interpretation. For example, predictions related to electoral behavior are compared with the theory of political participation, while new behavioral models of young people on social networks are compared with theories of socialization. At this stage, predictions do not only indicate the probability of future events, but also reveal the social causes behind these events.

From a mathematical standpoint, the prediction model serves to determine the direction in which social trends may develop in the future. The basic logic here is as follows: features extracted from big data (X) collected from various sources are transmitted to artificial intelligence algorithms, and as a result the probability or intensity (y) of the occurrence of a certain event is calculated. For example, electoral behavior, the probability of protest actions, or the speed at which disinformation spreads can be described by such models. For this purpose, time-series models (ARIMAX, VAR), non-linear diffusion models (the Hawkes process, SIR-type network models), and machine learning approaches (logistic regression, gradient boosting, neural networks) are used. Mathematically, the



model can be expressed in the form $y_{t+\Delta} = f(X_{t-k:t}) + \varepsilon$ where f denotes the functional relationship constructed by artificial intelligence and ε denotes the random error.

In addition, it is not sufficient for the prediction merely to yield technical results; its interpretation through sociological theories is essential. For example, when the probability of protests is calculated by means of logistic regression or survival models, these results are compared with resource mobilization theory or the theory of political participation. When information cascades on a social network are tracked with the Hawkes process, the results are interpreted in the context of diffusion theory. Thus, the prediction model does not merely describe future events probabilistically, but also reveals the social causes behind them and provides their interpretation from a theoretical standpoint.

The indicators used in the mathematical model are expressed by means of a time index, and this clarifies the basic mechanism of prediction. y_t denotes the outcome observed at time t , for example, voter activity on a particular day or the intensity of public protests. $X_{t-k:t}$, in turn, is the set of data collected during the period from $t-k$ to t ; this includes indicators such as social media posts, official statistics, and survey results, that is, the model takes as its basis the data coming from a past window. $y_{t+\Delta}$, in turn, expresses the outcome to be predicted at a time Δ in the future, for example, it indicates the direction in which social trends will develop one week or one-month later. This approach is generalized in the form $y_{t+\Delta} = f(X_{t-k:t}) + \varepsilon$.

Challenges and Problems

The main problem or challenge in the model is that social processes are not stable and simple, but complex, multidimensional, and dynamic. That is, the function f in the formula $y_{t+\Delta} = f(X_{t-k:t}) + \varepsilon$ is in real life very often not linear; on the contrary, it consists of interconnected and rapidly changing factors such as social network effects, political events, economic changes, and cultural factors. As a result, two major difficulties arise. The first is the quality and diversity of data, in that social media, official statistics, and survey data may be contradictory both in terms of reliability and in terms of differences of measurement. The second is the complexity of the prediction function, in that traditional statistical tools have difficulty in fully reflecting these multidimensional and non-linear relationships, and for this reason the use of artificial intelligence becomes necessary. In other words, the main problem is both the construction of a reliable database and the conversion of this data into a prediction model that corresponds to real social mechanisms.

The second challenge is related to artificial intelligence detectors. The use of artificial intelligence detectors has become widespread in recent years, and the aim is to safeguard academic integrity. However, empirical evidence shows that these tools frequently produce erroneous results. For example, in some cases texts written by humans are mistakenly assessed as the product of AI. Errors of this type have gone so far that even the United States Constitution has been flagged as a text written by artificial intelligence [15]. A more serious problem is that the texts of authors who use English as a second language, and especially the writings of scholars from the countries referred to as the Global South, are systematically perceived as AI writing. Such misidentifications are not merely a technical defect; they can also cast a shadow over the scholarly credibility of certain groups.

The research that has been conducted also confirms this. A study led by Stanford University showed that more than half of the essay samples of students whose native language is not English were assessed by detectors as AI writing [17, 18]. Whereas more than 90 percent of the writings of students whose native language is English were accepted as "human writing" [12]. These results clearly show that the algorithmic approach of the detectors automatically likens a simple or less idiomatic style of expression to machine language.

Recent research shows that artificial intelligence text detectors exhibit a systematic bias in mistakenly assessing text written by humans as AI writing. For example, in 2023 the dissertation of a Nigerian doctoral student was erroneously flagged by detectors as a text produced by artificial intelligence [14]. One of the most well-known examples of such incidents occurred at the University of Minnesota,

where a Chinese doctoral student, Haishan Yang, was expelled from his program on suspicion that his examination answers had been written with AI. The professors, running his writings through a detector, accepted the indicator of "high AI probability" as proof and, despite the student's objections and even the tool's showing contradictory results on his own writings, did not change the decision [8]. As a result, Yang lost both his doctoral program and his visa to remain in the United States.

One of the main reasons for this "bias" lies in the operating mechanism of the detectors. They mainly use a measure called "perplexity": they assess the degree to which the words and expressions of a text can be predicted. In a text with a simple and repetitive language structure, perplexity is low, and such writings are automatically flagged as AI writing. This, in turn, puts at risk the writings of authors who write in a language other than their native one, because of the simpler grammar and limited lexical repertoire they use. The paradox is that advanced AI systems such as ChatGPT, because they are able to produce multilayered, idiomatic, and fluent English-language content, are accepted by detectors as human writing.

The model for the prediction of social trends shows that big data and artificial intelligence algorithms are a powerful instrument for tracking social processes, but the one-sidedness of AI detectors poses a serious challenge to the reliability of these systems. If the predictions produced by this model are mistakenly labeled as "AI writing," this, in turn, will deal a blow both to the correct interpretation of the data and to the preservation of trust in the academic environment. Thus, the application of the model must not be limited to prediction alone, but must also take into account the algorithmic injustice created by artificial intelligence.

CONCLUSION

Thus, as a result of our study, we can state that digital sociology, having taken shape as an inseparable direction of modern sociology, requires both the reinterpretation of theoretical frameworks and the application of new methodological approaches. Its development shows that the tracking of public opinion, disinformation, and patterns of digital behavior by means of big data and artificial intelligence makes sociological analysis more multifaceted and dynamic. This field, developing on a global scale, carries strategic significance not only on the academic plane but also for social policy, information security, and public governance.

In this respect, the integration of artificial intelligence and big data makes it possible in sociology not only to explain existing social phenomena but also to foresee their future trajectory. This, in turn, opens new scholarly and practical possibilities both for the prevention of disinformation and for the prediction of long-term social processes such as political participation, cultural transformation, and social stability.

Within this framework, the significance of the three-column model proposed in the article lies in the fact that the construction of the database serves the reliable structuring of big data collected from various sources, the processing and analysis stage serves the uncovering of hidden social patterns through artificial intelligence algorithms, and the interpretation and prediction stage serves the formation of foundations for explaining the future development of social trends by linking these results to theoretical frameworks.

Big data and artificial intelligence open important possibilities in the tracking and prediction of social processes, but their application is limited by the quality of data and the complexity of non-linear social mechanisms. In addition, the one-sidedness of artificial intelligence detectors creates an additional risk for academic credibility and public trust, and without taking this problem into account, the application of the model cannot be considered sufficient.

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РƏQƏMSAL SOSIOLOGIYA: BÖYÜK VERİLƏNLƏR VƏ SÜNİ İNTELLEKT ƏSASINDA İCTİMAİ TENDENSIYALARIN PROQNOZLAŞDIRILMASI MODELİ

C.Q. Cabarov

Tədqiqat rəqəmsal sosiologiyanın müasir mərhələsində böyük verilənlər və süni intellektin inteqrasiyası əsasında ictimai tendensiya­ların proqnozlaşdırılmasına yönəlmiş metodoloji bir yanaşmanı təqdim edir. Əsas ideya ondan ibarətdir ki, sürətlə dəyişən sosial proseslər ənənəvi statistik metodlarla kifayət qədər izah edilə bilmir və bu səbəbdən, böyük verilənlərin analizi ilə süni intellekt alqoritmlərinin imkanlarını birləşdirən yeni modellərə ehtiyac yaranır. Tədqiqat çərçivəsində üçsütunlu bir model irəli sürülür: məlumat bazasının formalaşdırılması, emal və analiz, həmçinin interpretasiya və proqnozlaşdırma mərhələləri. Məlumat bazası müxtəlif mənbələrdən (sosial şəbəkələr, media platformaları, rəsmi statistika və sorğular) toplanan məlumatların strukturlaşdırılması və etibarlılığının təmininə əsaslanır. Emal və analiz mərhələsində təbii dil emalı, maşın öyrənməsi və dərin öyrənmə üsulları tətbiq edilərək gizli sosial nümunələr və davranış modelləri aşkarlanır. Sonuncu mərhələ isə nəticələrin nəzəri çərçivələrlə əlaqələndirilməsini və gələcək ictimai proseslərin proqnozlaşdırılmasını nəzərdə tutur. Məqalədə həmçinin süni intellekt detektorlarının birtərəfliliyi və məlumatların keyfiyyət problemi kimi çağırışlara diqqət çəkilir.

Açar sözlər: *rəqəmsal sosiologiya, böyük verilənlər, süni intellekt, proqnozlaşdırma, ictimai tendensiya­lar.*

ЦИФРОВАЯ СОЦИОЛОГИЯ: МОДЕЛЬ ПРОГНОЗИРОВАНИЯ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫХ ТЕНДЕНЦИЙ НА ОСНОВЕ БОЛЬШИХ ДАННЫХ И ИСКУССТВЕННОГО ИНТЕЛЛЕКТА

Дж.Г. Джабаров

Исследование предлагает методологический подход к прогнозированию общественных тенденций на современном этапе развития цифровой социологии на основе интеграции больших данных и искусственного интеллекта. Основная идея заключается в том, что быстро меняющиеся социальные процессы не могут быть адекватно объяснены исключительно традиционными статистическими методами, в связи с чем возникает необходимость в новых моделях, сочетающих анализ больших данных с возможностями алгоритмов искусственного интеллекта. В рамках исследования выдвигается трехкомпонентная модель, включающая этапы формирования базы данных, обработки и анализа, а также интерпретации и прогнозирования. Формирование базы данных основано на структурировании и обеспечении надежности информации, полученной из различных источников, таких как социальные сети, медиа-платформы, официальная статистика и опросы. На этапе обработки и анализа применяются методы обработки естественного языка, машинного обучения и глубокого обучения для выявления скрытых социальных закономерностей и моделей поведения. Заключительный этап предполагает соотнесение полученных результатов с теоретическими рамками и прогнозирование будущих общественных процессов. В статье также рассматриваются такие вызовы, как односторонность детекторов искусственного интеллекта и проблемы качества данных.

Ключевые слова: *цифровая социология, большие данные, искусственный интеллект, прогнозирование, общественные тенденции.*



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ARMENIAN ORGANISATIONS IN GEORGIA: CASE OF SAMTKHE-JAVAKHETI

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The purpose of this article is to analyze the Armenian organizations established in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia. Samtskhe-Javakheti region was chosen as the main subject of the study because it is the region where the largest Armenian minority in Georgia lives. In the study the main goals, tasks and objectives of the Armenian organizations in the region are discussed and the internal and external factors influencing the activities of these organizations are analyzed. In 1991, with the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Georgia regained its independence. The collapse of the USSR led to a deep socio-political and economic crisis in Georgia, as well as difficulties in the process of nation-building. In addition, the civil war in the regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, which resulted from the separatist movements, was also a complicating factor. This study is based on qualitative research and were used secondary sources. In the process of research, sources such as studies, articles, reports, academic books, journal articles, internet sites materials of various research centres and institutes were used.

Keywords: Armenians, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Georgia, separatism, unfounded claims

INTRODUCTION

In 1991, when the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Georgia restered independence. As a result of a referendum held on March 31, 1991, Georgia declared its independence on April 9, 1991. The collapse of the USSR led to a deep socio-political and economic crisis in Georgia, as well as difficulties in the process of nation-building. One of the factors complicating this process was the far-right politics of Georgia's first President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, which triggered the national sensitivities of the Georgian people. In addition, the civil war in the regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, which resulted in separatist movements, was a complicating factor.

After the restoration of independence in 1991, Georgia could be characterized as a very complex country in terms of inter-ethnic relations. Armenians, one of the minorities living in Georgia, took advantage of the difficult socio-political and economic situation in the country and established various organizations. These organizations exploited inter-ethnic relations and fomented separatism. Against the backdrop of continuing problems in the breakaway regions, Armenian organizations emerged as a potential separatist force. Founded with the aim of reviving the so-called Armenian language and culture, almost all of these organizations soon became a source of separatism and began to make territorial claims against Georgia. This led to the emergence of the Javakheti conflict in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region, which became the "eternal problem".

Internal and external factors affecting the activities of these organizations are also discussed in the paper. The main objectives of the study are as follows: to identify the main political and socio-economic prerequisites for the formation of Armenian organizations in Samtskhe-Javakheti after the collapse of the USSR; to unpack the main directions of the activities of Armenian organizations; to identify the influence of external factors such as the Armenian Church and the Armenian state on these activities.



This study was conducted on the basis of qualitative research. In the research process, studies, articles, reports, academic books, journal articles, websites, materials of various research centers and institutes were used.

A review of the literature on the activities of Armenian organizations in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region in Georgia reveals that the issue has been the subject of many studies in the fields of history and sociology, as well as political studies with a legal emphasis. However, it has been observed that most of these studies do not address all aspects of the issue and are generally limited to a specific framework.

Various studies examine the activities of Armenian organizations in the context of Armenia-Georgia bilateral relations and focus on the factors influencing these relations. This approach is prominent in the works of authors such as Omarov [15] and Jabbarlı [5]. In his study, Habibbayli [7] investigated the regional strategies of Armenian organizations, especially their impact on relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Other scholars, on the other hand, consider the issue from a regional security perspective. This perspective is more linked to geopolitical relations in the region. The strengthening of Armenian nationalism in the Javakheti region has posed a significant threat. As noted in Cornell's [6] study, ethnic conflicts have been coupled with demands for autonomy in the South Caucasus, leading to an increase in separatist movements in the region.

Many Armenian researchers, on the other hand, have taken a biased stance. Namely, they argue that their studies have created a fear of assimilation among the Armenian population in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region. This can be explained by the fact that these studies were conducted under the influence of Armenia's policy towards Georgia and ideological barriers. This makes it difficult to address the issue objectively. In addition, Western researchers Hin [8], Wheatley [31], etc. analyze the problem from the point of view of the defense of the rights of national minorities.

The review of the available literature revealed some gaps in the main topic of the article. Studies that independently analyze the factors affecting the activity of Armenian organizations are very limited. This article aims to fill this gap.

Armenian migration to Georgia

An analysis of the activities of Armenian organizations in Georgia reveals that the Samtskhe-Javakheti region is of special importance. Because this region is the main center of the activities of Armenian organizations. The cities of the region consist of Akhalkalaki, Akhalsykh, Adygen, Borjomi and Ninotsminda. "Due to the intervention of tsarist Russia in the XIX century and the deportation of the local population of Meskhetian Turks during the reign of Iosif Stalin, the Armenian population in the region has increased significantly" [17]. In accordance with the Treaty of Edirne, approximately 40,000 of the Armenians who migrated from Eastern Anatolia to the Caucasus were settled in Akhalkalaki in a planned manner. The reason for this decision can be explained as follows:

"In this context, the fact that Turks lived on the border line with Turkey was perceived as a threat by the Russian Tsardom and in order to balance this threat, some of the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia were migrated and settled here. In the following period, the Turks in the region were deported at the first opportunity that arose and the Turkish threat on the border line was completely eliminated and a situation was created in favor of the Armenians, who were considered as a friendly element" [10].

Organizations founded by Armenians living with the dream of "Greater Armenia" and previously indoctrinated with Turkophobia became the main source of Armenian nationalism and terror in



the XIX Caucasus [13]. “At the beginning of the 20th century, the support of the Armenian Church influenced the expansion of the activities of Armenian organizations” [24, p. 52].

Armenian terrorist acts were based on territorial claims against various peoples, especially neighboring Azerbaijanis, Turks and Georgians. Their desire to establish their own state in their so-called “own land” was in reality based on extreme nationalism and separatist policies. In other words, “Armenian terrorism as part of international terrorism was well organized” [16].

According to Georgian historian Mosidze, the ethnic structure of Javakheti was negatively affected by the policies and practices pursued by the Soviet Union. Mosidze states that during the Soviet rule, people of Armenian nationality were brought to high positions, and many social, economic and cultural problems in the region were solved in line with the interests of the Armenian people. In this process, the Georgian population was ignored by both local and central authorities. “As a result of these policies, many Georgian villages were transformed into Armenian villages over time” [27].

“Since the Meskhetian Turks were deported by Stalin in 1944 and replaced by Georgians and Armenians, today about half of the population of the region is Armenians” [9, p. 68].

After Stalin's death in 1956, the repressive regime was lifted and the exiles were granted the right to return to their homeland. However, Meskhetian Turks have not been able to get any result from the struggle for their return that they started in 1956. In 1999, Georgia had to accept the return of Meskhetian Turks as a condition of becoming a member of the Council of Europe. On July 11, 2007, Georgia approved the law on repatriation, but this process has been hindered for different reasons. The main factor affecting the process is the Armenians in Georgia. Despite the fact that Meskhetian Turks have the right to return to the country with the decision taken by the Georgian parliament in 2007, there is no solution due to the opposition of the Armenian people and organizations in the region. The return of Meskhetian Turks to their homeland is prevented by Armenian organizations influential in the region.

Over time, Javakheti has become the region with the largest Armenian minority in Georgia. Armenians are the majority in two districts of Samtskhe-Javakheti - Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda. More than 90 percent of the population of these towns is Armenian.

This historical background plays an important role in understanding contemporary ethnic tensions and the activities of Armenian organizations. This demographic change in Samtskhe-Javakheti has underpinned the political and social dynamics in the region and has been the basis of the never-ending Javakheti conflict for Georgia.

Armenian Organizations in Georgia

In 1991, the collapse of the USSR led to a deep political crisis in Georgia. The first President of Georgia was Zviad Gamsakhurdia, known for his nationalist views. His policy towards ethnic minorities living in Georgia was effective in activating Armenian nationalists. In such an environment, Armenian organisations started to take a more active part in political processes.

According to the researcher Cornell, Armenians showed a higher level of hostility towards the Georgian authorities than other ethnic groups. In the early 1990s, when the referendum on Georgian independence was held, “only 52 per cent of Armenians living in Akhalkalaki voted, whereas Azerbaijanis, the majority in Marneuli, voted with 86 per cent” [6, p. 163]. This shows that while Azerbaijanis support Georgia's independence, the Armenian community has a colder approach to this process.

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Ethnic tensions in Javakheti reached their peak in the first years of Georgia's independence and caused serious problems in the region. The situation was further complicated by the war in Abkhazia in the early 1990's. The fact that Armenians in Abkhazia supported the Abkhazians led to an increase in anti-Armenian sentiments in Georgia. Namely, it raised concerns that Russia, which supported not only separatism in Abkhazia, but also a similar movement in Tskhinvali, could provoke a similar conflict in the Javakheti region [8, p. 63]. During this period, Javakheti was often characterised as a "potential hot spot".

According to researcher Lom, the emergence of radical and nationalist organisations was due to the region's remoteness from the centre. Javakheti was socio-economically more dependent on Russia than Georgia and culturally dependent on Armenia. In addition to these factors, the weakness of central state institutions led to the de facto independence of the region from Tbilisi. During Gamsakhurdia's rule, the Javakheti region remained outside the jurisdiction of the central government, with state institutions having limited influence over local forces in the region [26, p. 4].

Another important trigger of the Armenian organisation in Javakheti is the Karabakh War. Azerbaijan's occupation of the Karabakh region had given Armenians a certain experience of war. Founded on 25 February 1988, the Javakhk People's Movement gradually strengthened with the outbreak of the First Karabakh War. "It organised to send Armenians from Javakheti to fight in Nagorno-Karabakh. It also formed its own armed groups" [2, p. 75]. As Wheatley notes, this organisation "managed to obtain weapons from the warehouses of the defunct Soviet Army and some of its members took part in the Karabakh war against Azerbaijan from 1988 to 1994" [31, p. 28].

Georgian academic Ramishvili believes that "the First Karabakh war was the main factor that gave rise to the Armenian nationalist movement in Georgia" [30, p. 19-20]. Many experts support the idea that "if the Armenians had not occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, they would have demanded the annexation of the Javakheti region of Georgia to Armenia".

The Javakhk organisation, which was established in an environment of ethnic tensions, rapidly politicised and increased its influence. In this context, this organisation can be considered as an oppositional political structure against Tbilisi. The organisation organised various protests in the region. Faced with the actions of Armenian separatists, Georgian authorities tried to maintain control over the region, but these efforts led to new conflicts and protests. In order to strengthen control in the region, the Gamsakhurdia administration introduced a system of appointed governors throughout Georgia. However, protests started in Javakheti region against these appointments. In Akhalkalaki, an armed group prevented the three centrally appointed governors from entering the administrative building, objecting to their being ethnic Georgians. Armenians demanded that the governor be ethnic Armenian [6, p. 202].

According to David Rstakyan, one of the leaders of the organisation, it was after Zviad Gamsakhurdia came to power that the Javakhk organisation acquired a nationalist identity, as "the organisation assumed the task of defending the rights of Armenians in the region in response to the threats posed by Georgian nationalists. The ethnic origin of the governor was of great importance, and for this reason a representative of Armenian origin was requested to serve in Akhalkalaki". However, the nationalist attitude of the Armenian organisations continued after Gamsakhurdia's rule. The clashes continued from January to November 1991. During this period "the paramilitary organisation Javakhk effectively controlled the region and remained outside Tbilisi's control throughout Gamsakhurdia's rule" [30, p.20]. Although the official goal of the organisation was declared as "the protection of the Armenian cultural heritage, the teaching of Armenian language and history in schools,



and the development of the region” [30, p. 20], it was aimed to demand autonomy within Georgia in the first stage and to annex the region to Armenia as the ultimate goal.

The organisation temporarily has a 24-member Council of Representatives and a 7-member governing body’ the governor’s office. [6, p. 202]. This council effectively administered the region, retaining control until a suitable candidate for the position of governor was appointed. The council’s activity came to an end when they forced the Georgian government to accept one of their own leaders, Samvel Petrosyan, as governor, and the council subsequently dissolved itself [31, p. 28]. Moreover, the issue of declaring the ‘independence of Javakheti’ was also raised at the ‘council’ meetings [6, p. 203].

In order to resolve the situation resulting from Gamsakhurdia’s activities, a new administrative organisation was introduced in Georgia after Eduard Shevardnadze came to power in 1994. With this arrangement, Javakheti region was merged with Meskheta region and Samtskhe-Javakheti region was established with Akhaltsihe as its centre. This change weakened Akhalkalaki’s status as a regional centre. However, the new arrangement led to increased protests in Javakheti and deepened tensions in the region. “Shevardnadze’s decision led to the launch of an intensive campaign among Javakheti Armenians demanding “independence”. More than 40,000 signatures were collected in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda for regional autonomy for Javakheti” [8, p. 81].

In 1995, during the adoption of the Constitution of Georgia, Armenians appealed to the President of Georgia, suggesting that the country should be organised into a federal structure as a way out of the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali conflict [30, p. 20]. This demand was supported by the Armenian separatists of Javakheti, who met in the “Coordination Council of Javakheti Organisations and Movements”. The Armenians called on the President of Georgia and the parliament to grant the region “the constitutional right of self-government within the framework of the federal Republic of Georgia” [28, p. 41].

However, for the Georgian leadership, these demands of the Armenians were unacceptable. The Armenian desire for autonomy was seen as a new threat to the integrity of the state, as the leaders of Armenian organisations had set the secession of the region as their main goal. The Javakheti organisation, which reached its peak in the early 1990s, almost disintegrated in the late 1990s. In its place, new political organisations began to emerge, more aggressively demanding autonomy for Javakheti. One of these was ‘Virk, founded in 1995 in Akhalkalaki and led by David Rstakyan, who advocated autonomy and special language rights for Javakheti Armenians’ [19, p. 22]. Initially aiming to be established as a party, ‘Virk’ could not be registered as an ethnic political party according to the Georgian Constitution. The ‘Virk’ organisation “took an anti-Turkish and pro-Russian stance, stating that its main goals were to separate Javakheti from Georgia, to ensure the presence of Russian troops in the region and to prevent the pipeline from Azerbaijan to Turkey from passing through Javakheti” [8, p. 83].

Since 1995, with the end of the civil wars in Georgia, the country has stabilised. The central authorities regained control and tensions in the region decreased significantly, especially after the presidential and parliamentary elections.

Thus, the main goal of the Armenian organisations established in the 1990s was to take advantage of the difficult situation in Georgia after the collapse of the Soviet Union to make territorial claims in order to secede from the region and annex Javakheti to Armenia. The activities of Armenian organisations throughout the 1990s had a significant impact on the political dynamics of the region, increasing ethnic tensions and complicating the integration of Javakheti into Georgia’s political and social structure.

The coming to power of Mikheil Saakashvili and the launch of a comprehensive reform policy aimed at strengthening the state triggered a significant transformation process in the activities



of Armenian organisations in Georgia. The strengthening of the Georgian state has led to various concerns, especially among the Armenian population, and this has affected the inter-ethnic political dynamics.

“In particular, Saakshvili's promise to devolve power from the centre to local governments led to various reforms at the local level. However, instead of integrating the Armenians into the Georgian society as a whole, the reforms were interpreted as assimilation by the Armenians and raised concerns that their ethnic identity would disappear” [9, p. 71].

As in the previous period, many problems in the region remained unresolved. Economic backwardness, the integration of the Armenian minority into Georgian society, and the closure of the Russian military base have also been problems to be solved during Saakashvili's rule. President Saakashvili has visited the region many times and in his meetings with the inhabitants of the region has frequently emphasised that Georgia offers equal rights to all its citizens, regardless of their nationality [19, p. 9].

The language problem is one of the main problems faced by Armenians living in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region. “Georgia's post-independence minority policies after the Rose Revolution made it compulsory for Armenians living in the region to learn Georgian in order to take part in the public sphere and benefit more from public services” [9, p. 67].

Despite significant changes under Saakashvili, Armenian organisations have not been satisfied with the clear and consistent policies of the Georgian government. “There are a number of standard themes around which the Javakheti people can be mobilised: initially the issue of the Russian military base was prominent, but this issue lost its relevance after Russia agreed to start withdrawing its troops. Then there was opposition to the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. Today, the main controversy is the demand for the affiliation of the churches in Javakheti to the Armenian Church” [26, p. 19]. These issues are strategically used by local Armenian organisations to increase their popularity and mobilise the Armenian population.

The other main organisations active in this period were the youth organisation JEMM (Javakheti Sports Youth Union) and United Javakh. This organisation “was established in 2001 as a non-governmental organisation with the main aim of organising sports events in Akhalkalaki and preventing the emigration of young people. In 2005, the leader of the group, Chahalyan, founded another political organisation - United Javakhk” [31, p. 29]. It has also been established that Chahalyan has links with the Armenian diaspora in France and wealthy Armenian businessmen in Russia [26, p. 21].

Both “Javakheti Youth and Sports Union” and “United Javakh” were known for their radical stances and nationalist programmes. These organisations have declared an active nationalist platform by gathering the youth organisations in the region under their umbrella and have used controversial propaganda methods [19, p. 22].

They also organised mass demonstrations and political protests demanding greater representation of Armenians in state offices and other official institutions [19, p. 4]. On 5 October 2006, the results of the local elections in Akhalkalaki caused controversy. Following the elections, supporters of United Javakhk, known for their separatist sentiments, staged protests and demanded the cancellation of the results in 12 villages [19, p. 18]. The protesters tried to seize the office of the District Election Commission in Javakheti, but the demonstrations were ended by police intervention [31, p. 30].

In the predominantly Armenian districts, Armenians hold high positions in the executive authorities and municipalities. In both Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda, ethnic Armenians head the executive authorities. In Akhalkalaki in particular, 84 per cent of municipal employees are Armeni-



ans [19, p. 12]. In general, key positions at district level in this region, such as the police chief, prosecutor and chief judge, are also held by Armenians [31, p. 18].

In the early 2000s, “the dependence of the majority of Armenians on Russian military bases for their livelihoods was one of the major obstacles to Georgian national unity” [9, p. 69]. The economic downturn under Shevardnadze forced the local population to look for alternative ways of earning a living. One of the alternatives for Armenians was the Russian base that had long been established in the region. The presence of the base made Javakheti difficult to integrate into Georgia [29, p. 15]. In March 2005, the Georgian government took a decisive step. Against the decision of the Georgian government to close the bases, a large protest demonstration was held on 13 March 2005 in Akhalkalaki, United Javakhs [26, p. 26].

On 3 May 2006, Armenian organisations in Samtskhe-Javakheti appealed to the Georgian government. “The situation after the withdrawal of the base is uncertain. As Georgia continues its efforts to join NATO, it was stated that after the withdrawal of Russian troops from the region, Turkish troops might take their place”. However, in time, it became clear that the “fears” expressed by the Armenians did not materialise. In 2007 and 2008, the United Javakh's influence significantly decreased and the organisation sadly began to disintegrate.

In conclusion, the reforms introduced in Georgia after Mikheil Saakashvili came to power have caused serious concerns, especially among the Armenian population. Georgia's efforts to strengthen the state structure have caused concerns among Armenians in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region. However, the initiatives of the Saakashvili government again failed to meet the expectations of the Armenians.

External factors

An ongoing problem in Armenia-Georgia relations is the issue of churches in Georgia. “Armenians claim that some churches and religious shrines, especially in Javakheti and even in Tbilisi, belong to the Armenian national history and were confiscated by the state” [17, p. 74]. According to some circles in Armenia, Georgia is committing “cultural genocide” by appropriating Armenian cultural heritage. Publications in Armenia claim that there are about 650 Armenian churches in Georgia. Georgian intellectuals argue that these allegations are invalid, but are deeply concerned that these allegations are being made for future political demands [2].

It is known from history that the Armenian Church “had a great influence on the Armenian population” [11]. As Iskefieli states, “religion, especially the church, plays an important role in the formation of Armenian identity. The influence of the Church on Armenian identity is so great that for Armenians the concepts of religion and nationality, the Church and the Armenian language are intertwined” [14, p. 237].

At the end of the 20th century, the Armenian Church supported separatist movements in Abkhazia and Samtskhe-Javakheti, beginning with the restoration of Georgian independence. The Church was more than a religious institution [8, p. 84]. The Armenian Church participated in the territorial claims of Armenia, Armenian organisations and government officials against Georgia. Not content with Javakheti and Tbilisi, the Armenian Church also claimed historical and cultural heritage in Abkhazia. Indeed, this was perceived by the Armenian Church as a violation of the recognition of Georgia's territorial integrity by Georgian President Salome Zurbashvili in 2019. The Armenian media, often addressing the issue of determining the status of churches, blames the Georgian government and sees this as a policy against the Armenian population and culture in Georgia [1, p. 5].

The branch of the Armenian Church in Georgia is located in the Surb Gevorg Church in Tbilisi. Being part of the Armenian Apostolic Church, it is governed by the laws and decrees of the Armenian Catholicosate [25].



The Armenian Church makes its claims about a number of churches located on the territory of Georgia on the official website of the Church. 'The Armenian Church is demanding that the Georgian authorities return 442 Armenian churches in pre-Soviet Georgia, now destroyed or in ruins', [25.] the website reads. As the Georgian researcher Chedia writes, "for some countries religion is a tool to achieve long-term political goals" [32, p. 107].

On 14 October 2017, the Armenian Church in Georgia organised a protest action entitled "Let's Protect the Armenian Historical and Cultural Heritage of Tbilisi" to express its dissatisfaction with the policy of the country's authorities [20].

The Armenian Church has an influence on various Armenian organisations. For example, the Church has various partnerships with the Hayartun Youth Cultural Centre, founded in 2005 in Tbilisi, the Alexander Mantashev Cultural Centre in Batumi, and the Rafael Javakhhk Youth Centre in Ninotsminda [25]. "Our goal is to help Armenians to prevent assimilation, which threatens Armenians, especially in Tbilisi", Levon Chidilian, the head of the Hayartun Youth Cultural Centre, said in an interview. About ten youth centres have been opened in Georgia with the support of the Armenian Church.

The Georgian researcher Chedia states that "Georgia strives to maintain good neighbourly relations with Armenia, but the conflicts over the church have brought to light the deep contradictions between the two countries" [32, p. 117]. In order to solve this problem, it can be emphasised that Armenia's church guide should withdraw its territorial claims against Georgia. At first glance, it seems possible to understand this as a struggle for the protection of historical and cultural heritage. However, an in-depth analysis of the issue reveals that today's seizures of churches have the potential to form the basis for future territorial claims.

Armenia's policy towards Georgia was determined by its anti-Turkish ideology against Turkey and Azerbaijan and its economic situation. Because Armenia organised most of its economic relations through Georgia and continued to meet its oil and natural gas needs through Georgia. Therefore, although the Armenian government attached great importance to its relations with Georgia, it sometimes did not hesitate to make statements that would disturb Georgia regarding the Javakheti issue. "Despite the mutual declarations of good neighbourliness made by the officials of the two countries during visits and meetings, the relations between the two countries are dominated by mistrust and rivalry. This mistrust and rivalry deeply affect the relations" [2, p. 63]. Although Armenia is not openly at war with Georgia, it has not given up its claims over Javakheti. Armenia supported the social, cultural and political organisation of Armenians living in Georgia and continued to coordinate their activities.

Although Armenia has at times made territorial claims on Georgia, it was unable to openly support Armenian separatists in the Javakheti region in the 1990s. A number of reasons have influenced Armenia's behaviour. "Geopolitical realities forced Iravan to exert a restraining influence on Javakheti Armenians, since at that time the war in Karabakh and the occupation of Azerbaijani territories had already begun" [6, p. 205]. The military aggression against Azerbaijan not only disrupted Armenia's commercial ties with Azerbaijan, but also resulted in Turkey closing the border in solidarity. As a result, Armenia's landlocked links with the rest of the world are limited to either Iran or Georgia.

At the end of the 20th century, the leaders of Armenian nationalist organisations, sensing the imminent collapse of the USSR, began to draw up plans for the expansion of a future independent Armenia. The Dashnaktsutyun party and other nationalist organisations, which had disappeared during the Soviet era, reappeared. In 1985, the XXIII Congress of Dashnaktsutyun convened in Athens, the capital of Greece. There was only one issue on the agenda of the congress: The expansion of the territory of Armenia. Only one question caused disagreement among the delegates of the



Congress - from which direction to start - from the west, from Karabakh, the territory of Azerbaijan, or from the north, from Akhalkalaki, the territory of Georgia. According to the results of the voting, by a margin of one vote, it was decided to start the occupation of Karabakh from the Azerbaijani direction [12].

Speaking about the influence and role of Armenia, the leaders of the Javakhetian organisations openly stated that they had ties with the political forces in Armenia [19, p. 21]. In the 1990s, members of Armenian terrorist organisations such as Dashnaktsutyun, Krunk and Asala were actively engaged in subversive activities in the south of Georgia. The head of the Armenian-Aryan organisation Armen Avetisyan made the following threatening statement to the newspaper "Asaval-dasavali" about "Javakheti was ours, now it is yours, will you give it to us peacefully? If so, then good, if not, war is inevitable! Javakheti is Armenian territory and must be returned to Armenia... If we have to, we will fight to regain our homeland..." [12].

Speaking about the influence of Armenia on the organisations in Georgia, Jabbarli wrote: The mechanism of organisation of Javakheti Armenians by the Armenian government can be divided into two types: "doves" and "hawks". The Armenian government voices the Javakheti Armenians' demands for independence through "doves" and when the Georgian government does not respond positively, it threatens the government and puts forward "hawks" [5, p. 355].

According to Georgian historian Ramishvili, Javakh's radical figures were under the influence of the Dashnaktsutyun party, which was known for terrorist acts throughout its history. The emergence of the Javakheti conflict can be perceived as a threat, but also as a violation of Georgia's territorial integrity. Javakheti is of great strategic importance not only for Georgia but also for Armenia. Therefore, the issue of Javakheti Armenians is not only a domestic issue for Georgia, but also of regional significance [30, p. 21].

Bochoroshvili, a member of the Georgian parliament, stated that the Armenian government controls the activities of Georgian Armenians and that the Javakhetian organisation cannot demand autonomy without the consent of Iravan. During his visit to Javakheti, Stepan Margaryan, Advisor to the Armenian Prime Minister, stated that the Armenian demand for autonomy from the Georgian government does not violate the Georgian Constitution [5, p. 354]. After Robert Kocharyan came to power in Armenia, official state officials made statements that worried Georgia.

For instance, Armenian MP Vahan Onanessian's statement that he "considers the Armenia-Georgia border as a front line" was met with irritation in Georgia. [5, p. 353]. Former Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan stated that he would support the granting of official language status to Armenian in Javakheti [1, p. 2].

"I believe that the recognition of Armenian as a regional language in Javakheti and steps to preserve Armenian monuments in Georgia will strengthen Armenia-Georgia's friendly relations and increase mutual trust. We must approach all these issues sensitively, but at the same time we must be persistent and principled" [19, p. 12].

Armenia realised that a possible conflict in Javakheti would affect Armenia, thus closing Armenia's exit to the Black Sea and leaving it economically dependent only on Iran. In addition, given the dire state of its economy, it took restrictive steps on Javakheti Armenians in order to reduce tensions in the region. "Georgian scholars generally agree that Armenia is the key to peace in Javakheti" [6, p. 205].

In Armenia, there are organisations such as "Zor Hayrenik" and "Union of Intellectuals" that deal with the problems of Javakheti Armenians. In addition, it was found that "Armenians in Javakheti were in close contact with the Dashnaktsutyun party and some of its leaders continued their activities in Akhalkalaki after the party was banned in Armenia in 1994" [8, p. 82].



Offensive statements against Georgia were increasingly heard from Armenian politicians. “Armenia's policy of friendship with Georgia is very costly for us, the price of this policy is the loss of Javakheti. Georgia's arrogance makes us think that it is time for Armenia to change its policy towards this country” [32, p. 116].

For a period of time, the Prime Minister of Armenia had a special adviser on Javakheti affairs [30, p. 22]. This means that Armenia is addressing the Javakheti problem at the highest state level and with a specific purpose. Armenian organisations in Javakheti have received assistance from the highly influential Armenian community in the United States and France [26, p. 19]. Thus, Armenia's policy towards Georgia is based on many factors, particularly the situation of the Armenian population in the Javakheti region and Armenia's anti-Turkic ideology. Armenia has tried to keep its economic relations with Georgia balanced, which are of vital importance, especially with regard to energy supplies, while at the same time defending and supporting the separatist movements of Javakheti Armenians. However, geopolitical difficulties and the regional uncertainties brought about by the First Karabakh War have limited Armenia's position on this issue.

Despite the fact that Georgia has always remained neutral in the Karabakh war, Armenians living in Georgia ignored the official position of the state and engaged in anti-state activities and initiatives.

On September 27, 2020, in response to the wide provocation carried out by Armenia, the Azerbaijani Army decided to launch a counter-offensive operation along the entire front line in order to stop the attacks and ensure the safety of the civilian population. Thus, the Second Karabakh War began. The 44-day (September 27 - November 8, 2020) Second Karabakh War ended with the victory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. During the war, the occupied Azerbaijani territories were liberated.

The Karabakh war became the center of attention not only in the world media, but also in the Georgian media. Armenia's media has engaged in disinformation against Georgia.

On September 28, 2020, former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili posted on his Facebook page that “Nagorno-Karabakh is a sovereign territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan and nothing will change this” and declared his support for Azerbaijan in its fight for its rights. Soon after, Saakashvili was accused by Armenians of making “anti-Armenian” statements. On October 1, 2020, around 300 Armenian protesters staged a protest in front of the Georgian internet TV channel Mtavari Arkhi, claiming that the channel was pro-Azerbaijani regarding the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia [18].

At the same time, in the village of Kartsakhi, located on the border in Javakheti, Armenians tried to send cargo to Armenia, possibly destined for Karabakh. According to the protesters, they blocked the road in Javakheti to stop trucks allegedly supplying arms from Turkey to Azerbaijan via Georgia. The situation worsened when disinformation spread on the Internet that Georgia had authorized the transportation of weapons from Turkey to Azerbaijan. However, the head of the parliamentary defense and security committee, Irakli Sesiashvili, said that Georgia did not allow the transportation of military cargo from either side during the war [4].

The Second Karabakh War in 2020 was a conflict that started with Armenia's provocations, continued with Azerbaijan's counter-offensive and ultimately ended with an Azerbaijani victory. This war profoundly affected not only the borders between Azerbaijan and Armenia, but also regional security and international relations. Armenia's disinformation campaigns against Georgia and its influence on the media created serious tensions both for the Armenian population inside Georgia and for regional security.



CONCLUSION

In the early 1990s, the process of Georgian independence and the collapse of the Soviet Union led to serious ethnic and political tensions in the Javakheti region. Armenian nationalism gained strength under Gamsakhurdia's rule and demands for independence from Georgia emerged. Under the influence of the First Karabakh War, Armenian organizations and radical groups in Javakheti engaged in various political and military actions with the aim of annexing the region to Armenia. In this process, the actions of Armenians in Javakheti led to clashes with the Georgian administration, deepening tensions in the region. After 1994, political stability was restored in Georgia. However, ethnic tensions in the region have not completely ended. Armenian organizations in Javakheti continued to voice their demand for autonomy, thus complicating Javakheti's integration into Georgia and affecting the ethnic and political structure in the region.

The reforms introduced in Georgia after Mikheil Saakashvili came to power have caused serious concerns, especially among the Armenian population. Georgia's efforts to strengthen the state structure have caused identity concerns especially among the Armenian population in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region. The reforms were perceived by Armenians as a form of assimilation, which triggered efforts by local Armenian organizations to mobilize the population. The Saakashvili government's initiatives did not meet the expectations of Armenians. The influence of Armenian organizations, especially the radical and nationalist rhetoric of United Javakh, encouraged separatist tendencies in the region and led to conflicts at the local level. Over time, however, the popularity of these organizations declined.

Armenia's relations with Georgia and the Javakheti issue have been shaped by an effort to maintain a balance between regional security and economic factors, but the mistrust and rivalry in these relations have at times led to mutual threats and tensions. Cooperation between Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia is at the center of energy and trade projects in the region, increasing the strategic importance of the South Caucasus. However, Armenia has consistently opposed these collaborations and has viewed Georgia's participation in these projects negatively. Armenia's attitude has manifested itself in obstructions and provocations against regional projects, especially through the Armenians living in the Javakheti region.

Armenia's policy has negatively affected not only the relations between Georgia and Azerbaijan, but also the security and political balances in the region. Nevertheless, this attitude of Armenia has led to its isolation and regional isolation over time. Moreover, Armenia's aggressive stance in Karabakh and the new tensions that emerged after the war further complicated relations in the region. The Second Karabakh War was not only a military conflict, but also a turning point that reshaped the balance of power in the South Caucasus and profoundly affected regional alliances and security relations.

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GÜRCÜSTANDA ERMƏNİ TƏŞKİLATLARI: SAMTSXE-CAVAXETİ NÜMUNƏSİNDƏ

N.Ə. Məmmədova

Bu məqalənin məqsədi Gürcüstanın Samtsxe-Cavaxeti regionunda yaradılmış erməni təşkilatlarını təhlil etməkdir. Samtsxe-Cavaxeti regionu Gürcüstanda ermənilərin kompakt yaşadığı yerdir. Məqalədə erməni təşkilatlarının məqsədləri, vəzifələri və fəaliyyət istiqamətləri nəzərdən keçirilir, onların fəaliyyətinə təsir edən daxili və xarici amillər təhlil edilir. 1991-ci ildə SSRİ-nin dağılması ilə Gürcüstan müstəqilliyini bərpa etdi. SSRİ-nin dağılması Gürcüstanda dərin sosial-siyasi və iqtisadi böhrana, habelə dövlət quruculuğu prosesində çətinliklərə səbəb oldu. Ölkənin Abxaziya və Sxinvali bölgələrində separatçı hərəkətlər baş vermişdir. Bu tədqiqat işi kontent-analiz metoduna əsaslanır.

Açar sözlər: *erməni, Samtsxe-Cavaxeti, Gürcüstan, separatizm, əsassız iddialar*

АРМЯНСКИЕ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ В ГРУЗИИ: НА ПРИМЕРЕ САМЦХЕ-ДЖАВАХЕТИ

Н.А. Маммадова

Цель данной статьи – проанализировать армянские организации, созданные в регионе Грузии Самцхе-Джавахети. Регион Самцхе-Джавахети где проживает компактно армянское меньшинство в Грузии. В статье рассматриваются основные цели, задачи и направления деятельности армянских организаций, а также анализируются внутренние и внешние факторы, влияющие на их деятельность. В 1991 году, с распадом СССР, Грузия восстановила свою независимость. Распад СССР привел к глубокому социально-политическому и экономическому кризису в Грузии, а также к трудностям в процессе государственного строительства. Кроме того, осложняющим фактором стала гражданская война в регионах Абхазии и Цхинвали, вызванная сепаратистскими движениями. Данное исследование основано на качественном анализе и использовании вторичных источников.

Ключевые слова: *армяне, Самцхе-Джавахети, Грузия, сепаратизм, необоснованные претензии*



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SCIENTIFIC AND THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CLASSIFICATION OF MIGRATION PROCESSES

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In the article, a scientific-theoretical analysis of the classification of international migration processes was carried out, security issues within the framework of migration policy, as well as migration movements under the conditions of globalization were investigated. During the research, information was given about the causes and consequences of regular and irregular migration, the types of changes that occurred in migration movements during globalization processes were shown, and the impact of granting permission for high and low level temporary migration on the economy of developing and developing countries was explained.

Forced and voluntary migration should be defined as a classification based on a migrant-centric approach. Forced migration occurs during war, oppression, famine, floods, etc. it is the movement of people who have to move from their countries due to natural disasters. People who move like this are mostly called refugees, but the concept of refugees does not include all forced migrants. Here it is necessary to clearly explain the difference between the concepts of refugee, asylum seeker and migrant. According to international law, a refugee is a person without nationality and is a person who cannot or does not want to return to the country of his citizenship because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to his race, religion, nationality, affiliation or political opinion. Asylum seekers are used to describe an asylum seeker who is seeking international protection but whose status has not yet been officially recognized.

The research provided information about the causes and consequences of regular and irregular migration, showed the types of changes in migration movements since the emergence of the concept of globalization, and explained the benefits of allowing high and low levels of temporary migration to the economies of developing and emerging countries. At the same time, a sociological classification of migration processes was conducted, the Belarusian crisis was addressed, and forced migration occurring during the Karabakh conflict was investigated.

Keywords: adaptation of migrants, regular and irregular migration, brain drain, border security, refugee status issues

INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the topic: In the era modern globalization, migration processes have become one of the most dynamic and complex socio-economic phenomena shaping the world order. Changing the place of residence of people is not just a physical displacement, but also a multifaceted process that directly affects the demographic structure, labor market and national security strategies of states. The rapid increase in the scale of migration flows poses the urgent task of classifying these processes on a scientific basis and studying them in depth theoretically.

Problem statement: One of the main difficulties encountered in the scientific study of the phenomenon of migration is the lack of a single and universally accepted definition of this concept. Migration processes are diverse by their internal nature: they can be voluntary or forced, legal or illegal, permanent or temporary. This diversity necessitates the creation of a single scientific classifi-



cation system, which, in turn, plays the role of the basis for effective regulation of migration policy by the state.

Scientific and theoretical basis of the study: The classification of migration processes is analyzed within the framework of various scientific approaches (neoclassical economic theory, the concept of “push and pull” factors, a systemic approach, etc.). In the scientific literature, the grouping of migration according to spatial (internal and external), temporal (temporary and permanent) and motivational (economic, political, ecological) criteria help to understand the essence of this process. However, modern geopolitical changes require a revision of classical classification models.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the presented work is to systematize existing scientific and theoretical approaches to the classification of migration processes, analyze the internal structure of these processes, and identify the main features of the differentiation of migration types in modern conditions.

MAIN PART

Types of classification

International migration processes are classified in different ways. The first of these classifications is desirable as well as undesirable migration from a state-centered perspective. Desirable migration means mainly high-quality labor migration necessary for the country's economy.

Unwanted migration by the state is migration through marriage and asylum seekers, which must be accepted under international law. Irregular migration is the type of unwanted migration with which states are most politically engaged.

That is not desired by the state is the migration and the applicants for asylum that are carried out by establishing a family, which should be accepted based on international law. Irregular migration is the type of unwanted migration that politically concerns the states the most.

The term primarily refers to individuals whose claims for refugee status have been assessed by the government or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and who are awaiting status determination. Although their status has not been officially recognized, asylum seekers are not forcibly sent to their countries, and their rights and freedoms need to be protected.

The migrant-centered approach is people who migrate for political and economic reasons. Economic migrants mainly include family members who move to another country or region with the aim of improving their financial and social situation and securing the future of themselves and their families. That is, this type of migration can occur within the country and mainly due to the fear of persecution in the country, but work, education, etc. it's about people leaving for different reasons. While some of these transactions can be carried out regularly with legal documents such as passports and visas, others can be carried out irregularly, bypassing legal channels. Labor migration itself is divided into high-level labor migration and low-level labor migration.

The classification of high-quality and low-quality labor divides the world into “poor countries” and “rich countries”, with migration currently moving from poor countries to high-income countries. Although Europe has long tried to play the role of a closed fortress, there is an unlimited number of emigration from its eastern and southern borders. These migrants consist of people with mostly low-level professional characteristics who are looking for permanent work as the low-quality labor force increases. All developed countries, which do not benefit enough from local workers and education systems, are increasingly in need of high-quality labor migration. Competition between developed countries also increases, as increased skilled labor migration also reduces the availability of jobs for unskilled labor migration. In this regard, European countries lag behind countries such as North America, Australia and New Zealand [14, p. 14].

Another classification of migration can be made as permanent as well as temporary migration. Irrevocable migration is defined as permanent migration, while the separation of people from their place of residence for a certain period of time is characterized as temporary migration. Although



migration movements were mainly permanent during the last few centuries, in modern times temporary migration movements are more predominant. Migrants can settle in different countries of the world many times during their stay and return to their former countries during this period. Therefore, in modern conditions, the number of people who migrate from one country to another and spend the rest of their lives there is less than in the past. In the past, immigrants who lived abroad for a long time often travel back to their home countries as a result of the development and cheapening of this type of international transport [13, p. 8].

Studies have shown that allowing both high-level and low-level temporary migration to the economies of developing and emerging countries. According to these studies, a 3% increase in the temporary migration quotas of developing countries can increase global welfare by 156 billion dollars per year, of which 70 billion dollars will go to developing countries [31, p. 66]. Temporary migration, including return migration, covers a wide spectrum, from artists to teachers, service sector workers to seasonal workers, international students and researchers. One of the emerging migration trends is the migration of international retirees. The causes and consequences of international pension migration differ from other types of migration, depending on the age and economic status of the migrants. Such migrants migrate mainly from Northern Europe to Southern European countries, including Turkey. In this process, the post-Soviet space, as well as the South Caucasus region, has its own place.

The last classification is legal and illegal migration or regular and irregular migration, as it is more commonly used in the literature. Regular migrants outnumber irregular migrants. However, irregular migration is recognized as a problem area by various states. Irregular or illegal migrant refers to a large group of people who enter the country without the necessary documents or with forged documents and continue to stay in the country after their visa or work permit expires, even if they enter the country legally [13, p. 16].

It is difficult to define an exact boundary between these classifications. Just as most voluntary migrants migrate for economic reasons, most internally displaced persons are refugees for political reasons. Individuals can easily switch from one migration category to another. A legally immigrating migrant becomes an illegal migrant if he exceeds the period of the document authorizing him to stay in the territory of the country, etc.

On the social classification of migration processes

The social analysis of migration is the study of the impacts of the processes of population departure from communities or relocation to new territories on society, individuals, the economy, and culture. This analysis encompasses the causes of migration and the consequences it generates in both countries of origin and destination.

The state also views migration challenges as a social issue; in this regard, one of the social approach methods involves the adaptation of migrants to local conditions. The objective is the integration of migrants into the local society. Migration processes can be studied from a social perspective in the following dimensions: the social aspects of the occurrence of migration processes, social consequences, issues of social security and protection, social insurance, regulation of labor relations, provision of employment, timely and legally compliant payment of wages, labor conditions meeting established standards, acquisition of housing, as well as migrants' rights to housing, family, property, education, social equality, leisure, and other socio-political factors [24, p. 96-97]. The social analysis of migration proves that migration is not merely the relocation of people, but a process of reshaping societies, cross-cultural intersection, and the renewal of the global social structure. A successful integration policy can transform migration from a threat to society into a source of cultural and economic enrichment. The social dimension allows us to focus on social change by examining inequalities and to investigate migration as one of the factors explaining social differences today. These inequalities function structurally because the very concept of migration classifies individuals according to a status that justifies the inequality of rights and opportunities. It also functions



socially, as being a migrant always constitutes a situation characterized by fewer advantages, fewer resources, and limited legal opportunities to seek employment and housing, which serves as an overt factor of discrimination [18].

The social analysis of migration is conducted across several primary dimensions and factors: Drivers of migration (push and pull factors): Push factors in the country of origin include unemployment, poverty, conflicts, natural disasters, political or religious persecution, and low-quality education or healthcare. Pull factors in the destination country involve better wages and welfare opportunities, stability, quality education, family reunification, and high living standards. Social impact on countries of origin: Demographic changes: the departure of primarily young and working-age populations leads to population aging (a demographic crisis). Brain Drain: the emigration of professional specialists, scientists, and physicians creates a potential human resource shortage in the country of origin. Family structure: the migration of one or both parents results in child neglect or children being raised under the guardianship of relatives. Remittances: funds sent by migrants can lower poverty levels among families, but sometimes lead to an excessive increase in consumption within the national economy. Social impact on destination (host) countries: Integration and multiculturalism: the adaptation (integration) of migrants into the local society, language, and customs is a complex social issue. Demographic revitalization: it addresses labor shortages and helps balance demographic indicators. Pressure on social services: additional burdens may arise in the education, healthcare, and social security systems of the host country. Cultural diversity: the intersection of different cultures can lead to both enrichment and social tensions such as migrantophobia (fear and prejudice against migrants).

Social impact at the individual level: The psychological state of the migrant: separation from the native environment, loss of social support networks, and encountering discrimination in the new society can cause stress and depression. Social status change: migrants often have to abandon their previous professions in the new country and work in low-social-status jobs. Individuals participating in international migration are divided into different groups based on their sociological status and reasons for relocation:

Voluntary economic migrants: Individuals who cross borders through legal or illegal means to raise their living standards and find better employment.

Forced migrants (refugees and asylum seekers): Those compelled to leave their country due to war, ethnic conflicts, political persecution, or ecological disasters.

Intellectual migrants ("brain drain"): The relocation of highly qualified personnel such as scientists, engineers, and IT specialists to developed countries.

Sociological processes occurring within the host society of international migrants primarily develop according to four models: 1. Assimilation: The migrant completely forgets their native culture and fully adopts the cultural norms and identity of the host society. 2. Multiculturalism (integration): The migrant preserves their cultural identity while successfully adapting to the laws and social life of the new society. 3. Ghettoization (marginalization): The rejection of migrants by the local population, resulting in them living in closed, impoverished, and isolated neighborhoods (ghettos) on the fringes of cities, consisting solely of their compatriots. 4. Xenophobia and political populism: The influx of international migrants creates fears of "losing our jobs" or "the destruction of our culture" among the local population in host countries. Sociologically, this gives rise to the strengthening of racism and anti-migrant political movements.

Regulated and irregular migration

Regular migration policy covers legal migration such as accepting migrants for employment, marriage, education purposes and their integration into society. This policy covers the entry and settlement of third-country nationals into the EU for vocational training, work and self-employment. In addition, the integration policy of migrants takes into account the mutual rights and duties of migrants and their country of residence and covers the issues of integration of migrants into the



society of their country of residence. The marriage policy defines the conditions for the right to enter into marriage for third-country nationals legally residing in the territories of the member states.

Illegal or irregular migration, as it is presented in the literature, is a concept that has a greater impact on contemporary international relations and therefore should be discussed more widely. In modern times, illegal immigration has become an important and widespread issue on the world agenda, since the processes experienced in the background of sharp conflicts in those lands after the events of the “Arab Spring” led to the mass migration of people to Europe. Explanations about illegal migration lead to differences of opinion among experts.

From the terminological point of view, the term “illegal migration” is used in a broader sense, but it has also been criticized. Although legal systems and the public view this phenomenon as illegal migration, social scientists prefer to use the terms “undocumented”, “unauthorized” or “irregular” rather than “illegal immigrant”. The main goal here is to avoid discriminatory expressions and prevent the interpretation of migration as an element of criminal responsibility. What is illegal here is not the migrant himself, but the way to enter the country, stay and work [11, p. 29].

It should be noted that the term “undocumented” is not very appropriate due to its vagueness. Because there are also documented and state-recognized illegal migrants. Also, since not all illegal migrants are unauthorized, the term “unauthorized” is not widely used. Of these terms, the concept of “irregular migrant” can be considered the most suitable among other alternatives, although it is not comprehensive. When the concept of irregular migration emerges, it emerges from legal, political and social perspectives. The concept of irregular migration encompasses an increasingly important legal, political and social context. This concept is vague, highly politicized, has specific political goals, and is often difficult and dangerous to discuss. Irregular migration can be an issue and subject of negotiation in various policy areas, such as trade agreements, development policy, military strategy and international relations. The concept of “illegal immigration” that emerged as a result of the combination of regular migration and citizenship policy is considered an artificial concept. Illegal migration cannot occur without a migration policy that makes migration illegal. However, the definition of illegal, irregular and undocumented migration is also related to the approach of the migration policy to this issue. As a result of the relationship between immigration and citizenship laws, migration has already become a problem for law enforcement and police officers. The police security service operates in the direction of preventing illegal entry and settlement into the country's territory [16, p. 28].

Therefore, illegal or irregular migration is an unknown figure in all countries of the world, and the influence of globalization on this process is increasing. In other words, the majority of international migration in the globalized world is not registered and therefore cannot be reflected in official statistics. It is estimated that between 250,000 and 300,000 people migrate to Northern Europe every year [13, p. 17].

Policies to reduce irregular migration have been ineffective or have had serious consequences. Although it is difficult to prove empirically, many scientists agree that limiting asylum applications to Europe has led to an increase in human trafficking. Therefore, people who cannot legally enter Europe still resort to smuggling because they want or need to enter these lands.

Barbed wire at the borders, biometric tests or the introduction of visas do not prevent illegal migration. Deeper solutions are proposed for solving these problems, including eliminating the conditions that force people to leave the country, helping the country's development to improve security and living standards, and increasing the opportunities for legal migration.

Although some utopians, theoretical schools, and views argue that states generally abolish borders, this does not seem possible in modern political conditions.

Another migration closely related to irregular migration is transit migration. Transit migration is a form of migration that occurs when a country is used as a gateway to a country of destination, both irregularly and regularly. Transitional migration, also known as transit migration, is a dynamic



concept that is difficult to regulate. This is especially true when local residents are unhappy with the move and are looking for a new place to live.

Transit migration has become a political expression of unwanted migration and irregular migration within the EU or within the Union. In addition to irregular migration, various movements combining complex movement aspects also constitute transit migration. The concept of transit migration refers to various forms of migration that appear to be temporary. In this sense, it refers to migrants who move from one country to another because their original destination is the same or because of changing conditions, increased pressures or new destinations. Consequently, the concept of transit migration is a politicized term used to denote unwanted migration to the EU, for which transit countries are responsible.

Frank Duvell grouped the countries involved in the transit migration process in EU-related migration processes as follows [32, p. 156-158]:

- Origin country;
- Migration stage which is countries (Russia, Yemen, Mali, Senegal, Mauritania);
- Countries on the way to the EU (Ukraine, Turkey, Serbia, Libya, Morocco);
- EU countries (Italy, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Slovakia, Cyprus and Malta);
- Countries crossing on the way to the destination country (Germany, France, Austria);
- Targeted countries in the EU, North America and elsewhere;
- Finally, migration from the South Caucasus (to this we can refer to Russia, direct or indirect migration through Russia to Europe).

We should note that such grouping is not mandatory. Due to the dynamic nature of migration, an EU country can be an entry point for some migrants and a destination for others. Due to the dynamic nature of migration, an EU country can be an entry point for some migrants and a destination for others. For example, countries such as Italy and Spain began to move from a transit country to a settlement country as they developed. Migrants' perceptions of these countries and their settlement goals may change over time.

Places related to transit migration include Debrecen in Hungary, Humenne in Slovakia, etc. states that there are also cities that accept refugees. Edirne, where refugees are temporarily settled in Turkey, Pavchino in Ukraine, etc. centers, camps, street markets such as Shulavska in Kyiv, places where migrants and refugees work to finance their onward movements, etc. there is

With the signing of repatriation agreements with third countries to EU countries, the number of such places is increasing. In the face of these growing and intermingling types of migration, source, transit and destination countries continue to participate in information exchange and coordinate their policies at both the national and international levels.

Security issues within the framework of migration policy

In the era of globalization, migration is intertwined with security issues, among other things. Conventionally, three main elements of migration policy within the EU can be summarized as follows: visa policy, border management, policy regulating the movement of refugees.

a) Visa policy. Although the state creates its own migration policy, it applies visas primarily to ensure security. In most cases, the passport of one country is not enough to enter the territory of another country and a visa is required. That is, a visa is a document issued by foreign state authorities to a person with a passport to enter the territory of that country. Thus, the visa indicates that the passport of the person who wants to enter the country is accepted and there will be no problem in entering the country [3, p. 127].

A visa is also required for transit. Separate transit visas are provided for this purpose. Tourist visas are intended to introduce people to a country to enter the country temporarily across the border. Within the EU, a Schengen visa allows individuals to enter and move freely between countries in the region. The most important element of the EU's visa policy is the visa facilitation agreements signed by the Union with third parties, especially with neighboring countries. Visa facilitation ag-



reements provide for the issuance of short-term visas for 90 or 180 days to citizens of the parties on the basis of the principle of reciprocity makes it easier. The issue of long-term visas is often a matter for member states to decide on their own.

b) Border management. States take various security measures to prevent unauthorized persons from entering their territory, the main issue here being border control to prevent unauthorized entry. Strengthening border control of safety is one of the most important factors in protecting and preventing illegal immigration among OSCE members. Although the term “border security” is widely used in EU policy, there are some difficulties in defining its meaning. The term “border control” was previously used for policy in this area, but as a result of subsequent policy improvements, it has been replaced by border security. The terrorist acts that took place in the United States in 2001 played an important role in this exchange. Thus, after this event, immigration actions were associated with crime and the concepts of border control and homeland security, which are separate but very related areas, were combined. Thus, border security has become crucial in the context of civil defense and the Union's counter-terrorism strategy. This strategy of border security improvement is based on the development of technology, especially the use of biometric systems for passports, visas, identity cards, expansion and dissemination of information systems within the Union [2, p. 32]. It is no coincidence that the Russian Federation from time to time imposes various restrictions on Azerbaijan and Georgia from the countries of the South Caucasus, with the exception of Armenia. After the establishment of states and the determination of borders, migration acquires a modern content, and on the other hand, it becomes a force that rejects borders and the state itself. Migration, which is a fact of modern times, is conditioned by its necessity. An individual chooses any form of life activity in order to fully and comprehensively satisfy his needs [17, p. 116].

c) Policies governing the movement of refugees. The legal status of refugees is explained in accordance with the 1951 Geneva Convention of the UN. A refugee is an alien who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of origin for legal reasons due to fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, affiliation or political opinion. The UN Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees is an important document regulating the migration of refugees in Europe. There is also the Dublin Regulation, which defines which member states must deal with these accepted refugee applications to prevent refugee applications from the same persons in different countries.

The migration crisis in Belarus

In 2021, migration trends related to Belarus were primarily noted in the context of unregulated transit from the Middle East through Belarusian territory into Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, and subsequently to other European Union Member States, including Germany. The majority of migrants arrived from Iraq, as well as Afghanistan, Syria, and other countries. Overall, more than 43,000 apprehensions were reported at the border in Poland, and 4,200 in Lithuania, while Germany registered over 11,000 migrants in 2021 who had used the route through Belarus to enter the country [20, p. 383]. Poland increased the number of its security forces to 15,000 to detain and return those illegally crossing its border. Official Minsk accused Europe of demonstrating indifference toward migrants, while European states, led by Poland, accused Belarus of manufacturing the migrant crisis [6]. The European Union accused Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko of deliberately organizing the migration influx in response to the sanctions imposed on his country following the 2020 presidential elections; the West characterized this process as a hybrid attack.

As a consequence of the burgeoning migrant crisis, an Iraqi migrant within a cohort detained in the border zone while attempting unauthorized entry into Poland succumbed to a myocardial infarction. It is noteworthy that this fatality brought the recent death toll among migrants along the Polish-Belarusian border to five, with four casualties recorded within Polish territory and one within Belarus [25]. The crisis currently continues beyond border confrontations and has moved into the legal sphere. Lithuania has filed a lawsuit against Belarus at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. The country accuses the regime of Alexander Lukashenko of deliberately creating a



migration crisis in violation of international law. According to ayna.az, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania released information regarding this on May 19. The lawsuit concerns the violation of the UN Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants. Vilnius emphasized that since 2021, Lithuania has faced an unprecedented influx of illegal migrants from Belarus. According to the collected evidence, this flow was orchestrated by the Belarusian regime. Specifically, Belarusian state-owned enterprises increased the number of flights from the Middle East, facilitated the issuance of visas, and simplified accommodation for migrants. Belarusian security forces escorted them to the Lithuanian border and often forced them to cross illegally under life-threatening conditions. Despite repeated appeals from Lithuanian institutions, the Belarusian side refused to cooperate to prevent these violations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania stated that bilateral negotiations yielded no results; therefore, the country has turned to international justice. Lithuania demands full compensation for damages, including border construction costs, and guarantees that the violations will not be repeated. According to the Border Guard Service, 23.6 thousand illegal immigrants have been denied entry into Lithuania since the beginning of the crisis [15]. Currently, this problem remains unresolved.

Globalization and migration movements

One of the main trends of the globalization process is the acceleration of the migration process and the fact that this process begins to play a decisive role in the fate of states and peoples. National leader Heydar Aliyev used to say that "Migration is a natural process. It cannot and should not be avoided and is generally positive. The process of migration in the world applies to all countries and peoples" [28, p. 37]. Migration is one of the least studied and discussed aspects of globalization and is increasingly placed in the context of global changes. Historically, hundreds of years ago, the communication of European countries with other continents led to the emergence of large-scale migration movements that laid the foundations of multinational societies. The migration movements that started with this process and continue to influence the social structure of many nation-states on a global scale continue today. Although migration is not a new concept in this context, its importance has increased with the rapid development of globalization. For this reason, some migration process experts such as Castels and Miller call the 21st century "the century of migration".

The nature and driving force of international migration changed after the 1980s, when the concept of globalization appeared [13, p. 82]. These changes can be listed as follows:

- Globalization of migration: More and more countries have joined the global migration system. Thus, immigrants from different geographies, with different economic, socio-cultural characteristics began to flow to the countries receiving migrants.

- Different types of migration: There have been changes in the types of migration throughout this process. These include long-term labor migration, migration of highly skilled professionals, asylum seekers, illegal migrants, shuttle migration, i.e. short-distance, daily, weekly or monthly seasonal migration.

- Increased tendency of migration in certain parts of the world

- Gender change of migration: So, if earlier migrants were mostly men, now women are at the forefront in different stages of migration.

- Changes in the reasons that attract people to migrate and force them to leave their countries: In general, when it comes to migration in third world countries, the reasons that force people to migrate come to the fore. Poverty, demographic growth, political instability and natural disasters in these countries are becoming increasingly controversial for potential migrants as the situation in the Western world is increasingly scrutinized. Restrictions on legal migration routes lead to an increase in illegal migration. In addition, with the development of globalization, the reasons that attract people to other countries are also changing. The decline in manufacturing has reduced the need for migrant labor. In addition, the development of the service sector increased the need for skilled professionals of migrants.



The “brain drain” and “intellectual migration” caused by migration have created great problems for the countries of the modern world. The immigration policy of developed countries aims to give status to intellectual immigrants or implement a preferential legalization policy for a strong, highly qualified labor force by applying the principle of “selective selection” [12, p.263]. There is a fierce competition between Europe and the United States in this field as well. The economic benefits of intellectual migration, or “brain drain”, are estimated to be between \$1.43 billion and \$62 trillion annually.

In the process of globalization, increased development, demographic and democratic differences have become an important driving force for migration. International division of labor in countries with a high level of wealth increases the demand for migrant workers. At the 59th session of the International Organization for Migration held in 1989, the concepts of “migration” and “migrant” were defined as follows: Migration is an integral part of the development of any state. A migrant is a person who moves from one country to another and needs international migration services [26]. There are similar statements about migrants [24, p.54]: documented immigrants; economic migrant; illegal migrant (irregular migrant); skilled worker migrant (skilled migrant); temporary worker migrant (temporary migrant worker). Almost no part of the world sends or receives migrant workers. Even if a state with an entirely migrant population were to be established, it would be the fifth largest state in the world by population. Migrant- sending countries have now become recipient countries, and countries that claim not to accept migrants are adapting their migration and citizenship laws to the realities of current migrant flows were forced to adapt [10, p. 170]. In the early 1990s, there were approximately 25 million migrant workers in the West alone, half of whom were from Eastern Europe. The Federal Republic of Germany became a country of mass immigration, receiving more than one million immigrants (including 720,000 ethnic Germans from the GDR) in 1989 alone [30, p. 6].

Today, migration movements cover the whole world like a spider's web, and therefore the world migration map is a multipolar map. If states adopt policies that can play a role in managing migration, international migration may increase rather than decrease. For example, in a global economy, countries will be able to use labor migration to increase their economic income. In some areas, international migration is considered an obstacle to the sovereignty of states and thus a threat to national security .

One of the main areas where migration can affect state sovereignty is border control. It is important for states to control their borders and ensure their national security from the point of view of protecting state identity. Although states are increasing border controls, non-state actors such as organized crime groups and human traffickers also play a role. There is a link between globalization and increased migration movements and border controls. Thus, in response to the high mobility of globalization resulting from the transgression of borders, states have chosen to fortify their borders. On the other hand, with the strengthening of globalization in the face of increasing migration flows, the ability of the nation state to prevent these movements has decreased, and the restrictions created by globalization have forced states to allow unwanted migration. In that process, it is stated that the nation-state is too big to solve regional problems and too small to solve global problems. Although countries try to manage migration and asylum movements, there is a gap between the concept of restrictive control and the reality of increased migration. In this process, the results of the policy implemented in this area do not coincide with the goals of the national migration policy. But in general, it can be said that the areas where sovereignty is most reflected are migration, naturalization and displacement. In such a case, the question arises, does the implementation of unwanted migration mean a decrease in the sovereignty of the national state? In order to answer this, two elements must be considered. First, sovereignty has two distinct aspects. These are: the ability to make laws and enforce them. This feature is based on the idea that nation states are the main actors in international relations. The second element approaches the issue from a historical-sociological perspective



and includes the concepts of the power, ability or independence of the state in determining the historical development of the modern state. It is noted that restrictions on sovereignty in both areas of migration management occur very rarely. The decision to accept or reject foreign citizens is not left to foreign actors, and the capabilities of modern states have not diminished over time, but rather strengthened. Moreover, sovereignty has rarely been absolute in terms of both legal capacity and operational capacity. Because as a result of increasing interdependence of states in the international world, citizens of other countries cannot be prevented from entering the state territory unless it is illegal. At the same time, such actions against a citizen of a state can be considered committed against the state to which he belongs. In addition, international law prohibits racial discrimination, such as denying entry or deportation to a country, as well as denying access to its territory to persons persecuted by other states. Western countries in particular are committed not only to the rule of law in domestic legislation, but also to protecting human rights, including the rights of migrants. Thus, international human rights and freedoms ensure the protection of the rights of non-citizens as well as migrants [7, p. 268].

Forced migration processes in Azerbaijan during the Karabakh conflict

Forced migration in Azerbaijan, beginning in the late 1980s, was conditioned by Armenia's policies of deportation, genocide, and aggression, making Azerbaijan the first republic in the former Soviet space to confront refugee and internal displacement crises. As the first country in the CIS to encounter a refugee crisis, the influx of refugees from Armenia to Azerbaijan began in late 1987. In the early 1990s, 200.5 thousand individuals were forcibly deported from Armenia and sought refuge in Azerbaijan [22, p. 456]. Consequently, developing large-scale projects to stabilize the demographic situation in Azerbaijan became an absolute necessity. The displacement of populations expelled from Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other districts of Azerbaijan further compounded the crisis [21, p. 456]. Specifically, 300 thousand members of the Azerbaijani population displaced from Karabakh and its surrounding districts settled in the Absheron Peninsula, with 200 thousand relocating to Baku, approximately 85 thousand to Sumgait, and 15 thousand to the Absheron district [5]. Military operations between Armenia, which supported Armenian separatism in Nagorno-Karabakh, and Azerbaijan resulted in the occupation of the entire Nagorno-Karabakh territory and its adjacent districts, triggering unprecedented migration flows from both Azerbaijan and Armenia. Although Armenians first attempted to raise the Karabakh issue in 1967, the perestroika policy pursued by Mikhail Gorbachev in the USSR in 1987 more actively incited Armenians to lay claims to Azerbaijani lands. Among those who provided special support for the execution of Armenian separatist plans were Aganbegyan and Shahnazarov, who served as aides to M. Gorbachev, the Soviet leader at the time [9, p. 42]. In the subsequent phase, between 1991 and 1993, the occupation of Karabakh and the seven surrounding districts (Lachin, Kalbajar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Gubadli, and Zangilan) forcibly displaced more than one million people, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), from their homelands. Currently, there are nearly 1.2 million refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan, forming the core of forced internal and external migration [4, p. 11]. Populations that lost their homes and lifelong savings due to the conflict were forced to move to more stable and secure countries. As a result, illegal migration emerged, creating conditions conducive to smuggling and human trafficking, while the spread of terrorism and the expansion of illicit drug trafficking evolved into global threats. These consequences of migration intensified to such an extent that preventing these threats became impossible not only at the national level but even at the regional level. We clearly observed these phenomena in the case of the Azerbaijani territories occupied by Armenia. The occupied Nagorno-Karabakh and its surrounding seven districts became a "gray zone" beyond international oversight. Terrorist groups were established and trained in Nagorno-Karabakh, criminal elements from abroad were settled in these lands, narcotics were cultivated, and funds generated from drug trafficking were utilized to support various forms of transnational crime. Azerbaijan monitored the atrocities, ecological genocide, and destruction of flora and fauna perpetrated



by Armenia through ethnic cleansing in the seized territories using satellite intelligence, which Armenia lacked the capacity to obstruct. Consequently, Azerbaijani delegations raised the issues of these crimes and acts of vandalism before international organizations through satellite intelligence, progressively dealing a severe blow to the image of the Armenian administration in the information sphere. As a direct result, documents condemning Armenia were adopted by European institutions and at the UN level. Resolution 1416 and its accompanying recommendations, adopted by the Council of Europe in January 2005, and the new resolution passed by the UN General Assembly in March 2008 concerning the implementation of previous Security Council resolutions, effectively exposed Armenia's occupier image to the entire world. The National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan clearly outlined the spectrum of threats posed to national security by migration. As a result of migration processes, the country was primarily abandoned by the young and middle-aged male population, which initially manifested as a "brain drain" abroad and subsequently as a loss of labor force. Migration disrupted demographic balance, damaged national values and cultural characteristics, and created serious complications in economic and border matters. The geographical position of our republic underscores the critical importance of migration and border security. As is well known, because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan's 132-km border with Iran and 733-km border with Armenia fell under occupation [19, p. 107-108].

As a consequence of Armenia's policy of ethnic cleansing and aggression, over one million compatriots were driven from their homes and sought refuge in different regions of the country. From 1993 onward, during the presidency of Heydar Aliyev, the state sought to provide comprehensive care to address the challenges faced by citizens displaced due to various factors. National Leader Heydar Aliyev laid the foundation for implementing practical measures to regulate forced internal migration processes in the country. Thanks to the purposeful steps taken under his leadership, migration from our republic to certain developed countries slowed down, and many families representing other nationalities returned. As a result of the National Leader's political principles, following the signing of the "Contract of the Century" with the world's leading oil companies in 1994, the influx of migrant workers accelerated in the country due to the increased volume of investments in the national economy, alongside the realization of infrastructure and business projects across different sectors [23]. The work initiated in this direction was successfully sustained after Ilham Aliyev was elected President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2003. Indeed, the "State Program on Social-Economic Development of the Regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2004–2008)," approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 11, 2004, is a socio-economic program aimed at mitigating the consequences of internal migration. As the primary subjects of internal migration, refugees and IDPs have also been protected through the comprehensive attention and care of the Azerbaijani state. President Ilham Aliyev, who declared on the eve of the 2003 presidential election that all IDP camps in the country would be abolished [8], swiftly fulfilled this promise, and IDPs were provided with new housing equipped with modern infrastructure. In December 2007, the last tent camp in the country was officially dismantled, and all residents were relocated to modern settlements. In general, the activities of President Ilham Aliyev in the field of social protection for IDPs displaced by the Karabakh conflict and their return to their native lands can be divided into two main stages: the conflict period (2003–2020) and the post-victory Great Return period (from 2020 onward).

As a result of the Second Karabakh War, for the first time in the 75-year history of the United Nations, the armed forces of a country whose territories had been occupied compelled the occupying party on the battlefield to unconditionally implement the prior resolutions of the UN Security Council regarding the liberation of the occupied territories [29, p. 346]. Under the leadership of the Commander-in-Chief, President Ilham Aliyev, the victorious Azerbaijani army liberated our lands, which had been under enemy occupation for 30 years, in just 44 days (September 27 - November



10, 2020), after which our victorious state commenced preparations for the return of our compatriots to their native homelands.

The 44-day Patriotic War, ending in Armenia's crushing defeat, exerted a profound geopolitical impact on the South Caucasus, shifting the traditional balance of power and fostering new opportunities for regional peace and security. Excellent prospects have emerged for restoring crucial economic, transport, and communication links in the South Caucasus. If Armenia definitively renounces its aggressive policy and signs a peace treaty, the restoration of all transport routes and the establishment of the Zangezur corridor would provide significant economic advantages to this country. By liberating its historical territories, Azerbaijan regained control over the rich natural resources that had been unlawfully exploited by the Armenian occupiers in Karabakh. Once the reconstruction of the devastated territories is completed, Azerbaijan will ensure stable and modern economic growth there, which will contribute substantially to the country's overall economic development [1, p. 18-19]. With the opening of the new Zangezur corridor, Turkey will gain direct access to Azerbaijan without transiting through the territories of Georgia and Iran. Comparing the new overland route to be restored between Azerbaijan and Turkey via the new corridor with the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway that passes through Georgia, the new route will be approximately 340 km shorter [27]. The realization of the Zangezur corridor will not only guarantee a lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan but will also facilitate the return and reintegration of Azerbaijanis once deported from the territory of Armenia. Furthermore, by redrawing the geostrategic map of the region through new logistics hubs and industrial zones, it will accelerate the migration of the rural population to cities, thereby increasing the level of urbanization in the region.

CONCLUSION

Thus, migration management has also changed with globalization. When we look at history, we see that international migration was perceived as a one-sided and unique process. According to this approach, a migrant should never return to his country. At this time, two countries participate in the migration movement - the source of migration and the country where the migrant goes, and the responsibility for organizing this process rests only on them. However, in modern times, this does not reflect reality and it is not accepted that migration management is possible only at the national level. Transit countries are already recognized as actors in migration management policies. In addition, various international organizations are involved in the regulation of this process. Global migration in light of all these ongoing processes the ability to respond to the movement with global governance is a subject of constant debate.

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MİQRASIYA PROSESLƏRİNİN TƏSNİFATLAŞDIRILMASININ ELMİ-NƏZƏRİ TƏHLİLİ

R.N. Rzaxanov

Bu məqalədə beynəlxalq miqrasiya proseslərinin təsnifatı, miqrasiya siyasəti daxilində təhlükəsizlik məsələləri və nəzəri təhlili təqdim olunur. Tədqiqatda qanuni və qeyri-qanuni miqrasiyanın səbəbləri və nəticələri, qloballaşmanın gəlişindən bəri miqrasiyada baş verən dəyişikliklərin növləri və inkişaf etməkdə olan ölkələrin iqtisadiyyatına yüksək və aşağı səviyyəli miqrasiyanın faydaları haqqında məlumatlar təqdim olunur.

Məcburi və könüllü miqrasiya miqrant mərkəzli yaşamağa əsaslanan təsnifat kimi müəyyən edilməlidir. Məcburi miqrasiya müharibə, zülm, aclıq, daşqınlar və s. zamanı baş verir. Bu, təbii fəlakətlər səbəbindən ölkələrini tərk etməyə məcbur olan insanların hərəkətidir. Bu şəkildə köçən insanlar ümumiyyətlə qaçqın adlanır, lakin qaçqın anlayışı bütün məcburi miqrantları əhatə etmir. Burada qaçqın sığınacaq axtaran və miqrant anlayışları arasındakı fərqləri aydın şəkildə aydınlaşdırmaq lazımdır. Beynəlxalq hüquqa görə qaçqın irqinə, dininə, milliyyətinə, mənsubiyyətinə və ya siyasi fikrinə görə əsaslı təqib qorxusu səbəbindən vətəndaşlığı olduğu ölkəyə qayıda bilməyən və ya qayıtmaq istəməyən vətəndaşlığı olmayan şəxsdir. Sığınacaq axtaran termini beynəlxalq himayə axtaran, lakin statusu hələ rəsmi olaraq tanınmayan sığınacaq axtaran şəxsi təsvir etmək üçün istifadə olunur.

Araşdırmalar zamanı nizamlı və nizamsız miqrasiyanın səbəbləri və nəticələri haqqında məlumat verilmiş, qloballaşma anlayışı meydana çıxdıqdan sonra miqrasiya hərəkətlərində baş verən dəyişikliklərin növləri göstərilmiş, eləcə də yüksək və aşağı səviyyəli müvəqqəti miqrasiyaya icazənin verilməsinin inkişaf edən və inkişaf etməkdə olan ölkələrin iqtisadiyyatına faydası izah edilmişdir. Eyni zamanda miqrasiya proseslərinin sosioloji təsnifatı aparılmış, Belarus böhranına toxunulmuş və Qarabağ münaqişəsi zamanı baş verən məcburi miqrasiya araşdırılmışdır.

Açar sözlər: *miqrantların adaptasiyası, nizamlı və nizamsız miqrasiya, beyin axını, sərhədlərin təhlükəsizliyi, qaçqınların status məsələləri*

НАУЧНО-ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ КЛАССИФИКАЦИИ МИГРАЦИОННЫХ ПРОЦЕССОВ

Р.Н. Рзаханов

В данной статье проводится научно-теоретический анализ классификации международных миграционных процессов, вопросов безопасности в рамках миграционной политики, а также миграционных движений в условиях глобализации. В исследовании представлена информация о причинах и последствиях законной и нелегальной миграции, типах изменений в миграции после возникновения глобализации, а также о преимуществах допуска высоких и низких уровней миграции в экономику развивающихся и развивающихся стран.



Принудительная и добровольная миграция должна быть определена как классификация, основанная на мигрантоцентричном подходе. Принудительная миграция происходит во время войны, угнетения, голода, наводнений и т. д. это перемещение людей, которые вынуждены переезжать из своих стран из-за стихийных бедствий. Людей, которые переезжают таким образом, в основном называют беженцами, но понятие беженцев не включает всех вынужденных мигрантов. Здесь необходимо четко объяснить разницу между понятиями беженец, проситель убежища и мигрант. Согласно международному праву, беженец-это лицо без гражданства и является лицом, которое не может или не хочет возвращаться в страну своего гражданства из-за обоснованных опасений преследования из-за своей расы, религии, национальности, принадлежности или политических убеждений. Просители убежища используются для описания просителя убежища, который ищет международной защиты, но чей статус еще не был официально признан.

Исследование предоставило информацию о причинах и последствиях легальной и нелегальной миграции, показало типы изменений в миграционных потоках с момента появления концепции глобализации и объяснило преимущества разрешения высокого и низкого уровня временной миграции для экономик развивающихся стран и стран с переходной экономикой. В то же время была проведена социологическая классификация миграционных процессов, затронут белорусский кризис и исследована вынужденная миграция в ходе Карабахского конфликта.

Ключевые слова: адаптация мигрантов, регулярная и незаконная миграция, мозговой поток, безопасность границ, вопросы статуса беженца



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INNOVATIVE AND PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN AZERBAIJAN

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Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is increasingly recognized as a strategic approach to inclusive development, particularly in rural areas of Azerbaijan. Unlike traditional top-down tourism models, CBT emphasizes community-led development, where local populations are not passive beneficiaries but active participants in the planning, production, and delivery of tourism experiences. This research examines innovative and pragmatic strategies for the diversification of CBT products and provides a theoretical foundation for rethinking CBT beyond conventional paradigms in Azerbaijan. The main aim of this research is to develop innovative, context-sensitive CBT product diversification strategies applicable to Azerbaijan's rural tourism sector. The study applies a qualitative workshop-based approach involving key stakeholders such as local residents, tourism professionals, and policymakers to co-create adaptive CBT product concepts. The findings confirm that CBT has the potential to become a key pillar in Azerbaijan's rural development agenda, provided that empowerment, capacity building, and inclusive governance structures are prioritized.

Keywords: *Community-Based Tourism (CBT), participatory tourism, rural development, capacity building, local empowerment, tourism diversification, Azerbaijan.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has evolved into a key driver of socio-economic development, stimulating cultural exchange, economic growth, and regional revitalization [53]. Within this broad sector, community-based tourism (CBT) has gained prominence as a sustainable model that emphasizes local participation, resource conservation, and equitable economic benefits [17]. CBT initiatives seek to empower local communities by positioning them as primary stakeholders in tourism development, ensuring that cultural and natural heritage assets are preserved while enhancing visitor experiences [34]. The origins of CBT can be traced back to early forms of communal hospitality in primitive societies, where local traditions and resources played a fundamental role in hosting travellers [41]. Over time, tourism has transitioned from unstructured communal hospitality to structured, market-driven approaches that integrate participatory governance and sustainable development principles [3]. The historical evolution of communities has shaped the way local groups interact with tourism today. Early human societies were based on small, tightly knit communities where resources were collectively shared and managed. This early form of communal living laid the groundwork for modern concepts of community governance and resource management. As society evolved, particularly with the advent of agriculture and trade, communities began to expand and diversify, developing complex social, political, and economic structures [32].

In the context of tourism, the importance of these communities became evident as tourism began to interact with local cultures. Initially, tourism was a top-down process where tourists arrived in experience “authentic” cultures, often without meaningful interaction with the community. Over time, however, it became clear that for tourism to be sustainable, it must involve local communities, ensuring that their traditions and practices were respected, and that they had a stake in the benefits generated [2]. In this early conception, CBT was about ensuring that local service providers, suppli-



ers, and community members played a central role in shaping the tourism experience. The term “local tourism” gained traction as CBT began to focus on connecting visitors with the authentic culture and environment of a destination. Early definitions stressed the importance of engaging the host community in every step of tourism development, as tourism was seen as an instrument for local development and empowerment. This notion was captured by Hall [21], who noted that CBT could create a more sustainable tourism industry by ensuring the host community had a say in the decision-making process. In these early stages, participatory planning and community control became integral to the concept of CBT [28].

As CBT evolved, its scope broadened to encompass not only community control but also the integration of sustainable practices. The triangular partnership between tourism, sustainability, and community development is based on the interdependence of these three elements. Sustainable tourism practices enhance community development by supporting environmental conservation, creating opportunities for local businesses, and preserving cultural heritage. In turn, the active participation of communities in tourism management ensures that sustainable practices are embedded within the local context and that the benefits of tourism are distributed fairly [51]. Despite the potential benefits of the triangular partnership, several challenges must be addressed to achieve success. One of the main obstacles is the potential conflict between economic growth and environmental conservation [25]. While tourism can generate substantial economic benefits, it can also lead to over-exploitation of natural resources, particularly in fragile ecosystems such as coral reefs and rainforests. Balancing these competing interests requires effective resource management, long-term planning, and a commitment to sustainable practices by all stakeholders [37].

The primary goal of CBT is to ensure that the economic, social, and environmental benefits of tourism are directed towards local populations [41]. CBT models evolved as a response to the negative impacts of mass tourism, which often leads to environmental degradation, cultural erosion, and unequal distribution of economic benefits [36]. The early development of CBT focused on rural and indigenous communities where tourism products are designed around the preservation of culture, nature, and the environment. Through its participatory nature, CBT provides an alternative to mainstream tourism, encouraging local autonomy and sustainability [47]. CBT is deeply connected to the concept of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL), which highlights the balance between economic, social, and environmental sustainability. The social dimension of TBL aligns with CBT's emphasis on community empowerment and local involvement, ensuring that tourism initiatives benefit the residents and enhance their participation in the decision-making process [41]. The environmental pillar of TBL intersects with CBT's commitment to environmental preservation by promoting sustainable tourism practices that minimize ecological footprints and contribute to conservation efforts [26]. Additionally, the economic aspect of TBL ties to CBT's aim of providing economic benefits to local communities, improving livelihoods, and fostering poverty alleviation through tourism ventures. In the case of Azerbaijan, CBT development is still in its infancy. The government has initiated various rural tourism projects with the intention of empowering local communities and diversifying the tourism industry. However, challenges remain in integrating local communities into the decision-making and benefit-sharing processes, which is a crucial aspect of CBT success [24].

MAIN PART

Theoretical Framework of Community-Based Tourism

CBT is often characterized by its focus on local community participation, where the community plays a key role in the planning, development, and management of tourism activities. The community plays a central role in CBT initiatives, serving as both the provider and the beneficiary of the tourism product [49]. This model contrasts sharply with traditional tourism, where external entities, often from outside the community, dominate the decision-making processes. This approach also aims to increase income earning opportunities and support sustainable development while con-



tributing to the creation of high quality, authentic and diversified tourism products. Sustainable CBT products aim to conserve local natural and cultural resources while providing economic opportunities for local people [8]. The long-term success of CBT hinges on balancing the needs of the community with the preservation of its heritage and environment [36]. Equitable benefit-sharing is another core principle that ensures that the financial benefits derived from tourism are distributed fairly among community members. This principle is integral to preventing the exploitation of local populations who asserts that ensuring equitable benefits prevents the “leakage” of tourism revenue to external stakeholders [16]. It is argued that without equitable benefit-sharing, CBT risks exacerbating local inequalities [40]. For CBT to be truly beneficial to communities, it must create an inclusive model where all members, including marginalized groups, can access the opportunities tourism offers [21].

The successful development of CBT products requires collaboration across various stakeholders, notably the local community, the government, and the private sector. The collaboration is a crucial element in CBT product development, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered in the decision-making process and that the resulting products reflect the needs, aspirations, and cultural values of the community [30]. The government plays an essential role in establishing the legal and regulatory frameworks that facilitate CBT [19]. Moreover, the government’s role in policymaking can help protect local resources, ensuring that tourism does not overrun the community’s environmental or social fabric [44]. On the other hand, the involvement of the private sector can provide essential expertise and capital to enhance the marketability and scalability of CBT products [39]. The private sector collaboration can help local communities develop tourism products that meet the needs of global tourists while remaining true to local culture and sustainability practices. However, the private sector's involvement must be carefully managed to prevent the dominance of profit motives over the community’s well-being [42].

Given the interconnected nature of tourism, it is crucial that CBT development does not occur in isolation but instead through strong, effective partnerships. Local authorities play a critical role in establishing the regulatory framework, connecting tourism initiatives with other relevant development efforts, and encouraging a supportive environment for sustainable growth. Moreover, effective community engagement is central to the success of CBT, cultivating local ownership and participation throughout the process [27]. When communities are actively involved, it leads to greater responsibility and commitment to the project, as well as a broader distribution of tourism benefits within the community. This, in turn, enhances the quality and authenticity of tourism products and experiences, ensuring they remain aligned with local values and sustainable practices [51]. The effectiveness of this collaborative approach is illustrated by the case of Bhutan, where the government, private sector, and local communities have successfully worked together to create a sustainable tourism model that promotes both cultural preservation and economic development [31]. In particular, community-government-private sector partnerships (CGP partnerships) are seen as a model that encourages innovation in product development. Such partnerships ensure that tourism products meet the needs of both visitors and local stakeholders. For instance, in the case of indigenous tourism in New Zealand, CGP collaborations have led to the creation of culturally immersive tourism products that benefit both the community and the tourism sector [46]. For CBT to be truly effective, each stakeholder must contribute their knowledge, expertise, and resources, with a shared commitment to the community's long-term well-being [5].

Current Landscape of Community-Based Tourism in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijani government has introduced several strategic documents to guide tourism development, emphasizing sustainability and community involvement. The Azerbaijan Tourism Strategy 2023-2026 presents a strategic and holistic framework for tourism development over four years, emphasizing nine pillars, including Destination Development, Heritage and Communities, and Tourism Products and Experiences. The vision is to position Azerbaijan as an accessible, sustaina-

ble, and quality tourism destination offering unique experiences to both domestic and international tourists. This strategy aligns with the country's broader socio-economic development plans and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [4]. The Strategic Road Map on the National Economy and Key Sectors of the Economy (2017-2020) serves as guidelines for preparing strategic plans across various economic sectors, including tourism [18]. Institutional support is further evidenced by Azerbaijan's membership in the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). The State Tourism Agency's collaboration with GSTC underscores a commitment to integrating global sustainable tourism standards at the national level, encouraging local stakeholders to embark on sustainability journeys, and positioning Azerbaijan as a preferred sustainable tourism destination [15].

One of the critical challenges in the expansion of CBT in Azerbaijan is the lack of community interest and motivation, particularly in some rural areas. Many local residents perceive tourism as an unstable income source due to seasonal fluctuations and limited marketing strategies [54]. Additionally, the high rate of migration from rural to urban areas weakens community engagement, as younger generations often relocate in search of better employment opportunities, leaving behind an aging population less inclined to engage in tourism-related activities [29]. Furthermore, there is a lack of training and awareness programs designed to equip local residents with the necessary skills for successful tourism operations. The absence of structured capacity-building initiatives results in low service quality, limited entrepreneurial capabilities, and a lack of understanding of international tourist expectations [17]. Government-led initiatives often adopt top-down approaches that limit local involvement, restricting the ability of communities to take ownership of CBT projects. This overreliance on centralized planning results in projects that do not align with the socio-cultural context of rural communities, leading to low participation rates [12]. A significant barrier to CBT growth in Azerbaijan is the limited tourism infrastructure in rural areas. Poor road networks, inadequate accommodation facilities, and insufficient transportation options make it difficult for tourists to access CBT sites. The absence of innovative and experience-driven tourism products results in limited tourist engagement, reducing the competitiveness of Azerbaijan's rural tourism sector [53]. The commercialization of traditional practices has led to the trivialization of cultural values, where certain local customs are staged rather than authentically preserved. Additionally, the expansion of tourism in some rural areas has contributed to the acceleration of social inequality, as economic benefits are often concentrated among a small group of individuals rather than being equitably distributed within the community [55]. All these challenges are illustrated in the below fish model, highlighting the key barriers to CBT development in Azerbaijan (Figure 1).

In line with the definition provided by the UN Tourism, a tourism product is a blend of both tangible and intangible components. These include natural, cultural, and man-made resources, attractions, facilities, services, and activities that are centered around a particular focal point. This combination forms the core of a destination's marketing mix and is designed to generate overall visitor experience, which can include emotional responses for potential customers. A tourism product is not only priced but also sold through various distribution channels and follows a life cycle [51]. However, in the context of CBT, tourism products are not limited to these conventional elements. Instead, they are multifaceted and involve the immersion of the visitor into the local culture, environment, and community life [13].

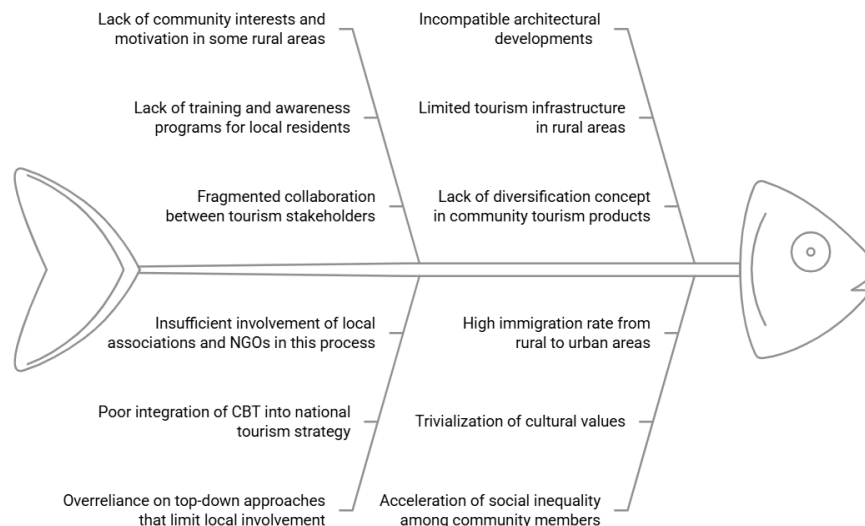


Fig. 1. Fish Model – Challenges for Community-based Tourism in Azerbaijan

Understanding Tourism Products in a Community-based Tourism Context

In a CBT context, the tourism product must be experiential. The key to tourism in CBT is the creation of “experiences” that engage tourists in a meaningful and authentic way, transforming their perception of the destination and connecting them to local customs, practices, and the community [38]. These experiences are deeply rooted in the physical environment, local culture, and the service interactions between visitors and hosts, and they contribute to the construction of the product itself. Thus, the experience provided in CBT is multi-dimensional, mixing tangible elements like local services (e.g., homestays, food) with intangible elements like social and cultural interaction (e.g., storytelling, community events) [7].

CBT products need to deliver an authentic experience to differentiate themselves from mass tourism offerings [50]. The experience should be immersive, where tourists engage directly with the local community, learn about local customs, and participate in activities that are part of everyday life. Therefore, understanding the role of experience, service, and culture is critical when analysing the design and delivery of CBT products. The authenticity of experiences in tourism products is vital in attracting tourists who seek “genuine and local” experiences [10]. In CBT, authenticity is not just about offering traditional customs or heritage; it is about representing the lived experiences of local communities, where the practices and interactions are not staged for tourists, but rather an integral part of the local way of life. Tourism products should reflect an honest portrayal of a community’s culture and history [33].

Local identity plays a critical role in the uniqueness of CBT products. The local identity is a powerful tool for differentiation in tourism [20]. In CBT, the tourism product is deeply embedded in the identity of the community, where the local population becomes both the producer and the consumer of the tourism product. This direct involvement of the community in the creation and management of the tourism product helps preserve and promote local heritage, while simultaneously offering tourists an authentic experience. Community involvement is also a fundamental component of CBT products. This participatory approach ensures that the benefits of tourism are shared equitably, and that the community has control over how tourism impacts their lives [48].

Sustainability is another principal element of a CBT product, ensuring that tourism development does not degrade the environment or culture, but instead contributes to the long-term well-being of the community. In the context of CBT, sustainability encompasses not only environmental concerns but also social and economic aspects. Sustainable CBT products should promote environ-

mental conservation, preserve cultural heritage, support local economies, and ensure equitable benefit-sharing among the community [9]. Sustainable CBT products often include strategies for conservation, such as limiting visitor numbers, using eco-friendly infrastructure, and promoting the responsible use of local resources [22]. The ability of CBT to maintain its sustainability hinges on its adaptability to local conditions. The community must remain at the centre of the development process, ensuring that the product reflects the realities of the area and the aspirations of the local people. Without this participatory approach, the sustainability of the CBT product may be jeopardized.

The CBT Product Wheel, as conceptualized, encapsulates the interplay between tourist experiences and community well-being, highlighting core attributes such as cultural exchange, economic empowerment, and sustainability. The proposition of CBT lies in offering tourists authentic, hands-on experiences while ensuring the preservation of local traditions and capacity-building for host communities [14]. The framework emphasizes dual-value creation, wherein tourists gain experiential learning and emotional fulfilment through village homestays, cultural workshops, folklore storytelling, and agritourism, while local communities experience economic upliftment, strengthened social cohesion, and skill development [55]. Moreover, CBT strengthens resilience, empowerment, and pride among community members by integrating local entrepreneurship and traditional knowledge systems into tourism offerings [34]. Furthermore, the experiential highlights within the CBT Product Wheel underscore the role of local prosperity, inclusivity, and collaboration, which are key components of sustainable tourism development [41]. Through ensuring that tourism practices enhance rather than exploit local resources, CBT aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in promoting decent work, economic growth (SDG 8), and cultural heritage preservation (SDG 11) [52]. As shown in Figure 2 below, the illustration represents the CBT Product Wheel, highlighting its key components and structure.



Fig. 2. Community-based Tourism Product Wheel

Diversification and Innovation in CBT Products

Traditional forms of CBT have predominantly emphasized basic tourism offerings such as homestays, consumption of local cuisine, and the sale of artisanal handicrafts. These foundational elements remain integral to CBT frameworks; however, emerging trends indicate a growing tourist demand for more experiential forms of engagement [9]. This evolving preference reflects a broader



shift towards experiential tourism, wherein cultural, environmental, and social components are integrated to facilitate authentic and participatory interactions between visitors and host communities. The authentic experiences, in which the tourist becomes involved in the local culture and community life, are a critical aspect of tourism experiences today [11]. This might include cultural rituals, local agricultural practices, or participating in the preservation of local traditions [1].

The concept of CBT 2.0 refers to the next generation of CBT products, which are characterized by a focus on high-value, experience-driven products that appeal to modern travellers' growing demand for adventure, learning, and interactivity. The integration of new experiences such as eco-tourism, adventure tourism, and educational travel is essential to the growth of CBT in the 21st century [45]. In CBT, co-creation allows for a more personalized and interactive experience, where tourists become integral to the tourism product's development. The concept of co-creation is particularly important in CBT because it empowers local communities by giving them an active role in shaping their tourism offerings. One example of sustainable co-creation is the involvement of tourists in conservation efforts or community-led environmental initiatives. In these experiences, tourists do not simply observe local practices but actively participate in sustainable tourism activities such as tree planting, wildlife monitoring, or promoting environmental awareness [35]. The development of innovative tourism products is crucial for the success of CBT initiatives, as it attracts visitors while ensuring that local communities are the primary beneficiaries of tourism activities [6].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To ensure a participatory and inclusive approach in the development of CBT products, this study adopted the workshop methodology as its primary qualitative research approach. The participants of the workshop were carefully selected to ensure a diverse representation of key stakeholders involved in the development of CBT in Azerbaijan, including local community members, tourism practitioners, and industry experts.

Workshops are particularly valuable in CBT research as they provide a dynamic environment that triggers active participation, enabling individuals to exchange experiences, co-create innovative solutions, and contribute to the formulation of practical strategies and this methodology is well-suited to the community-centric nature of CBT. Unlike traditional surveys or interviews, workshops facilitate collective brainstorming and real-time feedback, leading to the context-specific solutions [23, 43]. The primary objectives of the workshop were to identify and prioritize key factors influencing the success of CBT products; examine their impact on tourist satisfaction; encourage collaboration in product co-design among stakeholders; encourage active participation from local communities and industry actors; and propose innovative CBT products suited to the unique context of Azerbaijan.

The workshop was organized on the 8th of February 2025, with the participation of nine individuals, including local community members, tourism professionals, and industry experts, alongside one facilitator. The facilitator for this session was the author, who guided the discussions and activities throughout the day. At the beginning of the workshop, the facilitator (the author) delivered an introductory presentation that provided an overview of the findings and discoveries related to the topic. Participants engaged in various interactive activities designed to stimulate discussion, idea generation, and collaborative problem-solving. All participants were fully informed about the workshop's goals and structure before the event.

WORKSHOP RESULTS

The workshop provided a dynamic platform for stakeholders to engage in meaningful discussions about the challenges and opportunities surrounding CBT product development in Azerbaijan. The discussions were structured around the PAR methodology, ensuring that every stakeholder had

an active role in identifying problems and proposing solutions. Key themes and thoughts highlighted by participants are the following:

1. *Community Engagement and Ownership*: One of the recurring themes throughout the workshop was the necessity of community ownership in CBT product development. Participants highlighted that while Azerbaijan has a wealth of cultural and natural assets, the lack of direct community involvement in product design has often led to underutilization of these resources. Several community members emphasized the need for capacity-building programs to empower local residents with the skills.

2. *Innovation in CBT Product Offerings*: A major discussion points centred on the need to diversify CBT offerings beyond traditional homestays and handicrafts. Participants collectively brainstormed tourism products that integrate adventure tourism, agritourism, and experiential learning. Ideas such as “Honey Village Edu-Trail”, “Silk Road Heritage Trails”, and “Interactive Carpentry and Weaving Workshops” emerged as potential flagship CBT products.

3. *Balancing Authenticity and Commercial Viability*: A concern raised during the workshop was maintaining authenticity while ensuring commercial viability. The workshop participants emphasized the importance of creating a tiered approach to CBT development that allows local communities to control the level of tourist interaction with their daily lives. This would ensure that tourism does not intrude upon, but instead enhances, local culture and traditions.

4. *Infrastructure and Policy Support*: Infrastructure gaps were identified as a primary bottleneck hindering CBT growth in Azerbaijan. Community representatives from rural areas pointed out deficiencies in transportation, accommodation, and digital connectivity. Industry experts stressed the importance of integrating CBT into national tourism policies and securing government support.

5. *CBT Product Co-Creation*: According to the workshop participants, successful CBT product development in Azerbaijan requires a structured yet flexible framework that balances innovation, sustainability, and local engagement. As a result of extensive discussions and collaborative brainstorming, the Temple Model emerged as a guiding structure for conceptualizing CBT initiatives. This model represents a holistic approach, outlining key pillars, strategic priorities, and interconnected considerations necessary for developing community-driven tourism. The figure 3 below illustrates the Temple Model:

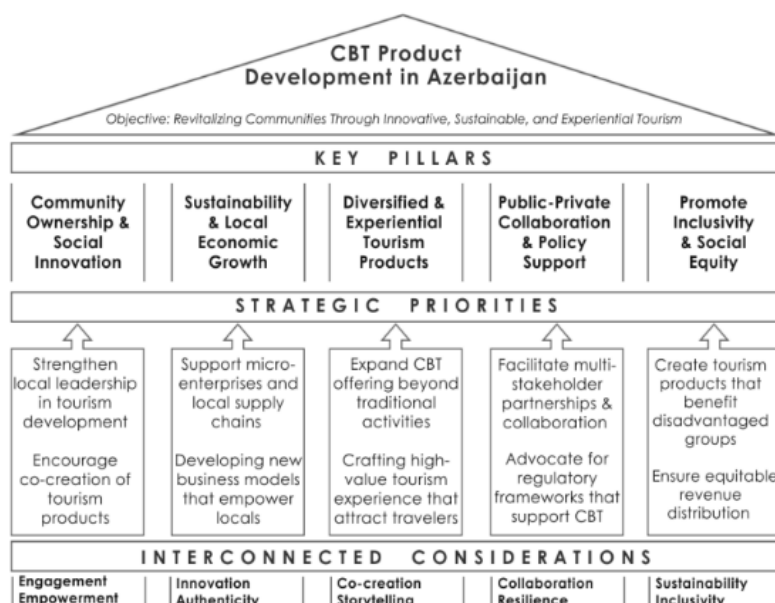


Fig. 3. The Temple Model: Framework for CBT Product Development in Azerbaijan



CONCLUSION

The findings underscore the importance of community empowerment and dynamic tourism ecosystems in stimulating long-term resilience and destination loyalty. Through positioning local communities as active co-creators of tourism experiences, this approach not only empowers local communities and increases a sense of ownership and pride but also ensures that tourism products are deeply rooted in local culture. Unlike the conventional models that focus primarily on static, location-based experiences, this research emphasizes the role of adaptive tourism ecosystems where communities actively shape and co-create dynamic tourism offerings. The integration of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) with the proposed Temple Model and CBT Product Wheel offers a novel analytical lens through which CBT can be conceptualized not merely as a tourism typology, but as a locally innovation system that supports social resilience, cultural continuity, and sustainable entrepreneurship.

A key theoretical contribution is the introduction of the experience ecosystem approach in CBT, which redefines community participation beyond service provision to include co-creation, co-governance, and co-benefit sharing. This perspective contributes to the growing body of literature that emphasizes the role of local storytelling, emotional engagement, and place-based identity in constructing meaningful tourist experiences. The study argues that community members should transition from passive hosts to active “experience architects”. From a managerial perspective, the study offers a revolutionary approach to CBT governance, experience design, and commercialization strategies. The research underscores the importance of collaborative governance and stakeholder synergy, highlighting that CBT success relies on multi-stakeholder engagement, including local communities, government entities, private investors, and non-governmental organizations. The proposed Eight-Step CBT Product Development Pathway provides a clear and replicable roadmap for practitioners, integrating key stages from community needs assessment to ongoing evaluation.

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AZƏRBAYCANDA İCMA-ƏSASLI TURİZM MƏHSULLARININ İNKİŞAFINA DAİR INNOVATİV VƏ PRAKTİK YANAŞMALAR

S.Ş. Hacıyev

İcma-əsaslı turizm, xüsusilə Azərbaycanın kənd yerlərində inklüziv inkişaf üçün əsas strateji alət kimi getdikcə daha çox tanınmaqdadır. Ənənəvi turizm modellərindən fərqli olaraq, icma-əsaslı



turizm konsepsiyası yerli icmaların turizmin inkişafında fəal rol oynamasını və onların rifahının yaxşılaşdırılmasını təşviq edir. Bu yanaşmada icma üzvləri sadəcə faydalanan tərəf kimi deyil, eyni zamanda turizm məhsullarının planlaşdırılması, hazırlanması və təqdim edilməsində əsas aktorlar kimi çıxış edirlər. Bu tədqiqatın əsas məqsədi, Azərbaycanın kənd turizmi üçün uyğun, innovativ və praktik icma-əsaslı turizm məhsullarının diversifikasiyası üzrə strategiyaların hazırlanmasıdır. Tədqiqatda keyfiyyət tədqiqat metodundan (vörkşöp formatlı) istifadə olunmuşdur. Vörkşöpə əsas maraqlı tərəflər – yerli icma üzvləri, turizm mütəxəssisləri və dövlət qurumlarının nümayəndələri cəlb olunmuşdur. Tədqiqatın nəticələri göstərir ki, əgər yerli icmaların səlahiyyətləndirilməsi, bilik və bacarıqlarının artırılması, həmçinin inklüziv idarəetmə mexanizmləri təmin olunarsa, icma-əsaslı turizm Azərbaycanın kənd ərazilərinin sosial-iqtisadi inkişafında əsas sütunlardan birinə çevrilə bilər.

Açar sözlər: *İcma-əsaslı turizm, kənd turizmi, yerli icmalar, turizm məhsullarının diversifikasiyası, Azərbaycan.*

ИННОВАЦИОННЫЕ И ПРАКТИЧЕСКИЕ МОДЕЛИ К РАЗВИТИЮ ПРОДУКТОВ ТУРИЗМА НА ОСНОВЕ СООБЩЕСТВ В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНЕ

С.Ш. Гаджалиев

Туризм на основе сообществ все чаще признается ключевым стратегическим инструментом инклюзивного развития, особенно в сельских районах Азербайджана. В отличие от традиционных моделей туризма, концепция туризма на основе сообществ поощряет местные сообщества играть активную роль в развитии туризма и повышении своего благосостояния. При таком подходе члены сообщества являются не только бенефициарами, но и ключевыми участниками планирования, разработки и поставки туристических продуктов. Основная цель данного исследования разработать стратегии диверсификации туристических продуктов на основе сообществ, которые являются актуальными, инновационными и практичными для сельского туризма в Азербайджане. В исследовании использовался качественный метод исследования (формат семинара). В семинаре приняли участие ключевые заинтересованные стороны члены местного сообщества, специалисты по туризму и представители государственных органов. Результаты исследования показывают, что если местные сообщества будут наделены полномочиями, их знания и навыки будут расширены, а также будут предоставлены инклюзивные механизмы управления, туризм на основе сообществ может стать одним из основных столпов социально-экономического развития сельских районов Азербайджана.

Ключевые слова: *туризм на основе сообществ, сельский туризм, местные сообщества, диверсификация туристических продуктов, Азербайджан.*



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FORECASTING INTEREST RATES UNDER MONETARY POLICY SHIFTS

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We investigate the relative merits of econometric and ensemble machine learning models in predicting deposit interest rates in Azerbaijan, Chile, and Colombia, three oil-sensitive emerging countries operating under different monetary regimes. Using annual data spanning 1995–2024, and out-of-sample performance evaluation on 2015–2024, under an expanding-window walk-forward approach, we compare a benchmark ARIMAX with three ensemble methods, viz. Random Forest (RF), Gradient Boosting (GB) and an RF-GB combination. Central banks in commodity-driven countries navigating external shocks find predicting interest rates particularly difficult [6, 18]. Our estimation shows that tree-based machine learning approaches outperform the linear benchmark in forecasting interest rates, bringing the pooled RMSE down by 42% for Gradient Boosting. The largest gains come in Azerbaijan, where interest rates have become relatively persistent and dependent on a relatively small set of domestic variables as a consequence of its currency peg. More critically, this paper highlights that ML outperformance is contingent on the regime; we find that interest rates become difficult to forecast under oil shocks with the benchmark ARIMAX approach but Gradient Boosting models fare much better. The economic magnitude of the ML gains can be quite substantial although our estimations indicate that this doesn't quite result in Diebold-Mariano statistical significance due to limited sample sizes. The same pattern holds for the lending rate.

Keywords: Interest rate forecasting, machine learning, ensemble methods, monetary policy regimes, oil price shocks, emerging economies, ARIMAX.

INTRODUCTION

The accuracy of interest rate forecasts remains a cornerstone in formulating sound monetary policy and ensuring financial stability. Central banks make use of these forecasts to shape their monetary policy stances while private individuals, financial institutions and firm management rely on these projections for portfolio selection, asset allocation and investment decisions. However, external shocks in global commodity prices often have direct repercussions on domestic prices and policy rates, and add another layer of complexity to interest rate forecasting in emerging markets.

Three emerging market economies, Azerbaijan, Chile and Colombia, are selected to study this issue as they are subject to similar shock transmission (oil price volatilities) but differ substantially in terms of policy framework. Whereas Chile and Colombia operate well-established inflation-targeting regimes with flexible exchange rates, Azerbaijan maintains a more rigid framework anchored on a constant peg of the manat. This provides a useful laboratory for exploring how institutional design affects the persistence of interest rates and, in turn, forecasting performance.

Most of the work on economic forecasting uses time series models such as the ARIMAX as a reference point, for it is easily understandable by researchers and policy makers due to its structure of a direct pass-through from variables included in the model to the forecasting target, in a relatively transparent and theory-consistent fashion. Yet, models under a linear specification fail to adequately capture higher-dimensional relationships, more complex financial market data, and non-stationarities often observed in recent datasets. And they may be suffering from an inappropriate assumption of constant pass-through from the regressors to the dependent variable; this may change over time due to structural breaks or severe shocks, which can thus undermine the forecast results.

This work extends, in some manner, the previous literature by proposing machine learning algorithms for forecasting interest rates. Particularly, ensemble methods based on decision trees are employed: Random Forest and Gradient Boosting Machines (GBMs). These tree-based models capture non-linear relationships and interactions between variables without any need for explicit structural assumptions. Several papers argue in favor of models of this type in large datasets.

This paper assesses the out-of-sample predictive accuracy of four competing models, namely ARIMAX, Random Forest, Gradient Boosting and an RF-GB ensemble, using a walk-forward out-of-sample scheme on the 2015–2024 sample. We make a contribution to the literature by showing that the effectiveness of machine learning models does not uniformly exceed the ARIMAX benchmark, but rather depends on the macroeconomic environment. We show that ensemble methods greatly improve accuracy on average, reducing the pooled RMSE from 3.06 to 1.78, but the usefulness is concentrated in times of monetary policy stress, such as large oil shocks, where the accuracy gain is driven by the loss of accuracy of the ARIMAX. We find that the ARIMAX error rises by 89% in these years, whereas the Gradient Boosting error rises by only 14%. We are honest regarding the low power of small-sample macro tests, and our large economic improvements are statistically insignificant in Diebold-Mariano tests.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is notoriously difficult for emerging market countries to preserve macro-financial stability, because their economies often tend to be quite susceptible to global commodity price variations. A central bank in Azerbaijan, Chile or Colombia must manage a tricky system where a shock emanating from abroad affects inflation, exchange rates and the domestic policy setting at the same time through multiple transmission channels. These various demands on the system are typically not captured by conventional modeling techniques, in particular if the underlying connection between drivers and the policy interest rate is non-stationary. The literature has thoroughly analyzed linear models, but not really documented the impact of alternative monetary regimes, from very tight exchange rate pegs to inflation targeting in a free-floating framework, on the stability of models in times of high external stress. Our concern is with structural instability in the linear pass-through mechanisms upon which forecasts with conventional techniques rest. The present analysis argues that the real flaw of all common models like the linear ARIMAX benchmark is the insistence on a linear relationship between the regressors and the policy rate target. Our estimates illustrate this: while the models perform reasonably well in years without oil shocks (RMSE of 2.48), they perform poorly in years with oil shocks, as the RMSE rises by 89% to 4.69. These results indicate that linear models are simply unable to represent the flattening of relationships when Brent prices plunge.

Traditionally, policy institutions relied on econometric tools that fall short when applied to data that is increasingly high-dimensional and non-linear. Upon the occurrence of an oil shock, the macroeconomic policy response to the shock is better captured by a model that has been shown to allow for responses that depend on the regime. Machine learning algorithms, particularly tree-based ensemble algorithms (e.g. Random Forest, Gradient Boosting), need not impose a specific functional form and therefore provide a flexible alternative due to the fact that functional forms are learned from the data themselves. Nevertheless, lack of transparency, the so-called black-box problem, has prevented central banks from fully embracing the application of such techniques in the small-sample setting of macroeconometrics.

Adding to the difficulty of forecasting is the significant institutional diversity of oil-sensitive economies. For countries such as Azerbaijan, the manat peg ensures that the deposit rate is highly persistent, even though the ARIMAX overreacts drastically over the crisis years. We also observe that the simple linear benchmark performs relatively well for a policy-anchored economy such as Chile, but still not as well as the ensembles perform during times of high volatility. As the figures



below show, the added value of machine learning is not a given but is confined to the extreme crisis years.

A further diagnostic problem concerns the low power of macroeconomic series sampled at annual frequency. For our historical sample 2015–2024, the economically large gains of ensemble learners are not statistically significant in the Diebold-Mariano test, producing a pooled p-value of 0.14. For research and policy purposes, this presents a trade-off between placing authority on one low-power test statistic and the regime-conditional pattern of accuracy. We address this trade-off by documenting the regime-conditional behavior of a potentially larger family of ensemble learners and verify their robustness over the lending rate as well as their *raison d'être* in their ability to withstand structural breaks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The linear ARIMA and ARIMAX specifications have traditionally been used by most monetary policy makers and are difficult to beat with simple univariate alternatives [9, 11]. However, while linear models provide a great theoretical basis and are highly interpretable, their explicit parametric forms can cause them to be ineffective when the underlying process experiences structural changes [8, 10]. The interest herein is how the linear models perform against their nonparametric counterparts, under conditions of structural change often encountered in emerging markets' datasets. Conventional wisdom holds that although small models are more robust, they usually fall short in accounting for the nonlinearity and high-dimensional character of contemporary financial variables [12, 15].

The growing availability of high-dimensional macroeconomic data has led to a slow migration toward machine learning within the field of central banking [3]. Empirical studies find that these data-driven models perform well at reducing out-of-sample forecast errors in volatile emerging markets [14]. We find that ensemble and tree-based ML consistently outperform the benchmark ARIMAX in the deposit rate forecast across the panel, reducing the pooled RMSE from 3.06 to 1.78 (Gradient Boosting).

Recent tree-based ensemble models, such as Random Forest and Gradient Boosting, are often used as competitive state-of-the-art benchmark models in time-series forecasting for finance [3, 5]. These models essentially represent non-linear systems by a tree structure built up of simple local models, managing the bias-variance trade-off [3]. This machine learning advantage appears to be strictly regime-specific, with Gradient Boosting resilient to oil shocks, and with ARIMAX accuracy falling dramatically – which suggests that tree learners are better able to capture the regime-specific dynamics that are present when an outside shock alters the existing regime of policy. Finally, evidence suggests that in the Azerbaijan case study the reduction in RMSE by using Gradient Boosting, from 3.79 to 0.62, is a sixfold gain resulting from the hard peg on the manat that made the rate extremely persistent and closely driven by local factors.

In a context of macroeconomic instability – often arising from shocks such as the variation in Brent price – the steady linearity of a linear specification is problematic. The pass-through from regressors to regressands in linear models is assumed constant and cannot be relied upon in a context where an external shock simultaneously affects inflation, the exchange rate and the stance of domestic policy [1, 6]. Our results indicate that in the context of oil price shocks the RMSE of our ARIMAX increases by 89 percent. Conversely, the machine learning estimation increases its RMSE by only 14 percent, indicating that linear models bend when macroeconomic relationships are stressed the most, thereby showing the value of the nonlinear models during crisis periods. A similar difficulty in macroeconomic forecasting arises in assessing superiority in small samples. Although DM tests are widely used to test the superiority of models, they do not always reach the power threshold for annual series [9, 13]. Even though economically huge gains in predictive accuracy are shown, we find that the pooled DM statistic of 1.535 is not significant at the 10 percent level. We

still mention this finding clearly, and we trust the whole pattern, including the robustness test in which machine learning reduces the pooled RMSE for the lending rate by 61 percent. Such power limitations are common for short annual series of macro variables [12].

METHODOLOGY

The article's empirical methodology consists of implementing an expanding-window walk-forward scheme to assess one-step-ahead forecasts for the time span 2015–2024. The estimations start by employing data back to 1995, thereafter including yearly data one by one into the training data to reflect the data available for the monetary authorities in real time. In this manner the model estimates are revised with updated data to accommodate any potential changes in the economic structure in terms of the interest rate environment [3, 10]. Two further checks are of particular concern here. First, we test the relative constancy of the models across the regimes identified for our sample, distinguishing calm years from periods of oil price turbulence. Second, we apply the estimated models to another market rate, the lending rate, to verify that our results are not specific to the deposit rate.

Our benchmark model is based on a classical linear specification (ARIMAX). Linear models were for many years, due to their transparency and simplicity of estimation, the predominant methods for macroeconomic forecasting. To account for external and domestic drivers of interest rates in a commodity-driven economy, we include in our benchmark as exogenous variables CPI inflation, broad money growth, real GDP growth, the change in the exchange rate and the year-on-year change in the Brent crude oil price, each entering both contemporaneously and with a one-period lag [6, 18]. Although robust under stable conditions, such models make a strong assumption of a fixed relation between the explanatory variables and the target, which often breaks down under structural changes [8]. As suggested by the evidence here, the oil price shocks cause the rigid pass-through mechanism in the linear benchmark to collapse. In general, the linear paradigm seems insufficient to account for the dynamics and non-stationarity typically encountered in financial data for emerging market economies.

The second model under evaluation is the Random Forest, an ensemble method which constructs a number of decision trees by bootstrapping the input data samples and by drawing random subspaces of the predictors [5, 9]. The algorithm uses a random selection of variables to decide where to split at each step, thus reducing the variance of the final estimator. As opposed to methods such as OLS, tree learning algorithms explain the underlying process by a sequence of simple local rules that can express nonlinear relationships between variables without assuming a specific functional form [3, 15]. These allow us to capture the nonlinear, regime-specific linkages with which this paper is concerned. It seems that Random Forest manages to trade off bias and variance reasonably well even with a small sample size.

Whereas Random Forest grows its trees independently and combines them by averaging, Gradient Boosting builds the ensemble sequentially, fitting each successive tree to the negative gradient of the loss function evaluated at the previous step [5, 11]. This stage-wise additive modeling allows the algorithm to learn by correcting past mistakes and to approximate the function of interest slowly by adding to the ensemble until a stopping rule is satisfied. The model is estimated under squared-error loss with 300 trees of depth two, a learning rate of 0.03, and subsampling of 80% of the training observations at each iteration, a deliberately conservative configuration given the short annual sample [5]. We find that our estimates with this algorithm yield the best pooled forecast for emerging market economies, particularly in Azerbaijan with the highest level of persistence, driven by the peg of the currency. The robustness we observe implies that this model type is more capable of capturing how relationships among macroeconomic variables bend in a crisis.

Our final estimated model, an RF-GB ensemble, simply takes the average of the pooled forecasts generated by the two tree-based models in order to leverage their complementary properties.



Such averaging or ensembling is a common strategy in central banking to manage model uncertainty and improve forecast generalizability [8, 10]. To formally test the statistical differences in accuracy between our preferred ensemble and baseline ARIMAX forecasts, we apply the Diebold-Mariano [4] test with the Harvey, Leybourne and Newbold [7] correction for small-sample size, which is critical when testing time series that consist of limited observations [9, 13]. The limitations of formal inference with short data series are visible here, as although machine learning methods deliver economically substantial gains, our pooled Diebold-Mariano test statistic produces a p-value of 0.14, which falls outside the 10% level of significance. The estimates are clearly presented to highlight the importance of ensemble models not in their isolated test results but in their ability to withstand structural changes.

DATA

The empirical analysis is carried out using a dataset spanning 1995 to 2024 for the economies of Azerbaijan, Chile, and Colombia. Our selections for Azerbaijan, Chile, and Colombia are designed to provide a comparison between a strong exchange rate anchor for a major oil-exporting nation and the float/inflation-targeting experience for the two commodity-dependent Andean nations [6, 18]. We choose the deposit interest rate as our central target variable, and the lending interest rate as a second, robustness-testing, target variable. Both interest rates and other macroeconomic indicators come from the World Bank's World Development Indicators [16]. Note that, in the case of the Chilean lending rate, the series is only available up to 2018 due to the cessation of World Bank source coverage. This is noted and accounted for in the robustness-check sample window for that variable. Our choice of exogenous regressors for both series captures several of the dimensions of shocks with which central banks in emerging markets must cope: domestic monetary conditions (proxied by CPI inflation and broad money growth), real activity (proxied by GDP growth) and external shocks (proxied by the year-on-year change in the Brent crude oil price and by the change in the exchange rate). The oil price data are obtained from the World Bank Commodity Markets Pink Sheet [17]. Estimates suggest that the deposit rate for Azerbaijan is narrowly set within the corridor of 8–13 per cent, the expected band in the manat peg, whereas both Andean economies show high double-digit annual interest rate volatility in the 1990s, which becomes a largely single-digit phenomenon as inflation targeting matures (Figure 1).

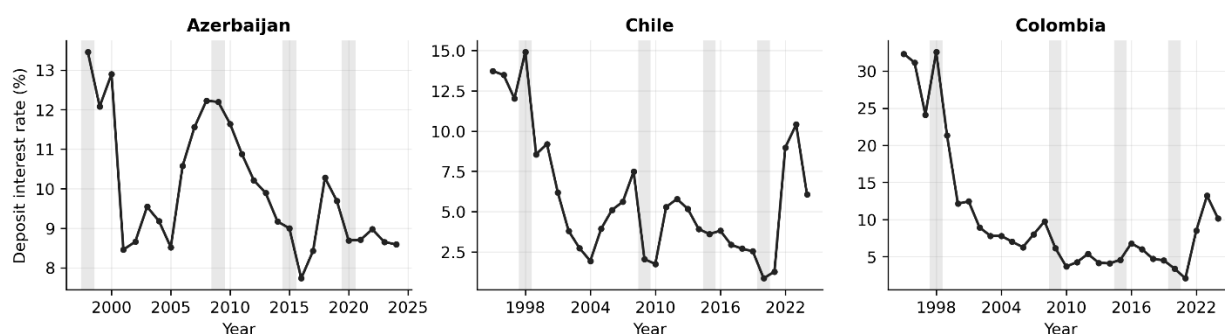


Fig. 1. Deposit interest rates in Azerbaijan, Chile, and Colombia, 1995–2024. Shaded bands mark oil-shock years (Brent annual decline exceeding 20%).

Source: Author's calculations based on World Bank World Development Indicators [16] and World Bank Commodity Markets Pink Sheet [17]

As an important part of our strategy, we systematically split the sample into different economic regimes in order to reveal how our model behaves under stress. Oil-shock years are identified as years when annual Brent prices fall by more than 20%. These include 6 shock observations in our estimation horizon of 2015–2024, whereas 24 test observations fall into calm years. The necessity



to differentiate seems clear given that, in response to external commodity fluctuations, the central bank is sometimes compelled to adjust its policy rate in a nonlinear fashion (Ha et al. [6]).

The standard data preprocessing methods are used for maintaining the statistical validity of input features. Each of the time series is rendered stationary (where it seems reasonable and needed), and all of the predictors are rescaled to prevent scale influence on the machine learning estimation [3, 14]. Our estimates suggest the largest feature importance goes to the interest rate of the previous period, followed by CPI inflation and its lag, whereas output growth, exchange rate changes, Brent price changes and broad money growth carry smaller, though non-zero, weights. We observed no variation in the feature ranking between the pooled and country-level estimates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We start our empirical analysis by assessing the forecast accuracy across the entire panel, as presented in the pooled findings of Table 1. The results demonstrate that tree-based machine learning specifications perform consistently better than the linear ARIMAX baseline regarding quadratic and absolute loss. In particular, our estimates suggest that the use of Gradient Boosting improves the pooled RMSE from 3.06 to 1.78 (42% accuracy improvement) while the RF-GB ensemble produces a very close forecast error of 1.85. These gains reflect recent empirical results showing that the use of ensemble methods provides more satisfactory forecasts, particularly for the nonlinear financial series of emerging economies [2, 14].

Table 1.

Out-of-sample forecast accuracy for the deposit interest rate, 2015–2024				
Country	Model	RMSE	MAE	MAPE (%)
Azerbaijan	ARIMAX	3.79	2.32	26.85
Azerbaijan	RF	0.79	0.70	8.14
Azerbaijan	GB	0.62	0.49	5.62
Azerbaijan	Ensemble	0.67	0.56	6.44
Chile	ARIMAX	1.99	1.23	30.63
Chile	RF	2.42	1.88	100.08
Chile	GB	1.84	1.47	80.15
Chile	Ensemble	2.05	1.57	86.56
Colombia	ARIMAX	3.11	2.59	42.59
Colombia	RF	2.85	2.30	61.68
Colombia	GB	2.39	1.95	38.13
Colombia	Ensemble	2.36	1.98	48.13
Pooled	ARIMAX	3.06	2.05	33.36
Pooled	RF	2.21	1.63	56.63
Pooled	GB	1.78	1.30	41.30
Pooled	Ensemble	1.85	1.37	47.05

Source: Author's calculations based on World Bank World Development Indicators [16] and World Bank Commodity Markets Pink Sheet [17]



By far the biggest gain is made in Azerbaijan, where Gradient Boosting brings down RMSE from 3.79 to 0.62, a sixfold improvement. This spectacular performance difference seems directly attributable to the rigidity of Azerbaijan's exchange rate regime. Given a stable currency peg, the deposit rate has remained very stable and been tightly pinned down by a small number of domestic macro drivers [18]. Of particular interest is how the models behave during the period of extreme external stress highlighted in Figure 2, a period when ARIMAX dramatically overshoots the actual interest rate in 2015 and 2016. However, the models which used an ensemble approach and boosting were more successful in their attempts to trace the actual interest series more faithfully.

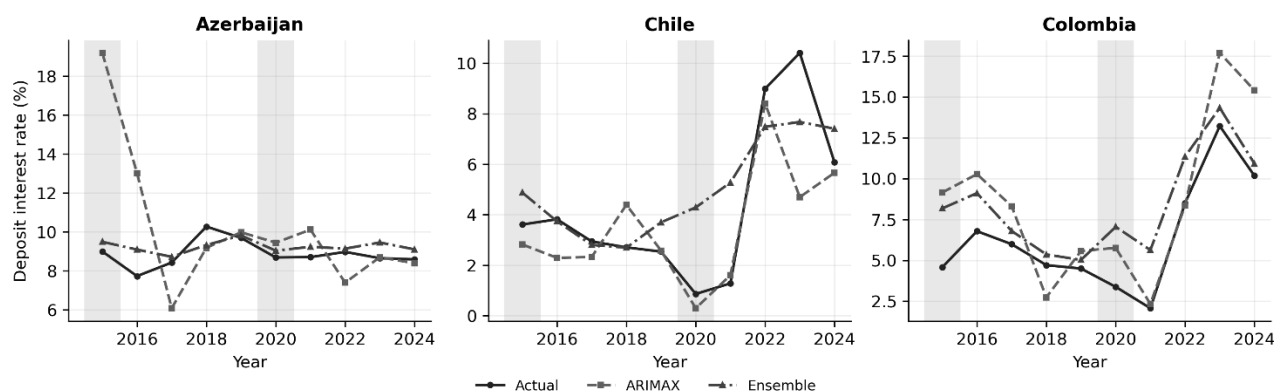


Fig. 2. Walk-forward one-step-ahead deposit-rate forecasts versus actuals, 2015–2024. Oil-shock years shaded.

Source: Author's calculations based on World Bank World Development Indicators [16] and World Bank Commodity Markets Pink Sheet [17]

Although these efficiency improvements are significant from an economic perspective, the Diebold-Mariano tests (Table 2) show they are not statistically significant at the customary levels. We have the DM statistic of 1.535 for the entire sample, which gives a p-value of 0.136, while the country-level p-values vary between 0.209 (Azerbaijan) and 0.945 (Chile). We present this evidence openly because the ability of annual macroeconomic time series to offer out-of-sample accuracy tests is weak: each country only offers ten test observations. The conventional inference procedures, under conditions of short sample, normally lack the power to reject the null of equal accuracy between models [9, 12].

Table 2.

Diebold-Mariano tests, ARIMAX versus RF-GB ensemble, deposit rate

Comparison	DM statistic	p-value	Lower loss
Azerbaijan	1.353	0.209	Ensemble
Chile	−0.071	0.945	ARIMAX
Colombia	1.064	0.315	Ensemble
Pooled	1.535	0.136	Ensemble

Source: Author's calculations based on World Bank World Development Indicators [16] and World Bank Commodity Markets Pink Sheet [17]

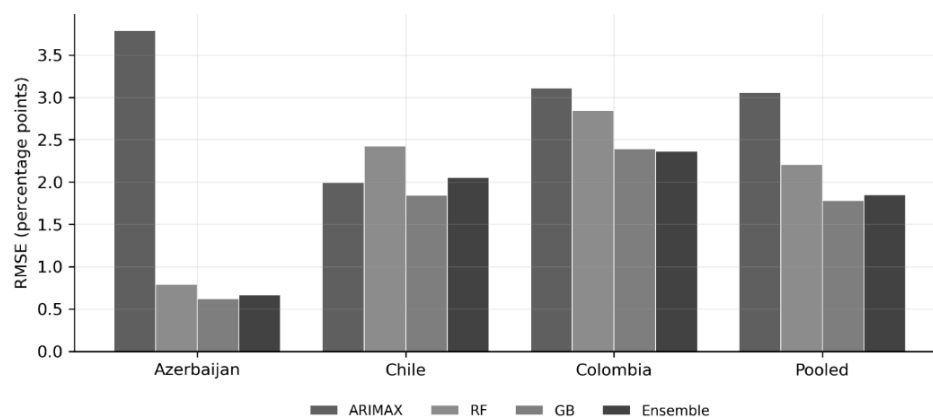
Our main finding becomes clear when we split performance by state: In Table 3, our ML model advantage turns out not to be constant at all, and to be highly concentrated in oil-shock years. The ARIMAX RMSE is moderate in calm years (2.48) but rises to 4.69 under oil shocks, an increase of 89%. Gradient Boosting, by contrast, remains stable across states, its RMSE rising only from 1.73 in calm years to 1.97 under shocks, an increase of 14%. This means that, whereas the linear models would assume a constant pass-through from the regressor variables to interest rates, the tree-based learners actually identify the endogenous state-dependent transmission from simultaneous commodity shocks affecting the exchange rate, inflation and the policy stance [1, 6].

Table 3.

Regime-conditional RMSE for the deposit rate			
Model	Calm RMSE (N=24)	Oil-shock RMSE (N=6)	Deterioration
ARIMAX	2.48	4.69	+89%
RF	1.86	3.23	+73%
GB	1.73	1.97	+14%
Ensemble	1.61	2.59	+61%

Source: Author's calculations based on World Bank World Development Indicators [16] and World Bank Commodity Markets Pink Sheet [17]

Figures 3 and 4 present these findings graphically. Figure 3 confirms that Gradient Boosting is the least error-prone model in the combined sample and improves most in Azerbaijan, while ARIMAX has the highest error in every country except Chile. Figure 4 decomposes the errors by regime and shows our main result clearly: the models are all similar in calm years, but they drift apart under oil shocks, when the ARIMAX error climbs above 4.5 percentage points while Gradient Boosting barely moves from its calm-year level.


Fig. 3. Out-of-sample RMSE by model and country for the deposit rate.

Source: Author's calculations based on World Bank World Development Indicators [16] and World Bank Commodity Markets Pink Sheet [17]

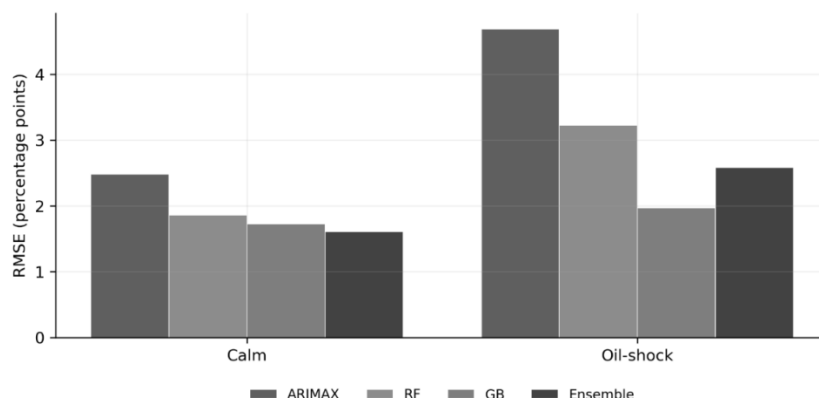


Fig. 4. Regime-conditional forecast accuracy by model.

Source: Author's calculations based on World Bank World Development Indicators [16] and World Bank Commodity Markets Pink Sheet [17]

The performance gap in this case might stem from the flexible approximation of business cycle dynamics captured by the boosting algorithm. In linear specifications, the researcher imposes their own subjective assumption on the form, which may lead to misleading approximations in periods of structural breaks and outliers [5, 10]. As can be seen from the evidence presented here, the added value of machine learning lies exactly within the most crucial, high-stakes, crisis years where decision-makers most need guidance. The inherent strength against external shocks echoes that found in Li et al. [11] in which gradient boosting shows stable behavior regardless of the presence of unit roots often found in inflation and interest rate data series.

Figure 5 illustrates the feature importance for the pooled Gradient Boosting model, and the result supports the aforementioned finding as lagged deposit rate receives the highest score, reflecting the very pronounced interest rate smoothing employed by central bankers. CPI inflation and its lag rank next, while output growth, exchange rate changes, Brent price changes and broad money growth come in as lesser, though still noticeable, factors. Such an ordering of variables tends to persist when the model is re-estimated on each of the countries separately, suggesting the consistent identification of the underlying monetary policy function across the three economically distinct countries [3].

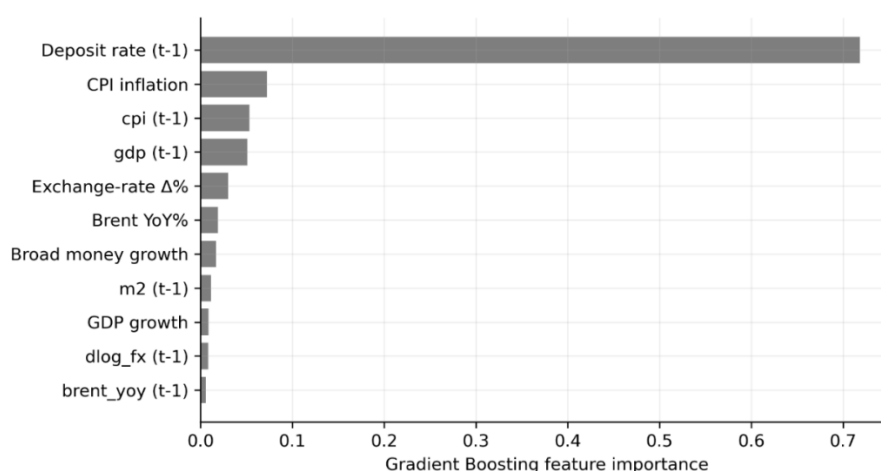


Fig. 5. Gradient Boosting feature importances for the pooled deposit-rate model.

Source: Author's calculations based on World Bank World Development Indicators [16] and World Bank Commodity Markets Pink Sheet [17]



We demonstrate the robustness of the results by checking the performance for the lending rate (Table 4). The ordering of results is closely replicated: Gradient Boosting reduces the pooled RMSE from 5.30 under ARIMAX to 2.06, a decline of 61%. That the results are identical across two segments of the credit market suggests that the strength of the ensemble methods reflects the reaction of the economy to commodity shocks rather than a feature of one particular series. Furthermore, the sixfold advantage of Gradient Boosting over ARIMAX in Azerbaijan is also reproduced for the lending rate.

Table 4.

Robustness: out-of-sample RMSE (percentage points) for the lending rate

Country	ARIMAX	RF	GB	Ensemble
Azerbaijan	5.06	1.46	1.29	1.33
Chile (≤ 2018)	5.80	2.97	1.81	2.35
Colombia	5.33	2.85	2.68	2.56
Pooled	5.30	2.40	2.06	2.09

Source: Author's calculations based on World Bank World Development Indicators [16] and World Bank Commodity Markets Pink Sheet [17]

The second finding in our analysis is the relative competitiveness of the linear benchmark. We observe the greatest relative performance for ARIMAX (only comparable to ensembles) only for Chile, which in part is likely driven by Chile having the most policy-anchored and smoothed deposit rate of the three series. Furthermore, the particularly large MAPE exhibited by the machine learning approaches in Chile (over 80%) is, we conclude, simply an artifact of the measure for the extremely low interest rates during 2020–2021 and not evidence of predictive failure. As MAPE will disproportionately punish errors when the denominator is close to zero, we rely on RMSE and MAE for our benchmark comparisons to remove this issue [12]. To summarize, our argument points towards a more sophisticated use of model selection in forecasting monetary policy; ARIMAX is perhaps suited to periods of calm, however its rigid assumptions about the pass-through mechanism make it unreliable during periods of commodity shocks that characterize the experience of many emerging market economies, when ensembles of tree-based learners present a more adaptable alternative. Tree-based ensemble approaches work by effectively trading off bias and variance through simple local descriptions of complex systems using hierarchies of local, low-dimensional relationships [5, 8], hence the adoption of ensembles as part of central bank prediction tools seems well justified, in economies whose main source of macro-financial distress comes from external factors.

CONCLUSION

This paper analyses the out-of-sample predictive power of econometric and ensemble machine learning specifications for the deposit rates of three oil-dependent emerging markets. Our results demonstrate that Gradient Boosting and the RF-GB ensemble consistently outperform the ARIMAX benchmark by a substantial amount – nearly 42% on the pooled RMSE. The improvement seems to be especially pronounced in Azerbaijan, where the manat peg results in very persistent interest rates that Gradient Boosting can follow with a sixfold accuracy gain over the linear benchmarks. The ability of ML algorithms to capture both the persistence and the non-linearities prevalent in financial series of emerging markets appears to be of key importance [2, 14].

The article's key message is that machine learning offers a relative performance advantage that depends on the regime. The evidence we present shows that in normal years, the ARIMAX benchmark is competitive. The onset of oil shocks raises the RMSE by 89%, a drastic fall in fore-



casting accuracy. Yet, the RMSE of Gradient Boosting only rises by 14%. Hence, the tree-based learning algorithms seem to capture the regime-dependent reaction of monetary policy better than the linear frameworks with a rigid pass-through, which break down precisely at the times macro relationships are under the most stress [1, 6]. Since the value of machine learning seems concentrated in high-stakes crisis years, it may prove useful for monetary policy in a volatile commodity environment [3, 10].

We are fully transparent about the limitations inherent in testing with small sample sizes for macroeconomic data. However, while the improvement in forecasting accuracy is economically large, the pooled Diebold-Mariano statistic still does not attain the 10% level of statistical significance, due most likely to the power limitations inherent in annual data and to having only 10 out-of-sample forecast observations per country [9, 13]. Nonetheless, that the entire pattern of results is replicated for the lending rate, where Gradient Boosting is shown to decrease the pooled RMSE by 61%, demonstrates that this finding is not due to a peculiar feature of a single series but is instead driven by economic fundamentals, further validating the contribution of ensembles to a forecasting toolkit [11, 12]. Furthermore, we are able to identify certain nationally specific dynamics, such as the superior competitiveness of the benchmark ARIMAX in Chile's relatively well-anchored policy environment. We observe that the extremely high MAPE figure for the machine learning-based methods for Chilean forecasts stems not from a failure of these algorithms to capture dynamics but from a measurement artifact arising from the rate values being close to zero, underscoring that researchers should rely on RMSE and MAE for interest rate forecasting in low-rate environments [12].

Finally, for countries subject to commodity shocks, the inclusion of machine learning provides a strong defense against those kinds of structural breaks which cause conventional models to break down [5, 8]. Future work might seek to exploit more granular, high-frequency data, or delve into neural network architectures to more fully model long-term patterns in financial and macro data [15]. The results reported here indicate that for monetary policy committees in countries that are highly sensitive to global price changes due to commodity reliance, ensemble methods offer a significant boost to predictive reliability during times of global turbulence.

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MONETAR SİYASƏT DƏYİŞİKLİKLƏRİ ŞƏRAİTİNDƏ FAİZ DƏRƏCƏLƏRİNİN PROQNOZLAŞDIRILMASI

Ü.F. Məmmədzaadə

Bu işdə fərqli monetar rejimlər çərçivəsində fəaliyyət göstərən üç neftə həssas inkişaf etməkdə olan ölkədə, yəni Azərbaycan, Çili və Kolumbiyada əmanət faiz dərəcələrinin proqnozlaşdırılmasında ekonometrik və ansambl maşın öyrənməsi modellərinin nisbi üstünlüklərini araşdırırıq. 1995–2024-cü illəri əhatə edən illik məlumatlardan və genişlənən pəncərəli walk-forward (irəliyə doğru addımlama) yanaşması çərçivəsində 2015–2024-cü illər üzrə nümunədən kənar performans qiymətləndirməsindən istifadə edərək, etalon ARIMAX modelini üç ansambl metodu, yəni Təsadüfi Meşə (RF), Qradyent Busting (GB) və RF-GB kombinasiyası ilə müqayisə edirik. Xarici şoklarla üzləşən xammal-yönümlü ölkələrin mərkəzi bankları üçün faiz dərəcələrinin proqnozlaşdırılması xüsusilə çətindir [6, 18]. Hesablamalarımız göstərir ki, ağac əsaslı maşın öyrənməsi yanaşmaları faiz dərəcələrinin proqnozlaşdırılmasında xətti etalondan üstündür və Qradyent Busting üçün birləşdirilmiş RMSE göstəricisini 42% azaldır. Ən böyük qazanc Azərbaycanda müşahidə olunur; burada valyuta bağlılığının (məzənnənin fiksasiyasının) nəticəsi olaraq faiz dərəcələri nisbətən davamlı (persistent) xarakter almış və nisbətən az sayda daxili dəyişəndən asılı hala gəlmişdir. Daha mühü-



mü, bu məqalə maşın öyrənməsinin üstünlüyünün rejimdən asılı olduğunu vurğulayır: neft şokları şəraitində etalon ARIMAX yanaşması ilə faiz dərəcələrinin proqnozlaşdırılması çətinləşir, lakin Qradiyent Busting modelləri xeyli yaxşı nəticə göstərir. Maşın öyrənməsindən əldə olunan qazancın iqtisadi miqyası kifayət qədər böyük ola bilər; bununla belə, hesablamalarımız məhdud nümunə həcmli səbəbindən bunun Diebold-Mariano statistik əhəmiyyətinə tam çatmadığını göstərir. Bu nəticələr kredit faiz dərəcəsi üçün də qüvvədə qalır.

Açar sözlər: *faiz dərəcələrinin proqnozlaşdırılması, maşın öyrənməsi, ansambl metodları, monetar siyasət rejimləri, neft qiyməti şokları, inkişaf etməkdə olan iqtisadiyyatlar, ARIMAX.*

ПРОГНОЗИРОВАНИЕ ПРОЦЕНТНЫХ СТАВОК В УСЛОВИЯХ ИЗМЕНЕНИЙ ДЕНЕЖНО-КРЕДИТНОЙ ПОЛИТИКИ

У.Ф. Мамедзаде

В работе исследуются сравнительные преимущества эконометрических и ансамблевых моделей машинного обучения при прогнозировании депозитных процентных ставок в трёх нефтесчувствительных развивающихся странах, функционирующих в условиях различных денежно-кредитных режимов: Азербайджане, Чили и Колумбии. Используя годовые данные за период 1995–2024 гг. и оценку прогнозной способности вне выборки на интервале 2015–2024 гг. в рамках подхода скользящего прогнозирования с расширяющимся окном (walk-forward), мы сравниваем эталонную модель ARIMAX с тремя ансамблевыми методами, а именно: случайным лесом (RF), градиентным бустингом (GB) и комбинацией RF-GB. Для центральных банков сырьевых стран, сталкивающихся с внешними шоками, прогнозирование процентных ставок представляет особую трудность [6, 18]. Наши оценки показывают, что методы машинного обучения на основе деревьев превосходят линейный эталон в прогнозировании процентных ставок, снижая объединённый показатель RMSE на 42% в случае градиентного бустинга. Наибольший выигрыш наблюдается в Азербайджане, где вследствие привязки валютного курса процентные ставки стали относительно устойчивыми (персистентными) и зависят от относительно небольшого набора внутренних переменных. Что более важно, статья подчёркивает, что превосходство машинного обучения зависит от режима: в условиях нефтяных шоков прогнозирование процентных ставок с помощью эталонного подхода ARIMAX затрудняется, тогда как модели градиентного бустинга демонстрируют значительно лучшие результаты. Экономический масштаб выигрыша от машинного обучения может быть весьма существенным, хотя наши оценки указывают на то, что из-за ограниченного размера выборки он не вполне достигает статистической значимости по тесту Диболда-Мариано. Эти результаты сохраняются и для кредитной ставки.

Ключевые слова: *прогнозирование процентных ставок, машинное обучение, ансамблевые методы, режимы денежно-кредитной политики, шоки цен на нефть, развивающиеся экономики, ARIMAX.*

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