



Hacettepe University Institute of Social Sciences  
Department of International Relations

## **DIASPORIC IDENTITY IN RUSSIAN AZERBAIJANIS**

Ümit Nazmi Hazır

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2016

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## KABUL VE ONAY

Ümit Nazmi Hazır tarafından hazırlanan "Diasporic Identity in Russian Azerbaijanis" başlıklı bu çalışma, 05.12.2016 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.



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## ETİK BEYAN

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**mit Nazmi HAZIR**

## ÖZET

Ümit Nazmi Hazır. *Rusyalı Azerbaycanlıların Diaspora Kimliği*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2016.

Bu tez Rusya'daki Azerbaycan diasporasını ve diasporanın kimlik bileşenlerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Rusya'daki Azerbaycan diasporasının kimlik oluşumunu incelemek amacıyla birincisi, diaspora kavramına ilişkin farklı görüşler ve diasporanın kimlik, etnisite ve göç kavramlarıyla olan ilişkisi incelenmiştir. Rusya'daki Azerbaycan diasporasını analiz edebilmek için Sheffer'in etnik-diaspora kavramı tezde kullanılmıştır. İkincisi, Kafkasya'ya dair tarihsel boyutlarıyla birlikte genel bir bakış sergilenmiştir. Üçüncü olarak, Azerbaycan'daki kimlik meselesi ve Azerbaycanlıların hem ulusal hem de diaspora kimliğinde etkili olan ideolojiler ortaya konulmuştur. Bununla birlikte, Azerbaycanlıların hem ulusal hem de diasporik kimliğinin şekillenmesinde çok önemli bir etkisi olması nedeniyle Karabağ Meselesi ve Hocalı Katliamının kimlik üzerindeki etkileri irdelenmiştir. Dördüncüsü, dünya üzerindeki Azerbaycan diasporası ve Azerbaycan Hükümetinin diaspora politikaları ortaya konulmuştur. Tezde, Moskova ve Saint Petersburg şehirlerinde Azerbaycanlı aydınlar ve diaspora temsilcileriyle yapılan yarı-yapılandırılmış mülakatlar temel alınmıştır. Rusya'daki Azerbaycanlı göçmenlerin ve diasporanın yapısı mülakatlar aracılığıyla tahlil edilmiştir. Özellikle 5. bölümde Rusya'daki diasporanın kimlik bileşenlerini ve diaspora Azerbaycanlıların bakış açısını kavramak için mülakatlardan faydalanılmıştır. Tezin ortaya koyduğu iddiaya göre, Rusya'daki Azerbaycanlıların diaspora kimliğinin bileşenleri Türkçülük, Avrasyacılık ve Azerbaycancılık ideolojilerinden oluşmaktadır.

### **Anahtar Kelimeler:**

Diaspora, Kimlik, Azerbaycan, Rusya, Türkçülük, Azerbaycancılık, Avrasyacılık

## ABSTRACT

Ümit Nazmi Hazır. *Diasporic Identity in Russian Azerbaijanis*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2016.

This thesis aims to analyze the Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia and its components in the formation of the diasporic identity. In order to examine the identity formation of the Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia; firstly, various opinions on diaspora and the relation of diaspora with identity, ethnicity and migration are discussed. The ethno-national diaspora concept of Sheffer is also used in the thesis to analyze the Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia. Secondly, the general outlook of the Caucasus with historical dimensions is articulated. Thirdly, the identity issue in Azerbaijan as well as various ideologies which are effective in the formation of the national and the diasporic identity of Azerbaijanis is deeply exhibited. Besides that, the impacts of the Karabakh issue and the Khojaly Massacre on the identity are scrutinized due to being effective in the shaping of both national and diasporic identity of Azerbaijanis. Fourthly, Azerbaijani diaspora across the world and diaspora politics of the Azerbaijani government are displayed. The thesis is based on semi-structured interviews with the Azerbaijani intellectuals and representatives of the diaspora organizations in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. In this respect, the dynamics and structure of Azerbaijani migrations and the diaspora in Russia are examined through the interviews. The interviews are particularly used in the fifth chapter in order to understand the identity components of the diaspora and views of the diasporic Azerbaijanis in Russia. The thesis argues that the components of the diasporic identity in Russian Azerbaijanis consist of the ideologies of Turkism, Eurasianism as well as Azerbaijanism.

### **Keywords:**

Diaspora, Identity, Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkism, Azerbaijanism, Eurasianism



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ADR</b>	Azerbaijan Democratic Republic
<b>AIP</b>	Islamic Party of Azerbaijan
<b>AKP</b>	Justice and Development Party
<b>AMOR</b>	World Union of Azerbaijani Youth
<b>ASA</b>	Azerbaijan Society of America
<b>Azerbaijan SSR</b>	Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic
<b>AZERROS</b>	Federal National Cultural Autonomy of Azerbaijanis
<b>AZIS</b>	Azerbaijan-Israel International Association in Tel Aviv
<b>BTC</b>	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan
<b>BTE</b>	Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum
<b>BTK</b>	Baku-Tbilisi-Kars
<b>CEA</b>	Congress of European Azeris
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>CSCP</b>	Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform
<b>DAK</b>	World Azerbaijanis Congress
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>KGB</b>	Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>NKAO</b>	Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>PFPA</b>	Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan

<b>RSDWP</b>	Russian Social Democratic Workers Party
<b>SCAALFC</b>	State Committee on Affairs with Azerbaijanis  Living in Foreign Countries
<b>SCWD</b>	State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan for  Work with the Diaspora
<b>TANAP</b>	Trans-Anatolia Natural Gas Pipeline
<b>TURKSOY</b>	Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking Countries
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USD</b>	United State Dollar
<b>USSR</b>	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
<b>VAK</b>	All-Russia Azerbaijanis Congress

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1. METHODS AND AIMS OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to contribute to literature on diaspora, identity and Eurasian studies. In this respect, the main aims of the study are firstly to analyze diaspora concept and its relations with identity, migration and ethnicity. Secondly, to scrutinize the identity issue and nationalism in Azerbaijan. Thirdly, to examine the South Caucasian countries and their relations with regional powers in the context of history and international relations. Fourthly, to interpret Azerbaijan's both foreign and diaspora policy. Fifthly, to discuss the situation of Russian Azerbaijanis and their approaches to Azerbaijan, Russia, Caucasus and the Turkic world which formulate their diasporic identity. In this sense, this thesis meets sociology, political science and international relations as an interdisciplinary study. As a result of this, the thesis answers the question "what are the identity components of the Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia?"

The study is based on the field research including meetings with lots of Azerbaijanis bearing different background and social status in Moscow and Saint Petersburg cities of Russia between October 2014 and October 2015. In the light of the field research, it was participated to many organizations and events of Russian Azerbaijanis during this period. This field research made very significant contribution to the thesis. During this period, semi-structured interviews were made with 15 intellectuals and representatives of the Azerbaijani diaspora in Moscow and Saint Petersburg through audio device and taking notes. These interviews approximately took one hour. The interview questions were created in the light of the interview techniques and rules. Subsequently, the interviews were reported and then compared with the theory and aims. In last part of the study, interview results were interpreted in order to get a final impression and conclusion in accordance with the theory and research question. On the other hand, there were small difficulties during the interviews. First of all, some of the interviewees were not eager to have interview with audio device. For instance, one of the interviewees did not accept interview with audio device. Therefore, the interview with this interviewee was made through taking notes. Some of them also preferred not to

answer questions regarding Russian and Azerbaijani domestic policy during the interviews. In order to eliminate these problems, it was chosen to meet most of them a few times before the interviews. It provided warm and trustful relationship between interviewer and interviewee. The relationship between interviewee and interviewer was significant to achieve fruitful interview and answers. Second problem was communication and language. They almost answered interview questions in Azerbaijani language which is a dialect of Turkish language. During the interviews, it became difficult to understand some of Azerbaijani words within their answers due to dialect diversity between Turkish and Azerbaijani. Furthermore, some of interviewees had Russian better than Azerbaijani. Therefore, they rarely resorted to use Russian words. It inconvenienced some of interviews. Some of questions were asked in Russian when they did not understand questions in Turkish. However, this problem was overcome since I have Russian.

For the thesis, many sources in the languages of Turkish, English, Russian and Azerbaijani were used. These sources: books, journal articles, conference papers and reports of Russian and Azerbaijani states regarding the diaspora were evaluated in the context of content analysis which is a research technique. In this respect, documents of the Azerbaijani organizations in Russia were scrutinized. In addition, content analysis of the documents of Azerbaijani associations and organizations in Russia were made. In this context, specific words and themes describing each candidate which have negative or positive connotations were analyzed. Moreover, the reports and documents of the institutions and organizations were read and reviewed in order to identify phrases and keywords. Afterward, findings were interpreted and written.



## II. ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF THE STUDY

There are more than 40 million Azerbaijani Turks<sup>1</sup> across the world. Iran has the largest Azerbaijani population in the world with more than 25 million Azerbaijani Turks.<sup>2</sup> In the beginning of 2016, number of Azerbaijan population was 9705.6 thousand in the Republic of Azerbaijan.<sup>3</sup> According to the datas of the State Committee for Work with the Diaspora, there are more than 40 million Azerbaijani people residing in the 70 countries across the world.<sup>4</sup> For this datas, there are respectively 3 million in Turkey, 2 million in Russia, 1 million in US, 1 million in Ukraine, 700 thousand in Iraq<sup>5</sup>, 500 thousand in Georgia, 300 thousand in Germany and 170 thousand Azerbaijani in France.<sup>6</sup> The Azerbaijanis who live in Iran, Georgia and Russia's Dagestan Republic are not reckoned as diaspora since they live in their historical homelands. In this sense, the largest Azerbaijani diaspora resides in Russia with 2 million. On the other hand, for some Russian scholars and Russian official sources the number of Azerbaijanis in Russia is less than one million.<sup>7</sup> There are sometimes changes in the quantity of Azerbaijanis in Russia, since some of Azerbaijani migrants leave Russia or new migrants come into Russia within different periods. Number of migrants mostly

<sup>1</sup> The words of "Azerbaijani, Azeri, Azerbaijani Turk" are applied to define the Azerbaijani community in the thesis.

<sup>2</sup> It is not possible to get certain number of Azerbaijani Turks in Iran since any information about the number of ethnic minorities in Iran is not published by the Iranian Government. There are various presumes regarding the number of Iranian Azerbaijanis ranging from 12 million to 34 million. Their population in Iran is 30 million for Nasib Nasibli, 18 million for John Bradley, 20 million for Brenda Shaffer and 23 million for the UN 1998 report. See: Yalçın Sarıkaya, "Tarihi ve Jeopolitik Boyutlarıyla İran'da Milliyetçilik (Nationalism in Iran with the Historical and Geopolitical Dimensions)", Ötüken Press, 2008, İstanbul, p. 168-171.

<sup>3</sup> See the official statistics of The Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan: (<http://www.stat.gov.az/indexen.php>), date of access: 16.12.2015.

<sup>4</sup> "Azerbaycan Diasporasının Maskunlaşma Coğrafiyası (The Settlement of Azerbaijani Diaspora across the World)", (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?options=content&id=86>), date of access: 15.12.2015.

<sup>5</sup> Iraq's Turkmens are considered as Azerbaijani Turks by the State Committee for Work with the Diaspora due to sharing common language, ethnicity and history. See in detail: (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?options=content&id=86>), date of access: 15.12.2015.

<sup>6</sup> "Azerbaycan Diasporasının Maskunlaşma Coğrafiyası (The Settlement of Azerbaijani Diaspora Across the World)" (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?options=content&id=86>), date of Access: 15.12.2015.

<sup>7</sup> "Том 1. Численность и размещение населения (Volume 1: The number and distribution of the Population)", ([http://www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis\\_itogi1612.htm](http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm)), *the official web-site of Federal State Statistic Service of the Russian Federation*, date of access: 18.01.2016.

depends on economic and political conditions both in Russia and Azerbaijan. It is also a same case for the other migrants in Russia coming from the Post-Soviet countries. The migration issue is a very topical debate in Russia which is the second largest immigration labor market with 11 million immigrants after the USA.<sup>8</sup>

The Azerbaijani government after the former president Heydar Aliyev has more focused on the Azerbaijanis living abroad. The First Forum of World Azerbaijanis under leadership of Heydar Aliyev took place in Baku in November 9-10, 2001. It was the first time that the Azerbaijani minorities in foreign countries were officially defined as “diaspora” with this forum. Therefore, this organization became crucial for destiny of the diaspora. Subsequently, “the State Committee on Affairs with Azerbaijanis Living in Foreign Countries (SCAALFC) was established by the signature of President Heydar Aliyev in 5 July 2002. This committee was re-organised by President Ilham Aliyev in 2008 with its new name “the State Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Work with the Diaspora. (SCWD)”<sup>9</sup> In parallel with this, the number of the organizations and activities, which are supported by the government, has increased in recent years. Hence, some thinkers claim that the Azerbaijani diaspora is a “constructed and imagined diaspora.”<sup>10</sup>

In the first chapter, various arguments related with the diaspora concept and Russian Azerbaijani society is discussed. Plus, in this chapter Sheffer’s argument on diaspora concept, which accords the Russian Azerbaijanis, is based on. In this chapter, the relationship between diaspora, ethnicity and identity is studied in the context of sociology, anthropology, political science and international relations. In the second chapter, the information regarding Azerbaijan and the Caucasus are given. In this sense,

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<sup>8</sup> The United Nations Migration Wall Chart 2015, (<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/wallchart/docs/MigrationWallChart2015.pdf>) date of Access: 02.01.2016.

<sup>9</sup> See the process to establishment of the diaspora organizations: “The Activities of Diaspora”, ([http://www.azerbaijans.com/content\\_494\\_en.html](http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_494_en.html)), date of access: 20.12.2015.

<sup>10</sup> See: Adeline Braux, “Azerbaijanis in Russia: an ‘imagined diaspora?’”, in Marlene Laruelle (dir.), *Migration and Social Upheaval as the face of Globalization in Central Asia*, Leiden, Brill, 2013, p. 167-187. Sergey Rumyansev, “Post-Soviet Nation State as a Sponsor of Construction of the Ethno-National Diaspora: Azeri’s Case”, *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales (REMI)*, (26) No. 3, 2010.

Southern Caucasuspolicies of Russia, Turkey and Iran as regional powers are briefly analyzed in order to understand their relations with Azerbaijan. Moreover, the Karabakh problem, which has significance for the Azerbaijani state and nation, is surveyed. In the third chapter, the identity issue in Azerbaijan with historical dimensions and the ideologies of Turkism, Azerbaijanism and Eurasianism which are effective on the diaspora in Russia are briefly explained. In parallel with rising the diasporic organizations, the Azerbaijani government under the leadership of Heydar and Ilham Aliyevs has attempted to construct the diasporic identity upon “Azerbaijanism.” In the fourthchapter, the diaspora and identity politics of the governments are considered in detail. In this chapter, there is also information about the Azerbaijani diaspora across the world. Furthermore, the influence of the diaspora on Azerbaijan’s foreign policy is discussed. In this chapter, the role and impact of the Karabakh problem and Khojaly massacre on Azerbaijani diaspora communitiesin the world are also discussed.

In the fifth chapter, there is information about the historical background and current situation of Azerbaijani community in Russia. The majority of Russian Azerbaijanis live in the cities of Moscow, Saint Petersburg except Russia’s Dagestan Republic that has a strong Azerbaijani population. Azerbaijani people firstly started to settle in mainland Russia in the late 19th century. After World War II, some Soviet Azerbaijanis immigrated to Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Siberia region in order to have better education and job. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the number of Azerbaijani migrants in Russia considerably increased. The majority of migrants were in a quest of better employment opportunities in the 1990s. Some of Azerbaijanis left Azerbaijan due to the war in Karabakh. Most of them firstly migrated to Baku. However, some of them emigrated from Baku to Russia because of bad economic and political conditions in Azerbaijan. Most of Azerbaijani migrants led to make fruit and vegetable trade in Russia. However, there has been promotion in the status of Russian Azerbaijanis over time. Some of them have gained better status in time. On the other hand, some of Azerbaijanis in Russia turned backed to Azerbaijan with the development of the country. There are currently many Azerbaijani businessmen who play a significant role in trade and oil sector of Russia. Furthermore, there are also many intellectual people and professors among Russian Azerbaijani Turks. As a result of this, Russian Azerbaijanis have increased their activities and ties among each other which have

contributed to formation of Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia during years. Nevertheless, the Azerbaijani diaspora has not had strong effect yet on Russian-Azerbaijan relations as well as on Russian political system due to its being an “incipient diaspora” and some problems among themselves. Furthermore, there is a strong rivalry among the Azerbaijani organizations and people that weaken the effect of the diaspora on the Russian political system and the relations between Azerbaijan and Russia. Currently, there are 13 Azerbaijani organizations in the Russian Federation. While The All-Russia Azerbaijanis Congress (VAK)<sup>11</sup> is supported by the Azerbaijani government, the Federal National Cultural Autonomy of Azerbaijanis (AZERROS) is independent from the government. They are the two most effective Azerbaijani diaspora organizations across Russia. “The All-Russian Azerbaijani Congress (VAK)” was created in March 2001 by the 50 Azerbaijani public organizations. VAK has also 79 branches across the Russian Federation. However, most of them are insufficient. The main purpose of VAK is to build ties between Azerbaijani people of Russia and their homeland. The organizations also aim to protect civil rights of Azerbaijani society in Russia. AZERROS also has same ambitions with VAK. They mostly focus on Russian Azerbaijani community rather than Azerbaijan-Russian relations. These two diaspora organizations do not have good relations with each other due to AZERROS having some problems with the government. In the fifth chapter the detailed information as well as the problems related with the organizations in Russia is given. The Azerbaijani associations in Russia also sometimes meet other Turkic<sup>12</sup> communities in Russia via some events. It also affects the diasporic identity of Russian Azerbaijanis. The Karabakh problem and Khojaly massacre as a great trauma also plays a major role in the formation of diaspora and diasporic identity. By the reason of this tragedy, the diasporic identity is shaped by the Armenian hatred. In the conclusion part, all of these components and their effect on the diasporic identity are examined in the context of Azerbaijanism, Turkish and Eurasianism. Alongside the interviews with the Azerbaijani people in Russia, the Azerbaijani journals, books, documents and websites regarding the diaspora in Azerbaijani and Russian languages are also searched.

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<sup>11</sup> The Official website of the All Russia-Azerbaijanis Congress (VAK): (<http://vakinfo.org/az>), date of access: 22.12.2015.

<sup>12</sup> Turkic refers to the societies sharing same ethnic roots, cultural elements, language and history. The Turkic societies live in various areas including Asia, Eastern Europe, Middle East. Azerbaijanis are also one of the Turkic societies.

## 1. DIASPORA AND IDENTITY

### 1.1 THE DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF DIASPORA

The “diaspora”, which is a Greek word, derives from the verb *speiro* (to disperse) and the preposition *dia* (over). It was referring to the meaning of migration and colonization in the term of the Ancient Greek.<sup>13</sup> In the subsequent periods, this word was identified with the Jewish community which was expelled from the Roman Empire by force. In this period, it was associated with bad meanings referring to exile, violent and homesickness. Until the 20th century, this word was just recalling Jewish people who live across the world. After the middle of the 20 century, it has also been referred to some other communities such as Armenians, Palestinians who live outside their homeland.

Currently, the concept of diaspora is a phenomenon, bearing many discussions regarding its own definition and status in social sciences. Recent years, there has been increase in attention and arguments towards this concept. Especially, in the 1990s many discussions and arguments emerged on the manner and meaning of diaspora which is a new phenomenon since the politics of identity and globalization has become more topical. Conversely, the definition of diaspora has become more ambiguous. For Brubaker, “the universalization of diaspora, paradoxically, means the disappearance of diaspora.”<sup>14</sup> The concept of diaspora is still ongoing debate. In parallel with this, more academician and thinkers have focused on this topic at the present time. There are many reasons why diaspora has become more attractive for social scientists. First of all, the concept of diaspora, which is a result of international migration, is directly related with many terms in social sciences such as identity, nationalism, migration, trans-nationalism and globalization.<sup>15</sup> Hence, it is affected and interpreted by many authors from different perspectives within various disciplines. Each diaspora is part of a nation within a

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<sup>13</sup> Robin Cohen, “Global Diasporas: An Introduction”, UCL Press, 1997, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Rogers Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.28, No.1, January 2005, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>Firat Yıldız, “Uluslararası Göç ve Diaspora ile İlişkili Kavramlar (The Terms Related with International Migration and Diaspora)”, *Journal of the Human and Social Science Researches*, Vol. 3, Issue. 2, 2014.

different country. Hence, discussions on the phenomenon of identity, minority and nationalism are foundation for diaspora studies. For another thing, there has been rising in movement of migration across the world last decade. As a result of this, the diaspora concept has gained more importance and wider meaning. Thirdly, flow of international human capital has strongly risen with the globalization. This causes some communities to be more interacted with each other. In parallel with this, new modern diasporas as trans-national actors over the world have emerged and thus the power of nation-states has been weakened.

Diasporas derive from people who emigrate from their homeland to different countries. Hence, diaspora researches are related with migration studies. The fact remains that there are huge differences about their meanings and scopes. Diasporas refer to the perpetuation of complex patterns of symbolic and cultural connection which characterize the diasporic society unlike the terms of immigration, migration and migrant which are related with disruption and displacement.<sup>16</sup> For Gabriel Sheffer, ethnic diasporas constitute the most enduring outcomes of international migrations of ethnic groups with their permanent settlement in host countries. The definition and concept of groups of tourists, international immigrants, guest workers, asylum-seekers, and refugees are different from diasporas even though they reside in host countries for extended periods.<sup>17</sup> According to Baskın Oran, migrations are essentially divided into two parts as forced and voluntary migration.<sup>18</sup> People are mostly forced to migrate to a receiving country due to bad circumstances in their homeland such as war, human right violations as well as political reasons. For instance, four million Palestinian refugees are currently living in various countries due to the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1948 and 1967.<sup>19</sup> This war compelled them to flee their homes. On the other hand, some people voluntarily immigrate to a new country to do business, to be educated or to live in better conditions. In this sense, it is not possible to associate all migrations with diaspora. In

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<sup>16</sup> Bill Aschcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, ‘‘The Post-Colonial Studies Reader’’, Routledge, 2nd edition, London and New York, 2008, p. 425.

<sup>17</sup> Gabriel Sheffer, ‘‘Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad’’, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Yaldız, p. 384.

<sup>19</sup> ‘‘Geography’’, (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/higher/geography/human/population/revision/7/>) date of access: 20.12.2015.

order to formulate a migrated community as a diaspora, firstly time has to pass and migrated community has to block to assimilation in the present and future by way of a strong attachment to the past.<sup>20</sup> For Sheffer, unlike migrated communities, diaspora populations have choices of permanent settlement in host countries and they form new diasporas in order to become active in the political arena as functionaries of diaspora organizations.<sup>21</sup>

The new actors have emerged with rising of globalization in recent years. In this sense, the globalization has provided opportunities to diasporas since communication and business have enhanced all over the world. It makes diaspora more significant actors to trade and business among countries. For instance, many Azerbaijanis in Russia make fruit and vegetable trade in Russia. They mostly bring vegetable and fruit from Azerbaijan in order to sell them in Russia. Thus, they contribute to trade between Russia and Azerbaijan. What's more, diasporas have advantage within international economic and political relations since they know language of host countries alongside their mother tongue. Their mission and position have been increasing in relations between a kin state and host state in recent years. We can consider diasporas as transnational actors which derive from relations among non-state actors since the transnational space is situated both in a "kin state"<sup>22</sup> and "host state."<sup>23</sup>,<sup>24</sup> The usages of these two terms are overlapping in the social sciences since they have in common an agency-oriented, processual view of cross border social phenomena.<sup>25</sup>

There are many different arguments and definitions by many thinkers from various disciplines about the question, "which ethnicities can be defined as diaspora?" One of the scholarly opinions regarding diaspora belongs to William Safran. From his perspective, there are six characteristics of the diaspora: Firstly, members of diasporic communities have been dispersed from a specific original center to two or more foreign regions; secondly, retaining a collective memory, vision, or myth about homeland;

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<sup>20</sup> Cohen, 1997.

<sup>21</sup> Sheffer, 2003, p. 16-17.

<sup>22</sup> "Kin state" refers to a state which has diaspora in a foreign state.

<sup>23</sup> "Host state" refers to a state where diaspora lives outside of its kin state.

<sup>24</sup> Yaldız, p. 387.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Faist, "Diaspora and Transnationalism: What kind of dance partners?", in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*, eds. Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, IMISCOE Research, Amsterdam University Press, 2010, p. 34.

thirdly, they believe that they are not fully accepted by their host society; fourthly, they think that their ancestral homeland is true and ideal home and their descendants will eventually return when conditions are appropriate; fifthly, they believe that they should collectively strive to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland; sixthly, they maintain relationships with that homeland which define their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity.<sup>26</sup>

Robin Cohen also changes Safran's definition on diasporas and thus he put forwards three new points to Safran's diaspora formulation:

1) alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions, 2) a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement, 3) the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance of pluralism.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, Cohen categorizes diaspora as victim, labor, trade, imperial and cultural diasporas. According to his argument, the Africans and Armenians have been represented as a victim diaspora, the British as an imperial diaspora and the Indians as a labor diaspora. The Chinese and Lebanese can be categorized as a trade diaspora and the peoples of the Caribbean as a culture diaspora. Plus, some diasporas are defined into several categories by Cohen. For instance, the Jews are considered into a victim diaspora as well as into a trade diaspora in different periods.<sup>28</sup>

Safran's point of view on diaspora is not sufficient in order to formulate all modern diasporas. First of all, many diasporas have permanently lived in host states. They mostly do not have a chance or not prefer to return to their homelands. Moreover, there are many reasons which push communities to leave their homeland, apart from forced emigration. Many communities voluntarily leave their homeland due to some reasons such as trade ambitions. There are many diasporic communities, such as Lebanese and Chinese diasporas, which want to do business and trade. Safran claims, diasporas believe that they eventually return to their homelands. However, there are many diasporas that do not aim to return to their homelands. For instance, members of the

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<sup>26</sup> William Safran, 'Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return', *Diaspora*, Vol.1, No.1, 1991, p. 83-84.

<sup>27</sup> Cohen, 1997, p. 26.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10-11.



Armenian diaspora mostly have not preferred to return to their homeland after Armenia gained its independence from the USSR in 1991. For Safran, diasporic communities feel that they are not accepted by host countries. However, there are many diasporas that integrate and have good relations with host community. Therefore, Safran's diaspora definition is not enough to explain all diasporas in the world. We can just consider his diaspora definition in order to explain some classical diasporas which consist of victim diasporas such as Jewish diaspora.

Another well-known definition belongs to Gabriel Sheffer.

An ethno-national diasporas is a social-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries. Members of such entities maintain regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as their homelands and with individuals and groups of the same background residing in other host countries. Based on aggregate decisions to settle permanently in host countries, but to maintain a common identity, diasporas identify as such, showing solidarity with their group and their entire nation, and they organize and are active in the cultural, social, economic, and political spheres. Among their various activities, members of such diasporas establish trans-state networks that reflect complex relationships among the diasporas, their host countries, their homelands, and international actors.<sup>29</sup>

Sheffer also divides diasporas as “stateless diasporas” and “state-linked diasporas”. In this sense, while the stateless diasporas do not have their own independent states, the state-linked diasporas have their own ethnic origin that constitutes a majority in established states.<sup>30</sup>

Sheffer makes great contributions to the diaspora definition. Unlike the diaspora definition of Safran and classical diaspora concepts which define diasporas as a result of forced migrations, he underlines migration can be result of a voluntary migration. Furthermore, he indicates that diasporas have connections with international actors and other members of diaspora in different countries alongside with home countries, unlike Safran who just mentions diasporas' relationships with their homeland. Furthermore, one of the significant contributions of Sheffer that diasporas are marked out by having ethno-national origin. Across the world, there are many various trans-national groups which derive from migrants, refugees, religious and business groups. It is important to

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<sup>29</sup> Sheffer, 2003, p. 9-10.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

have ethno-nation origin in order to find out which trans-national groups can be considered as a diaspora. For Sheffer, it is necessary to limit the term since “diaspora” has become a traveling term and we need to distinguish ethno-national diasporas from various other groups.<sup>31</sup> When all these points are taken into consideration, Sheffer’s ethno-national diaspora definition is both more flexible and explanatory in order to define contemporary diasporas.

## 1.2 THE DIASPORA CONCEPT AND AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA IN RUSSIA

There are different arguments and point of views about the definition of the Transcaucasian societies as well as Azerbaijani people in Russia. Diaspora is an ambiguous and more flexible word in Russia because many different groups are called diasporas in Russia. Temporary immigrant workers from the Caucasus and Central Asia even to be called diasporas by thinkers and most of people in Russia. Due to its flexible meaning in the Russian discourse, the word includes immigrants bearing the same nationality, regardless of their citizenship or the duration of their stay in Russia.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, it both refers to ethnic Russians who stayed outside Russia after 1991 and the immigrated communities that settled on Russian Federation after the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the concept of diaspora and immigrant is not clear in the Russian discourse.

Russian Azerbaijanis are called both diaspora and migrants in Russia. However, they are mostly reckoned as diaspora in Russia. Especially, they are called diaspora within Russian articles, dissertations and books. They are also nearly synonymous with seller in bazaars. On the other hand, Adeline Braux claims that Azerbaijanis in Russia are viewed as “an imagined diaspora” as a result of its limited geographical spreading, the short time elapsed since the independence and being state-oriented diaspora.<sup>34</sup> She characterizes Azerbaijanis alongside Central Asian people in Russia as migrants and

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Adeline Braux, “Azerbaijanis in Russia: an ‘imagined diaspora?’”, in Marlene Laruelle (dir.), *Migration and Social Upheaval as the face of Globalization in Central Asia*, Leiden, Brill, 2013, p. 167-187.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

accordingly she defines “so-called Azerbaijani diaspora”<sup>35</sup> However, Azerbaijani community in Russia is more integrated and active within Russia in comparison with Central Asian people that mostly temporally work as migrants in service sector. Azerbaijani people in Russia have better status than Central Asian people via some businessmen such as Araz Agalarov, Vagit Alekperov who run Lukoil Company. Furthermore, there are many Azerbaijani associations in Russia which are foundation for diasporic organizations. Therefore, it is not a reasonable way to consider all Azerbaijani community in Russia as migrants.

For Robin Cohen, in order to formulate a migrated community as a diaspora, firstly time has to pass and thus migrated community has to block assimilation in the present and future by way of a strong attachment to the past.<sup>36</sup> In this respect, the Azerbaijani community is successful to block assimilation. During my field research and interviews with the Azerbaijani people in Russia, I saw lots of Azerbaijanis in Russia who have lived in Russia for a long time. They almost have strong Azerbaijani national identity. They sometimes go to Azerbaijan with their children. They also follow news in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, they mostly prefer to marry with Azerbaijani people instead of Russian people. What’s more, they prefer their children to get married with an Azerbaijani. For them, it’s better to marry with an Azerbaijani Turk rather than a Russian since they have a different culture and religion from Russians. As follows, there is an increase in collective identity and diasporic organizations of Russian Azerbaijanis. In my thesis, I divide Azerbaijani people in Russia as immigrants and diasporic people. In this sense, I consider diasporic Azerbaijanis in Russia. The diasporic people indicate intellectual Azerbaijanis who permanently live in Russia, have national consciousness and ties with Azerbaijan and being involved in diaspora activities.

For Sergei Romyansev, the Azerbaijani “diaspora” is constructed as a political project by the Azerbaijani government. He also argues that the relationships between the state

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<sup>35</sup> Adeline Braux, ‘‘Azerbaijani Migrants in Russia’’, *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, No. 57, 3 December 2013, p. 5-8.

<sup>36</sup> Cohen, 1997.

and the émigrés make it a post-Soviet bureaucratic diaspora.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, Valerji Tishkov also claims that it is difficult to call the one million Azerbaijanis, who circulate between Russia and Azerbaijan, a diaspora; however, there is a certain flavor of the diaspora in their culture and social practice.<sup>38</sup> Even though there are many attempts to construct Azerbaijani diaspora by the Azerbaijani government since the beginning of the 1990s, all Azerbaijani organizations and diaspora members in Russia are not oriented by the government. There are many Azerbaijani diasporic organizations which were established formerly as well as independently of the government. Moreover, some of them, such as AZERROS, which is one of the most active organizations, do not have good relations with the government. Hence, all Azerbaijani associations in Russia are not under the control of the government even though VAK, which is directed by the government, is the most active Azerbaijani organization in the Russian Federation. Hence, the construction of Azerbaijani diaspora is not totally led by the government. During my interviews with the members of the Azerbaijani organizations in Russia, I got various feedbacks which disaccord with the politics and discourses of the Azerbaijani government.

As mentioned previously, there are six criterias of William Safran to consider a community as a diaspora. Two of them do not fit to explain Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia. First of all, for Safran, diaspora members believe that they are not fully accepted by their host society. Almost all Azerbaijani people said to me that they feel comfortable to live in Russia. Furthermore, they do not have any adaptation problem since all of them know Russian and most of them were previously citizens of the Soviet Union. For second Safran criteria, diaspora members think that their ancestral homeland is true and ideal home and their descendants will eventually return when conditions are appropriate. This criterion also disaccords with Azerbaijani people in Russia. For my interviews, most of Azerbaijanis, except Azerbaijani migrants, said to me that they and their children probably will never return to Azerbaijan in the future.

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<sup>37</sup> Sergei Rumyantsev, ‘‘The State and the Diaspora: Bureaucratic and Discursive Practices in the Construction of a Transnational Community’’, in *Diaspora and Citizenship*, eds. Elena Barabantseva, Claire Sutherland, Routledge, 2012, p. 297.

<sup>38</sup> Sergei Rumyantsev, ‘‘Post-Soviet Diaspora-Building Processes and the Transnationalization of the Politics of Memory’’, *New Europe College Black Sea Link Program Yearbook 2013-2014*, p. 236.

On the other hand, Sheffer's ethno-national diaspora definition can be applied in order to evaluate the Azerbaijani diaspora that consists of a joint ethno-national community and being settled in many host countries. As Sheffer underlines voluntary migration<sup>39</sup>, most of Azerbaijanis voluntarily immigrated to Russia in both the term of the USSR and the beginning of the 1990s. According to the Sheffer's definition, the Azerbaijanis have contacts and solidarity with Azerbaijanis in both their homeland and other host countries. They sometimes establish joint events in Baku or other host countries via the trans-state networks. For instance, the First Forum of World Azerbaijanis took place in Baku on November 9-10<sup>40</sup>, 2001 and the First All-Russian Congress of Azerbaijanis took place in Moscow on October 4-5, 2001<sup>41</sup>. Azerbaijani diasporas across the world regularly rally.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, many Azerbaijani associations carry out activities in some important dates for Azerbaijani Turks. For instance, Azerbaijani diasporas organize the Memorial Day in 26 February each year in order to commemorate the Khojaly massacre.<sup>43</sup> This shows solidarity and collective identity among Azerbaijanis in the host countries. Additionally, they have strong ties with their homeland since their relatives live in Azerbaijan and they visit Azerbaijan several times every year. According to my interviews, their children go to Azerbaijan every summer during their holiday. Besides that, some of Russian Azerbaijanis send money to their relatives in Azerbaijan. In this respect, I based on ethno-national and state-linked diaspora definition of Sheffer in order to describe Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia as a contemporary ethno-national diaspora within my thesis. Since I divide Russian Azerbaijanis as migrant and diaspora in Russia, I focus on the diasporic Azerbaijani people in Russia. In this regard, I examine the identity of Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia.

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<sup>39</sup>Sheffer, 2003, p. 9-10.

<sup>40</sup> "Yaradılma Tarixi ve Maqsadi (The Creation Date and Purpose)", *the official site of SCWD*, (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?options=content&id=25>), date of access: 22.04.2016.

<sup>41</sup> "О конгрессе (About the Congress)", (<http://www.vakmos.org/vac/about-the-congress/>), date of access: 01.04.2016.

<sup>42</sup> See the official site of SCWD.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

### 1.3 IDENTITY, ETHNICITY AND DIASPORA

In order to examine the identity of Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia as an ethno-national diaspora, firstly, we need to survey the meanings of nation, ethnicity and identity. For Smith, a nation has some characteristics:

A nation is a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members.<sup>44</sup>

In parallel with this, ethnic community based on six main attributes:

1) a collective proper name, 2) a myth of common ancestry, 3) share historical memories, 4) one or more differentiating elements of common culture, 5) an association with a specific homeland, 6) a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population.<sup>45</sup>

National identities are constructed upon these joint elements in the light of positivist and modernist perspectives. According to these perspectives, nations and nationalism occurred after the French Revolution. It is also reckoned by many thinkers, such as Benedict Anderson<sup>46</sup>, that states play a major role in the formation of national identity. According to some point of views, diasporas disrupt national identity and nation-state which are institution and ideology of modernity through the cutting across national boundaries, the dispersion, the spreading out. Thus, diaspora becomes a prominent feature of a contemporary post-colonial world.<sup>47</sup>

Even though the term of identity is related with people or various groups along with societies, the term is almost identified with ethnicities and nations in social sciences. The concept of identity is also a subject where different branches of social sciences meet and discuss. Identity seeks an answer for the question “who are we?” While seeking an answer for this question, it also benefits from “other”. In this sense, “otherness” plays a crucial role in the establishment of identity since identities are

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<sup>44</sup> Anthony D. Smith, ‘National Identity’, Penguin Books, London, 1991, p. 40.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>46</sup> See in detail: Benedict Anderson, ‘Imagined Communities’, Verso, London and New York, 2006

<sup>47</sup> Bill Aschcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, ‘The Post-Colonial Studies Reader’, Routledge, 2nd edition, London and New York, 2008, p. 426.

constructed on both similarities and differences. For Fearon, “‘identity’” is used in two linked sense, “social” and “personal.”<sup>48</sup>For Çevik, the formation of ethnic consciousness begins at young age and subsequently ethnic identity becomes one of principles of personal identity through passing down values.<sup>49</sup>Identity and culture are the two fundamental components of ethnicity.<sup>50</sup>Ethnicity, which is a part of human self from childhood, is a reflection of sense of belonging and we-feeling.<sup>51</sup>

For Sheffer, there are four major approaches to ethno-genesis and to ethnicidentity. First is the “primordialist” explanation which emphasizes the roles of biological factors, physical markers and cultural attributes. The second is the “instrumentalist” approach. This approach advocates that ethnic groups, including diasporas, are useful for achieving practical individual and group goals. According to this approach, individual and group motivations for adhering to ethnic identities and for keeping up their with ethnic entities in the context of rational choice. “Psychological” approach and “ethno-symbolic and mythical” approach, as two similar approaches, are between the instrumentalist and primordialist approaches. For these two similar approaches, the identities of members of groups have their bases in subjective psychological factors or in strong attachments to symbols and myths. The last approach is the “constructionist” approach which aims to explain modern nationalism as well as etno-national diasporas. This approach is in accordance with constructionist approach of Benedict Anderson who argues that nations and nationalism are modern cultural artifacts. It is better to present a synthesis approach to the questions of the genesis, identity and history of ethno-national diaspora and to a better understanding of the diasporism since none of these explanations is enough to disentangle ethno-national diaspora.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> James D. Fearon, “What is identity (as we now see the world)?”, California: Stanford University, 1999, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Abdülkadir Çevik, “Politik Psikoloji (Political Psychology)”, Dost Kitabevi Yayınları, 2010, Ankara, p. 74.

<sup>50</sup> Senem Çevik, “The Armenian Diaspora and the Need for the Other”, *Akademik Bakış Journal*, Volume 5, Number 9, 2011, p. 96.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Gabriel Sheffer, “Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad”, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, p. 18-19.

For Cohen, national identities are stronger embraced by diasporas to maintain and improve.<sup>53</sup> With expansion of capitalism and communication, diasporas are more interested with their homelands in the light of long-distance nationalism concept of Anderson.<sup>54</sup> As a result of this, nationalism as well as national identity has rising effect on diasporas. People, who live outside their homeland, generally prefer to spend time with people from their own ethnicity within their hostland and thus the fact for We-hood becomes stronger for this people.<sup>55</sup> For instance, most of Azerbaijanis in Russia prefer to spend time with Azerbaijanis rather than Russians. They also prefer intermarriages with Azerbaijanis. During my interviews, they mostly said to me that “we have more sharing with our compatriots due to our common culture, religion, ethnicity.”

Ethnicity is the necessary space for diasporic people when the diasporic margins struggle to represent their own voice in the modern time.<sup>56</sup> Diasporas are dispersed ethnic groups from same nations and their identities are intricate combinations of primordial, psychological/mythical and instrumental elements. They are participants in nations that have common ethnic and national traits, identities and affinities as being affiliated with a cohesive ethno-national entity. Diasporas maintain their common ethno-national identities with the cultural, psychological and social virtual boundaries which define intra-state and trans-state social and political spaces.<sup>57</sup> It is very important for diasporas to maintain their identities since diasporas are able to continue their existences as long as they maintain their identities. A common national identity and ties with homeland are fundamental for diasporas in order not to be assimilated. Hence, identity and ethnicity are concerned with the concept of diaspora. However, diasporas can have

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<sup>53</sup> Robin Cohen, “Diasporas and the Nation State: From Victims to Challengers”, *International Affairs*, Vol: 72, No: 3, 1996, p. 508-509.

<sup>54</sup> Benedict Anderson, “The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World”, Verso, London, 1998, p. 74.

<sup>55</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen, “We and Us: Two Modes of Group Identification”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Volume 31, Number 3, 1995, p. 427.

<sup>56</sup> Chih-Yun Chiango, “Diaspora Theorizing Paradigm on Cultural Identity”, *Intercultural Communication Studies* XIX: 1, 2010, p. 39.

<sup>57</sup> Sheffer, 2003, p. 7-12.



different aspect of common national identity due to being trans-national actors. What's more, some of diasporas bear "hybrid identities"<sup>58</sup> because diasporic communities have more social interactions. Thus, their diasporic identities are formulated by more external elements. Besides of that, making of diasporic identity has become more complex in recent years in relation with globalization. The process of globalization has directly affected cultural, national and diasporic identities with its different dimension. This process has led to hybridization of some identities. Additionally, identities have become more instrumental for some communities to be preserved from the globalization, while some of communities have headed towards being assimilation. Diasporas, as trans-national communities, have been considerably affected by this process. Moreover, the trans-national movements of bodies, knowledge and capital generate nomadic identities. Diasporas involve "identity, memory, home" which are displacement produces alongside geographical dispersal of communities.<sup>59</sup>

Cultural identity is also associated with diaspora in the context of post-colonial discourse. Especially, the relationship between diaspora and cultural identity is applied to evaluate the black experience and diaspora of Caribbeannes in accordance with the term of post-colonialism culture and identity. There are two different approaches interpreting cultural identity. For the first approach, cultural identity is linked with one-shared culture, one true self and a sort of collective which refer to "one people" bearing the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes within stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning. For the second approach, cultural identities undergo constant transformation instead of being fixed. This approach focuses on the questions "what we really are", "what we have become". According to this approach, it is important to belong to the future as much as the past in the context of cultural identity.<sup>60</sup>

Diasporas' sense of identities can be formed and situationality determined in different contexts instead of being fixed. Diasporic identities are constructed and re-constructed

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<sup>58</sup> "Hybrid identity" refers to an identity bearing different types of identity.

<sup>59</sup> Chih-Yun Chiango, 2010, p. 36.

<sup>60</sup> Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, eds. Bill Aschcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, Routledge, 2nd Edition, London and New York, 2008, 435.

by individuals in their everyday life.<sup>61</sup>For Hall, diasporic identities constantly reproduce themselves anew by way of transformation and difference. As a result of this reproduce, diasporic identity embodies the variation and transformation of ethnic identification.<sup>62</sup> In this respect, even though the Azerbaijani government attempts to construct the diaspora identity on Azerbaijanism, it does not totally overlap with the discourse of the Azerbaijani Turks of Russia.

Identity is established by the objective and subjective elements. Objective elements consist of history, language, religion, homeland and traditions. Subjective elements linking people who are aware of these common elements.<sup>63</sup>In other words, subjective elements are reflections of shared common elements on members of nation. In the thesis, subjective elements on the Azerbaijani diaspora are analyzed through the interviews with the members of the diaspora. In the following chapters, the effective political ideas on the Azerbaijani identity are given.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 426.

<sup>62</sup> Chih-Yun Chiango, 2010, p. 38-40.

<sup>63</sup> Fırat Yıldız, ‘‘Diaspora Kavramı: Tarihçe, Gelişme ve Tartışmalar (The Term of Diaspora: History, Progress and Discussions)’’, *Hacettepe University Türkiyat Araştırmaları Journal*, Number 18, Spring 2013, p. 388.

## **2. GENERAL OVERVIEW THE SOUTH CAUCASUS AND AZERBAIJAN**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CAUCASUS**

The Caucasus, which contains many different cultures, ethnic groups and historical heritages, has a unique and crucial geopolitical position between Asia and Europe as well as between the Caspian and Black sea. It covers 440.000 square kilometer area between the Caspian and Black Sea.<sup>64</sup> It is also at a crossroad between Europe, Asia and the Middle East as well as between Islam and Christianity. Besides that, the region has rising significance for both the global and regional actors, since it possess energy resources. Moreover, it has a historical meaning for Russians, Iranians and Turks that competed for the region throughout the history. It is a bridge for both Russia and Turkey to stretch over Middle East and Central Asia. It has also been affected by various political structures and movements such as democracy, Islamic rules, Pan-Turkism, socialism so far. It has been not possible to establish permanent peace and stability within the region due to its multi-ethnic structure and different ambitions of regional and global actors. In parallel with many ethnic groups, many languages and dialects are spoken by these groups in the region. On the other hand, these ethnic groups share some cultural and historical elements since they lived together under the sovereignty of the Tsarist Russia and the USSR for a long time.

The region, which is called by some authorities as the Balkans of Asia, has quite chaotic and complex structure, because of the historical problems. Three major disputes of the region are the Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These frozen problems are mostly in favour of Russia which played a key role in the creation of these problems. They are particularly significant tools to Russia in order to trump versus the region states and West. Like in the case of Crimea, Russia is willing to benefit from the historical problems of the Post-Soviet geography. In recent years, the region has become more attractive to the West due to its geopolitical importance and growing

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<sup>64</sup> Alexander Mikaberidze, ‘Historical Dictionary of Georgia’, Rowmand & Littlefield, London, 2015, p. 213.

energy resources. Furthermore, the region has potential for transportation of energy resources in Central Asia towards Europe. Hence, the competition among the regional and global actors can arguably increase over the region.

Russia has had much stronger influence in comparison with other actors over the region since the beginning of the 19th century. The region has a private importance for Russia's security and expansion. Therefore, Russia has more focused on the region than other states, even when it was weaker.

The Caucasus is politically and geographically divided as Northern and Southern Caucasus which is determined by the Caucasus Mountains. The region was also named by these mountains. For the first time, the words of "Caucasus" and "Caucasian" associated with "Mount Caucasus" and used in the tragedy of "Enjoying Prometheus Bond" by Aeschylus who was an ancient Greek tragedian. After the Renaissance, the region was identified with the names of "Caucasus" "Caucasia", "Caucasie".<sup>65</sup> According to some thinkers, these mountains are also border between Europe and Asia. For some thinkers, Northern Caucasus is main Caucasus and Southern Caucasus refers to Transcaucasus. Southern Caucasus, which is also called Transcaucasus in Russian literature, consists of three independent and former Soviet states; Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. It also includes many ethnic groups such as Ossetians, Abkhazians, Talysh, Kurds and Lezgins alongside main ethnic groups of the region which are Azerbaijanis, Georgians and Armenians. Northern Caucasus consists of seven autonomous regions which belong to the Russian Federation as Dagestan, Ingushetia, Stavropol Krai, Chechen, North Ossetia Alania, Kabardino-Balkar and Karachay-Cherkessia of Republics. Plus, the North Caucasus has strong Muslim majority. Therefore, the region has often become attractive for Islamic groups and movements. Dagestan, which is rarely called Eastern Caucasus, is the largest region of Northern Caucasus. The Caucasus region has never established long-term peace because of the rivalry among various ethnic groups. Besides, the Caucasian countries have never established a single state except of the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic which was a short-lived

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<sup>65</sup> Ali Faik Demir, "Türk Dış Politikası Perspektifinden Güney Kafkasya (The South Caucasus in the Perspective of Turkish Foreign Policy)", Bağlam Yayınları, 2003, İstanbul, p. 59.

state in 1918. On the other hand, although they do not share common identity and political view, they have many similar cultural characteristics and codes.<sup>66</sup>

The Caucasus was affected by many civilizations since many various communities settled in the region throughout history. After the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., Cimmerians, Scythians, Sarmatians respectively lived in the region. Alans captured the region with their invasions in the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.E. After the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, Huns came into the region and they compelled Alans to move towards west. After Huns, Avars and Khazars settled in the region. Sasanians and the Roman Empire also had influence over the region. As a result of this, these states competed for the region. The Arab invasions in the region also realized in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Islam firstly came into the region after the Arab invasions. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Turks pervaded the Caucasus with rising effect of the Great Seljuk Empire over the region. As a result of this, the Georgian principalities were separated and the process for ‘‘Turkization’’ of the Caucasus accelerated. As a result of the wars between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Empire and rising influence of Safavids on the Caucasus, the competition on the region between the Ottomans and Safavids increased in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>67</sup>

Russian interest towards the Caucasus firstly began with the seizure of the Khanate of Kazan by the Tsar Ivan IV in 1552. In the following years, some Circassian and Chechen lords requested the Tsar Ivan IV to be under the auspices of him in order to be freed from the influence of the Ottomans and Crimean Tatars. Hence, for the first time Russian influence began to spread into the Caucasus.<sup>68</sup> In parallel with decreasing the influence of the Ottoman Empire, Russia’s influence enhanced over the region. In 1801, the Russian Empire annexed the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti which was established by the unification of Georgian kingdoms. Later, the Tsar Alexander I of Russia captured Baku, Nakhchivan and Yerevan. As a result of the Russo-Persian War in 1826-1828 which resulted with the Treaty of Turkmenchay, Azerbaijan was divided as North and South. With this treaty the Russian Empire captured the North Azerbaijan referring to

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<sup>66</sup> Thomas De Waal, ‘‘The Caucasus: An Introduction’’, Oxford University Press, New York, 2010, p. 1-10.

<sup>67</sup> Demir, 2003, p. 63-65.

<sup>68</sup> Akdes Nimet Kurat, ‘‘Rusya Tarihi: Başlangıçtan 1917’e Kadar ( History of Russia: From the Beginning until 1917)’’, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 2014, p. 170.

left side of Aras River. After 1850, Russian occupation of Northern Caucasus considerably increased. However, with the support of the Ottoman Empire, the Muslim tribes of Northern Caucasus under the leadership of Imam Shamil struggled against Russians in 1834-1859. Islam, as a unifying element, played a significant role in their struggle against Russians.<sup>69</sup> With these wars, Northern Caucasian Muslim tribes gained more Islamic identity which provided a basis for Caucasian solidarity.

Georgian and Armenian Christianity played a significant role in the construction of Armenian and Georgian identity. For instance, Armenian and Georgian alphabet were introduced by the church in order to write religious texts in their own scripts.<sup>70</sup> Caucasian Muslims were considered as a threat and obstacle by Russians to their expansion toward the Caucasus. Hence, Armenians and Georgians had more priority for Russians to spread into the Caucasus after 17<sup>th</sup> century. Christianity also played an important role in these relations. Russia portrayed itself as a savior of Christianity in the Caucasus. Peter the Great promised the Armenians and Georgians that he frees them being under the sovereignty of the Safavid Dynasty. He also promised Georgians that he supports them to regain their territory under the occupation of Ottoman Empire. The representatives of the Georgians and Armenians also promised that they provide Russians military support after the Russian army crosses the borders of the Safavid Dynasty.<sup>71</sup>

After Russians' settlement and sovereignty into the region in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Caucasian Muslims had to flee their homeland to Anatolia because of Russian suppression over them. In this period, with the support of the Russian Empire, Armenians had chance to settle and spread into Southern Caucasus where Muslims lived. As a result of this, the clashes between Azerbaijani Turks and Armenians erupted in 1905-1907.<sup>72</sup> Thus, Armenization and de-Turkization of Southern Caucasus accelerated.

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<sup>69</sup> Demir, 2003, p. 66-67.

<sup>70</sup> De Waal, 2010, p. 20.

<sup>71</sup> Q. M. Aliev, "Антииранские выступления и борьба против турецкой оккупации в Азербайджане в первой половине XVIII века (Anti-Iranian Stance and the Struggle Against Turkish Occupation in Azerbaijan in the first half of the 18th century)", Baku, Elm, 1975, p. 39.

<sup>72</sup> Akdes Nimet Kurat, "Rusya Tarihi: Başlangıçtan 1917'e Kadar ( History of Russia: From the beginning until 1917)", Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1993, p. 155-161.

After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Russian influence into the region decreased temporarily. Thus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan declared their independence in 1918. However, they became short-lived states since the French, the British, Russian, German and the Ottoman Empires competed in order to have control over the region. In 1920, the Red Army invaded the South Caucasus. The Transcaucasia region was unified by the USSR as Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (TSFSR) in 1922. TSFSR was dissolved and The Soviet Socialist Republics of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia were separately established by the USSR in 1936.<sup>73</sup>

## **2.2 THE CAUCASIAN COUNTRIES**

### **2.2.1. Azerbaijan**

Azerbaijan, where approximately 10 million people live, is located in southward to the Caucasus. Azerbaijani people have strong ethnic, cultural and linguistic ties with Turkish people since their ancestors are Oghuz Turks. Over the territory including the present-day Azerbaijan, Iran and Anatolia, Oghuz Turks constructed many states such as the Ağ Qoyunlu, Qara Qoyunlu, the Seljuk Empire, the Safavid and the Qajar dynasties. Turkish and Azerbaijani people called Turks throughout history. Azerbaijan is the most important Turkic presence in Southern Caucasus which started in the seventh century and this presence became stronger with the rising effect of the Safavid, Seljuk and Ottoman empires over the region after 11th century.<sup>74</sup>In the beginning of the 20th century, Turkism ideology became effective in the construction of identity and modernization in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan declared its independence in 1918 under the leadership of Mammad Amin Rasulzade. However, it did not take a long time due to the Bolshevik invasion of Azerbaijan in 1920. The Azerbaijan Republic secondly gained its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. After the declaration of independence in 1991, Azerbaijan has become neighbour with Russia, Georgia,

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<sup>73</sup> Demir, 2003, p. 68-69.

<sup>74</sup> Mahmud İsmailov, ‘‘İlk Çağlardan XX. Yüzyıl Başlarına Kadar Azerbaycan Tarihi (The Azerbaijani History from the Early Ages to the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century)’’, (translation of Vefa Kurban), IQ Kültür Sanat Publishing, İstanbul, 2014.

Armenia and Iran as well as with Turkey through Nakhchivan autonomous region of Azerbaijan Republic. It covers an area of 86.600 square kilometers. Besides this, 20% of Azerbaijan's territory including Nagorno Karabakh, was occupied by Armenians. It is still under the occupation of Armenia.<sup>75</sup>

Number of Azerbaijani community in the world is almost 40 million.<sup>76</sup> Iran has the largest Azerbaijani community, who live in Northern Iran, with more or less 25 million people.<sup>77</sup> They speak Azerbaijani language which is a dialect of Turkic language. Majority of the Azerbaijani Republic consist of Azerbaijanis with 91.6 %. The rest of Azerbaijan consists of the ethnicities of Lezgians, Talysh, Russians, Armenians and Kurds. The majority of Azerbaijan is Muslims. They have both Sunni and Shia Islam faith.<sup>78</sup> Although Azerbaijan has similarities with Iran in the context of religion, the Azerbaijani Republic based on secularism instead of Shia Islamic rules unlike the Republic of Iran Islamic. It provides both advantage and disadvantage to Azerbaijan towards foreign policy. As for advantage, Azerbaijan has capacity to affect Islamic population in Northern Caucasus. On the other hand, some of Islamic groups and movements have been supported by Iran to spread their ideologies towards Azerbaijan.<sup>79</sup>

After Azerbaijan gained its independence in 1991, its early orientation became towards Russia in the period of Ayaz Mutallibov. However, it changed after Elchibey became president of Azerbaijan in 16 June 1992. Azerbaijan had pro-Turkish stance with Azərbaycan Xalq Cəbhəsi (Popular Front of Azerbaijan) under the leadership Abulfəz Elçibey in the period of 1992-93. In this sense, the relations with Turkey had the

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<sup>75</sup> "General Information: Republic of Azerbaijan", *The Official Website of Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, (<http://www.mfa.gov.az/content/8>), date of access: 16.02.2016.

<sup>76</sup> "Demographic Situation in Azerbaijan", *The Official site of The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan*, (<http://stat.gov.az/news/?id=3128>), date of access: 15.04.2016.

<sup>77</sup> Yalçın Sarıkaya, "Tarihi ve Jeopolitik Boyutlarıyla İran'da Milliyetçilik (Nationalism in Iran with the Historical and Geopolitical Dimensions)", Ötüken Press, 2008, İstanbul, p. 168-171.

<sup>78</sup> "General Information: Republic of Azerbaijan", *The Official Website of Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, (<http://www.mfa.gov.az/content/8>), date of access: 16.02.2016.

<sup>79</sup> Nazim Cafersoy, "Elçibey Dönemi Azerbaycan Dış Politikası: Haziran 1992 - Haziran 1993 (Azerbaijan Foreign Policy in the period of Elchibey: June 1992 - June 1993)", Avrasya Bir Vakfı ASAM Yayınları, Ankara, 2001, p. 114.



highest priority. He aimed Azerbaijan to have strategic partnership with Turkey. He also indicated many times that Turkey is model country for Azerbaijan. According to him, it was necessary to have equal relations with Russia. In this context, Azerbaijan rejected to join CIS in the period of Elchibey. During this period, Azerbaijan strove to have good relations with the West, particularly with the USA in order to counterbalance and eliminate Russia's influence. Accordingly, he strove to attract American and British oil companies to invest in Azerbaijan. In the relations with Iran, he mentioned the problems of Iranian Azerbaijani Turks. He many times referred to Bütöv Azərbaycan (Unified Azerbaijan) which includes Southern Azerbaijan of Iranian territory.<sup>80</sup> As a result of this, Russia and Iran were alarmed by Elchibey's politics and the prospect of rising Turkish-American-Israeli influence in the Caucasus. Subsequently, Tehran and Moscow started to destabilize Azerbaijan under the leadership of Elchibey as supporting Armenia and some opponents. For instance, the Islamic parties and the Talysh separatist movement in Azerbaijan were supported by Iran. While the Nagorno Karabakh war was going on, Elchibey lost its power due to foreign and domestic policy failures in June, 1993. He was succeeded by Heydar Aliyev.<sup>81</sup>

In June 1993, Heydar Aliyev, who was former head of KGB's branch in Azerbaijan, took power in Azerbaijan. Firstly, he suppressed the dissident in order to create his authority within the country. Thus, he achieved stability in domestic policy. According to his foreign policy, he avoided the extreme nationalistic position of his predecessor and pursued a more balanced policy towards his neighbours. In this sense, he pursued more pragmatic and realist policy over the region. Thus, his policy could bring a thaw in relation with Iran as well as with Russia. Furthermore, he signed many energy agreements with both Russia and the US in order to provide balance among them. To sum up, Aliyev left Elchibey idealist politics and pursued pragmatic policy.<sup>82</sup>

After the dead of Heydar Aliyev in 2003, his son Ilham Aliyev succeeded him. Azerbaijan has maintained balanced policy like in the term of Heydar Aliyev. Since the

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 156-160.

<sup>81</sup> Taner Bilgin, 'Bir Türk Beyi Ebulfez Elçibey (A Turkish Leader: Abulfaz Elchibey)', Babıali Kültür Publishing, İstanbul, 2016, p. 189-192.

<sup>82</sup> K. Zadeh, 'Iran's Strategy in the South Caucasus', *Caucasian Review of International Affairs (CRIA)* Volume 2 Number 1, Frankfurt am Main, 2008.

term of Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan has pursued a balanced, interests-based policy, which satisfies needs of powerful actors around it, in order to guarantee its national and economic security.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, Azerbaijan has been the biggest growing country in the South Caucasus through energy resources in recent years. For instance, Azerbaijan's gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated in 2015 as 63.983 billion U.S. dollars. According to 2015 economic statistics of IMF, Georgia's GDP is 13.753 billion U.S. dollars and Armenia's GDP is 10.607 billion U.S. dollars.<sup>84</sup> In comparison with other Caucasian countries, Azerbaijan is rapidly growing through energy resources and pipeline. The Azerbaijani ruling elite enjoys unprecedented economic growth thanks to high oil prices make it immune to outside pressure.<sup>85</sup> Azerbaijan has gained more importance for the West recently due to its energy resources and pipelines.

### 2.2.2. Georgia

Georgia is one of the Caucasian countries, having 69.700 square kilometer area and borderlines with Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Russian Federation.<sup>86</sup> This country is also famous with its cuisine and wine. The Georgian church played a crucial role in the establishment of Georgian identity like the effect of Armenian Church on Armenian identity. Georgia had significance in the Soviet history since it was imagined as a vacation and culture region of the USSR. Especially, Soviet elites aimed to create the Soviet Florida within Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia in the period of Stalin.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Elkhan Nuriyev, "The Geopolitics of Azerbaijan", Chatham House, 28 April 2010, (<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/280410nuriyev.pdf>), date of access: 17.02.2016.

<sup>84</sup> "International Monetary Fund (IMF) World Economic Outlook (October 2015)", *The Official Site of IMF*, ([www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org)), date of access: 12.08.2016.

<sup>85</sup> T. Sharashenidze, "The Role of Iran in the South Caucasus", *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, Number 30, 2011.

<sup>86</sup> Giray Saynur Derman, "Georgia in Russia's Orbit and the South Ossetian Conflict Threatening Regional Stability in the South Caucasus Region", *Journal of Caspian Affairs*, Vol. I, No. 1, (Spring 2015), pp. 94.

<sup>87</sup> Waal, 2010, p. 82-83.

In the history, Georgia was many times occupied by various powers such as the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the Safavid Empire. Georgia had its ‘golden age’ under the reigns of Queen Tamar and David the Builder during the 12th and 13th centuries. On today’s Georgian territory, many Georgian principalities lived until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>88</sup> Georgia was ruled over by the Russian Empire from 1801 to 1917. After the Bolshevik Revolution, Georgia gained its independence with other Caucasian countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1918. After the Bolshevik invasion in 1921, Georgia was incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In 1991, it regained its independence as a result of the disintegration of the USSR.<sup>89</sup>

Georgia’s population is approximately 5 million whose 83% is both Georgian and Orthodox. Georgia has nine regions, one autonomous republic which is Adjara and two separatist regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia that are de facto independent. Georgia lost its all control on Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the Russian intervention to Georgia in 2008. Therefore, Georgia has problematic relations with Russia. South Ossetia and Abkhazia are two important problems of Southern Caucasus and Georgia. Adjara is also an autonomous republic which consists of Sunni Muslims and Georgian Orthodox Christians. It is also neighbor with Turkey.<sup>90</sup> The Muslim Georgians in Adjara have a significant place in the relations between Turkey and Georgia. Armenian minority lives in Javakheti region of Southern Georgia. There is Dagestani population in Kakheti region of Eastern Georgia and Azerbaijani Turks live in Borchali which is part of Kvemo Kartli region of Southeastern Georgia. They also call Borchali Turks. At time there might be some problems between Georgia and these regions.<sup>91</sup> There are some speculations regarding the number and situation of Borchali Turks. According to the Georgian governments, their number is 250 thousand. However, some thinkers claim that their number is more than 250 thousand and reaching to 600 thousand. Borchali Turks and Javakheti Armenians have been perceived as a potential threat by some Georgian governments since they have different ethnicity and culture. Borchali Turks

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<sup>88</sup> Tamara Dragadze, ‘Rural Families in Soviet Georgia: A Case Study in Ratcha Province’, Routledge, London and New York, 2001, p. 38.

<sup>89</sup> Mikaberidze, 2015.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Demir, 2003, p. 118.

have importance for Azerbaijan and Turkey due to sharingsame ethnic, historical and cultural ties.<sup>92</sup>

Turkey is particularly quite important for Georgia to engage with the West and diminish Russian influence. Furthermore, Turkey has strongly provided political support and economic, military assistance to Georgia. Georgia's joining to NATO has actively been supported by Turkey. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway line and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) natural gas pipeline are quite significant for Georgia's economy.<sup>93</sup>

After Georgia proclaimed its independence from the USSR with the referendum in 31 March 1991, Zviad Gamsakhurdia was elected as Georgian president in 14 April 1991. He conducted authoritarian and nationalist policies in order to consolidate its power. He increased its suppression over dissidents and ethnic minorities. He also repealed the autonomy of South Ossetia. The civil war in Georgia revealed in 1991. Aftermath of that, he received a military coup by the military council on December 15, 1992. Subsequently, Shevardnadze came to power with the elections in 1992. However, most of people in Abkhazia and South Ossetia did not participate in these elections.<sup>94</sup> When Shevardnadze came to power, there were many problems and insecurity in Georgia. Georgia did not have a control on South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Furthermore, the Georgian government faced the risk of losing control on Adjara region where Georgian Sunni Muslims live. In the period of Shevardnadze, the belligerence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia remained. He governed the country till 2003. In this period, he aimed to get balance between the West and Russia in foreign policy. He more attempted to have better relations with Russia in comparison with Gamsakhurdia. In his period, Georgia joined the Commonwealth of Independent States. Nevertheless, he was perceived as

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<sup>92</sup> Hasan Oktay, "Türkiye-Azerbaycan Arasında Borçalı Bölgesi (The Borchali Region Between Turkey and Azerbaijan)", Haber Hergün, 02.10.2014, (<http://www.haberhergun.com/turkiye-azerbaycan-arasinda-borcali-bolgesi-makale,1156.html>), date of access: 19.08.2016.

<sup>93</sup> Bülent Aras, Pınar Akpınar, "The Relations Between Turkey and the Caucasus", The Official Site of Center for Strategic Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (SAM), (<http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/ArasAkpınar.pdf>), date of access: 18.08.2016.

<sup>94</sup> Giray Saynur Derman, "Georgia in Russia's Orbit and the South Ossetian Conflict Threatening Regional Stability in the South Caucasus Region", *Journal of Caspian Affairs*, Vol. I, No. 1, (Spring 2015), pp. 93-97.

pro-Western by Russia. He also had good relations with former Turkish president Suleyman Demirel.<sup>95</sup>

After 2000, the competition between conservatives and reformists increased within Georgian political system. Under the guidance of Mikheil Saakashvili, the reformists became stronger versus conservative politicians. Moreover, the opposition went up against Shevardnadze due to the corruption problem, losing control on Adjara region and unresolved South Ossetia, Abkhazia problems. With the elections in 2 November 2003, the protests against Shevardnadze rose up. These protests were supported by some pro-Western NGOs. As a result of this, Shevardnadze resigned in 23 November 2003. Mikheil Saakashvili was elected as new president of Georgia with having 96% of votes in the elections in 4 January 2004. This pro-Western change of power in Georgia was named with the ‘‘Rose Revolution’’. After he came to power, he made reforms on democratization and resolved the corruption problem considerably. In this period, foreign investment to Georgia promoted. Besides that, he became successful in the solution of Adjara problem. However, after 2007, he began to dictate his politics. In the cases of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, he more focused on military ways rather than diplomacy. Hence, there was a decrease for support to Saakashvili in Georgia. His votes reduced to 53% in the presidential elections in 5 January 2008 due to his instable politics. He gave more priority to the relations with West. His pro-Western politics put Russia to inconvenience. It also paved the way for the Georgian-Russo war in 2008. Especially, after 2006, the tension between Saakashvili and Russia went up. Russia laid an embargo on agricultural products and wine from Georgia. Furthermore, Russia did not grant Georgians visa and deported some Georgian migrants in Russia. The declaration of Kosovo’s independence in 17 February 2008 and the decision taken in the NATO’s Bucharest in April 2008 to support Georgia’s membership for NATO also pushed Russia to intervene to Georgia in August 2008. After this intervention, Russia recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia’s independences. Georgia’s territorial integrity and economy huge suffered from this intervention which also named with the five-day

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<sup>95</sup> Demir, 2003, p. 122-126.

conflict. Saakashvili lost its prestige aftermath of this war. The West also was unable to respond to Russia's this aggression.<sup>96</sup>

All of these moved to the October 2012 parliamentary election was followed by losing power of Saakashvili and his United National Movement Party (UNM). Georgian Dream's Giorgi Margvelashvili came into power as a new president in 2013 with the permitting of Saakashvili and Ivanishvili who was establisher of Georgian Dream coalition. As different from Saakashvili, Margvelashvili has attempted to improve the Russian-Georgian relations which are very problematic topic because of ongoing Abkhazia and South Ossetia issues. Margvelashvili has made many statements that there should be a dialogue and negotiations with Russia in order to enhance Russia-Georgia relations.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, NATO and EU membership is top goal of Georgia.<sup>98</sup>

### 2.2.3. Armenia

Armenia is a less powerful and more isolated country within the region in comparison with the other Caucasian countries. However, Armenians have stronger collective identity due to the church and strong literary tradition written in the thirty-eight letter Armenian alphabet.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, the Armenian relocation in 1915 plays a crucial role in the establishment of collective identity especially for Armenian diaspora that has mostly presence in the US, Canada, France, Russia and some Middle Eastern countries. Total Armenian population in the world is nearly 10 million. 3 million of them live in the Republic of Armenia.<sup>100</sup> However, there are many claims that Armenian population

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<sup>96</sup> Mitat Çelikpala, "Başarısız Devlet -Demokratik Model Ülke Sarmalında Gürcistan'ın 20 Yılı (Between the Paradox of Failed State and Democratic Model: The 20 Years of Georgia's Independence)", *Journal of Central Asia & Caucasian Studies*, Volume 7, Number 14, USAK, Ankara, 2012.

<sup>97</sup> "Georgia elections: Russia welcomes new president Giorgi Margvelashvili", *The Telegraph*, 28.10.2013, (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/georgia/10409344/Georgia-elections-Russia-welcomes-new-president-Giorgi-Margvelashvili.html>) date of access: 06.06.2016.

<sup>98</sup> "Georgia's European integration cannot be postponed because of Brexit", *New Eastern Europe*, 02.07.2016, (<http://www.neweasterneurope.eu/interviews/2048-georgia-s-european-integration-cannot-be-postponed-because-of-brexit>) date of access: 02.08.2016.

<sup>99</sup> Waal, 2010, p. 28.

<sup>100</sup> *Statistical Yearbook of Armenia*, National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, (<http://www.armstat.am/file/doc/99493598.pdf>) date of access: 20.02.2016.

is less than 3 million in Armenia since many Armenians have left Armenia in recent years due to economic problems in the country. They prefer firstly Russia and secondly the USA to immigrate and work.<sup>101</sup> Armenia has almost no minority. 98% of the nation belongs to Armenian ethnicity and Christianity.<sup>102</sup>

Armenians have lived under the sovereignty of various states and empires such as the Roman, Byzantine, the Arab, the Ottoman and the Russian Empires. The Armenian community in Ottoman Empire was known as ‘‘millet-i sadıka’’ (the loyal community) due to their services and contributions to the empire.<sup>103</sup> Armenians were seen as tool by the Russian Empire with Peter the Great in order to spread into the Caucasus and Muslim regions. The Russian Empire targeted to take Muslims out and settle Armenians and Christians into these regions. The Russian Empire also aimed to use Armenians living in Anatolia and Iran against the Ottoman Empire and Caucasian Muslims. In this context, Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were encouraged by the Russian Empire and Western powers to establish an Armenian state under their control. The French Revolution made Armenians more ambitious to establish an Armenian state from the Ottoman Empire through rising nationalism thought.<sup>104</sup>

With the Treaties of Turkmenchay and Gulistan, the Russian Empire captured the territories of present-day Azerbaijan and Georgia. In 1828, the Tsar Nicholas I of Russia proceeded to establish Armenian province in the regions of Trans-caucasus where Caucasian Turks lived. Especially, 30.000 Armenians living Iran were settled into the regions where Azerbaijanis Turks inhabited. Armenians were followingly settled into these regions and Karabakh by the Russian Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>105</sup> The Erivan Khanate was transformed into the Erivan Province (gubernia) by the Russian Empire.

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<sup>101</sup> ‘‘Ermenistan’da göç dalgası (Migration wave in Armenia)’’, Aljazeera Turk, (<http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/ermenistanda-goc-dalgasi>), date of access: 03.08.2016.

<sup>102</sup> ‘‘Minorities in the South Caucasus: New visibility amid old frustrations’’, Policy Department, Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union, Policy Department, European Parliament, SQM 03 Y 71, Brussels, 27.07.2014, p. 5.

<sup>103</sup> Ömer Göksel İşyar, ‘‘Sovyet-Rus Dış Politikaları ve Karabağ Sorunu (Soviet-Russian Foreign Policies and the Karabakh Problem)’’ Alfa/Aktüel Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2004, p. 194-197.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 194-197.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 190-191.

Thus, Armenization and de-Turkization of the region was implemented by Russians. The demography of the region was considerably changed by the Russian Empire. Until the occupation of the region by the Russian Empire, 80% of all population was Muslims (Turks) and 20% of all population was Armenians in Erivan. After the Russian occupation, it strongly changed and the percent of Armenians and Muslims became 50% in Erivan.<sup>106</sup>

The problems between Armenians and Turks in Anatolia firstly arose after the 1790s. The 1789 French Revolution accelerated nationalism thought to spread into Armenians. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, American and English Protestants engaged in missionary activities on Armenians to establish Armenian Protestant community.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, the Treaty of Kucuk Kaynarca in 1774 was regarded by external powers that the rights were granted to Russians on Orthodox Armenians and Austria, Italy and France on Catholic Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>108</sup> As a result of this, separatist ideas among Armenians were deepened by these powers throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Dashnak and Hunchak Armenian terrorist organizations against the Ottoman Empire were supported by them. Subsequently, the Armenian terrorists started to attack the Muslim community in Eastern Anatolia. They were also armed by Russia which was self-proclaimed protector of Armenians during this period. Ottoman Armenians in Eastern Anatolia revolted the Ottoman Empire and started to kill the Muslims towards the World War I in order to gain their independence from the Ottoman. They led to perform ethnic cleansing on the Muslims in Eastern Anatolia since they were not majority in any province of the Ottoman Empire. As a result of this, some Armenian rebels were arrested in 24 April 1915 and the Ottoman Empire took a decision to relocate temporarily Armenian people who live Eastern Anatolia towards other regions of the Empire, such as Syria. Aftermath of this relocation, most of them were scattered all over the world. Some of these people immigrated to Western countries from the

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>107</sup> Justin McCarthy, Caroline McCarthy, "Turks and Armenians: A Manual on the Armenian Question", Washington D.C.: Committee on Education, Assembly of Turkish American Associations, 1989, p. 31.

<sup>108</sup> Ayla Efe, "Silistre Eyaletinde Osmanlı-Rus Savaşları Küçük Kaynarca'dan Berlin'e (Ottoman-Russian Wars in the Province of Silistre from Küçük Kaynarca to Berlin)", *OTAM*, No. 19, Ankara, 2006, p. 139-140.



countries where they were relocated. Thus, they created Armenian diaspora in many countries such as the US, France, Canada, Russia. Armenians have described the events in 1915 as genocide. They call the 24 April as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day and they commemorate 24 April each year.<sup>109</sup> On the contrary, according to the official Turkish stance, it was relocation instead of genocide and it was necessary to provide the security in Eastern Anatolia. For this stance, the mandatory measures had to be taken by the Ottoman government since Ottoman Armenians rebelled against their government in cooperation with Russian invaders of Eastern Anatolia.<sup>110</sup>

Armenia firstly gained its independence in 1918 like Azerbaijan and Georgia. Subsequently, it forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1920. The Republic of Armenia regained its independence with the disintegration of the USSR in 1991. Additionally, Turkey was one of earlier country which recognized the independence of Armenia. In the early 1990s, Armenia captured Nagorno Karabakh and some Azerbaijani regions, which are officially territory of Azerbaijan, with the support of Russian military. Thus, both Azerbaijan and Armenia faced with the war as soon as they gained their independence from the USSR. The Karabakh issue is a national ambition of Armenians, which has considerable influence on Armenian foreign and domestic policy. According to most of Armenians and Armenian public opinion, it is not possible to relinquish Karabakh due to being historical Armenian territory. When the clashes rising in Karabakh, nationalism and Turkophobia increase in Armenia. The dissident in Armenian has strongly criticized the governments when Armenian governments have attempted to reconcile with Azerbaijan in the case of Armenia. Hence, Armenian governments do not have a manoeuvre in the Karabakh case.<sup>111</sup> The relations with Armenia were suspended by Turkey which closed its common border to Armenia due to

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<sup>109</sup> Çiçek, 2005, p. 67-82.

<sup>110</sup> See the official stance of the Republic of Turkey regarding the Armenian Allegation of Genocide: ‘‘The Armenian Allegation of Genocide: The issue and the facts’’, *the Official Web-Site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, (<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-armenian-allegation-of-genocide-the-issue-and-the-facts.en.mfa>), date of access: 29.10.2016.

<sup>111</sup> Takayuki Yoshimura, ‘‘Sovyet Sonrası Ermenistan ve Ermeni Diaspora İlişkilerinin Değişimi: Dağlık Karabağ Meselesi Örneği (Alteration in the Relations Between Armenia and Armenian Diaspora in the Post-Soviet Era: The Karabakh Case)’’, (translation of Keisuke Wakizaka), (<http://www.kafkassam.com/ermenistan-ve-ermeni-diasporasi-iliskilerinin-degisimi-daglik-karabag-meselesi-ornegi.html>), date of access: 29.10.2016.

its Karabakh occupation. It directly damaged Armenian economy and its integration with the West. Because, Turkey is the best way to Armenia in order to engage with the West. Thus, Armenia does not have diplomatic relations with its two important neighbours which are Azerbaijan and Turkey. The Karabakh case, the genocide claims, Khojaly massacre have made the situation in Southern Caucasus more chaotic. Furthermore, some domestic factors of these states make difficult to solution. The Armenian issue engenders that Turkish and Azerbaijani communities become more close to each other. The two societies also have strong emotional ties since they share common language, culture and ethnicity. For instance, the Khojaly massacre highly commemorates in both Turkey and Azerbaijan. To sum up, Turkey-Armenia and Azerbaijan-Armenia relations are quite chaotic and frozen as directly affecting each other.<sup>112</sup>

### 2.3 THE KARABAKH PROBLEM

The Karabakh is one of the historical problem and low-intensity conflict of the South Caucasus alongside other ethno-territorial problems such as South Ossetia and Abkhazia problems. The Karabakh problem bears both regional and global dimensions. The other regional actors such as Russia, Turkey and Iran have influence on the problem. Especially, Russia played a major role in the emergence of the problem. The conflict is the biggest obstacle to achieve peace in Southern Caucasus. As the fundamental problem of Southern Caucasus, the Karabakh problem is unresolved since each side of the problem has different aims and strategies. Plus, it has a capacity to affect the relations between the regional and global actors.<sup>113</sup> Although it is seemed that the problem emerged in the end of 1980s for the first time, it has the historical background, backing to the earlier of the 19th century. The Russian Empire began to change governing structure and demography of Transcaucasus after 1820. In this respect, the Turkic-Muslim Karabakh Khanate was transformed to the Karabakh

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<sup>112</sup> Demir, 2003, p. 107-117.

<sup>113</sup> Sergey Minasyan, "Карабахский Конфликт: Ресурсы и Стратегии Политического Поведения Конфликтующих Сторон (The Karabakh Conflict: Resources and Strategies of the Political Behaviour of the Conflicting Sides)", in *большой Кавказ: Двадцать Лет Спустя (The Great Caucasus: 20 Years Later)*, Новое Литературное Обозрение, Moscow, 2014, p. 83.

Province (gubernia) in 1822.<sup>114</sup> Accordingly, the mass migration of Armenians in Karabakh strongly increased. Nevertheless, according to the first census in 1832, the percent of Turks was 64.8% and the percent of Armenians was 34.8%. In the following years, the territory of the Karabakh Province was divided and plus Armenization and de-Turkization of Karabakh was maintained by the Russian Empire.<sup>115</sup> It also caused some problems and conflicts between Armenians and Turks in Karabakh. For instance, Karabakh Turks revolted in 1844 due to rising suppression of Russians and Armenians.<sup>116</sup> As a result of Armenization and de-Turkization policy of the Russian Empire, the percent of Armenians increased to 53% in 1880. This policy was also maintained in Karabakh in the Soviet era. The percent of Armenians in Karabakh increased to 77% on the eve of the collapse of the USSR in 1989.<sup>117</sup> Even though Karabakh was legally territory of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, Azerbaijan was unable to have permanent control over Karabakh due to the ongoing fighting between Armenians and Azerbaijani Turks from 1918 to 1920. Fighting between Armenians and Azerbaijani Turks broke out after the Red Army invasion of Azerbaijan. In 1923, Karabakh was newly established by the Soviet government as Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) administratively belonging to the Azerbaijan SSR. Some provinces, which had Armenian majority, were incorporated with NKAO by the Soviet government.<sup>118</sup> This also changed the demography of Karabakh.

The Karabakh problem resurfaced towards the end of the 1980s. Azerbaijan and Armenia faced with the Karabakh war as soon as they gained their independence from the USSR in 1991. Until the ceasefire in 1994, twenty thousand people died and more than 1.5 million Azerbaijani people were forced to flee from their home. The Azerbaijani government faced with the refugee problem, including 1 million homeless people.

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<sup>114</sup> Fikret Bağirov, “Переселенческая Политика Царизма в Азербайджане: 1830-1914 (The Resettlement Policy of the Tsarism in Azerbaijan: 1830-1914)”, Maroseyka, Moscow, 2009.

<sup>115</sup> İşyar, 2004, p. 220.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>117</sup> Emine Vildan Özyılmaz, “Geçmişten Günümüze Dağlık Karabağ (From Past to Present Nagorno Karabakh)”, *Journal of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative of Gazi University*, 15/2, Ankara, 2013, p. 199.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 199-200.

Azerbaijan lost Nagorno Karabakh along with seven regions, referring to approximately 20 percent of the Azerbaijani territory. Azerbaijan lost some part of its territory because of some reasons. First of all, Armenians were more prepared than Azerbaijanis to the war. They earlier started to take up arms against Azerbaijani Turks before the collapse of the USSR. Plus, Armenia benefited from the political separation in Azerbaijan. For instance, during the war, Azerbaijani commander Surat Huseynov, who was supported by Russia, revolted with his troops against Azerbaijani leader Elchibey. During this internal political strife, Armenia easily captured Susha, Lachin and Kelbajar regions from Azerbaijan. Thus, it became easier to occupation of Karabakh by Armenia. The most significant advantage of Armenia against Azerbaijan was support from Russia. Elchibey was a first leader within the Post-Soviet countries, who removed Soviet military from his own country. He aimed to integrate with Turkey and West rather than with Russia and Iran. Hence, Russia and Iran undermined its power with the support of Armenia and separated Talysh movement during the war.<sup>119</sup>

In 25-26 February 1992, Armenians and a Russian division massacred more than 450 Azerbaijani Turks in the town of Khojaly during the Karabakh war.<sup>120</sup> The tragedies were engraved in Azerbaijanis' subconscious. It has also played a crucial role in the formation of Azerbaijani national identity. With this massacre, the Karabakh issue has become more sacred for Azerbaijani people. The Karabakh territory is a national ambition for both Azerbaijani and Armenian sides. Therefore, it is not easy to change the perceptions and eliminate the hostility.

The disputed territory is still under the control of Armenia. Although there have many negotiations among the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia to settle a dispute, they have not achieved a permanent peace in Karabakh as well as in Southern Caucasus yet. Moreover, Karabakh is currently an unrecognized republic which is not recognized even by Armenia. Apparently, Russia takes advantage of this problem. In some ways, the Karabakh alongside the Ossetia and Abkhazia problems are consequence of Russia's ambitious Caucasus policy. The frozen problems and separated movements are tool for Russia in order to intervene in the regions. Russia sells weapons to both Armenia and

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<sup>119</sup> İşyar, p. 467-475.

<sup>120</sup> Cafersoy, 2001, p. 41.

Azerbaijan. In this respect, Armenia is quite dependent on Russia through military and economic ways because of being isolated and its security fear from Azerbaijan and Turkey. Turkey was one of the countries which early recognized the independence of Armenia. However, Turkey closed its border to Armenia after Armenia's Kelbajar occupation in 1993. Thus, Armenia has become more isolated from the West and its neighbours. While Azerbaijan has been rapidly growing whereby energy resources and its rising engagement with the West, Armenia's economy has become more dependent on Russia and Armenian diaspora's assistance.<sup>121</sup> To sum up, it is not seemingly possible to achieve permanent peace in the Caucasus without a settlement of Karabakh dispute. Since 1992, there have been many attempts of other countries and international organizations as mediator to bring a peaceful solution to Karabakh. Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders have met many times by mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group through some summits in Lisbon, Prague and Madrid. Despite of that, there has been any peaceful solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict yet.<sup>122</sup> The conflict in Karabakh is still ongoing. Tension has risen in Nagorno Karabakh conflict in recent years. The clashes erupted in Karabakh in July 2014. Both Armenian and Azerbaijani soldiers died in these clashes. Aftermath of these clashes, Azerbaijani leader Aliyev and Armenian leader Sargsyan met in Sochi city of Russia in 10 August 2014 by mediation of Russian President Putin.<sup>123</sup> This meeting also did not bring a peaceful resolution to Karabakh. The conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan re-occurred in the beginning of April 2016. It was the worst clash, named by some writers as the Four-Day War, since the ceasefire in 1994. In these clashes, more Armenian soldiers died than Azerbaijani soldiers and Azerbaijan regained some small hills by force.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Demir, 2003, p. 233-239.

<sup>122</sup> "Ana Hatlarıyla Dağlık Karabağ Sorunu (The Nagorno-Karabakh Issue with Its Main Dimensions)", Aljazeera Turk, (<http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/dosya/ana-hatlariyla-daglik-karabag-sorunu>), date of access: 18.01.2016.

<sup>123</sup> "Meeting with Ilham Aliyev and Serzh Sargsyan", *the Official Web-site of the President of Russia*, (<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46427>), date of access: 30.10.2016.

<sup>124</sup> Nazim Caferov, "4 Gün Savaşı ve Bölgesel Dengeler (The Four-Day War and Regional Balances)", (<http://m.dw.com/tr/4-g%C3%BCn-sava%C5%9F%C4%B1-ve-b%C3%B6lgesel-dengeler/a-19168839>), date of access: 09.04.2016.

## 2.4 RUSSIA'S SOUTHERN CAUCASUS POLICY

Many states, such as the Russian, the Ottoman Empires, the Abbasid and the Safavid dynasties, have competed to establish hegemony against each other in the Caucasus throughout the history. There is a still ongoing rivalry on the Caucasus among regional and global powers with different dimensions. After the 19th century, particularly with the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, the Russian Empire replaced Ottoman and the Qajar Dynasty's position within the region. Thus, Russians began to be dominant over the region. Russia firstly controlled Southern Caucasus with the annexing Georgia in 1801. Interestingly, Northern Caucasus remained out of effective Russian control until 1859 in Chechnya and Dagestan and 1864 in the Northwestern Caucasus.<sup>125</sup> A similar situation resurfaced in the 1990s. After the disintegration of the USSR, Russia has aimed to restore its influence towards the Caucasus. The region had priority for the Russian Federation due to Russia's geopolitical and security interests. This shows why Russia intervened to conflicts of Karabakh, Ossetia and Abkhazia in the beginning of the 1990s, although it could not totally control Northern Caucasus until the end of the 1990s. According to the Russian security understanding, it is necessary to have influence over Southern Caucasus in order to control Northern Caucasus. In the link between Northern and Southern Caucasus, Southern countries increased their tendency towards the West, when Russia failed in Chechnya in the middle of the 1990s. In this respect, Russia has a fear that if Russia lose its influence over Northern and Southern Caucasus, the disintegration can spread into Russia. It has also strategic importance for Russia as being buffer zone between Russian territory and the Islamic world.<sup>126</sup> Previously, the region had significance in the Russian-Turkish competition in the 19th century. Subsequently, the region became buffer zone between the West and East in the 20th century. Furthermore, this region became a stage for Russia to stretch over the Middle East. Moreover, Russia has often perceived Turkey as a great rival in

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<sup>125</sup> S. Cornell, S. Starr, 'The Caucasus: A Challenge for Europe', *Silk Road Studies Paper*, Central Asia-Caucasus Silk Road Studies Program, Sweden, 2006, p. 49.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46-58.

the region. The rivalry surfaced particularly in energy field after the 1990s because of Turkey's ambition being a transit country with the encouragement of the West.

Russia constructs its Caucasus policy upon some approaches. First approach is making fragile states in the region. As long as weak and vulnerable states become in the region, Russia is able to have more influence over them. In order to create weak states, it is necessary to create frozen problems such as the Karabakh, Ossetia, Crimea, and Transnistria. In this sense, supporting minorities and separatist groups to create frozen problems become one of aspects of the Russian strategy in Southern Caucasus. From the Russian perspective, the region can only achieve stability if the countries live under the control of Russia. Therefore, Russia dedicates itself to rule over the region. In this sense, Russia aims to prove that solutions of these problems just depend on Moscow's initiative. In this sense, Russia aims to eliminate influence of external powers over the region.<sup>127</sup> Secondly, the natural resources of the region should be held by Russia in order to sustain its energy monopoly referring to block alternative pipelines from supplying natural gas and oil to Europe.<sup>128</sup> Thirdly, Russian military bases and troops should be settled in the region. In this sense, "coercive diplomacy" and "the use of force" are elements of Russia's Caucasus policy.<sup>129</sup> According to use of force, it was recklessly realized by Russia during the five days war against Georgia.

When the region states attempt to fit into the West, Russia has surfaced the regional problems in order to hinder their integration. Hence, it is a Russian conventional Caucasus policy to take advantage of the conflicts. If the disputes are settled, Russia will lose its effects and instruments over the region. What's more, Russia can diminish economic and political effect of the West and external powers in virtue of these conflicts. Moreover, Russia can have a chance to directly interfere in the internal affairs of these countries. For instance, Russia supported military commander Surat Huseynov to stage a coup to unseat Elchibey and Aliyev when they made agreements with the Western companies in the field of energy. When Azerbaijan pursued independent policy

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<sup>127</sup> İşyar, 2004, p. 78-79.

<sup>128</sup> "Russian Energy Policy and its Challenge to Western Policy Makers", A Statement by Ambassador Keith C. Smith, Center for Strategic and International Relations (CSIS), Washington DC, 2006.

<sup>129</sup> Cornell, Starr, 2006, p. 50.

from Russia, Lezgin separated movements were supported by Russia. Civil wars and separatism in Georgia and Azerbaijan have been betimes supported by Russia.<sup>130</sup>

With Russia's intervention to Georgia in 2008, Russia rapidly changed balance of the region. The intervention has significance since Russia intervened to a region in the former Soviet area for the first time. The intervention was also followed by the intervention to Ukraine in 2014. Furthermore, Russia illegally annexed Crimea which is Ukrainian territory. These interventions have made the Pos-Soviet countries to feel less secure.<sup>131</sup>

Armenia, which is a basis of Russia in Southern Caucasus, has currently strategic importance to Russia. It is a barrier which cut Turkey's link to Azerbaijan and the Turkic countries. Russia has often intended to unlink Turkey's ties with Azerbaijan and Turkic countries. Moreover, Armenia is a bridge for Russia to link to Iran. It is also a historical ally for Russia to offset Turkish effect. Unlike Armenia, Azerbaijan and particularly Georgia have had more effort not to be under Russian influence. As a result of this, they have been punished by Russia with Abkhazia and Karabakh conflicts. Hence, Russian military bases in Armenia are threat for both Azerbaijan and Georgia. In the period of Elchibey, Russia had problematic relations with Azerbaijan since Elchibey had pro-Turkish as well as pro-Western political stance. However, both Heydar Aliyev and his son Ilham Aliyev have made effort to maintain good relations with Russia. Azerbaijan has many agreements and cooperation with Russia in the field of military, economy and trade in accordance with its balance policy between Russia and the West.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, there has been an increase in cooperation between Azerbaijan and Russia in recent years. The political elites and system in Azerbaijan and Georgia are still influenced by Russia. The personal relations and interests between Azerbaijan and

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<sup>130</sup> İşyar, 2004.

<sup>131</sup> Margarita Antidze, "Georgia Feels Less Secure After Russian Move in Ukraine", Reuters, 15.04.2014, (<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-georgia-russia-idUSBREA3E0W620140415>), date of access: 02.08.2016.

<sup>132</sup> Reha Yılmaz, Fatih Mehmet Sayın, "Azerbaycan Dış Politikasını Belirleyen Öğeler ve Denge Politikasına Yansımaları (The Elements Determining Foreign Policy of Azerbaijan and Its Reflections to the Balance Policy)", *Çankırı Karatekin University Social Sciences Institute Journal*, Volume: 4, Number: 1, p. 38-40.



Russia affect the relations and Karabakh problem.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, in recent years Ilham Aliyev has been more criticized by the West and international organizations due to human right violations and corruption in the country.<sup>134</sup> It is also claimed by some authorities that Aliyev's government has had recently more closed relations with Russia as moving away from the West which is not overlapping with the balance policy of Heydar Aliyev.<sup>135</sup>

## 2.5 TURKEY'S SOUTHERN CAUCASUS POLICY

After the collapse of the USSR, Turkey rapidly enhanced its politics towards the Caucasus and Central Asia. In the 1990s, Turkey intended to be a "model country" due to its Turkic, European and Muslim identity with the encouragements of the US on the Turkic countries which are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan. Turkey has focused on these countries because of its ethnic, historical, cultural and religious ties with them and energy interests. Turkey has assisted and supported these after they gained their independence from the USSR.<sup>136</sup> Azerbaijan also became priority for Turkey in the Caucasus. It is often referred to "one nation, two states" by Azerbaijani and Turkish statesmen and politicians in order to define affinity among the two countries.<sup>137</sup> After the collapse of USSR, a power gap occurred in the region. It has been a chance for Turkey to increase its influence over the region. Thus, the historical competition between Turkey and Russia resurfaced on the region. These two countries particularly have competed for energy area. Turkey's goal has been to

<sup>133</sup> Efim Pivovarov, "Российско-Азербайджанские Отношения. Конец XX -начало XXI века (Russian-Azerbaijani Relations. End of XX - Beginning of XXI Century)", Kremlin Multimedia, Moscow, 2012.

<sup>134</sup> Giorgi Gogia, "The paralel realities of President Ilham Aliyev", Azadlıq, 15.07.2014, (<http://www.azadliq.info/49018.html>), date of access: 20.09.2016.

<sup>135</sup> Dennis Sammut, "From Russia, with love!", ([http://commonsplace.eu/index.php?m=23&news\\_id=3357](http://commonsplace.eu/index.php?m=23&news_id=3357)), date of access: 08.04.2016.

<sup>136</sup> Meşkure Yılmaz, "Tarihi, Siyasi ve Kültürel Yönleriyle Türklerin Dünyası ve Türkiye'nin Dış Türkler Politikası (The World of Turks with Historical, Political, Cultural Dimensions and Turkey's Policy for Turks Abroad)", Kripto, Ankara, 2010.

<sup>137</sup> Musayeva Chinara, "History of Azerbaijan-Turkey Relations: One Nation-Two States", Turkish-Asian Center for Strategic Studies, ([http://www.tasam.org/Files/Icerik/File/history\\_of\\_azerbaijan\\_-\\_turkey\\_relations\\_e78c28df-19cc-4d90-b290-b5bb571bc6d8.pdf](http://www.tasam.org/Files/Icerik/File/history_of_azerbaijan_-_turkey_relations_e78c28df-19cc-4d90-b290-b5bb571bc6d8.pdf)), date of access: 09.08.2016.

become a transit country and if possible energy hub through energy corridor from the Caspian towards Europe.

On the other hand, Turkey attempted to have good relations with Georgia and Armenia. Turkey instantly recognized their independences. In the beginning of the 1990s, Turkey provided economic, military and technical assistance for these countries. Turkey aimed to achieve good relations with these countries in order to enhance its influence over the region.<sup>138</sup> However, the 11<sup>th</sup> article of the Armenian declaration of independence indicated that Armenia makes effort for ‘‘the Armenian genocide’’ to be accepted by the world.<sup>139</sup> Furthermore, the Armenian Parliament declared in February 1991 that Armenia does not recognize the Treaty of Kars in 1921 determining the current Armenia-Turkey borders.<sup>140</sup> This political attitude of Armenia has damaged Turkey-Armenia relations. After the Karabakh occupation of Armenia, Turkey ceased its assistance and diplomatic relations with Armenia. Furthermore, the Turkey-Armenia borders have been closed by Turkey in 1993 due to Armenia’s occupation of the Karabakh territory and the genocide claims.<sup>141</sup> The closed borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan make Armenia more isolated and damage its economy.

In contrast to relations with Armenia, Turkey has steadily improved its relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia. Thus, the Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia axis has established in the Caucasus. Turkey is significant trade partner of Georgia. Georgia is a significant country for Turkey because of energy transition. Georgia’s geopolitical position between Asia and Europe as well as between the Black and the Caspian seas provides Turkey to reach to Azerbaijan and Central Asia. The problematic relations and closed borders with Armenia raise the importance of Georgia for Turkey. Especially, Turkey-Georgia relations are shaped by energy and trade context. In this respect, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) natural gas pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline and Baku-

<sup>138</sup> Fatih Özbay, ‘‘Türkiye-Ermenistan İlişkiler (Turkey-Armenia Relations)’’, *Wise Men Center for Strategic Studies (BİLGESAM)*, Report No. 25, İstanbul, January 2011, p. 3-4.

<sup>139</sup> See the Armenian Declaration of Independence: (<http://www.gov.am/en/independence/>), *the Official Web-Site of the Government of the Republic of Armenia*, date of access: 30.10.2016.

<sup>140</sup> Mehmet Okur, ‘‘Gümrü, Moskova ve Kars Antlaşmaları Çerçevesinde Ermeni Sorunu Üzerine Genel Bir Değerlendirme (A General Evaluation on The Armenian Problem Through The Treaties of Gyumri, Moscow and Kars)’’, *Journal of the Institute of Social Sciences*, Number 8, Autumn 2011, p. 84-87.

<sup>141</sup> Özbay, 2011, p. 3-4.

Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway projects are quite significant for Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia as well as for Europe. These pipelines promote economic integration of these countries among themselves and with the West. These pipelines, which bypassing Armenia, have been mostly objected by Armenia and Russia. Georgia and Azerbaijan are able to more engage to the West by the virtue of this economic integration. Rising of integration among three countries makes Armenia more isolated from the West and more dependent on Russia. Besides, Turkey supports Georgia's membership to the EU and NATO. Turkey has importance for Georgia and Azerbaijan to balance Russia. Plus, Georgia and Turkey have a visa-free regime for their citizens and the Batumi Airport in Georgia is available to both Georgia and Turkey for domestic flights.<sup>142</sup> The cooperation between Turkey and Georgia covers economic, military and cultural fields. Turkey provides Georgia military assistance as modernizing and training Georgian army.<sup>143</sup> Turkey also has geostrategic importance for Georgia in the Black Sea because of Turkey's rights on the control of the Turkish straits which were granted by the Montreux Convention. According to this convention, Turkey has right to close the Straits to all foreign warships in any wartime.<sup>144</sup> The Turkish Straits are crucial to have influence over the Black Sea where Turkey and Russia have historical competition. The importance of the Straits and Turkey for Georgia re-emerged in the Russo-Georgian war in 2008. During the war, Turkey firstly did not permit the US to send two hospital warships to Georgia through the Straits since this contradicted the Montreux referring to that weight of warships can not exceed 45,000 tons. Later, Turkey permitted the US to send three smaller ships to Georgia.<sup>145</sup> In this sense, Turkey is a crucial country for Georgia to engage with the West in economic, political and military ways.

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<sup>142</sup> Bülent Aras, Pınar Akpınar, "The Relations Between Turkey and the Caucasus", The Official Site of Center for Strategic Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (SAM), (<http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/ArasAkpınar.pdf>), date of access: 18.08.2016.

<sup>143</sup> Yelda Demirağ, "Bağımsızlıktan Kadife Devrime Türkiye-Gürcistan İlişkileri (Turkish-Georgian Relations from Independence to Velvet Revolution)", *International Relations Journal*, Volume 2, Number 7, Ankara, Autumn 2005, p. 137.

<sup>144</sup> Sami Doğru, "Türk Boğazlarının Hukuki Statüsü: Sevr ve Lozan'dan Montrö'ye Geçiş (The Legal Regime of the Turkish Straits: From the Treaties of Sevres and Lausanne to the Montreaux)", *Law Faculty Journal of Dokuz Eylül University*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2013, p. 61-65.

<sup>145</sup> "US in talks with Turkey for Straits passage of its naval vessels", *Hürriyet Daily News*, 20.08.2008, (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-in-talks-with-turkey-for-straits-passage-of-its-naval-vessels.aspx?pageID=438&n=us-in-talks-with-turkey-for-straits-passage-of-its-naval-vessels-2008-08-20>), date of access: 10.10.2016.

Azerbaijan and Turkey as strategic partners and allies have steadily enhanced their relations. Alongside historical and cultural relations, economic relations have played an important role in the development of relations in recent years. They have cooperation in many areas such as energy, trade, military and education. Turkey purchases Azerbaijani gas at the lowest price.<sup>146</sup> In the field of energy, they decided to establish an important project calling Trans-Anatolia Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) signed in 2011. The Project will come to end in 2018. The Project aims to move Azerbaijani gas towards Turkey and the EU through Georgia. The first gas flow will have annual capacity of 16 bcm in 2020.<sup>147</sup> It is quite important for energy diversity of the EU and Turkey.

Azerbaijan-Turkey relations deteriorated temporarily in 2009 after the Turkey-Armenia protocols<sup>148</sup> were signed by Armenia and Turkey. According to the Azerbaijani government, Turkey should not establish diplomatic relations with Armenia unless Armenia withdraws from Karabakh. In this sense, Azerbaijan strongly criticized Turkey's political attitude to repair diplomatic relations with Armenia in the context of 'the zero problem with neighbours policy.'<sup>149</sup> Azerbaijan emphasized that the Karabakh problem would be remarked in the protocols. These protocols were a nice chance for Russia to damage Azerbaijan-Turkey relations. There are some speculations that pro-Russian supporters in Azerbaijan and Russia encouraged to create hostility in Azerbaijani voxi-populi versus Turkey. On the other hand, both in Turkey and Azerbaijan, many experts and politicians strongly criticized these protocols that can damage Turkey-Azerbaijan brotherhood. They argued that these protocols do not

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<sup>146</sup> Svante E. Cournell, 'Azerbaijan Since Independence', Routledge, London and New York, 2011, p. 382.

<sup>147</sup> See the official web-site of Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline Project, ([www.tanap.com](http://www.tanap.com)), date of access: 09.09.2016.

<sup>148</sup> The protocols, which were signed by Armenia and Turkey in 2009, refers to the establishment of diplomatic relations and development of bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia. See: 'Protocol on Development of Relations Between The Republic of Turkey and The Republic of Armenia', (<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/protocol-on-development-of-relations-between-the-republic-of-turkey-and-the-republic-of-armenia.en.mfa>), *the official-site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, date of access: 09.09.2016.

<sup>149</sup> 'The zero problem with neighbours' as a foreign policy approach was released by the former Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. This approach based on his book calls Strategic Depth. See: Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Stratejik Derinlik (Strategic Depth)', Küre Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001.

overlap with Turkey and Azerbaijan's interests.<sup>150</sup> However, it was not easy to damage historical and deep relations of Azerbaijan and Turkey. Aftermath of the protocol crisis, Turkish PM Erdogan made a speech on the Azerbaijani parliament. In the light of this speech, he pledged that Turkey would never open its borders with Armenia as long as Armenia does not withdraw from Armenia.<sup>151</sup> Thus, Azerbaijani society and government partly satisfied from this speech. As we witnessed in the protocol issue, Turkey-Armenia relations directly affect Turkey-Azerbaijan relations. Hence, this chaotic situation restricts political maneuver of Turkey in the Caucasus.

On the other hand, there have been important changes in Turkish foreign policy in the last decade after AKP government came to power in Turkey in 2002. The new Turkish foreign policy concept based on "Pro-active policy and zero problems with neighbours." In this context, Turkey has been targeting to achieve becoming "central country" from "model country" which based on the 1990s. Especially after the 2008 Russo-Georgian war, Turkey increased its attempts to take more initiative in the Caucasus. In this respect, firstly, Turkey has aimed to normalize relations with Armenia via the protocols in 2009. The protocols have not been realized since the parliaments have not ratified and the public opinion both in two countries are not ready to embrace the normalization. On the other hand, aftermath of the Five Days War in 2008, the second initiative of Turkey became the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP) which established with the led by Turkey.<sup>152</sup> Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Russia and Turkey were pointed out as main members of this platform. The organization has not been sufficient to achieve peace and stability in the Caucasus since all of the Caucasian countries have different expectations related with their problems from the platform. In the meantime, the Trabzon declaration was declared in 8 June 2012 by the ministers of foreign policy of Georgia, Turkey and Azerbaijan with the led

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<sup>150</sup> Ali Asker, "Tehlikeli Üçgen: Türkiye-Ermenistan-Azerbaycan (Risky Triangle: Turkey-Armenia-Azerbaijan)", 21st Century Turkey Institute, (<http://www.21yyte.org/arastirma/guney-kafkasya-iran-pakistan-arastirmalari-merkezi/2009/09/09/2998/tehlikeli-ucgen-turkiye-ermenistan-azerbaycan>), date of access: 09.09.2016.

<sup>151</sup> "Erdogan: Azerbaycan'ı yalnız bırakmayacağız (Erdogan: We will not leave Azerbaijan alone)", NTV, 16.05.2009, (<http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/erdogan-azerbaycani-yalniz-birakmayacagiz,OtdDxUNEW1A8iDScAT-Q>), date of access: 08.09.2016.

<sup>152</sup> Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform, (<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=104737>), date of access: 23.02.2016.

by Turkey. This declaration and its implementations have aimed to increase regional cooperation. It underlines the importance of BTC, BTE and BTK. According to the declaration, the new projects should be added by these cooperation plans.<sup>153</sup> Plus, the Black Sea Cooperation Organization, which was established under the guidance of Turkey in 1992 with 11 countries, is an important organization to promote peace and stability in the Caucasus since it includes all three Caucasian countries.<sup>154</sup>

## 2.6 IRAN'S SOUTHERN CAUCASUS POLICY

In the beginning of the 90's, three broad developments directed Iran to develop relations with its South Caucasian neighbors.<sup>155</sup> First of all, there was a new geopolitical reality since the cease-fire agreement with Iraq and the US enlarged its presence in the Middle East. Secondly, it was a change in the socio-economic reality due to the costs of Iraq war. Thirdly, the ethnic issues of the Islamic Republic surfaced since the half of population is made up non-Persians.

The independence of the Caucasian countries opened up opportunities as well as serious threats for Iran.<sup>156</sup> In this respect, Iran has pursued the following goals in the South Caucasus, to diminish the influence of the outside powers such as the US and Israel in order to achieve a balance of power vis-a-vis other regional players; to gain a foothold in the region through economic and cultural expansion and neutralizing the possible threats itself from the region.<sup>157</sup> Moreover, Iran views the Caucasus as a region holding a

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<sup>153</sup> "Trabzon Declaration Of The Ministers Of Foreign Affairs Of The Republic Of Azerbaijan, Georgia And The Republic Of Turkey, 08 June 2012, Trabzon", *the Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, ([http://www.mfa.gov.tr/trabzon--declaration-of-the-ministers-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-azerbaijan\\_-georgia-and-the-republic-of-turkey\\_-08-june-2012\\_-trabzon.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/trabzon--declaration-of-the-ministers-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-azerbaijan_-georgia-and-the-republic-of-turkey_-08-june-2012_-trabzon.en.mfa)), date of access: 10.10.2016.

<sup>154</sup> Bahadır Bumin Özarlan, "Yirmi Yıllık Bir Serüven: Karadeniz Ekonomik İşbirliği Örgütü-Kurum Yapısı, İç İşleyişi, Dış İlişkileri (A Twenty Years Old Adventure: Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation-Institutional Structure, Inner Process, Foreign Relations), Berikan Yayınları, Ankara 2012.

<sup>155</sup> Cornell, Starr, 2006.

<sup>156</sup> Zadeh, 2008, p. 36.

<sup>157</sup> Sharashenidze, 2011.

national security risk. In this sense, Iran has aimed to restrict the influence of Turkey and Azerbaijan over the region.

In the following years, the different alliances have been built in the region. In this regard, Iran has surprisingly close ties to Armenia and pro-Armenian attitude in the Nagorno Karabakh issue. However, Iran prefers to be seen as a mediator between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the case of Karabakh in recent years. Iran also has a low profile relationship with Georgia, but it supported its territorial integrity. On the other hand, Iran has the most difficult and complicated relations with Azerbaijan due to the South Azerbaijan issue and growing Israel-Azerbaijan cooperation. Thus, the Moscow-Yerevan-Tehran axis has partly emerged against the Ankara-Tbilisi-Baku axis in the Caucasus. Furthermore, Iran has had political attitude in the case of Chechnya in favour of Russia. In this respect, Iran's Southern Caucasus policy mostly based on pragmatism rather than values and constructivist approach.

### 3. IDENTITY IN AZERBAIJAN

Aftermath of the occupation of Northern Azerbaijan by Russia in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian Empire betimes pursued a policy for centralization and Russification of the Caucasus. In this vein, the dismantling of the khanates by Russia, the diverse local currencies by the ruble, the elimination of the old custom barriers led to the economic integration of Azerbaijan.<sup>158</sup> Moreover, Azerbaijani bourgeoisie and intelligentsia began to emerge in parallel with the rising of petroleum production in Azerbaijan toward the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this period, there has been increase in the number of Azerbaijani intellectuals and cultural activities. They considerably contributed to the modernization and nation building of the Azerbaijani society in the following years. However, the process for the emergence of the Azerbaijani national identity mainly began after 1905. The period from 1905 to 1920 played a crucial role within the Azerbaijani history as well as within the Russian history.

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some political ideas effectively spread into Russia which was a multi-ethnic empire. Towards 1905, the opposition arose against the Tsar of the Russian Empire. The uprising in Russia led to the Revolution of 1905 which was resulted with the establishment of the State Duma, the multiparty system and the Russian Constitution. As a result of this, the authority of the Tsar was damaged and thus, it brought some political freedoms into Russia. Muslims in Russia were also directly affected by the developments in the Russian Empire. In this sense, Russian Azerbaijanis, which called Tatars, Caucasian Tatars and Muslims by Russians until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were also affected by these deep changes in the Russian Empire.<sup>159</sup> There was a considerable increase in the number of newspaper, literacy rate and cultural activities in Azerbaijan in the term of 1905-1920. It was a significant phase for the modernization and nation formation of Azerbaijani Turks.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Tadeusz Swietochowski “Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920: The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community”, Cambridge University Press, London, New York, 1985, p. 18.

<sup>159</sup> Until the beginning of the 20th century the Turkic communities as well as Azerbaijani Turks in Russia called various names such as Tatars, Muslims.

<sup>160</sup> Nadir Devlet, “Rusya Türklerinin Milli Mücadele Tarihi: 1905-1917 (The National Struggle History of Turks in Russia: 1905-1917)”, Türk Tarih Kurumu, III. Press, 2014, p. 241-249.



The conflicts firstly between Armenians and Azerbaijani Muslims began in 1905.<sup>161</sup> The conflicts between Azerbaijanis and Armenians in 1905-1907 were named with the Armeno-Tatar war. This war pushed the Muslims to solidarity in a cause transcending local and sectarian loyalties.<sup>162</sup> In this respect, this war engendered nationalism within the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities. Nationalism was more effective on the Armenian society via the movement of Dashnaktsutyun in comparison with the effect nationalism on Azerbaijani society, since the Armenian bourgeoisie was stronger than the Azerbaijani bourgeoisie over economy and petroleum industry in Baku. During this period, the wave of nationalism took effect towards the Caucasus. In the period of 1905-1920, pan-Turkism played a major role in the construction of the national identity in Azerbaijan. Especially, Ali bey Huseynzade was one of the most significant Azerbaijani ideologists of Pan-Turkism. In this term, the community in Azerbaijan firstly began to be called Turks or Caucasian Turks instead of Tatar or Muslim. In this term, some thinkers and politicians were ambitious about Azerbaijan to unite with South Azerbaijan which was under the rule of Iran. Thus, Pan-Azerbaijanism was generated by some Azerbaijani intellectuals in the shape of Turkism and Azerbaijanism.

On the other hand, the other ideologies, such as Pan-Islamism, liberalism and socialism, also became effective in the construction of the national identity. Nevertheless, they had less effect on the formation of the national identity in comparison with Pan-Turkism in the period of 1905-1920. In this period, Ahmad bay Aghayev was the most articulate Azerbaijani Pan-Islamist who based on the liberal-Islamist ideas of al-Afghani. However, his ideas evolved from Pan-Islamism toward Turkism over the following years.<sup>163</sup> In September 1917, as unification of the Baku group Rusyada Muslumanliq (Muslims in Russia) with the Ganja Ittihad-I Islam, the political organization of the Rusyada Muslumanliq-Ittihad was established and this organization embraced the Sharia as their political principle.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> İşyar, 2004, p. 281.

<sup>162</sup> Swietochowski, 1985, p. 42.

<sup>163</sup> Fahri Sakal, ‘‘Ağaoğlu Ahmed Bey (Ahmad bay Aghayev)’’, Türk Tarih Kurumu, VII Series, No. 187, Ankara, 1999, p. 89-111.

<sup>164</sup> Swietochowski, p. 88.

The Azerbaijani socialists began their activities with the foundation of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (RSDWP) and the organization of Himmat (Endeavor) in the beginning of the 1900s.<sup>165</sup> Particularly, the Azerbaijani socialists enhanced their political activities after the Revolution of 1905. In this way, they provided a basis for the political activities of the Bolsheviks. Neriman Nerimanov was one of good known Azerbaijani socialist in this term. As another political ideology, liberalism became less effective on the Azerbaijani thought life in comparison with Turkism and Pan-Islamism. The Azerbaijani liberals were thinking themselves as a part of the Russian liberal movement which based on the European principles. The Azerbaijani liberals, which mostly consisted of merchants and representatives of the Baku Duma, were targeting to achieve local self-government and a constitutional regime. Ali Mardan-bay Topchibashev and *Kaspiy* newspaper were voice of Azerbaijani liberals in this term.<sup>166</sup> While the Azerbaijani intelligentsia had a quick evolution from Pan-Islamism to Turkism to Azerbaijanism, the masses remained on the level of umma consciousness with its typical indifference to secular power.<sup>167</sup> In this sense, Turkism, Azerbaijanism and Islamism played a significant role within the establishment of the national identity from 1905 towards 1920.

The formation of national identity in Azerbaijani Turks accelerated with the foundation of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 28 May 1918 under the head of Mammed Amin Resulzade and Musavat Party. From 1905 towards the foundation of the republic in 1918, Turkism played a major role in the construction of the national identity. It was the first democratic and secular republic in both the Turkic and Muslim world. Islam became ineffective in the system of the state since the state was founded with the secular rules. Furthermore, it was the first nation to grant women political rights with men. However, it was unable to achieve long-lived republic since it lost the independence with the conquest by the Russian Red Army in 27 April 1920.

From 1920 towards the end of the 1980s, the Azerbaijani identity was shaped by the communist-ruled Soviet Union in the context of the Marxism-Leninism ideology. In the

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid, p. 55.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

period of the Soviet Union, the Azerbaijani identity had undergone various processes of the Soviet identity construction. During the revolution, Bolsheviks under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin announced that they pursued the doctrines of anti-imperialism, national self-determination and brotherhood of people regardless of ethnicity, religion of people. However, after 1920, they led to create the ‘‘New Soviet man’’ in the context of the Homo-Sovieticus.<sup>168</sup> Some policies of the Tsarist Russia were followed by the Soviet Union in the way of Islam, administrative and ethnic division policies.<sup>169</sup> These policies were targeting to hinder unifying of Soviet Muslims in the light of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. Plus, these policies enhanced Russian’s hegemony and Russification. Instead of national identities, ethnic identities and supranational Soviet identity were constructed by the Soviet rules. Ethnography based on Marxism and German Romanticism, and language science were utilized by Soviet elites in the construction of the identities. The Soviet nationality policy was mainly abiding by the ideas of Lenin and Stalin. It was bearing three approaches. First was Stalin’s people (narod) approach based on the Soviet Ethnography including Marxist and the 19th anthropological theories. Second approach was the establishment of political and administrative structures shaped by the status of language and territory. Third approach was including the division of territories and people.<sup>170</sup>

According to Lenin and Bolsheviks, national identity was an instrument in weakening religious identity. Socialism ultimately could make nationalism obsolete. In the initial years of Soviet rule, the territorial delimitations of Southern Caucasus and the role of the titular nationality in the governing of the republic were two key issues which stood out. In the 1920s, the Bolshevik government launched the policy of korenizatsiia (nativization) which was bringing locals to power in order to integrate non-Russian population into the Soviet system. Additionally, the self-determination doctrine evolved into a concept of nation building. There had been significant changes in the Soviet Union with Stalin in the 1930s. Stalin centralized the Soviet system under authority of Moscow. The centralization was accelerated with collectivization of agricultural

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<sup>168</sup> Yaşar Onay, ‘‘Rusya ve Değişim (Russia and Change)’’, Nobel Publishing, İstanbul, 2002, p. 86-88.

<sup>169</sup> Olivier Roy, ‘‘Yeni Orta Asya: Ya da Ulusların İmal Edilişi (New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations)’’, Metis Publishing, İstanbul, 2009, p. 90.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 101-103.

sector.<sup>171</sup> As a result of the policies of nation building (natsional'noye stroitel'stvo) and nativization, the position of non-Russians in the party was promoted. However, after 1932, re-Russification had been implemented by Stalin.<sup>172</sup> With Stalin, assimilation and Russification of non-Russians increased in parallel with rising hegemony of Russian language and culture. During the World War II, Russian nationalism and chauvinism were exaggerated by Stalin.<sup>173</sup> One of the ways to increase assimilation was deportation of many people, especially Muslims, by Stalin during the war. They were accused of cooperation with Nazi Germany during the war. In this respect, many people, such as Crimean Tatars, Chechens, Ingush, Ahıska Turks, were deported towards other regions of the union. Many people lost their lives during these deportations.<sup>174</sup> These deportations changed the demography and accelerated de-Turkization of the Caucasus. In this respect, Russian chauvinism became effective on the nationality policy of the USSR in the era of Stalin. Soviet nationalism evolved toward Russian nationalism during this period. Aftermath of Stalin's death, de-Stalinization and some liberal reforms were implemented by Soviet leader Krushchev. It provided a thaw in Soviet's domestic and foreign policy. Nevertheless, Russification and centralization policies were followed in the USSR after Stalin.<sup>175</sup> Turkic epics, such as *The Book of Dede Korkut*, were banned.<sup>176</sup>

The subject of the national identity in the term of the USSR is divided into four stages by Nesib Nesibli. According to him, in the first stage, the name of the ethnic identity was turned into Azerbaijani from Turk; the language of the people was named as

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<sup>171</sup> Svante E. Cornell, 'Azerbaijan Since Independence', M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 2011, p. 32-35.

<sup>172</sup> Ariel Cohen, 'Russian Imperialism: Development and Crisis', London, Praeger, 1996, 80.

<sup>173</sup> Astrid Tuminez, 'Russian Nationalism since 1856: Ideology and the Making of Foreign Policy', USA Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000, p. 177.

<sup>174</sup> J. Baberowski, A. Manteuffel, 'The Quest for Order and the Pursuit of Terror: National Socialist Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union as Multiethnic Empires', in '*Beyond Totalitarianism Stalinism and Nazism Compared*', eds. Michael Geyer, Sheila Fitzpatrick, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 223.

<sup>175</sup> Ebülfez Süleymanlı, 'Milletleşme Sürecinde Azerbaycan Türkleri: Rus İşgalinden Günümüze Sosyolojik Bir Değerlendirme (Azerbaijani Turks in the Nation Building Process: From the Russian Occupation to Present in the context of Sociological Perspective)', Ötüken Publishing, İstanbul, 2006, p. 164-175.

<sup>176</sup> Cornell, 2011, p. 41.

Azerbaijani language instead of Turkic language; the alphabet switched from Latin to Cyrillic by the Bolshevik regime. Plus, some religious and tradition cultural activities, such as Newroz Festival, were prevented by the regime.<sup>177</sup> In the second stage, there was an industrialization and modernization of education, culture as well. For the third stage, many intellectuals of the nation were repressed and killed by the totalitarian state regime in order to eliminate national ideas. For the last stage, unified Azerbaijan and the South Azerbaijan and issue were brought to agenda of Azerbaijani society by the Soviet intellectuals in order to make propaganda that demonstrating the achievements of socialist system.<sup>178</sup> In the term of the Soviet Azerbaijan, religion and its rules were suppressed by the Soviet state atheist policies and thus religion had been diminished on the Azerbaijani identity. The Turkic identity was replaced by the Azerbaijani ethnos based on territorial identity. During this period, Azerbaijanism was a principle of collective identity of the Azerbaijani society as comprising of various ethnicities within the country in accordance with the establishment of nation-state.<sup>179</sup> Nevertheless, Azerbaijanism was functional to encapsulate Turkism since it bears Turkic cultural elements.

In the period of 1985-1991, there were some crucial changes in the policy of the USSR under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev. Accordingly, he began to implement new policies and liberal reforms within the USSR. In the light of his liberalizing policies, he pursued glasnost and perestroika in order to get through the political and economic stagnation in the union. As a result of Gorbachev new policies, some problems emerged between Moscow and local elites. Perestroika and fighting against corruption of Moscow were seen as tools of Russification by local elites. There was a rise of nationalist movements within some of the Soviet Republics alongside the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>180</sup> In parallel with this, the Karabakh issue resurfaced as a conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijani Turks towards the end of the 1980s. In the

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<sup>177</sup> Nesib Nesibli, ‘‘Azerbaycan’ın Milli Kimlik Sorunu (National Identity Problem of Azerbaijan)’’, *Avrasya Dosyası Journal*, Volume 7, Number 1, 2001. p. 144.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>179</sup> Brenda Shaffer, ‘‘Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity’’, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 2002, p. 152-154.

<sup>180</sup> Roy, 2009, p. 177-183.

end of 1980, there was an uprising by Azerbaijani Turks against the USSR due to Armenians' aggressive politics on Karabakh. Subsequently, the Red Army troops were sent to Baku by order of Gorbachev in order to suppress the uprising. During the suppression of the rebellion, lots of Azerbaijani Turks were killed by the Soviet soldiers in 19-20 January 1990. This incident, known as the Black January Tragedy, has significance within Azerbaijan history. Because of all these, there was a considerable rise of nationalism in Azerbaijan within this period. After all of this, the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 18 October 1991. Along with the independence, Azerbaijan met the identity issue.<sup>181</sup> National identity has again come to the fore on the Azerbaijani society and intellectuals with the collapse of the USSR. According to the survey for 1998-1999 years, 80% of the Azerbaijani people think that national identity is one of the most significant issues of the Azerbaijani Republic since states can not live long without national ideology. 15% of them think that there are more important issues of the Republic. According to this survey, while 84.5% of the Azerbaijani people think that all people should feel themselves as a representative of their nations, 15.5% of them think that modern men do not need to feel themselves as a representative of their nations.<sup>182</sup>

### 3.1 TURKISM

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the ideologies of Turkism, Azerbaijanism and Islamism in the Russian Azerbaijan fostered each other rather than competing with each other. Nonetheless, Turkism had been more influential on Azerbaijani intellectuals in comparison with other ideas. As a result of this, even the ideas of Islamism, Socialism and Liberalism in the Russian Azerbaijan were influenced by Turkism. Thus, Turkism became a dominant ideology in the formation of Azerbaijani national identity in the

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<sup>181</sup> Cafersoy, 2001, p. 23-27.

<sup>182</sup> “Этнокультурная идентичность и некоторые аспекты психологии межнационального общения в Азербайджане-Part III (Ethno-cultural Identity and Some Aspects of International Communication Psychology in Azerbaijan-Part III)”, (<http://www.gumilev-center.az/nacionalno-etnicheskoe-soznanie-azerbajdzhancev-chast-iii/>), Lev Gumilev Center for Modern Eurasianism in Azerbaijan, date of access: 20.10.2016.

period of 1905-1920. Especially, Azerbaijani thinker Ali bey Huseynzade<sup>183</sup> and Mammad Amin Rasulzade, head of the nationalist party of Musavat and the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, considerably contributed to the process of establishment of the national identity in the light of Turkism. ‘‘Turkify, Islamicize, Europeanize’’ was spelled out by Huseynzade and subsequently it became a famous and fundamental slogan of Turkism in both Azerbaijan and Turkey. Besides that, these three words were symbolized in the tricolor of the independent republic. Huseynzade wrote many articles about Turkism and modernization in the journal of Füyüzat. Some Turkist ideologists of the Füyüzat argued that Caucasian Turks should be unified under the leadership of the Ottoman State, the spiritual and political leader of the Islamic World. According to them, a modified Ottoman language should be a common language among all Turks.<sup>184</sup>

The emergence of Azerbaijani national bourgeoisie considerably contributed to activities of Azerbaijani intellectuals and publishing newspapers.<sup>185</sup> The daily newspaper, Açıq Söz (Open Word) first issued by Rasulzade in October 1915, it called itself a ‘‘Turkic (Türk) newspaper’’ in order to put an end to the still prevalent confusion of the terms of Tatars, Transcaucasian Muslims, Caucasians.<sup>186</sup> Besides that, especially after the Young Turk Revolution in Turkey in 1908, Turanism became a goal for some Azerbaijani and Turkish intellectuals bearing Turkism ideology. However, in the subsequent years, the Azerbaijani intellectuals considered Turkism as an instrument in the establishment of national identity and state as excluding Turanism thought referring to unify for all Turkic communities under a common state. In the period from 1905 to 1920, the Azerbaijani society had an evolution from a feudal and Muslim society towards a nation by the virtue of the nationalist thinkers.

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<sup>183</sup> See: Sevil Garaşova, ‘‘XX. Yüzyıl Azerbaycan Fikir Tarihinde Ali Bey Hüseyinzade’nin Yeri (The Role of Ali bey Huseynzade in the Intellectual History of Azerbaijan in the 20th Century)’’, *Türkiyat Araştırmaları Journal of Selçuk University*, Number 16, Konya, 2004, p. 297-314.

<sup>184</sup> Swietochowski, 1985, p. 59-60.

<sup>185</sup> Ebülfez Süleymanlı, ‘‘Milletleşme Sürecinde Azerbaycan Türkleri: Rus İşgalinden Günümüze Sosyolojik Bir Değerlendirme (Azerbaijani Turks in the Nation Building Process: From the Russian Occupation to Present in the context of Sociological Perspective)’’, Ötüken Publishing, İstanbul, 2006, p. 44-48.

<sup>186</sup> Swietochowski, 1985, p. 82.

In the period of Stalin, the Soviet regime became more repressive and authoritarian. During the political repression of 1935-1943, lots of people including intellectuals were exiled and killed by the Soviet regime. 70 thousand people including 29 thousand intellectuals were repressed in the Soviet Azerbaijan from 1930 to 1950. Many of them were punished with the label of Pan-Turkist.<sup>187</sup> Turkism was portrayed as a big threat by the Soviet regime. According to official Soviet history publications, the Red Army invasion of Azerbaijan in 1920 was survival of Azerbaijan with the support of the Azerbaijani society. The Musavat Party was also being portrayed as a national bourgeoisie party by these publications. After the 1980s, many Soviet Azerbaijani intellectuals began to publish lots of articles criticizing the invasion in 1920 and the Sovietization of Azerbaijan.<sup>188</sup> The Azerbaijani intellectuals in the USSR were in quest of national identity in the early 1980s. Many articles related with Azerbaijani identity were published particularly with the liberal reforms of Gorbachev in the light of Glasnost in 1986. During this period, cultural and national activities of Soviet Azerbaijanis went up. In this sense, Soviet Azerbaijanis established many cultural organizations such as Yurd, Vatan, Baku Art Center. These organizations were conducting researches on culture and history of Azerbaijan. Towards 1980s, more Azerbaijani intellectuals and organizations in the USSR began to remark Turkism. They were underlining Turkism as a significant component of Azerbaijani identity. Majority of them were generally underlining Turkism with its cultural dimension. Minority of them were supporting political union of Turkic states.<sup>189</sup>

After the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, alongside other problems, Azerbaijan encountered identity issue yet again. As a new independent state, Azerbaijan found itself in the many problems such as economic problems, occupation of some part of Azerbaijan by Armenia. Apart from all these, the Black January Tragedy in 20 January 1990 and the Khojaly Massacre by Armenians in 26 February 1992 engendered nationalism in Azerbaijan. Plus, anti-Russian as well as anti-Soviet sentiment rapidly

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<sup>187</sup> ‘‘Repression tragedy’’, *The official site under the chairman of the diaspora committee of the Republic Azerbaijan*, ([http://www.azerbaijans.com/content\\_1709\\_en.html](http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_1709_en.html)), date of access: 27.10.2016.

<sup>188</sup> Brenda Shaffer, ‘‘Sınırlar ve Kardeşler: İran ve Azerbaycanlı Kimliği (Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity)’’, İstanbul Bilgi University Publishing, İstanbul, 2008, p. 142-143.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137-141.



increased among the Azerbaijani Turks in the beginning of the 1990s. Moreover, after the collapse of the repressive regime in the Soviet Azerbaijan, there was a rise in democracy, freedom and national movement in Azerbaijan.<sup>190</sup> In this context, as a democratic nationalist movement, The Popular Front of Azerbaijan (PFA) under the leadership of Abulfaz Elchibey became very popular and effective in the beginning of the 1990s in Azerbaijan. As a result of this, Elchibey, the leader of PFA, won the first democratic presidential elections in 7 June 1992 with 59% of the votes. Elchibey embraced the ideology of Turkism in both domestic and foreign policy. Especially, he followed Turkey as a model country due to being a national, democratic, Muslim and secular country. As a result of his pro-Turkish stance, Russia, Iran and the ethnic minorities in Azerbaijan felt excluded. Furthermore, he referred to ‘‘Greater Azerbaijan’’ indicating the unification with Southern Azerbaijan which officially belongs to Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>191</sup>

Elchibey aimed to revive the national identity based on Turkism like in the term of in the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan in the guidance of Rasulzade. In this respect, he made some changes in the light of his nationalist politics. For instance, in the constitution the language of the community was changed to Turkic language from Azerbaijani language, defined in the term of Soviet leader Stalin. Additionally, Azerbaijan moved from Cyrillic to Latin alphabet.<sup>192</sup> In the period of Elchibey, Turkism became the fundamental ideology on the Azerbaijani identity rather than Azerbaijanism and Islamism. However, Elchibey viewed Islam as a part of national identity unlike the Soviet state atheist policies. Furthermore, Armenia hatred fostered nationalism instead of Islamism in Azerbaijan. He also had mostly Pan-Turkist and pro-Western attitude in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy. He considered Turkey as the best ally and he attached importance to cooperation with the new Turkic states which gained their independence from the USSR.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Bilgin, 2016, p. 107-117.

<sup>191</sup> Cafersoy, 2001, p. 153-160.

<sup>192</sup> Nesibli, 2001.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

During the Karabakh war, Elchibey got into some difficulties in domestic and foreign policy since his power was undermined by both internal and external actors. Azerbaijani commander Surat Huseynov revolted with his troops against Elchibey in June 1993. Furthermore, Elchibey's power was undermined by Russia since he was targeting to have a relationship of equals with Russia.<sup>194</sup> As a result of this, Elchibey lost his power in June 4, 1993. Subsequently, Heydar Aliyev, who was former Soviet Politburo member, took power in Azerbaijan in 1993. Firstly, he suppressed the dissident in order to consolidate his power and authority within the country. Thus, he achieved stability domestically. According to his foreign policy as well as his domestic policy, he avoided the extreme nationalistic position of his predecessor and pursued a more balanced policy towards his neighbours.<sup>195</sup> Azerbaijan showed a tendency to Azerbaijanism from Turkism with Aliyev. After he came to power, Turkism mostly began to be ideology of the opposition parties in Azerbaijan. Hence, majority of current opposition parties idealize Turkism and Elchibey's political thought with different dimensions. For instance, the Musavat (Equality) Party and Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan (PFPA), ex-president Elchibey, are the major opposition parties based on Turkism. Besides these two parties, there are approximately ten minor Turkist parties in Azerbaijan.<sup>196</sup>

However, even though Turkism is a quite effective ideology on Azerbaijani society, political parties and intellectuals are unable to influence Azerbaijan's political system since they do not act in unison. Furthermore, it is claimed by some thinkers that the opposition parties have no chance to take power in Azerbaijan due to one-party dominant state by the New Azerbaijan Party under the leadership of Ilham Aliyev.

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<sup>194</sup> Cafersoy, 2001, p. 106-107.

<sup>195</sup> Zadeh, 2008.

<sup>196</sup> Fahri Türk, 'Azerbaycan'da Türkçü ve Turancı Siyasal Partiler (Turkist and Turanist Political Parties in Azerbaijan)', *OAKA, USAK*, Volume 8, Number 16.

### 3.2 AZERBAIJANISM

Alongside Turkism and Islamism, Azerbaijanism is one of the influential ideologies in the formation of Azerbaijani identity. The emergence of Azerbaijanism can be traced to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For the first time, the definition of ‘‘Azerbaijan nation’’ was used by K oskh ul Newspaper in 1890.<sup>197</sup> In the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some thinkers coined Azerbaijani, as an ethnonym. Subsequently, many articles in the newspapers of the Sharq-I Rus, Iqbal and the journal of Molla Nasr al-din argued that the South Caucasian Muslims and their language should be named with Azerbaijani and Azerbaijani language.<sup>198</sup>

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the debate emerged between Turkists and Azerbaijanists on the language of Azerbaijani Turks. Some Azerbaijanists, were against the ideas of Pan-Turkist Huseyinzade, argued that the Ottoman language should be common language of all Turkic communities. According to him, the all Turkic communities with Azerbaijani Turks should be unified under the leadership of the Ottoman Empire. For some Azerbaijanist thinkers, the Ottoman language could not be used by Azerbaijani Turks since it includes many Arabic words. For them, Azerbaijani people have own sui-generis language, which should be named as Azerbaijani language.<sup>199</sup> In this respect, Azerbaijanism linking ‘‘Azerbaijani language, being Azerbaijani and Azerbaijani nation.’’

The Azerbaijanism also played a role in the construction of the Azerbaijani identity and the foundation of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic by the guidance of Rasulzade. From 1905 towards 1920, there was an ideological evolution from Pan-Islamism to Turkism to Azerbaijanism. Unlike Huseyinzade and Aghayev, Rasulzade’s Turkism idea was more overlapping with Azerbaijanism. The foundation of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was a significant step to attain a national identity. For Balayev, Rasulzade led to establishment of a national state in the light of Azerbaijanism ideology based on

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<sup>197</sup> Rafiq R ustemov, ‘‘1918’lere Dođru Azerbaycan’da Milli Kimlik Oluřumu (The Construction of National Identity in Azerbaijan Towards 1918)’’, in *Azerbaycan’da Din ve Kimlik (Religion and Identity in Azerbaijan)*, eds. Sevinç Alkan  zcan, V gar İmanbeyli, K re Press, İstanbul, 2014, p. 49.

<sup>198</sup> Swietochowski, 1985, p. 62.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59-60.

Turkism thought. In the years after 1917, Turkism transformed from core element to one of cultural elements of the Azerbaijani identity. After 1917, Rasulzade supported the idea that each Turkic nation should separately have a nation building based on its own Turkic dialect and cultural values rather than construction of a single Turkic nation.<sup>200</sup> This approach of Rasulzade shows that there was an evolution in Rasulzade's ideas from Turkism towards Azerbaijanism. On the other hand, Azerbaijanism has been not excluding Turkism since it has been constructed on the Turkic values. Especially, as a collective identity of the society, Azerbaijanism was functional to encapsulate Turkism since it bears Turkic cultural elements in the period of the Soviet Azerbaijan. For instance, the maintaining some Turkic cultural values in Azerbaijani Turks, such as celebration of Newroz Festival and Dada Gorgut Epic, demonstrating the role of Azerbaijanism to encapsulate the Azerbaijani Turkic identity.

After Heydar Aliyev came to power in 1993, there became some changes in the identity politics of the state. With the new constitution, approved by the referendum in 12 November 1995, the definition of the language of Azerbaijani society was changed. According to Article 21 of this new constitution:

‘‘Azerbaijani language is official language of the Azerbaijan Republic. Azerbaijan Republic provides development of the Azerbaijani language.’’<sup>201</sup>

Heydar Aliyev made a statement about the language at the meeting in London in 1998:

‘‘You know that in 1992, a big mistake was made in Azerbaijan saying that our language is a Turkic language. Yes, we belong to Turkic nations, our ancestors are of single roots. But Turkic people branched out afterwards turning into a nation. Uzbek is a Turk, Kirghiz is a Turk, Kazakh, Tatar, Turkman, Bashkir and Uigur are also Turks. But each one is a representative of his nation, he has his native language. For instance, I can possibly understand ten percent of Uzbek language, but not more. However, the roots of our languages are similar.

<sup>200</sup> Aydın Balayev, ‘‘20. Yüzyıl Başlarında Azerbaycan Türklerinde Ulusal Kimlik ve İdeolojinin Oluşumu (The Construction of National Identity and Ideology in Azerbaijani Turks in the beginning of the 20th Century)’’, in *Azerbaycan'da Din ve Kimlik (Religion and Identity in Azerbaijan)*, eds. Sevinç Alkan Özcan, Vügar İmanbeyli, Küre Press, İstanbul, 2014, p. 91-94.

<sup>201</sup> ‘‘The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan’’, *the Official Web-site of the President of Azerbaijan*, (<http://en.president.az/azerbaijan/constitution>), date of access: 20.03.2016.

And we are a branch of those roots. The name of this branch is Azerbaijan. We have our language - Azerbaijani language.’’<sup>202</sup>

‘‘Azerbaijani’’, as ethnonym, was widely used again in the period of Heydar Aliyev like in the period of the USSR. His identity politics on Azerbaijan had similarities with the identity politics of the USSR. With Heydar Aliyev, ‘‘Azerbaijani’’ term has been popularized in order to define both the language and society. There are various points of view about this term. Some thinkers, especially Turkists, argue that Azerbaijanism disrupts Turkism within the Azerbaijani identity. For Gazenferoglu, Azerbaijanism, which refers to patriotism related with territorial nationalism, is an artificial ideology, blocking Turkism.<sup>203</sup> On the other hand, some Azerbaijanists and liberals claim, the term is more integrative for all ethnic groups in Azerbaijan rather than Turkism. Besides, for some thinkers, Azerbaijanism is a balanced identity due to being functional to eliminate separatist movement into the country, such as Talysh and Lezgi ethnic movements. For Tokluoğlu, the ruling New Azerbaijan Party, established Heydar Aliyev, pursues Azerbaijanism which is inclusive of all ethnic groups within the country unlike Elchibey’s Turkism based on ethnic and conservative nationalism.<sup>204</sup> According to some of thinkers, Azerbaijanism is not contrast with Turkism as well as with Turkic identity. For them, Azerbaijanism is also overlapping with Turkism since it based on the elements abiding by Turkic culture. For Nesibli, ‘‘Azerbaijanism, as a pragmatic and integrative identity, diminishes internal and external threats. What’s more, it enables to encapsulate and develop Turkic culture.’’<sup>205</sup> For Akhundov, ‘‘Azerbaijanism, as an ideology of Azerbaijani nationalism, was a trump card for Heydar Aliyev in order to consolidate his power within domestic policy. This ideology draws a line between us and them as creating external enemy which is Armenia. In the light of Azerbaijanism, the subject of genocide arose in 1998 due to the presidential election in 1998 and lack of

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<sup>202</sup> ‘‘Speech of President of the Azerbaijan Republic, Heydar Aliyev at the meeting with our fellow countrymen living in Great Britain’’, London, 22 July, 1998 (<http://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/1685093.html>), date of access: 10.10.2016.

<sup>203</sup> Rafiq Rustamov, ‘‘Azerbaycan Dış Politikasında Kimlik, Tehdit Algılaması ve Güvenlik Yaklaşımları (Approaches for Identity, Threat Perception and Security in Azerbaijan Foreign Policy)’’, PhD Thesis of University of Ankara of the Department of Social Sciences, Ankara, 2008, p. 180.

<sup>204</sup> Ceylan Tokluoğlu, ‘‘Definitions of National Identity, Nationalism and Ethnicity in post-Soviet Azerbaijan in the 1990s’’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, July, 2005, s. 737.

<sup>205</sup> Rustamov, 2008, p. 186.

ideological stability among the country's rulers. As a result of this, the March Genocide, indicating the massacre by Armenians in March 1918, began to be memorialized in 31 March of each year with the decree of Aliyev signed in 26 March 1998.<sup>206</sup>

During the term of Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan maintained its ties with both Turkey and the Turkic countries. He mostly aimed to improve the relations with the Turkic countries via cultural and economic ways rather than political ways. According to his speech at the VIII meeting of TURKSOY International Organization held in Baku; the main reason of meetings of the Turkic countries, instead of bearing political character, should be to improve cooperation in the field of economy, sciences, education and culture among the Turkic countries.<sup>207</sup>

After the death of Heydar Aliyev in 2003, his son Ilham Aliyev succeeded him in the same year. His identity politics have been also based on Azerbaijanism in parallel with the politics of his father. During the terms of Heydar and Ilham Aliyevs, Azerbaijanism has also matched Azerbaijan's balanced (*balanslı harici siyaset*) and interests-based foreign policy. They have never emphasized unification with the Iranian Azerbaijan in order not to damage the relations with Iran unlike Elchibey whose foreign and domestic policy bearing Turkism. In the light of balanced policy, Aliyevs have aimed to build good relations with Azerbaijan's neighbours, particularly with Russia and Iran. It has also provided them to consolidate their power within domestic policy as not alarming Iran and Russia.

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<sup>206</sup> Sabir Akhundov, "Azerbaijanism", Open Democracy, ([https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/sabir-akhundov/azerbaijanism?utm\\_source=Weekly+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=3f25f9c205-WEEKLY\\_NEWSLETTER\\_MAILCHIMP&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_6e23da4aab-3f25f9c205-407953673](https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/sabir-akhundov/azerbaijanism?utm_source=Weekly+Newsletter&utm_campaign=3f25f9c205-WEEKLY_NEWSLETTER_MAILCHIMP&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6e23da4aab-3f25f9c205-407953673)), date of access: 01.08.2016.

<sup>207</sup> "Speech of the Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev at the VIII meeting of TURKSOY International Organization held in Baku - The State Theatre of Song named after Rashid Behbudov", 6.11.1996 (<http://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/4864141.html>), date of access: 16.03.2016.

### 3.3 ISLAMISM

Azerbaijani community had conversion from Sunnism to Shii Islam twice throughout history. Shiism became more dominant after the 16<sup>th</sup> century with Shah Ismail I who was the founder of Safavid Dynasty. Being at crossroad of the Sunni-Shiah triangle (Caucasus-Turkey-Iran)geopolitically has also enhanced religious tolerans in Azerbaijan.<sup>208</sup>

The identity of Russian Azerbaijani (Muslim) community did not have national characteristic until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Instead of national identity, Islam was the major component of their identity. Islam was the most important element drawing line between Azerbaijanis (Muslims) and others. Furthermore, Shia sect deepened this diversity. In this sense, as an integrative ideology, Islam with its values and norms played a unifying role in the Azerbaijani community.<sup>209</sup> One of the names to define the Russian Azerbaijani community was ‘‘Caucasian Muslims’’ until 20<sup>th</sup> century. The conflicts between Armenians and Azerbaijani Turks in 1905 were also being known as the Armenian-Muslim conflicts among Russian Azerbaijanis. During these conflicts, the green flag of the Prophet was symbol of the Caucasian Muslims (Turks). These conflicts developed solidarity among the Caucasian Muslims which provided them to overcome local and denominational differences. The conflicts with Armenians paved the way for establishment of national identity of Azerbaijani Turks.<sup>210</sup>

The Musavat Party based on Pan-Islamism instead of Pan-Turkism when it was firstly established in 1912 as a secret organization. It called on Muslims to come and move together within its declaration. According to the declaration, the mission of the Musavat was to unite all Muslims for their rights regardless of their nationalities and sects.

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<sup>208</sup> Ali Abasov, ‘‘Azerbaycan’da İslam: Yeniden Canlanma ve Kurumsallaşma Sorunları (Islam in Azerbaijan: Revival and Institutionalization Problems)’’, translated by Vügar İmambeyli, in *Azerbaycan’da Din ve Kimlik (Religion and Identity in Azerbaijan)*, eds Sevinç Alkan Özcan, Vügar İmambeyli, Küre Press, İstanbul, 2014, p. 131-133.

<sup>209</sup> Rüstemov, 2014, p. 40.

<sup>210</sup> Behram Hasanov, ‘‘Osmanlı-İran İlişkileri, Rus İşgali ve Sovyet Politikaları Çerçevesinde Azerbaycan’da (The Religion in Azerbaijan in the Context of the Ottoman-Iran Relations, the Russian Occupation and Soviet Politics)’’, ‘‘Azerbaycan’da Din ve Kimlik (Religion and Identity in Azerbaijan)’’ eds. Sevinç Alkan Özcan, Vügar İmambeyli, Küre Press, İstanbul, 2014, p. 106-108.

However, the ideology of the Musavat transformed from Islamism towards secular nationalism with Mammad Amin Rasulzade in the subsequent years.<sup>211</sup>

Some Azerbaijani Turkist intellectuals, such as Mammad Amin Rasulzade, Ahmed bey Agayev, were initially affected by the Islamic ideas of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani<sup>212</sup>. However, they did not aim to establish an Islamic Azerbaijani state. The religion transformed from major identity to one of components of national identity within the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, which was declared in 28 May 1918. The declaration of independence of the republic also had secular characteristics as underlining that the republic did not pay regard to nationality, class and denominational differences. Moreover, despite of bearing Islamism thought, the journal of Molla Nasr al-din published many articles and caricatures indicating that religious ignorance is a big obstacle for community development.<sup>213</sup>

In the period of the USSR, religion was limited and atheism was encouraged by the Soviet regime. In this respect, numbers of mosques and Muslim religious leaders were restricted. The restrictions on Islam were maintained even during the period of Perestroika. According to the researches of the Western academicians, 70-75% of the Soviet Azerbaijani community was Shia and 25-30% of the community was Sunni/Hanafi.<sup>214</sup> Hacı Sabir who is Rector of Bakı İslam University claimed in 1996 that 60-70 % of the Azerbaijani Turks are Shia and 30-40 of them are Sunni in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Black January Tragedy in 1990 and the Karabakh conflicts with Armenians engendered nationalism rather than Islamism in the Azerbaijani community. According to the survey in May-June 1990, 2.65% of the Azerbaijani community to think that Islamic factor played a role in the dispute with

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<sup>211</sup>Swietochowski, 1985, p. 73-75.

<sup>212</sup>Jamal al-Din al-Afghani is a prominent Pan-Islamist ideologist who lived in the years of 1838-1897. He also lived in İstanbul from 1892 to 1897. He was supporting union of Muslims. Many intellectuals from Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran and Middle Eastern countries have been affected from his Islamism thought. See in detail: Alaeddin Yalçınkaya, "Cemaleddin Efgani ve Türk Siyasi Hayatı Üzerindeki Tesirleri (Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and His Effect on Turkish Political Life)", Sebil Publishing, İstanbul, 1995.

<sup>213</sup> Rüstemov, 2014, p. 42-43.

<sup>214</sup> Abasov, 2014, p. 141-142.



Armenians. Furthermore, 3.8% of the community to support the establishment of Islamic state in Azerbaijan and 2.4% of them to desire the prohibition of Islam in the country according to this survey.<sup>215</sup>

Some Islamist parties, such as the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan (AIP), were established in Azerbaijan in the 90s. Especially AIP, bearing Shia Islamism ideology, was supported by some conservative people in Azerbaijan. However, AIP was banned and four party administrators were arrested in 1996 due to being financed by some groups in Iran. Subsequently, the establishment of Islamic parties in Azerbaijan was banned in accordance with secular laws of Azerbaijan.<sup>216</sup>

Iran has supported some underground Shia Islamic groups and Saudi Arabia also has supported Wahhabism in Azerbaijan. The Presidency of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı) has officially served in Azerbaijan in cooperation with the Azerbaijani government. The Gülen Movement<sup>217</sup> has involved in activities through private schools in Azerbaijan. The State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of Azerbaijan Republic (Azərbaycan Respublikası Dini Qurumlarla İş üzrə Dövlət Komitəsi) was established by the Azerbaijani government in order to control religion and hinder radicalism which supported by external powers. The government attaches importance to cooperation with Turkey and considers radical Shiism and Wahhabism as a threat against the secular state system of Azerbaijan.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p. 142-144.

<sup>216</sup> Gabil Hüseyin, "Azerbaycan'da Siyasal Partiler ve Siyasal İlişkiler (Political Parties and Political Relations in Azerbaijan)", *Avrasya Dosyası, Azerbaycan Özel*, Volume 7, No. 1, Spring 2001, p. 169-172.

<sup>217</sup> The Gülen Movement is an Islamic transnational community and movement. Fethullah Gülen is founder of this movement. This movement was banned in Turkey as well as some countries. It was also banned and Qafqaz University, belonging the Gülen Movement, was closed by Azerbaijan Government because this Islamic Movement has been classified as a terrorist and illegal organization by the Turkish Government since 11 December 2015. See: "Azerbaycan'daki 'Gülen' Okulu Kapatıldı (The Gülen School was closed in Azerbaijan)", *Hürriyet*, 20.07.2016, (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/azerbaycan-ve-kambocya-da-cemaat-okullari-kapaniyor-40156243>), date of access: 10.09.2016.

<sup>218</sup> Bayram Balcı, Altay Göyüşov, "Sovyet Sonrası Dönemde Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nde Değişen İslam'ın Sünni-Şii Ayrışmasına Etkisi (Changing Islam in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan and its impact on the Sunni-Shia cleavage)", translated by Emre Erşen, *Azerbaycan'da Din ve Kimlik (Religion and Identity in Azerbaijan)*, eds, Sevinç Alkan Özcan, Vügar İmanbeyli, Küre Press, İstanbul, 2014, p. 182-192.

Azerbaijani intellectuals and elites did not have tendency to establish an Islamic state both in the period of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic and the Post-Soviet Azerbaijan. Islam was seen as part of national identity and culture by them. In this sense, even though it is seen as part of national identity, radical and political Islam is not supported by the majority of the nation. The approaches of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan and the Soviet Azerbaijan to religion also played a significant role in the Azerbaijani nation to reformulate secularism.

### **3.4 EURASIANISM**

Eurasianism has come to the fore on many intellectuals with the collapse of the USSR. It has been discussed and theorized by various thinkers. As a result of this, new perspectives and doctrines on Eurasianism have emerged. Since the 1990s, Eurasianism has led to a new approach and way. It has developed new arguments and mentality bearing both similarity and discrepancy with Classical Eurasianism which revealed in the beginning of the 20th century. In this sense, it has been described as Neo-Eurasianism by some thinkers since it has become a new version of Eurasianism. Even though there have been significant differences between Eurasianism and Neo-Eurasianism, they are related with each other through some approaches. In order to understand Eurasianism and Neo-Eurasianism, first of all it should be applied to elucidate Eurasianism and its perspective.

The roots of the Eurasianist idea can be traced to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Petr Chaadaev highlighted in 1829, ‘Russia does not belong to any of the great families of the human race due to being neither of the West nor the East. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian Empire had expansion into the Caucasus and Central Asia. Besides, some Pan-Slavist intellectuals were disappointed since the Berlin Treaty of 1878 was perceived as a humiliation in Russia. Some nationalist-minded intellectuals, such as Lamansky, Leont’ev, more emphasized Asian view of Russian identity. Nevertheless, any Russian intellectual movement did not display a real openness to the Turk-Mongol world until 1920 since Christian and Aryan character of the Russians were taking more priority than

national and territorial reality of the empire.<sup>219</sup> Eurasianism was firstly theorized by some Russian philosophers such as Trubetzkoy, Savitskiy, Roman Jakobson, Petr Savitsky Alekseev and Bromberg who escaped from Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution in the 1920s. Thus, the Eurasianist movement within the emigre community has little in common with the sociological profile of Neo-Eurasianism.<sup>220</sup> For Classical Eurasianists in the 1920s, Russia belongs neither to the Western Europe, nor to the Eastern Europe because Russian civilization is constituted by mixture of Slavs and Muslims of Russia/Eurasia. According to them, Russia has a unique ethnic blend of Slavic and Turkic peoples.<sup>221</sup>

The classical Eurasianists defined the West as industrial-imperial states referring to the Great Britain, Germany, and France. They were against colonist idea of Europe. They viewed themselves different from the West. According to them, Russia's values are spirituality, tolerance and social collectivity unlike individuality, materialism and colonial violence of Europe. Furthermore, they consider Eurasianism as a strong alternative to the West.<sup>222</sup>

For some of Eurasianists, socialism was seen as an instrument in order to achieve Eurasianism. However, they could not have an important position in the Bolshevik system. Hence, Eurasianism idea did not have an effect within the Soviet Union. The classical Eurasianists emphasized the importance of the natural-geographical unity of Eurasian space reaching from Europe to Asia. The radical isolationist doctrine was one of their political principles. In this regard, their purpose was to achieve full national autonomy and self-sufficiency in the space of Eurasia. For some Eurasian thinkers, national autarchy was achieved with the establishment of the USSR. In this sense, they

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<sup>219</sup>Marlene Laruelle, "Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire", Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington D.C., 2008, p. 2-4.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>221</sup>Dmitry Shlapentokh, "Dugin, Eurasianism, and Central Asia", *Communist & Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 2007, p. 143-144.

<sup>222</sup>Mark Bassin, "Eurasianism 'Classical' and 'Neo': The Lines of Continuity", in Tetsuo Mochizuki, (ed.), *Beyond the Empire: Images of Russia in the Eurasian Cultural Context*, Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, 2008, p. 289.

support the idea that the former Soviet nations should again be unite in a new Eurasian empire under the leadership of Russia.<sup>223</sup>

The Neo-Eurasianism movement, which is disengagement from Classical Eurasianism movement, revealed in the late of the 1980s. New-Eurasianism within different perspectives and doctrines has been articulated by leading notables ranging from Evgenii Primakov<sup>224</sup> to Gennadi Ziuganov<sup>225</sup> and to Alexander Dugin. In this respect, Dugin is the most significant representative of New-Eurasianism on political, ideological and intellectual level in the Post-Soviet Russia. He has established a new version of Eurasianism which has both similarities and huge differences with Classical Eurasianism. In this context, Dugin has published many articles and books. Even though there are many versions of Eurasianism, it is a common point that it is a unique synthesis of the European and Asian values. Moreover, New-Eurasianists have nationalist and conservative ideas. For the Classical Eurasianists, Eurasia was determined as a specific civilizational zone. According to Dugin, the meaning of Eurasia is opposed to the Grand global project of the United States after the Cold War. Hence, the main purpose of Eurasians is struggle against the American hegemony and Atlanticism which are illustrated as a main enemy. Generally Eurasianists based on the boundaries of the USSR in 1920s in order to determine the borders of Eurasia. In this sense, the Eurasian Union is geopolitical tool in order to achieve the goal of reunification.<sup>226</sup>

Despite of its strong conservatism, Neo-Eurasianism looks highly modern against the back ground of Russian nationalism as a whole. For Dugin, ‘to have any potential, a nationalist project must be in the level of intellectual, correct and presentable regarding an enlightened nationalism. There are some dilemmas of nationalism perception of Eurasianists and Dugin. Even though some Eurasianist thinkers assert that nationalism

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p. 291-292.

<sup>224</sup> Evgenii Primakov served as Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1996-1998 and Prime Minister of Russia in 1998-1999. His political view was bearing the vision of a multipolar world and Russia’s global geopolitical role. See: Andrei P. Tsygankov, ‘‘Russia’s Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity’’, 2nd Edition, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., United Kingdom, 2010, p. 97.

<sup>225</sup> Gennadi Zyuganov has been the leader of the Communist Part of the Russian Federation. According to him, Russia is an independent socialist civilization and a great power. Russia’s interest do not overlap with the West which is a threat for Russia because of its imperial goals. See: See: Andrei P. Tsygankov, ‘‘Russia’s Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity’’, 2nd Edition, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., United Kingdom, 2010, p. 61-62.

<sup>226</sup> Bassin, 2008, p. 280-287.

is a great obstacle to achieve Eurasianism, some of Eurasianists stress on Russian nationalism. The Neo-Eurasianists follow the founding fathers in prasing a ‘‘Russian Russia’’an empire whose central linguistic, cultural and religious features are those of the ethnic Russians. As Savitsky highlighted, ‘‘the history of the expansion of the Russian state is a large degree of the adaptation of the Russian people to its place-development and to the adaptation of the entire Eurasian space.’’<sup>227</sup>

With Neo-Eurasianists, especially Dugin, the perception of the West evolved from Europe and its historical reality of the Romo Germanic into the Atlantic and North America. Thus, the United States and Atlantic became an antithesis of Eurasianism. As a result of this, Europe has been viewed as a potential ally rather than historical hostile. Therefore, they are positive to theEuropen continent due to the vision of Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis against the American hegemony. New Eurasianists argue that the USA aims to have hegemony over all countries. According to their claims, the interventions of the USA in Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan were to realize its imperial goals. Additionally, they remark the Colourful Revolutions in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. They assert that Central Asia and other post-Soviet regions under threat of the USA due to its imperial goals. Zarifullin<sup>228</sup> argued that Nazarbaev, president of Kazakhstan, understood that he will be next target fora revolution.<sup>229</sup>According to him, the Orange Revolution<sup>230</sup> in Ukraine was pre-arranged by the West. For Dugin’s view, orange-type revolutions will be realized in Kazakhstan and Belorussia as it happened in Moldova and Kyrgyzstan.Subsequently, it will be launched in Russiafor its disintegration.Thus, pro-American regimes will be established in Eurasia. On the other

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<sup>227</sup> Laurelle, 2008, p. 211.

<sup>228</sup> Paul Zarifullin is a Eurasianist thinker and Director of the Lev Gumilev Center. See: (<http://www.gumilev-center.af/en/about>), date of access: 10.10.2016.

<sup>229</sup>Dmitry Shlapentokh, ‘‘Dugin, Eurasianism, and Central Asia’’, *Communist & Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 2007.

<sup>230</sup> The Orange Revolution refers to the political protests that were held in Ukraine from November 2004 to January 2005 after the 2004 Ukranian presidential election. These protests were named with the Orange Revolution since Ukranian opposition leader Yushcenko and his supporters took to the streets in Kiev dressed in orange. Aftermath of the protests, pro-Western leader Yushcenko came to power as the third president of Ukraine. See: ‘‘Chronology of the Orange Revolution’’, (<http://www.dw.com/en/chronology-of-the-orange-revolution/a-2804808>), *DW*, date of access: 10.10.2016.

hand, Dugin underestimated Russia's power over the Post-Soviet area especially after the Orange Revolutions. He indicated that the USA took advantage from weakness of Russia which lost all influence over the Post-Soviet area. Correspondingly, Tagi Dzhafarov, an Eurasianist from Baku, claimed that the orange revolutions will spread into Central Asia, Moldova, Belorussia and the Caucasus. On the other hand, Dzhafarov criticized Putin and Russia's politics on the USA. According to him, Russia is not a reliable partner since its unwillingness to engage in direct confrontation with the USA.<sup>231</sup>

Kazakhstan is also one of nucleus of the Eurasian Union. Dugin has drawn more attention to Nazarbaev after he felt disappointed of Putin's flirtation with U.S. Hence, according to him, Nazarbaev plays a crucial role in the establishment of the Eurasia Union and stability in Kazakhstan. Therefore, Nazarbaev is often extolled by Dugin. Plus, Nazarbaev has emphasized the Eurasian Union since 1994. Furthermore, Dugin published the book "Nursultan Nazarbaev's Eurasian Mission" in 2004.<sup>232</sup> However, the meaning of Eurasianism and Eurasian Union changes from country to country as well as from thinkers to thinkers.

For some authorities, Lev Gumilev was the last representative of Classical Eurasianism in the term of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, some thinkers claim that he was a founder of Neo-Eurasianism instead of being last representative of Classical Eurasianism. For them, he shared a certain conception of Russian identity and imperial destiny with the original Eurasianists and the Neo-Eurasianists. According to Gumilev, people have a community of destiny due to sharing the territory of the Eurasian and the unity based on a Turko-Slavic alliance.<sup>233</sup> He also put "ethnicities hypotheses"<sup>234</sup> into conventional Eurasianist idea. Plus, like all the Eurasianists, he did not embrace the universality of humanity which was produced by the West. Moreover, he pointed out

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<sup>231</sup> Shlapentokh, 2007, p. 146-147.

<sup>232</sup> Alexander Dugin, "Nursultan Nazarbaev's Eurasian Mission", Eurasia Publishing, Moscow, 2004.

<sup>233</sup> Laruelle, 2008, p. 81.

<sup>234</sup> Gumilev provided an unrivalled explanation of ethnic relations as explaining the relationship between humanities and exact science as well as the inherent opposition between Russia and Europe. He elucidated natural and historical conditions of the birth of the Eurasian super-ethnos referring to Russians which is kindred to Turkic-Mongol peoples.

the biological nature of humanity which is a joint point between classical and contemporary Eurasianists.<sup>235</sup> Besides, the Neo-Eurasianists themselves have a paradoxical attitude toward the founding fathers such as Gumilev.<sup>236</sup>

Aleksandr Panarin, who has different ideas from Dugin and Gumilev, more focused on political philosophy. He continues the tradition of Pan-Slavic conservatives and proposes a modernized version of Slavophilism. Therefore, he is closer to the ideas of early Eurasianists such as Prince Trubetzkoy and Petr Savitsky. He interprets Westernization as the historical experience of Athens and democratic racism which is related with the view of white Catholics or Protestants. According to him, Westernization is seen as ongoing process initiated by the United States.<sup>237</sup> For Neo-Eurasianists, the Caucasus should be under Russian hegemony. For them, Russia should use many instruments in order to maintain its influence over the Caucasus. Russia can make cooperation with Iran in the light of self-interested policy on the Caucasus. Especially, Dugin attaches importance to the axis of Moscow-Yerevan-Tehran. For Eurasianists, it is the best way to establish a Caucasian Federation in order to achieve permanent stability and to solve the problems of the Caucasus.<sup>238</sup>

There is a huge discrepancy regarding the approach of Dugin on Azerbaijan between the 1990s and 2000s. In the 1990s, Dugin did not consider Azerbaijan as an ally. He had views regarding the Karabakh issue in favour of Armenia. Gennady Zyuganov, Chairman of the Communist Part of the Russian Federation and Eurasianist, is also in Armenia's side within the issue of Karabakh. Conversely, Dugin has had more positive approach to Azerbaijan after 2000. On the other hand, the former Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Primakov, who is known as Eurasianist, paid attention to relations with Azerbaijan. In Azerbaijan, most of political parties, especially the Musavat Party and Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan, view Eurasianism as a tool of Russian imperial ambitious. Therefore, they are totally against Eurasianist thought.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Laruelle, 2008, p. 50-70.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>238</sup> Aleksandr Dugin, "Rus Jeopolitiği: Avrasyacı Yaklaşım (Russian Geopolitics: Eurasianist Approach)", eds. Vügar İmanov, Küre Publishing, 2015, p. 365-377.

<sup>239</sup> Nazım Cafersoy, "Azerbaycan ve Rus Avrasyacılığı (Azerbaijan and Russian Eurasianism)", 06.01.2012, (<http://qafsam.org/page/221/az>), date of access: 27.03.2016.

## 4. AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA IN THE WORLD

### 4.1 AZERBAIJANI MIGRATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS IN THE WORLD BEFORE 1991

The Azerbaijani Turks, who live in Azerbaijan, Iran, Georgia and Russia's Dagestan Republic, are not reckoned as diaspora or migrant since they live in their historical homelands. Apart from them, Azerbaijani Turks, living in other countries, refer to diasporic Azerbaijanis and migrants.

Although Azerbaijani organizations have seemingly become more active in the years after 2000, the formation of the first organizations could be traced to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These organizations were established by immigrated Azerbaijanis. Immigrations of Azerbaijanis abroad historically back to ancient times, however on systematic way this process is connected with some political reasons and military conflicts. There were many reasons that compelled Azerbaijani Turks to leave their homelands in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Firstly, the forced migration in the Caucasus region; secondly, the wars between the Qajar Dynasty and the Russian Empire, resulted with the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828 which caused the division of historical Azerbaijani territory into two parts; thirdly, immigrations of dissatisfaction of some Northern Azerbaijanis due to the North Azerbaijan khanates being under the patronage of the Tsarist Russia.<sup>240</sup>

Especially, the number of mass immigrations of Azerbaijani Turks increased in the 20 century because of the historical events. In this context, the immigration waves of Azerbaijani Turks across the world from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century towards today might be divided into six periods:

a) The first wave refers to the period of the first Russian revolution of 1905-07 and the Constitutional Movement of Sattark Khan in South Azerbaijan in 1906;

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<sup>240</sup> ‘‘The Activities of Diaspora’’, *The official site under the chairman of the diaspora committee of the Republic Azerbaijan*, ([http://www.azerbaijans.com/content\\_494\\_en.html](http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_494_en.html)), date of access: 10.04.2016.



- b) The second wave refers to the period of the First World War in 1914-1918, establishment and collapse of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) in 1918-20, and the Khiyabani Political Movement<sup>241</sup> in South Azerbaijan;
- c) The third wave refers to the period of the Second World War in 1939-1945, formation and collapse of the Azerbaijan National Government in South Azerbaijan in 1945-46;
- d) The fourth wave indicates economic migrations of the Azerbaijani Turks living in Turkey in 1950-60 to Europe;
- e) The fifth wave occurred from the Soviet Azerbaijan in 1970-80-year to the Union republics and after the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979 as a political emigration from South Azerbaijan to Europe;<sup>242</sup>
- f) The last wave happened after the collapse of the Soviet Union and during the Karabakh War due to economic crisis and the war in Azerbaijan.

After the collapse and Sovietization of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, many Azerbaijani nationalist, intellectuals and politicians emigrated from Azerbaijan to Turkey and Germany because of Red Army invasion to Azerbaijan. Mammad Amin Rasulzade, Ali bey Huseynzade, Ali Mardan-bay Topchibashev, Ahmed bey Agayev and the others left Azerbaijan due to political reasons. Subsequently, Azerbaijani political refugees abroad began their political activities through some organizations and press. This contributed to formation of Azerbaijani diaspora in both Turkey and Europe in the following years. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Azerbaijani intellectuals and writers abroad published many newspapers and journals in order to voice their ideas, issues of Azerbaijan and to unite Azerbaijani migrants.

The first press organ of the Azerbaijani Diaspora published abroad in 20 years of the XX century - "New Qafqasiya" (1923, Istanbul), "Azeri-Turk" (1928-31, Istanbul, Turkey), "Odlu Yurd" (1929-30, Istanbul, Turkey), "Bildirish" (1929-31, Istanbul, Turkey), "İstiqlal" (1932-34, Berlin), "Qurtulush" (1934, Berlin), "Azerbaijan" (1952, Ankara) newspapers and magazines,

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<sup>241</sup> Shaikh Mohammed Khiabani independently established the Democrat Party of Azerbaijan in the South Azerbaijan in 22 June 1920 as excluding authority of Tehran. Later, he declared the state of Azadistan (land of liberty) based in Tabriz city of Southern Azerbaijan. In September 1920, Tehran sent the troops to Tabriz. Subsequently, they killed Khiabani and suppressed national liberation movement of Southern Azerbaijan. See: Yalçın Sarıkaya, "Tarihi ve Jeopolitik Boyutlarıyla İran'da Milliyetçilik (Nationalism in Iran with the Historical and Geopolitical Dimensions)", Ötüken Press, 2008, İstanbul, p. 176-178.

<sup>242</sup> "The Activities of Diaspora", *The official site under the chairman of the diaspora committee of the Republic Azerbaijan*, ([http://www.azerbaijans.com/content\\_494\\_en.html](http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_494_en.html)), date of access: 10.04.2016.

and published earlier by Azerbaijanis in the neighboring countries "Akhtar" (1875-95, Istanbul, Turkey), "Fikri-istiqlal" (1910, Istanbul), "Burhani-Taraqqi" (1906 -11, Astrakhan), "Milli" (1918, Simferopol), "Nur" (1906-09, St. Petersburg), "Kave" (1915-21, Berlin), "Iranshahr" (1921, Berlin).<sup>243</sup>

As a state organization, The Society of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (*Azərbaycanın Xarici Ölkələrlə Dostluq və Mədəni Əlaqələr Cəmiyyəti*) was established in Baku in 1946 in order to have connection with Azerbaijanis abroad. The newspaper of Voice of Homeland (*Vətənin səsi*) was published in the years after 1960 by this organization.<sup>244</sup> It was important for the USSR to be in touch with Azerbaijanis abroad in order to make propaganda.<sup>245</sup>

During the Second World War, many Azerbaijani Turks in the Soviet army were held captive by German troops. After the war, most of them preferred to stay in Europe rather than returning to the USSR, since they were anxious about the Soviet's repressive regime. Hence, the number of Azerbaijani Turks abroad increased.<sup>246</sup> Thus, the dissident movement against the USSR empowered abroad. Especially, the Turkist members of Musavat Party carried on their activities in Turkey and Berlin during the World War II. Musavat's Turkist ideas were quite influential on Azerbaijani people in Berlin. The Azerbaijan Congress was held by the guidance of Musavat in 6-8 November of 1943 in Berlin.<sup>247</sup> Particularity, Rasalzade and his friends were very active to convey their opinions through the press organs and meetings in both Turkey and Germany. As a result of this, the first Azerbaijani organization abroad emerged after World War II. In February 1949, "Association of Azerbaijan Culture" founded in capital of the Republic

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> "Diasporlarımızın faaliyyəti-2015-ci il (The Activities of the Diasporas in 2015)", Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin İşlər İdarəsi Prezident Kitabxanası, 2015.

<sup>245</sup> "Xaricdə yaşayan Azərbaycanlılar (Azerbaijanis living abroad)", (<http://olaylar.az/news/diaspora/30561>), date of access: 16.10.2016.

<sup>246</sup> "Azərbaycan Diasporunun Təşəkkül Tarixi (The Formation History of Azerbaijan Diaspora)", *The Official Site of the State Committee on Affairs with Azerbaijanis Living in Foreign Countries*, (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?options=content&id=85>), date of access: 16.04.2016.

<sup>247</sup> Banu İşlet Sönmez, "Azərbaycan'da Yirminci Yüzyılın Başında və 1990'lı Yıllarda Siyasi Gelişmeler (The Political Developments in Azerbaijan in the beginning of the 20th Century and the 1990s)", *Akademik Araştırmalar Journal*, Number 6, 2000. p. 249-284.

of Turkey in Ankara by the guidance of M. A. Rasulzade, that was the first step in the direction of organization of Azerbaijani Diaspora.<sup>248</sup> In this period, Turkey virtually became a host for many Azerbaijani thinkers who escaped from the authoritarian regime in the Soviet Azerbaijan. This association, based on the ideas of Rasulzade and Elchibey, has continued its activities in Ankara since 1949 until now.<sup>249</sup>

In 1957, Azerbaijan Society of America (ASA) was established in New Jersey, USA by Azerbaijan settlers represented the generation of Azerbaijan's first independence and secular democracy (1918-1920), later persecuted and exiled by the Soviet Bolshevik regime. After 1990, the USA experienced the second wave of Azerbaijani migrants due to the Post-Soviet economic turmoil and the Karabakh conflict. ASA has assisted this people in order to be integrated into the American society.<sup>250</sup> This association has continued its activities in the USA since 1957. Especially, after the 1990s, there has been an increase in the number of Azerbaijani associations in the USA with the leading of the Azerbaijani government. However, for Tomris Azeri, head of ASA, there is no increase in the influence of Azerbaijani diaspora in the USA even though there has been an increase in the number of Azerbaijani associations in the USA.<sup>251</sup>

In 1988, "Ojag" Cultural Center founded by Azerbaijani intellectuals and scientists in Moscow. Its press organ was Çırağ. After 1991, it incorporated into the All-Russian Congress of Azerbaijanis. In the same year, the Azerbaijani associations were also established in the Baltic countries, hosting more than 20 thousand Azerbaijanis. For

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<sup>248</sup> "The Activities of Diaspora", *The official site under the chairman of the diaspora committee of the Republic Azerbaijan*, ([http://www.azerbaijans.com/content\\_494\\_en.html](http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_494_en.html)), date of access: 10.04.2016.

<sup>249</sup> See in detail: "Azerbaycan Kültür Derneği (Azerbaycan Cultur Association)", (<http://www.azerbaycankulder.org>), date of Access: 15.04.2016.

<sup>250</sup> The official site of Azerbaijan Society of America, (<http://www.azeris.com>), date of access: 16.04.2016.

<sup>251</sup> "Amerika'daki Türk Dernek Sayısı 400'ü Geçti (The Number of Turkish Association in the USA over 400)", ([http://www.turkavenue.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4202:amerikadaki-turk-dernek-sayisi-250yi-gecti&catid=196:turk-amerikan-dernekleri-federasyonu&Itemid=819](http://www.turkavenue.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4202:amerikadaki-turk-dernek-sayisi-250yi-gecti&catid=196:turk-amerikan-dernekleri-federasyonu&Itemid=819)), date of access: 17.04.2016.

instance, ‘‘Society of Lithuanian Azerbaijanis’’ in Vilnius, ‘‘Azeri society’’ in Riga, ‘‘Ojaq’’ in Tallinn were established in 1988.<sup>252</sup>

In the late Soviet period, many Azerbaijani intellectuals started to be interested with their ethnic brethren in Iran, Soviet Armenia, Georgia and Dagestan in parallel with awakening of Azerbaijani national identity. As a result of this, the Vatan (Homeland) society was founded in 1987 in order to develop relations with Iranian Azerbaijani Turks as well as with Azerbaijani Turks throughout the world.<sup>253</sup>

#### 4.2 AZERBAIJANI MIGRATIONS AFTER 1991

After Azerbaijan gained its independence from the USSR in 1991, there was a considerable increase in the number of Azerbaijani people who immigrated to foreign countries, in particular to Russia due to the Karabakh war and bad economic conditions in Azerbaijan. As a result of this, the number of Azerbaijani people abroad rapidly increased. 707.5 thousand people departed from Azerbaijan and 266.1 thousand people arrived in the country from 1990 to 2009.<sup>254</sup> On the other hand, more people arriving to Azerbaijan than leaving in recent years. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2.7 thousand people arrived to Azerbaijan for permanent residence and 1.6 thousand people departures from the country in 2015. It made up 1.0% of total population growth.<sup>255</sup> According to President Ilham Aliyev:

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<sup>252</sup> ‘‘The Activities of Diaspora’’, *The official site under the chairman of the Diaspora committee of the Republic Azerbaijan*, ([http://www.azerbaijans.com/content\\_494\\_en.html](http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_494_en.html)), date of access: 10.04.2016.

<sup>253</sup> Stephan H. Astourian, ‘‘State, homeland, and diaspora: The Armenian and Azerbaijan cases’’, in *Central Asia and the Caucasus: Transnationalism and diaspora*, eds Touraj Atabaki and Sanjyot Mehendale, Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 99.

<sup>254</sup> Sergey Rumyansev, ‘‘Post-Soviet Nation State as a Sponsor of Construction of the Ethno-National Diaspora: Azeri’s Case’’, *Revue Europeenne des Migrations Internationales (REMI)*, (26) No. 3, 2010.

<sup>255</sup> ‘‘Demographic Situation in Azerbaijan’’, *The Official site of The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan*, (<http://stat.gov.az/news/?id=3128>), date of access: 15.04.2016.

‘‘The number of foreigners intending to visit the Republic of Azerbaijan will increase while Azerbaijan is developing. This can be considered a positive factor for our country. However in any case we must prefer the interests of our state, people, citizens and this must be the priority direction of our migration policy.’’<sup>256</sup>

For the datats of the State Committee for Work with the Diaspora, there are more than 40 million Azerbaijani currently residing in the 70 countries across the world. According to this data, there are respectively 3 million in Turkey, 2 million in Russia, 1 million in US, 1 million in Ukraine, 700 thousand in Iraq, 430 thousand in Afghanistan, 350 thousand in India and Pakistan, 300 thousand in Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and 170 thousand Azerbaijani in France.<sup>257</sup>

There is a huge Azerbaijani population in Americas. One million in US, 170 thousand in Canada, 75 thousand Brazil, 27 thousand Mexico, and 12 thousand Azerbaijani reside in Argentina. Most of them consist of Iranian Azerbaijanis. Many Azerbaijanis from Turkey in the 1970s and from Azerbaijan in the 1990s also immigrated to US.<sup>258</sup>

There is also a huge Azerbaijani population in Europe. There are more than 100 thousand Azerbaijanis in the countries of Germany, the UK, France, Ukraine, Belarus and more than 10 thousand Azerbaijanis in the countries of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, Portugal, Austria, and Finland. As Azerbaijanis residing in Germany, Belgium, Netherland, Sweden, and Denmark have mostly emigrated from Turkey, Azerbaijanis residing in the UK, France Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Austria, Estonia, Moldavia have mostly emigrated from Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan.<sup>259</sup>In parallel with rising of Azerbaijanis in foreign countries, Azerbaijani governments have more focused on Azerbaijani society in foreign countries.

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<sup>256</sup> See the official website of Azerbaijan Republic State Migration Service: (<http://www.migration.gov.az/index.php?section=000&subsection=000&lang=en>), date of access: 10.09.2016.

<sup>257</sup> ‘‘Azerbaycan Diasporasının Maskunlaşma Coğrafiyası (The Settlement of Azerbaijani Diaspora Across the World)’’ (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?option=content&id=86>), date of Access: 15.12.2015.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

### 4.3 FORMATION PROCESS OF AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA AFTER 1991

In 31 December 1989, the barriers on the border between the Nakhchivan Autonomous Region of the Azerbaijani SSR and the Islamic Republic of Iran were removed under the guidance of APF. It was a historical day and meeting for both Iranian and Soviet Azerbaijani Turks since they had chance to come together after many years. People in this action attempted to go down this glorious day as the day of unity for all ethnic Azerbaijanis.<sup>260</sup> In 16 December 1991, the anniversary of 31 December was declared as an official state day, named with ‘‘Azerbaijani World Solidarity Day’’ by the decree of President Heydar Aliyev who was the Chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan.<sup>261</sup>

Aftermath of the Black January Tragedy in Baku in 20 January 1990, there were increase in the number and activities of Azerbaijani associations. This tragedy and the ongoing war in Karabakh between Armenians and Azerbaijani Turks during this period pushed Azerbaijani people abroad to move together. As a result of this, the international congress of Azerbaijani societies was held in Istanbul in 3 November 1990 with Azerbaijani civil society representatives from the countries of the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Norway, Sweden, etc. According to this congress, the decision was taken to establish the Coordination Council, union of cultural centers and regional centers of Azerbaijani Diaspora in Baku, Istanbul and Hamburg. It was a crucial organization for Azerbaijani associations to move forward and centralization in the direction of being diaspora.<sup>262</sup> Until the 1990s, activities of Azerbaijanis abroad were independent from the state. Moreover, Azerbaijani organizations were carrying out cultural and social activities rather than political activities. With the developments in the early 1990s including the Black January Tragedy, the Karabakh War, Azerbaijani organizations abroad have become politicized. In this sense, the Karabakh issue has played a significant role in the politicization of the diaspora.<sup>263</sup> Furthermore, Azerbaijan

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<sup>260</sup> Sergei Rumyantsev, ‘‘The State and the Diaspora: Bureaucratic and Discursive Practices in the Construction of a Transnational Community’’, in *Diaspora and Citizenship*, ed. Elena Barabantseva, Claire Sutherland, Routledge, 2012, p. 291.

<sup>261</sup> ‘‘The Activities of Diaspora’’, *The official site under the chairman of the diaspora committee of the Republic Azerbaijan*, ([http://www.azerbaijans.com/content\\_494\\_en.html](http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_494_en.html)), date of access: 10.04.2016.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Özcan, 2014, p. 272.

was on the eve of regaining its independence from the USSR in this period. Nevertheless, Azerbaijani organizations abroad did not have a potential to become an international actor in the 1990s.

In 23 September 1992, the organization for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries was reestablished with the name of Azerbaijani World Center for International Relations.<sup>264</sup> The first ‘‘World Azerbaijanis Congress’’ (DAK) was held in Los Angeles, US in 1997. This organization has realized many congresses in the cities of Europe as well as in the USA until now. However, this organization was divided into two parts in 2005. Later, one was renamed with Democratic DAK under the guidance of Mahammedrza Heşti.<sup>265</sup> The other DAK was directed by Javad Derakhti and this organization stresses the independence of Iranian Azerbaijan.<sup>266</sup>

This shows the split of Azerbaijani diasporic organizations in the USA. By contrast with the rising of diasporic organizations, the effect of Azerbaijani Turks in the USA does not enhance. This situation directly damages the effect and position of Azerbaijani diaspora in the USA. Furthermore, the state-sponsored associations are not eager to cooperate with the organizations of Iranian Azerbaijanis, even though they are willing to cooperate with them. On the other hand, the political refugees from Iranian Azerbaijan have also established many small associations and internet channels in the USA, Sweden and the European countries in order to voice the rights of Iranian Azerbaijanis.<sup>267</sup> For instance Gunaz TV is one of the effective internet channels of Iranian Azerbaijanis in the USA.<sup>268</sup> Azerbaijan International is also quarterly magazine published in English in the USA since 1993.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> ‘‘Azerbaycanın dövlət siyaseti ve diaspora (Azerbaijan’s state policy and diaspora)’’, (<http://olaylar.az/news/diaspora/90270>), date of access: 17.04.2016.

<sup>265</sup> See the official site of Democratic World Azerbaijanis Congress: ([www.dakaz.org](http://www.dakaz.org)), date of access: 20.04.2016.

<sup>266</sup> See the official site of World Azerbaijanis Congress: ([www.dak.az](http://www.dak.az)), date of access: 20.04.2016.

<sup>267</sup> Astourian, 2005, p. 99-103.

<sup>268</sup> See the official site of Gunaz TV: ([www.gunaz.tv](http://www.gunaz.tv)), date of access: 21.04.2016.

<sup>269</sup> See the site of Azerbaijan International Journal: (<http://azer.com>), date of access: 21.04.2016.

In 9-10 November 2001, I. World Azerbaijanis Congress under the auspices of Heydar Aliyev was held in Baku with 1105 delegates from 31 countries. This congress was established in the light of idea of a single Azerbaijanihood in order to create a common thought and feeling among Azerbaijanis. It was a new stage for the Azerbaijani diaspora. It was the first time that Azerbaijani minority abroad was officially defined as ‘diasporic community’ by this congress.<sup>270</sup> Furthermore, this congress paved a way for the establishment of the State Committee on Affairs with Azerbaijanis Living in Foreign Countries (SCAALFC) by the decree of President Heydar Aliyev in 5 July 2002. In 19 November 2008 with Decree No. 54 of President İlham Aliyev dated the State Committee for Work with Diaspora (SCWD) was re-established on the basis of SCAALFC. Nazım İbrahimov, former Azerbaijani ambassador to Ukraine, has been head of this committee since 2008.<sup>271</sup>

On the other hand, some Georgian and Iranian Azerbaijanis had negative reactions to the congress held in November 2001 due to being excluded. At the meeting in Tbilisi in 17 November 2001, some Georgian Azerbaijanis from the region of Borçalı protested against the Azerbaijani ambassador in Georgia. Hacı Hacıyev accused of having handpicked the delegates from Georgia. Iranian Azerbaijani politician Aslan Khalidi also said that no Southern (Iranian) Azerbaijani working had been invited to the forum because of Baku’s concession to Tehran.<sup>272</sup>

SCAALFC also organized many conferences and events in Germany. For instance, this committee organized a conference on ‘The Azerbaijani Diaspora: Current Situation and Future Prospects’ in Mainz, Germany in 2003; ‘Berlin the Founding Congress of European Azerbaijanis’ in 2004 and the II European Forum of Azerbaijani Students in Brussels in 2007. Moreover, in some countries the first Azerbaijani organizations have

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<sup>270</sup> Sevinç Alkan Özcan, ‘Yurtdışındaki Azeriler ya da ‘Azerbaycan Diasporası’ (Azeris abroad or ‘Azerbaijani Diaspora’)’, in *Azerbaycan’da Din ve Kimlik (Religion and Identity in Azerbaijan)*, eds. Sevinç Alkan Özcan, Vügar İmanbeyli, Küre Press, İstanbul, 2014, p. 261.

<sup>271</sup> ‘Yaradılma Tarixi ve Maqsadı (The Creation Date and Purpose)’, *the official site of SCWD*, (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?options=content&id=25>), date of access: 22.04.2016.

<sup>272</sup> Astourian, 2005, p. 100.



been registered under the guidance of SCAALFC. For instance, the Azerbaijani-Japan Friendship Association was established in Tokyo in 2006.<sup>273</sup>

The II Congress of World Azerbaijanis held in Baku, in 16 March of 2006. In consequence of this congress, the Karabakh conflict became the program of the specific activity of Azerbaijanis living abroad and the appeals of the Congress to the international community and organizations. The II Congress of World Azerbaijanis with representatives of more than 80 groups was also held in Baku, in 21 January 2011 by the decree of İlham Aliyev. The third session of the Congress of European Azerbaijanis was held in Frankfurt, Germany in 14 April 2009. The report on organization, protection and preservation of national values and rights of Azerbaijanis living in Europe was delivered by this Congress. Besides that, the Azerbaijani diasporic organizations have had cooperation and common organizations with Turkish diasporic organizations. For instance, in November 2007 the XI Congress of Friendship, Brotherhood and Cooperation of Turkic states and societies were held with 1150 delegates and 550 guests from 30 countries. The problems of all Turkic world and ways to cooperation have been discussed in this Congress.<sup>274</sup> In addition to this, The Turkic Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council)<sup>275</sup> has increased its activities in recent years in order to consolidate diasporas of Turkic countries. In this respect, the Regional Diaspora Center of the Turkic Council was firstly established in Kiev in 24 December 2014. Diaspora representatives of Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan participated in this organization. The Turkic Council is also planning to establish the regional diaspora centers in Washington DC, Berlin and Paris. It is a significant stage to unify Turkic diasporas in the future.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Nazım İbrahimov, ‘‘Reaching Out to Azerbaijani Diaspora’’, *Azerbaijan in the World*, No. ½.

<sup>274</sup> ‘‘Congresses’’, *The official website under the chairman of the diaspora committee of the Republic Azerbaijan*, ([http://www.azerbaijans.com/content\\_496\\_en.html](http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_496_en.html)), date of access: 20.04.2016.

<sup>275</sup> The Turkic Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council) is an international inter-governmental organization which was established in 2009 by four founding member states, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey. See in detail: The official website of the Turkic Council, (<http://www.turkkon.org/en-US/HomePage>), date of access: 17.10.2016.

<sup>276</sup> ‘‘24 Aralık 2014 tarihinde Kiev’de Türk Keneşi Diaspora Bölgesel Merkezi açılmıştır (The Regional Diaspora Center of the Turkic Council was opened in Kiev in 24 December 2014)’’, *The Official Site of the Turkic Council*, (<http://www.turkkon.org/tr-TR/24-aralik-2014-tarihinde-kiev%E2%80%99de-turk-kenesi-diaspora-bolgesel-merkezi-acilmistir/3/54/54/1118>), date of access: 17.10.2016.

In parallel with good relations between Azerbaijan and Israel, Azerbaijani diaspora, especially in USA, devotes close attention to cooperation with the Jewish community in order to benefit from experience and power of this community. In line with this target, the Azerbaijan-Israel International Association in Tel Aviv (AZIS) and AZIS-Germany were backed by SCAALFC.<sup>277</sup> According to İbrahimov, the representatives of the Jewish Diaspora are ready to assist the establishment of Azerbaijani organizations in the USA.<sup>278</sup>

It is very significant for the Azerbaijani community to cooperate with other diasporas due to being incipient diaspora in comparison with Armenian diaspora. In this sense, Turkish and Jewish diasporas are seemingly more preferential for Azerbaijani diaspora to cooperate and create common organizations.

Many Azerbaijani diasporic organizations were also established within various countries under the guidance of the Azerbaijani government during this period. Plus, many newspapers, magazines, and websites have been established in order to enhance ties between the government and Azerbaijanis abroad. The Sunday Schools of Azerbaijanis have been also opened in order to educate Azerbaijani youth within Azerbaijani Turkish language and culture. SCAALFC assisted in the promotion of teaching Azerbaijani in foreign countries such as, at Moscow State Institute of International Relations, the National University of Kyiv and the French Institute for Eastern Cultures and Languages. According to Nazım İbrahimov, Head of SCAALFC, the first stage in the formation of Azerbaijan diaspora was successfully completed.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> İbrahimov, p. 3.

<sup>278</sup> “Назим Ибрагимов: Представители еврейской диаспоры готовы помочь в создании азербайджанских организаций в США (Nazim İbrahimov: The representatives of the Jewish Diaspora are ready to assist to the establishment of Azerbaijani organizations in the USA)", (<http://news.day.az/politics/85680.html>), date of access: 21.04.2016.

<sup>279</sup> İbrahimov, p. 2.

In this sense, both Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev have attached importance to Azerbaijanis in foreign countries. As a result of this, more than 150 associations in more than 30 countries have been established so far.<sup>280</sup>The Azerbaijani organizations in Germany, the Russian Federation and USA are the most active organizations in parallel with Azerbaijani population density in these countries. Because, Russia has the largest Azerbaijani migration in the world and Germany has the largest Azerbaijani migration in Europe. The Azerbaijani government is ambitious about all diaspora organizations across the world in order to gather under a single roof.

In recent years, lots of news about the corruption claims related with the Aliyev government have been published in the Western media. Additionally, many Azerbaijani dissident journalists, such as Khadija Ismayilova, have been arrested by the government since they criticize Aliyev's regime as being authoritarian and involved in corruption. Some of political refugees fled Azerbaijan to Western countries. The government does not enjoy voicing their ideas and activities against itself in the West. Hence, Azerbaijanis abroad have a capacity to be transformed into a strong opposition from the perspective of the government. In this sense, it is necessary to have an Azerbaijani diaspora under the control of the government. It might be a way to control all Azerbaijanis abroad through the diaspora in order to prevent the generation of strong opposition against the Aliyev's regime.

On the other hand, most of the diasporic organizations are presently not quite effective over politics of their hostland. They are unable to lobby actively within these hostlands. Hence, the diasporas are strongly criticized by many Azerbaijani thinkers due to being ineffective. Especially, it is obvious that the Azerbaijani diaspora is less effective than Armenian and Georgian diasporas which are even less funded by their governments. For the first reason, Azerbaijani diaspora is an incipient diaspora in comparison with historical Armenian diaspora. For Mirkazım Seyidov, who is one of founders of DADP, Azerbaijani diasporic organizations do not have sufficient cooperation as well as coordination with Azerbaijani embassies. In that vein, diaspora organizations cross swords with each other instead of cooperation. As a result of this, there is

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<sup>280</sup> See the official site of SCWD: ([www.diaspora.gov.az](http://www.diaspora.gov.az)), date of access: 24.04.2016.

dividedness into diasporic organizations, such as into the organizations in the USA and Russia.<sup>281</sup> İlham Aliyev also sometimes criticizes that Azerbaijani embassies do not sufficiently cooperate with diaspora organizations abroad.<sup>282</sup>

For the chairperson of ASA Tomris Azeri,

‘‘Let us not kid ourselves. Azerbaijani diaspora is very ineffective in the USA. As diaspora, we do not do more than publishing something on internet and making some statements. Furthermore, new associations, holding lack of mission, have been established by a few people in the USA and some of them are even funded by the government.’’<sup>283</sup>

There are many claims on Azerbaijani media that many state-sponsored diasporic organizations and representatives of diaspora spend money freely. For Mehriban Nasip who is one of the member of Azerbaijani diaspora in the USA,

‘‘We are glad that there is increase in the number of Azerbaijani diasporic organizations in recent years. Nevertheless, we have many serious problems related with the diaspora. One of the main problems is that some of diaspora directors aim to derive personal benefits rather than serving their countries.’’<sup>284</sup>

According to the claims, diaspora activities are considered as tool by some diaspora representatives in order to meet lots of businessmen and promote their business network. As a result of this, personal interests become priority within diaspora activities. According to this, Nazım İbrahimov, chairman of SCWD, is the most criticized person among the diaspora authorities. One of the claims that he earns lots of

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<sup>281</sup> ‘‘Mirkazım Seyidov: Azərbaycan diasporası xaricdə siyasi qüvvəyə çevirilə bilməyib (Mirkazım Seyidov: The Azerbaijani diaspora can not have a political power abroad)’’, (<http://azpolitika.info/?p=41310>), date of access: 28.04.2016.

<sup>282</sup> (<http://www.dia.az/3/print:page,1,52063-nazim-brahimovun-topdagltmaz-biznes-imperiyasi.html>), date of access: 29.04.2016.

<sup>283</sup> ‘‘Milli Azərbaycan Diasporası (National Azerbaijan Diaspora)’’, (<http://millidiaspora.blogspot.com.tr/2009/12/tomris-azeri-glin-ozumuzu-aldatmayaq.html>), date of access: 29.04.2016.

<sup>284</sup> ‘‘Azərbaycan diasporu daxilində birlik və həmrəylik varmı? (Does Azerbaijani diaspora have unity in itself)’’, (<http://olaylar.az/news/diaspora/76316>), date of access: 30.04.2016.

money by way of diaspora activities and plus he more focuses on his business than his permanent duty to diaspora.<sup>285</sup>

#### 4.4 NATIONAL IDENTITY AND AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA

As indicated in previous chapters, there were many small Azerbaijani organizations within various countries before Heydar Aliyev's rise to power in 1993. However, the Azerbaijani government under the short-period leadership of Elchibey, more concentrated on the unification with Iranian Azerbaijan rather than the theme of Azerbaijani diaspora. Even after his overthrow in a coup d'état in June 1993, in the context of Pan-Azerbaijanism he continued the goal of unifying the Republic of Azerbaijan with Iranian Azerbaijan through some associations which were almost opposite to the government of Aliyev. One of these associations was the United Azerbaijan Union (Bütöv Azərbaycan Birliyi) established in 1997 led by Elchibey and other one was the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Azerbaijanis of the World (Dünya Azərbaycanlılarının Haqlarının Müdafiə Komitəsi) established by the guidance of Elchibey and iconic nationalist poet, Bakhtiyar Vahabzade in 1999 in order to defend the rights of Azerbaijanis in the world.<sup>286</sup>

Unlike Elchibey's pan-Turkist and Pan-Azerbaijanist politics, in the light of the balanced policy, Azerbaijan ceased to concern about Iranian Azerbaijan with Heydar Aliyev in order not to damage the relations with Iran, since the South Azerbaijan issue is underbelly of Iran. In this sense, Iranian Azerbaijanis abroad have not been invited by the government to participate in the state-sponsored events and organizations. It has also indicated the ideological evolution of the state from Pan-Turkism and Pan-Azerbaijanism towards Azerbaijanism. However, the Azerbaijani state has more focused on Azerbaijanis in foreign countries with Heydar Aliyev in order to generate homogenous Azerbaijani diaspora bearing common action and goals in harmony with

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<sup>285</sup> ‘‘Nazim İbrahimov komitə sədridir, yoxsa biznesmen? (Is Nazim İbrahimov chairman of committee or businessman)’’, *Baku Daily*, (<http://arxiv.gundelik-baku.com/index.php?newsid=13307#.VyqYT9R97Dc>), date of access: 30.04.2016.

<sup>286</sup> Astourian, 2005, p. 99.

interests of the regime. As a result of this, there has been huge increase in the number of Azerbaijani diasporic organizations sponsored by the government in recent years. Concordantly, President Aliyev aimed to ascribe an identity and goal to Azerbaijani community in foreign countries. The Khojaly massacre, regaining Karabakh and solidarity of all Azerbaijanis abroad became the central themes of the diaspora. According to him, Azerbaijanis in foreign countries should have mission, responsibility and faithfulness to their homeland. According the address of Heydar Aliyev to World Azerbaijanis on the occasion of the Day of Solidarity in 1996:

‘‘For support of the sovereignty and eternity of our statehood, every Azerbaijani, despite the living place he is required to demonstrate the steadfast solidarity, ideological and practical unity for the sake of sacred Azerbaijan. In our times of hard historical tests when our dreams about independence and freedom that we had been bearing in our hearts during many centuries are being realized, I call all of you to the national solidarity and to be mobilized for the sake of free, independent, powerful and democratic Azerbaijan state.’’<sup>287</sup>

In this speech, Aliyev sets a common goal for all Azerbaijanis across the world. Alongside a common goal and future, many times he emphasized the glorious history and historical hardships of Azerbaijan. According to his speech at the I Congress of the World Azerbaijanis in Baku, in 10 November 2001:

‘‘The Azerbaijani people have a great ancient history. During these centuries our people overcame many difficulties, made a valuable contribution to the world civilization, and enriched it. However, at different stages of history the Azerbaijanis suffered certain hardships. Therefore, the unity, solidarity of the Azerbaijanis living in different corners of the planet has a special meaning both for us - the independent Azerbaijani state and for the Azerbaijanis living in different countries of the world.’’<sup>288</sup>

According to Aliyev’s address to diaspora, defending territorial integrity and regaining occupied territories by Armenians should be mission of all Azerbaijanis in the world. In

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<sup>287</sup> ‘‘Address of Heydar Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to World Azerbaijanis on the occasion of the Day of Solidarity - Baku, December 28, 1996’’, *Heydar Aliyev Heritage International Online Library*, (<http://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/5259863.html>), date of access: 01.05.2016.

<sup>288</sup> ‘‘Speech of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev at the I Congress of the World Azerbaijanis - Baku, 10 November, 2001’’, *Heydar Aliyev Heritage International Online Library*, (<http://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/2428604.html>), date of access: 01.05.2016.

this respect, his speeches refer to the elements of nationalism and nation building with ‘‘common history, common future and common goal.’’ For him, being Azerbaijani involves all Azerbaijanis across the world.<sup>289</sup> Nevertheless, he mostly avoided commenting on Iranian and Georgian Azerbaijani Turks in his statements.

He also frequently emphasized rapid development of Azerbaijan under his leadership and the state’s support for Azerbaijanis in foreign countries. In accordance with this, Aliyev’s address on the occasion of the day of solidarity of Azerbaijanis in the world in 2000:

‘‘Azerbaijan develops as one of the largest economic and energy centers of the world. The economic reforms are realized bravely and successfully in our country. The Republic of Azerbaijan is a center of support and attraction for the Azerbaijanis in the world, the holy place where address with a hope and love. Each Azerbaijani irrespective of the fact where he lives must feel its filial duty before the native land, live with cares, with the problems of republic, inform to the world community the truth about Azerbaijan. Each Azerbaijani must know that behind him may stand only powerful, authoritative and independent Azerbaijani state.’’<sup>290</sup>

According to spirit of the law ‘‘on state policy towards Azerbaijani living abroad’’ endorsed by Heydar Aliyev in 27 December 2002, former citizens of the Azerbaijani SSR or independent Azerbaijan who ‘‘think of themselves as Azerbaijani in the context of their ethnic, linguistic and historical ties’’ are considered as Azerbaijani living abroad. Other criteria being Azerbaijani in the context of ideology of Azerbaijanism is feeling to ‘‘historical motherland’’ linking traditions, language, religion, ethno-social outlook and ethno-cultural system of rules.<sup>291</sup>

For Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijanity should be a common idea of all Azerbaijanis in the world. From his speech at the I Congress of the World Azerbaijanis:

‘‘The idea of Azerbaijanity unites all of us. After Azerbaijan gained its independence, the Azerbaijanity, as a leading idea, has become the primary idea for the Azerbaijanis living both in

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<sup>289</sup> Özcan, 2014, p. 264-265.

<sup>290</sup> ‘‘Address of the Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev on the occasion of the day of solidarity of Azerbaijanis in the world - Baku, December 26, 2000’’, *Heydar Aliyev Heritage International Online Library*, (<http://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/9903556.html>), date of access: 02.05.2016.

<sup>291</sup> Romyansev, 2010, p. 115.

Azerbaijan and abroad. We should unite around this idea. The Azerbaijanity means maintenance of national belonging, maintenance of the national-spiritual values, and at the same time, their enrichment with synthesis, integration into common to all mankind values, as well as provision of development of each personality.’’<sup>292</sup>

Ilham Aliyev has also followed his father’s diaspora policy based on Azerbaijanism ideology since he came to power in 2003. He has also had parallel statements with his father regarding the theme of diaspora. According to his speech at the 2nd Congress of Azerbaijanis of the World in 15 March 2006,

‘‘The Azerbaijani people are a great people. There are 50 million of us. We are a very big nation on the global scale. We all have one homeland – Azerbaijan. We must try to strengthen and enrich our homeland and turn it into a powerful state.’’<sup>293</sup>

He has also participated in many joint organizations where Azerbaijan and the Turkic countries met. He has attached importance to Azerbaijani diaspora to improve its relations with other Turkic diasporas. He also joined all meetings of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (Turkic Council). However, the Azerbaijani organizations abroad have stronger ties and organized more joint events with Turkish organizations rather than with Turkic organizations. From his speech at the Third Summit of Turkic Council held in 15 August 2013:

‘‘We occasionally conduct forums of Turkish and Azerbaijani Diaspora organizations in Azerbaijan and Turkey. A joint congress has also been held. I believe that consolidation of efforts in this area would be useful because millions of our compatriots living abroad today represent our peoples. I believe there are excellent opportunities to organize them and bring them together. Individually, there are Diaspora organizations. In many cases they coordinate their activities. But in this format, in the form of a union of Diaspora organizations of member-countries of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, I think it will further strengthen our work in all respects.’’<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> ‘‘Speech of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev at the I Congress of the World Azerbaijanis - Baku, 10 November, 2001’’, *Heydar Aliyev Heritage International Online Library*, (<http://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/2428604.html>), date of access. 02.05.2016.

<sup>293</sup> See the speeches of Ilham Aliyev on diaspora: ([http://azleadersays.com/en/razdel/30\\_On%20the%20diaspora.html](http://azleadersays.com/en/razdel/30_On%20the%20diaspora.html)), date of access: 03.05.2016.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.



Ilham Aliyev has occasionally referred to his father as both national leader of Azerbaijanis and establisher of Azerbaijani diaspora in his speeches. It becomes one of significant elements of the ideology of Azerbaijanism that Heydar Aliyev is portrayed as national leader of modern Azerbaijan. For instance, at the 2nd Congress of Azerbaijanis of the World Ilham Aliyev mentioned the name of Heydar Aliyev eleven times in his speech as referring to his successes in the creation of modern Azerbaijan and diaspora. This is one of part from his speech at the Congress:

‘‘A congress of the world Azerbaijanis is a great, historical event. A very fine documentary has just been shown here; and we have taken the chance to remember again those wonderful moments. It was the initiative of the national leader of our people Heydar Aliyev that allowed us to hold five years ago the 1st congress of the world Azerbaijanis. The congress played an exceptional role in the modern history of Azerbaijan.’’<sup>295</sup>

According to sociologist Romyansev, this documentary film aims to propagate within the ‘‘diaspora’’ the activities of Heydar Aliyev as presenting the ideology of the official diaspora project to Azeris in emigration.<sup>296</sup>

Armenian diaspora and the Karabakh are currently major issues into the diaspora’s agenda. For both Heydar and Ilham Aliyev, one of the major missions of Azerbaijani diaspora to struggle with Armenian diasporic communities and their propagandas. It is also another mission of world Azerbaijanis to propagate within the world that the Khojaly’s massacre and rightfulness of Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict. They have often emphasized the role of the diaspora for this issue. In this sense, most of the Azerbaijani Diasporas abroad organize the Memorial Day in 26 February each year in order to commemorate the Khojaly massacre. There are also other significant days for Azerbaijanis both in the country and abroad. Alongside the Khojaly massacre, the Black January Tragedy in 1990 and the events of March 1918 are memorialized by diasporic communities through events each year. The events of March 1918, referring to the death of 10.000 Azerbaijani Turks by Armenian nationalists in 1918, started to be interpreted as genocide by decree of Heydar Aliyev in 1996. It also became a counter theory by

<sup>295</sup> ‘‘Speech of President Ilham Aliyev at 2nd Congress of World Azerbaijanis’’, *Azerbaijan State News Agency*, ([http://azertag.az/en/xeber/SPEECH\\_OF\\_PRESIDENT\\_ILHAM\\_ALIYEV\\_AT\\_THE\\_2ND\\_CONGRES\\_S\\_OF\\_WORLD\\_AZERBAIJANIS-560116](http://azertag.az/en/xeber/SPEECH_OF_PRESIDENT_ILHAM_ALIYEV_AT_THE_2ND_CONGRES_S_OF_WORLD_AZERBAIJANIS-560116)), date of Access: 04.05.2016.

<sup>296</sup> Romyansev, 2010, p. 117.

some Azerbaijani Turks against the Armenian genocide claims in 1915. In this case, Azerbaijani authorities actively support Turkish authorities and diaspora organizations against the Armenian allegation of genocide. The other days, established by Azerbaijani authorities in the Post-Soviet period, are the Day of the Solidarity of Azerbaijanis (31 December), Day of the Republic, referring to the day of the revival of Azerbaijani statehood in 1918 (28 May), and the Independence Day (18 October).<sup>297</sup> In these days, Azerbaijani diasporic organizations generally conduct ceremonies. Alongside these days, Heydar Aliyev is memorialized on his decease and birth anniversary by especially diasporic organizations belonging to the state. The birth and death day of Elchibey is also memorialized by some Azerbaijani associations which are independent from the Azerbaijani government.

The struggle with the genocide claims of Armenian diasporas pushes Azerbaijani and Turkish associations and authorities to move together. Moreover, the ethnic and cultural affinity makes them to work together. It also strengthens the diasporic identity based on Turkic ethnicity on both Turkish and Azerbaijani Diasporas. However, the Azerbaijani Turkic identity based on ethnicity is not totally overlapping with Azerbaijanism linking territorial nationalism and official ideology of the government. Hence, the identity question for diaspora emerges since the diasporic identity is shaped by Azerbaijanism and Turkism. While the Azerbaijani government since Heydar Aliyev has stressed to construct Azerbaijani national identity upon territorial nationalism, Azerbaijani authorities and organizations sometimes mention ethnic kinship with other Turkic countries as well as with Turkey. This situation causes the emergence of discussions on national identity of Azerbaijan in the context of Turkism and Azerbaijanism.

According to Murad Ismayilov from the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, pan-Turkic unity with Turkic Diasporas is risky for Azerbaijan since it may lead to an increasing gap in Azerbaijani identity as excluding representatives of other ethnic groups who identify themselves as Azerbaijani. For him, the creation of a single national identity based on Azerbaijanism rather than ethnic kinship is more in accordance with national interests and balanced foreign policy of Azerbaijan. It might be a good starting point to

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

work and strengthen links with the Jewish diaspora.<sup>298</sup> On the other hand, some of Azerbaijani thinkers argue that it is the best way for Azerbaijani diaspora to move together with especially Turkish and Turkic diasporic organizations. According to them, the Armenian and Karabakh issues are common problem of all Turkic World. There is a need to create a common strategy shared by all Turkic Diasporas. If all Turkic Diasporas move together, they are able to announce their ideas further to the world.<sup>299</sup>

According to Ilgar Ilkin Bayramali, the Karabakh is one of the biggest problems of the Turkic World. None of Western countries is in favour of Azerbaijan and Turkey in the Armenian issue. Hence, all the Turkic countries and diasporas should move together.<sup>300</sup> For Bahaddin Kaya who is ex-president of the Congress of European Azeris (CEA),

‘‘The main task of the diasporic movement must be to create a powerful propagandistic Turkic Lobby abroad.’’<sup>301</sup>

From the point of view of Professor Rogers Brubaker who is one of the most known sociologists focusing on ethnicity and diaspora, the question of nationhood inherited by the successor states from the USSR. Hence, three types of nationalism have emerged over the Post-Soviet era. First type is nationalism of new independent states based on ethnicity and culture targeting to assimilate minorities. Second type is ethnic nationalism of national minorities. According to this nationalism, ethnic minorities expect support from their external homeland in order to guarantee their rights. Third type is the homeland nationalism. It refers to homeland’s interests with own compatriots abroad.<sup>302</sup> For Özcan, the homeland nationalism pursued by the Azerbaijani government

<sup>298</sup> Murat Ismailov, ‘‘Baku and Azerbaijani Diaspora: How much interaction and influence?’’, *Azerbaijan in the World*, No. ½.

<sup>299</sup> ‘‘Türk Diasporası ve Türk Dünyası (Turkic Diaspora and Turkic World)’’, edited by Almagül Isina, *TASAM Yayınları*, İstanbul, 2014.

<sup>300</sup> Ilgar Ilkin Bayramali, ‘‘Türk Dünyası Diasporaları Karabağ Probleminin Hellinde Birge Fealliyet Istiqametler (Diasporas of the Turkic World Should Move Together for the solution of the Karabakh Problem)’’, ‘‘Türk Diasporası ve Türk Dünyası (Turkic Diaspora and Turkic World)’’, edited by Almagül Isina, *TASAM Yayınları*, İstanbul, 2014.

<sup>301</sup> Romyansev, 2010, p. 124.

<sup>302</sup> Rogers Brubaker, ‘‘Nationalism Reframed Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe’’, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 52

through imposing the importance of homeland on Azerbaijanis abroad. Besides this, it is predictable that Azerbaijanis abroad more nationalist-leaning than Azerbaijanis living their homeland due to homesickness in the context of long-distance nationalism of Benedict Anderson.<sup>303</sup>

#### **4.5 THE EFFECT OF THE KARABAKH AND ARMENIAN ISSUES ON AZERBAIJANI DIASPORIC IDENTITY**

The ‘‘other’’ plays a quite significant role in identity formation. Societies define their identities as comparing and seeing themselves superior with created and developed the ‘‘others.’’ The created ‘‘other’’ is also quite functional for societies to ensure group cohesiveness and to stick together when faced with an enemy. According to John E. Mack’s thought calls ‘‘the enemy system’’, enmity might be real or constructed. Moreover, the ‘‘other’’ plays a significant role for integrity, construction and sustainability of large groups like nations and ethnic identities.<sup>304</sup>

It is more difficult for diasporic communities to sustain their presence since they do not live in their homeland and face the risk of assimilation. Hence, they need the ‘‘other’’ and enemy more than their compatriots living in their homeland in order to maintain their presence and identity. For instance, the Turkish hatred in relation of the genocide claims has played a major role in the identity and politicization of Armenian diaspora.<sup>305</sup> Likewise, Armenian hatred is a very important element for Azerbaijani identity as well as for all Azerbaijanis. For the Azerbaijani government, one of the most significant reasons to have a stronger Azerbaijani diaspora is struggle with Armenian diaspora and propagandas across the world. The other reason is to voice the Khojaly massacre in all countries through memorial activities. The mission is directly given by the government to Azerbaijanis abroad. For ex-president Heydar Aliyev,

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<sup>303</sup> Özcan, 2014, p. 269-271.

<sup>304</sup> Senem Çevik, ‘‘The Armenian Diaspora and the Need for the Other’’, *Akademik Bakış Journal*, Volume 5, Number 9, 2011, p. 96.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104-105.

“The biggest problem of Azerbaijan in the world-scale is that on the one hand, we have a neighbour always bringing troubles to our country - it is Armenia that in the past, as well as now hankers after Azerbaijani lands, Armenia that wants to conquer these lands. On the other hand, Armenia has, one might say, very powerful diaspora in most countries of the world, in particular, in highly developed countries. We undertake different measures in our republic to popularize Azerbaijan, to make it well-known by everyone. But Armenia does not need it. Armenians living in America, England, France and other countries, as well as Armenian diaspora do it for Armenia. They created great opportunities for themselves while living in those countries, took up positions and possess large wealth. Making use of all these opportunities, these states raise among other countries the small Republic of Armenia being our neighbour, which is constantly inclined to commit aggression against our country, occupy our lands.”<sup>306</sup>

Azerbaijani authorities often mention Armenians and Karabakh in their speeches in order to be etched in Azerbaijani’s memories. The historical hostility between Armenia and Azerbaijan is essential within Azerbaijani politics and identity. This hostility sometimes might be functional for Azerbaijani politicians to conceal their political mistakes. For instance, when the Western and international organizations publish reports against the Azerbaijani government regarding the media freedom and human rights violation in the country, Azerbaijani authorities sometimes claim that these institutions take decision because of the influence of Armenian diaspora. After the report published by the European Parliament in September 2015 regarding the human rights violations in Azerbaijan, many Azerbaijani authorities, such as Azerbaijani MP Azay Guliyev, directly accused the parliament in their speeches. From the speech of Guliyev,

“One shouldn’t forget that Azerbaijan plays a crucial role in the energy security of Europe. However, in exchange, some of those in the West, at the instigation of Armenian diaspora, carry on a campaign aimed to discredit Azerbaijan and damage its international image.” The parliamentarian says that on September 15, the Armenian National Committee of America “thanked Armenian diaspora for souring the relations between the European Parliament and Azerbaijan and described the European Parliament resolution as the victory of the Armenian lobby. This is the clear proof of what we have said: most European politicians represented both in the leadership of the European Parliament and in the various political groups, are under the

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<sup>306</sup> “Speech of President of the Azerbaijan Republic, Heydar Aliyev at the meeting with our fellow countrymen living in Great Britain - London, 22 July, 1998”, *Heydar Aliyev Heritage International Online Library*, (<http://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/1685093.html>), date of access: 05.05.2016.

influence of Armenian diaspora or personal interests play their role in a smear campaign against Azerbaijan.’’<sup>307</sup>

Although there have been positive steps regarding promoting tolerance in Azerbaijan, there is widespread negative sentiments towards Armenians in Azerbaijani society due the Karabakh conflict.<sup>308</sup> Furthermore, Azerbaijanis have felt more anger towards Armenians in parallel with rising clashes in Karabakh since 2014. It is apparently not possible to overcome this hatred between Armenian and Azerbaijanis in the short period due to the problem that going back to many years and ongoing war in Karabakh. The historical problem of Karabakh is also related with the historical Turkish hatred and revenge of Armenians.

Azerbaijani diaspora becomes familiar with Turkish diaspora by the reason of the propagandas of Armenian diaspora against both Turkey and Azerbaijan. Both Turkish and Azerbaijani organizations and authorities have a common political stance in the cases of the 1915 Genocide Claims and Karabakh problem with supporting each other. For instance, after the European Parliament’s resolution on the Armenian genocide claims, Ali Hasanov who is the Assistant of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Socio-Political Affairs said:

‘‘For many years we have been informing the world, as well as European countries and institutions about the truth on the Khojaly genocide and real facts of atrocities committed against the Turks and Azerbaijanis by the Armenians in the last 200 years. However, the European countries, European Parliament, Council of Europe haven’t adopted any objective decision on the issue. This resolution is not the first subjective decision of the European parliament with its anti-Islamic, anti-Turkish and anti- Azerbaijani essence.’’<sup>309</sup>

Both Turkish and Azerbaijani flags wave in most of demonstrations of Turkish or Azerbaijani people for the genocide claims and Khojaly. For instance, Turkish and Azerbaijani people with their flags met near the Turkish Embassy in Washington DC in

<sup>307</sup> ‘‘MP Azay Guliyev: European Parliament attitude towards Azerbaijan is a 'threat'’, (<http://fact-info.az/press?id=749>), date of access: 05.05.2016.

<sup>308</sup> ‘‘Report on Azerbaijan’’, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Strasbourg, 15.04.2003.

<sup>309</sup> ‘‘Ali Hasanov: European Parliament's resolution on so-called Armenian genocide arises from anti-Muslim, anti-Turkish sentiment’’, (<http://m.apa.az/en/news/225805>), date of access: 05.05.2016

24 April 2016 in order to protest Armenians.<sup>310</sup> In this sense, the Armenian issue fosters ethnic identity of diasporic Azerbaijanis due to being suffered from same nation with Turks.

Presently, the Karabakh conflict and Armenian problem are central issues into agenda of Azerbaijani diaspora. It is also a significant component of diasporic identity of Azerbaijanis. Until the earlier 1990s, the Azerbaijani diasporic organizations mostly organize social and cultural activities. In the subsequent years, the diasporic organizations have started to focus on the Karabakh case by way of publications and events. In this regard, the Karabakh problem has become a major stage in the diaspora formation and nationalism after the middle 1990s. Hence, the unresolved Karabakh problem provides Azerbaijanis abroad to have a fellow feeling and act together. What's more, the state is able to enhance its effect over the diasporas and Azerbaijanis abroad in virtue of the problem.

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<sup>310</sup>See in detail: (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/buyukelcilik-onunde-karsilikli-gosteri-14523902>), date of access: 05.05.2016.

## 5. AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA IN RUSSIA

### 5.1 THE HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT OF AZERBAIJANI TURKS TO RUSSIA BEFORE 1991

Aside from the Azerbaijanis living in their homeland, the Russian Federation has the largest Azerbaijani population with more or less 2 million. Azerbaijani Turks have reached to this number in Russia by migrations in different periods. This might be divided into three periods. The first period is 1940-1960, the second period is 1970-1990, and the third period is after 1990.<sup>311</sup> There was not a large-scale immigration during the period of Tsarist Russia. During this period, some of Azerbaijani intellectuals only moved to the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg. The mass Azerbaijani migrations mostly began during the period of the Soviet Union. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, some young Azerbaijani Turks, who come from upper-classes families, moved to Moscow and Saint Petersburg in order to have good education. Some of them continued to live in these cities permanently. There was an increase in the number of Azerbaijani Turks who educated in the Russian Empire with the development of petroleum industry and the rise of bourgeoisie in Baku in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, Abbasgulu Bakikhanov is one of the known Azerbaijani writers who lived in the Russian Empire. He also served as a Russian diplomat.<sup>312</sup> Alongside Bakikhanov, Mirze Abdullah Vezirov and Mirza Cafer Topchubashov were also known Azerbaijani scientists who lived in Russia in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to these people, Ali-Agha Shikhlinski, Hacı Kazım, Aghababa Sadıqov, İbrahim agha Usubov were famous Azerbaijani Turks served in the Russian army and science in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>313</sup> Especially, General Shikhlinski played a significant role in the development

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<sup>311</sup> Mariyam Seyidbeyli, ‘‘Azərbaycanlıların Rusiyədəki Diasporası: Xüsusiyyətləri və Trendləri Formasiyası və İnkişafı, 1988-2007’’ (Azerbaijani Diaspora in Russia: Features and Trends of Formation and Development, 1988-2007), Elm, Baku, 2009, p. 9-10.

<sup>312</sup> Nadir Devlet, ‘‘Rusya Türklərinin Milli Mücadele Tarixi: 1905-1917 (The National Struggle History of Turks in Russia: 1905-1917)’’, Türk Tarih Kurumu, III. Press, 2014, p. 32-33.

<sup>313</sup> ‘‘Azərbaycan Diasporasının Məskunlaşma Coğrafiyası (The Settlement of Azerbaijani Diaspora across the World)’’, (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?option=content&id=86>), date of access: 15.06.2016.



of Russian military art. Moreover, he was awarded with the gold sword due to his performance during the Russian-Japanese war.<sup>314</sup>

Furthermore, Azerbaijani scientists and thinkers played a crucial role in the development of oriental studies in the Russian Empire towards the late of the 19th century. For instance, Nasirov, Abuturab Vazirov, Mirza Mahammad Shafi, Osmanov, Sadikhbey Jafarov, Mirza Abdulla Vezirov, Mirza Hasan Tahirov, Mahammad Aliyev, Mirza Abdulla Gaffarov, Mirza Jafar Rizayev worked at the Russian universities as lecturers and translators. Mirza Kazim bey was one of the famous orientalist who wrote his first scientific work “Abridged grammar of the Arabic language.” He taught Persian and Turkish-Tatar (Azerbaijani) languages at Kazan University.<sup>315</sup>

Alongside Moscow and Saint Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod was also one of the important Russian cities which hosted Azerbaijani merchants and politicians from the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century towards the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This city was an important center for many Azerbaijani merchants in order to sell their products and fruits which were being transported to the city by railway. Zeynalabdin Taghiyev was one of the known Azerbaijani merchants who considerably contributed to trade between Russian Azerbaijan and the Russian Empire. This city also became important center for Azerbaijani politicians. For instance, the Ittifaq al-Muslimin as the first Islamic party of Russia was established by the guidance of Azerbaijani politician Alimardan Topchubasov in Nizhny Novgorod in 1905.<sup>316</sup>

In general, Azerbaijani Turks living in the present-day Russian territory comprised of intellectual people during the period of 1828-1918. These people considerably contributed to the empire in the fields of science, military and academy. However, these people did not attempt to have activities and solidarity in order to establish a diaspora. On the other hand, there were not any mass migrations of Azerbaijani Turks within the

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<sup>314</sup> ‘‘Ali agha Shikhlinski’’, ([http://www.azerbaijans.com/content\\_1635\\_en.html](http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_1635_en.html)), date of access: 16.06.2016.

<sup>315</sup> ‘‘Azerbaycan’da Bilim Tarihi (The History of Science in Azerbaijan)’’, ([http://www.azerbaijans.com/content\\_600\\_tr.html](http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_600_tr.html)), date of access: 16.06.2016.

<sup>316</sup> ‘‘Ислам в Нижнем Новгороде (Islam in Nizhny Novgorod)’’, (<http://www.gazeta.islamn.ru/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=132>), date of access: 16.06.2016.

empire during this period. Hence, we cannot consider Azerbaijani Turks in the cities of Russia as diaspora for this period.

After Azerbaijan's incorporation into the Soviet Union, a mass migration to the Soviet Union from the Soviet Azerbaijan did not emerge for a long time. Only some of Bolshevik Azerbaijanis had tendency to move to Moscow and Leningrad. Nevertheless, more Azerbaijani Turks immigrated to the Russian cities in the period of USSR in comparison with the Tsarist Russia. Along with other ethnic groups, many Azerbaijanis were deported to Siberia, Central Asia and to unpopulated areas of the Soviet Union during the political repression of the Soviet Union in 1932. Most of them lost their life in these regions. Some of Azerbaijani survivors from this deportation continued to maintain their life in these regions.<sup>317</sup>

The first wave of Azerbaijani mass migration during the term of the Soviet Union occurred from the 1940s towards the 1960s. Many Azerbaijani oil experts moved to Siberia and the Russian Far East districts in order to work and discover oilreservoir in these regions. Some of regions of the Far East, where Azerbaijanis experts settled, were even named as Baku II or III because of this mass settlement. Many Soviet Azerbaijanis served in the Soviet oil industry. For instance, Sabit Orudzhev asa Soviet Minister of the Gas Industry from 1972 to 1981 and Farman Salmanov as a Soviet Minister of Geology were well-known Azerbaijani experts who played a key role in the construction of oil industry in the SSCB. Thus, they laid the foundation of infrastructure of the current Russian oil industry.<sup>318</sup> Many Soviet Azerbaijanis also served within other fields for the Soviet Union. For instance, Kerim Kerimov was known Soviet Azerbaijani aerospace engineer. Tahir Salahov was a famous Soviet Azerbaijani painter who was also First Secretary of the Union of Artists of the USSR from 1973 to 1992. Alongside these people, there were also other known Soviet Azerbaijani people such as

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<sup>317</sup>“Azerbaycan Diasporasının Maskunlaşma Coğrafiyası (The Settlement of Azerbaijani Diaspora Across the World)” (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?option=content&id=86>), date of access: 15.06.2016.

<sup>318</sup> Igor Izmodenov, Aleksandr Karavaev, “Азербайджанская Диаспора В России (Azerbaijani Diaspora in Russia)”, “Россия и Мусульманский Мир (Russia and Islamic World)”, Social Science Institute of Russian Academy, N & (168), Moscow, 2006, p. 79.

writer Cingiz Huseynov, composer Asya Sultanova, painter Esker Memedov, scientist Fuad Aleskerov, composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov.<sup>319</sup>

The second immigration wave of Azerbaijanis in the period of USSR occurred from Baku to Moscow between the 1970s and the end of 1980s. This wave was more irregular and had different character from the first migration wave, since the second wave was including young Azerbaijani students and intellectuals.<sup>320</sup> Especially, many Azerbaijani students of the USSR moved to the cities of Moscow and Leningrad in order to have good education at the good universities. Although some of them returned to Azerbaijan, the rest of them continued to live in these cities. The people, who returned to Azerbaijan, engaged with Azerbaijani intelligentsia in the subsequent years.

Throughout the 1970s, Heydar Aliyev, as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of Azerbaijan Communist Party, made an effort for Azerbaijani students to have education at good universities in Moscow and Leningrad. Aliyev stated:

‘‘Despite of many obstacles, as a result of my efforts, we achieved to gain the quota to send 200 Azerbaijani students in order to take education at universities in Moscow and Leningrad in the first year. In the following years of the Soviet Union, we obtain more quota for Azerbaijani students. Thus, we began to send 800 Azerbaijanis to Moscow and Leningrad each year. I was really interested with each of them since I was seeing all of them as my own child.’’<sup>321</sup>

According to widely accepted idea by Azerbaijanis, Azerbaijan became more known by Soviet people and media after the end of the 1970s with Heydar Aliyev who became head of the Azerbaijani SSR. For some of them, Azerbaijan was not known as much as Georgia and Armenian within the USSR.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Babek Kurbanov, ‘‘Rusya’da Yaşayan Azeri Türkleri: Azerros Teşkilatı ve Şehriyar Meclisi (Azeri Turks Living in Russia: Azerros Organization and Şehriyar Council)’’, *Atatürk University Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Journal*, Number 20, Erzurum, 2002, p. 292.

<sup>320</sup> Izmodenov, Karavaev, 2006, p. 79.

<sup>321</sup> ‘‘Azerbaycan Diasporasının Maskunlaşma Coğrafiyası (The Settlement of Azerbaijani Diaspora Across the World)’’ (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?options=content&id=86>), date of access: 15.06.2016.

<sup>322</sup> ‘‘Azerbaijanis in Russia’’, *Vestnik Kavkaza*, 05.03.2013, (<http://vestnikkavkaza.net/analysis/society/37730.html>), date of access: 17.06.2016.

During my interviews, I asked P3Diaspora, Azerbaijani diaspora member in Saint Petersburg, ‘‘How has the Azerbaijani diaspora been formed in Russia? Particularly in Saint Petersburg?’’ He explained:

‘‘In the period of the Tsarist Russia, the number of Azerbaijanis was very low in Leningrad. Only young Azerbaijanis from the Azerbaijani elites were coming to Leningrad in order to have education. However, with the USSR, more Azerbaijanis had chance to move to the cities of Moscow, Leningrad, Minsk in order to have education. Despite of that, the number of Azerbaijanis in Leningrad was limited until the 1970s because of the language problem of Azerbaijanis. However, after 1978 this situation changed with Heydar Aliyev’s attempt. He indicated that we need Azerbaijanis who have different jobs and speciality. In addition to this, the universities in the Soviet Azerbaijan were not enough to specialize on various fields since they were mostly conducting their researches on oil industry. In this sense, he brought forward a proposal to Moscow that was targeting more Azerbaijanis to come to Moscow and Leningrad in order to have education within different fields. For instance, I came to Leningrad in 1981 to study law since law education was not sufficient in Baku. As a result of this, the number of Azerbaijanis in Moscow and Leningrad increased. While 70% of Azerbaijanis returned to Azerbaijani after their graduation, 30% of them maintained to live in Russia.’’,<sup>323</sup>

**Table 1:** The Official Number and Distribution of Azerbaijani Population in Russia<sup>324</sup>

<b>Years</b>	<b>Total Population of Azerbaijanis in Russia except Azerbaijanis in Dagestan</b>	<b>Number of Azerbaijanis in Dagestan Republic</b>
<b>1926</b>	4,563	23,428
<b>1939</b>	11,982	31,141
<b>1959</b>	32,723	38,224
<b>1970</b>	41,286	54,403
<b>1979</b>	87,907	64,514
<b>1989</b>	260,426	75,463
<b>2002</b>	510,184	111,656
<b>2010</b>	472,151	130,919

<sup>323</sup> P3Diaspora, interview by author, 21.10.2015, Saint Petersburg.

<sup>324</sup> ‘‘Том 1. Численность и размещение населения (Volume 1: The number and distribution of the Population)’’, ([http://www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis\\_itogi1612.htm](http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm)), *the official web-site of Federal State Statistic Service of the Russian Federation*, date of access: 18.06.2016

## 5.2 AZERBAIJANI MIGRATIONS TO RUSSIA AFTER 1991

After the collapse of the USSR, a rapid increase in the number of Azerbaijani Turks in the Russian Federation revealed because of some developments in the early 1990s. First of all, Azerbaijanis living in the Russian SFSR suddenly turned into an immigrated community from Soviet citizen with the reconstitution of the Russian SFSR as the Russian Federation in 1991. Secondly, many Azerbaijani Turks, who were living in the Azerbaijan SSR, immigrated to the Russian Federation after Azerbaijan gained its independence from the USSR in the beginning of the 1990s. Most of immigrated Azerbaijani Turks to Russia after the 1990s said to me during my interviews in Moscow and St Petersburg that we immigrated to Russia due to economic crisis and state of war in Azerbaijan. According to them, it was not possible to have a job in Azerbaijan and they aimed to find a job in Russia. Hence, the economic and political crisis as well as instability in Azerbaijan over these years became a major reason in the emergence of this immigration. As a result of this, the number of Azerbaijanis who immigrated to Russia after the 1990s has become much more than the number of Azerbaijani Turks who migrated to the Soviet Russia until the end of 1980. It has become the largest mass migration of Azerbaijanis to the Russian cities throughout the history. The official number of Azerbaijanis in Russia doubled from 1989 to 2002. This migration after 1990 might be defined as a labor migration, since the most of this immigrated Azerbaijanis have been from Azerbaijan's rural areas and unqualified employees, unlike the intellectual and skilled Azerbaijanis living in the USSR and the Tsarist Russia. Alongside the immigration to Russia mostly consisted of Azerbaijanis from rural areas of Azerbaijan in the 1990s, some of Azerbaijani businessmen also immigrated to Russia in the middle of the 90s.<sup>325</sup> As a result of this, the recent Azerbaijani settlers have become less educated and skilled in comparison with the long-time Azerbaijani settlers who migrated before 1991. As the percent of high educated and long-time Azerbaijani settlers in Russia was 47%, the percent of high educated Azerbaijani recent settlers have become less than 25%. Besides that, 48% of recent Azerbaijanis have had low-paid jobs.

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<sup>325</sup> Izmodenov, Karavaev, 2006, p. 81.

They have mostly worked in trade and service sectors. Hence, the percent of intellectual Azerbaijanis in Russia has considerably decreased after the 1990s.<sup>326</sup>

According to most of Azerbaijanis and Azerbaijani officials, the number of Azerbaijani population in Russia has reached up to two million with this mass migration after 1990. On the other hand, there are various speculations regarding the number of their population. For some Russian thinkers, there are less than 1 million Azerbaijanis in Russia in accordance with the official data.<sup>327</sup> Some of Azerbaijanis also exaggerate the number and they argue, there are more Azerbaijanis living in Moscow than in Baku with 2.5 million.<sup>328</sup> According to the General Administration for Migration Issues of the Interior Ministry of Russia, there are currently 11.28 million registered migrant workers and 630 thousand of them are Azerbaijani citizen.<sup>329</sup> Actually, it is not possible to obtain certain number of Azerbaijanis in Russia, because Azerbaijani people in Russia consist of different groups as long-time settlers, seasonal employee and intellectuals. According the general opinion, 2 million Azerbaijani guest workers are working in Russia. Plus, 80% of them are men.<sup>330</sup> According to the research on Azerbaijanis in Russia for 2003-2010 years, 27% of them being under 18, 65% of them being between 18-59 years and 8% of them aged 60 and over.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> See the official numbers: “Том 1. Численность и размещение населения (Volume 1: The number and distribution of the Population)”, ([http://www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis\\_itogi1612.htm](http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm)), date of access: 18.06.2016.

<sup>328</sup> “В Москве живет больше азербайджанцев, чем в Баку (More Azerbaijanis live in Moscow than Baku)”, (<http://hayastannews.com/news/90964.html>), 13.07.2015, date of access: 20.06.2016.

<sup>329</sup> “Азербайджанские мигранты в России (Azerbaijani migrants in Russia)”, Radio Azadlyq, (<http://www.radioazadlyg.org/a/25266408.html>), date of access: 20.06.2016.

<sup>330</sup> Sergey Rumyansev, “Migration and the Construction of the Ethno-National Diaspora in Post Soviet Azerbaijan”, Documents of University of Eastern Finland, 2011, p. 13

<sup>331</sup> Ulker Mehdieva, “Роль азербайджанской диаспоры в развитии социокультурных связей между Россией и Азербайджаном, 2003 – 2010 гг. (The Role of Azerbaijani Diaspora in the Development of Socio-cultural Relations Between Russia and Azerbaijan, 2003-2010)”, MA Thesis of Lomonosov Moscow State University of the Department of History, Moscow, 2015, p. 127.

All in all, there are three types of Azerbaijanis in Russia: ‘‘The pioneer immigrant, the short-term migrant and the notary.’’ The pioneer migrant includes Azerbaijanis who migrated to Russia before 1991 and Azerbaijanis immigrated to Russia in the beginning of the 1990s. The economic reasons play a minor role to their migration in comparison with the contemporary and recent migrations. The pioneer migrants had various reasons to arrive in Russia such as education, marriage, following relatives and friends in Russia. Almost all of them are citizen of the Russian Federation. They mostly run a small business with their relatives. The 20% of the retail business is run by them. Additionally, many stalls, small shops, niche markets, flower business and restaurants are run by Azerbaijani people.<sup>332</sup> According to the interviewed Azerbaijanis, there are many Azerbaijani taxi drivers in Russia. They are nearly synonymous with seller and taxi driver in Russia. Most of the pioneer migrants are unable to return to Azerbaijan, even though some of them are eager to return to homeland. Their children generate the second-generation of Azerbaijanis in Russia. They are more adapted to Russia and their Russian is generally better than their Azerbaijani Turkish. They go to Azerbaijan twice a year. In particular, they are pushed by their parents to visit their relatives in Azerbaijan in summer holidays.

While Moscow and St Petersburg are the most preferable cities in Russia for Azerbaijan, some of Azerbaijanis, in particular long-term settlers, work in the regions of Ural, Siberia and Yekaterinburg. Azerbaijan opened its consulate in Yekaterinburg in 2009 as the second consulate of Azerbaijan after St Petersburg.<sup>333</sup> This consulate is opened due to huge Azerbaijani population in the region and rising problems between Azerbaijani and Russian stallholders.

In Russia, the word of *migrant* mostly refers to short-term migrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia rather than long-time settlers like pioneer migrants. The short-term Azerbaijani migrants work and live in Russia temporarily in order to earn money.

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<sup>332</sup> Adeline Braux, ‘‘Azerbaijanis in Russia: an ‘imagined diaspora’?’’, in Marlene Laruelle (dir.), *Migration and Social Upheaval as the face of Globalization in Central Asia*, Leiden, Brill, 2013, p. 167-187.

<sup>333</sup> See the official webpage of the Azerbaijani Consulate in Yekaterinburg: (<http://azconsulate-ural.ru/>), date of access: 15.12.2015.

According to the interviewed Azerbaijanis, Azerbaijani migrants are mostly men and send money their children and wife in Azerbaijan. They are generally seller in markets.

The ‘notary’ includes Azerbaijani businessmen and intellectuals. These intellectuals are mostly academicians who have been living in Russia since the Soviet period. Araz Agalarov and Vagit Alekperov are most known Azerbaijani people in Russia as the notaries.<sup>334</sup>The notaries mostly lead the diaspora in Russia. Araz Agalarov supported Azerbaijani diaspora and its activities as former vice-president of VAK. His son, Emin Agalarov is also known pop singer in Russia.<sup>335</sup>There are also many Azerbaijani writers and poets who have been living in Russia since the USSR. They write and publish in both Russian and Azerbaijani Turkish languages. Love of Azerbaijan and Russia is one of their themes in their poems. Some of them such as Abuzar Bagirov and Nasib Nabioglu play a significant role within the diaspora. However, there has been a decrease in the number of Azerbaijani writers and poets in Russia since most of them are old people as well as some of them died such as İbrahim Kebirli, Faig Mamed.<sup>336</sup>

The best part of remittance to Azerbaijan comes from migrants in Russia since the total number of Azerbaijani guest in the world is approximately 3 million and 2 million of whom work in Russia. Most of Azerbaijani Turks have oriented towards Russia in order to earn money in the Post-Soviet period.<sup>337</sup>Russia has been more preferable rather than other countries for Azerbaijani migrants because of some points: Firstly, Russia was also officially former country of Azerbaijani Turks through the USSR and Tsarist Russia that links to political, economic and historical ties with Russia. Secondly the visa free regime between Azerbaijan and Russia. Thirdly, most of Azerbaijani people know Russian. Fourthly, the arrival from Russia to Azerbaijan by train or flight is easy for Azerbaijani Turks.

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<sup>334</sup> Braux, 2013.

<sup>335</sup> Süleyman Elisa, ‘Moskvada Azərbaycan Dünyası (Azerbaijani World in Moscow)’, Qurbanov Fondu, ISBN 978-5-8125-1077-0, Moscow, 2008, p. 58-65.

<sup>336</sup> ‘Поэты Азербайджаны Москвичи: Антология (The Azerbaijani Poets from Moscow: Anthology)’ edited by Abuzer Bagirov, Hudojestvennaya Literatura, Moscow, 2015.

<sup>337</sup> Romyansev, 2011.



The amount of money flow by Azerbaijanis from Russia to Azerbaijan has showed alteration over the years. The annual remittance from Russia to Azerbaijan was 2.5 billion USD until the Russian economic crisis in 1998. It was 2.5 times more than foreign investment in Azerbaijan which amounted to 1 billion USD in the years of 1995-2003. The money transfer reduced to 780 million USD with the crisis in 1998.<sup>338</sup> After the crisis, the money transfer by 947.000 Azerbaijani workers in Russia increased to 1.5 billion USD. It indicates that each Azerbaijani was sending 133 USD to their families in Azerbaijan.<sup>339</sup> In the subsequent years, there had been a slight reduction in the money flow. The money transfer was amounted to 1.34 billion USD for 2013.<sup>340</sup> According to the interviewed Azerbaijanis, each of them sends approximately 100 dollars per month. However, the amount varies among them. Most of them underlined, they send less money over years. In particular, the number of notaries sending money is quite low.

On the other hand, the number of Azerbaijani migrants has been on the decline in recent years. For instance, there is a decrease in the number of Azerbaijani immigrants in Russia from 615.000 to 554.00 by 10% between 2014 and 2015 in parallel with the decrease of all migrants in Russia.<sup>341</sup> Firstly, the new Russian law, which includes legal restrictions, higher permit fees and Russian language tests, makes tougher migrants' life in Russia.<sup>342</sup> The second reason is the decline in Russian economy through the economic sanctions<sup>343</sup> that has reduced the number of migrants. The third reason is the economic development of Azerbaijan in recent years. In parallel with this, the money transfer by

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<sup>338</sup> Izmodenov, Karavaev, 2006.

<sup>339</sup> Vladimir Mukomel, "Экономика нелегальной миграции в России (The Economy of the Illegal Migration in Russia)", Demoskop Weekly, (<http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2005/0207/tema04.php>), date of access: 25.06.2016.

<sup>340</sup> Evgeniy Belyakov, "За год гастарбайтеры вывезли из России триллион рублей (Migrant workers remit trillion rubles from Russia year around)", (<http://www.kp.ru/daily/26226/3108897/>), 06.26.2016.

<sup>341</sup> С. Alieva, "Продолжается отток азербайджанских трудовых мигрантов из России (The outflow of Azerbaijani Labor Migrants from Russia continue)", 14.11.2015, (<http://www.echo.az/article.php?aid=92108>), date of access: 15.07.2016.

<sup>342</sup> Matthew Luxmoore, "Ruble ripple: New Russian laws make life difficult for migrant workers", 27.02.2015, (<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/2/27/new-russian-laws-make-life-difficult-for-migrant-workers.html>), date of access: 17.07.2016.

<sup>343</sup> "Russia's GDP falls 3.7% as sanctions and low oil price take effect", The Guardian, (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/25/russias-gdp-falls-37-as-sanctions-and-low-oil-price-take-effect>), date of access: 17.07.2016.

Azerbaijani migrants from Russia to Azerbaijan has also reduced from 1 billion USD to 400 million USD in the years of 2014-2015. For economist Oktay Akhverdiyev, this decrease in money transfer from Russia to Azerbaijan does not affect Azerbaijani economy since 1 billion USD is even less than 1.5% of Azerbaijan's GDP.<sup>344</sup> For Vugar Bayramov, Azerbaijan does not depend on the money from Russia unlike Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Lithuania, Uzbekistan which are more dependent on the remittance from their migrants in Russia. On the other hand, for Allahveranov, if Russia's economy and the conditions become better, Azerbaijani immigrants prefer to return to Russia, because Azerbaijani immigrants are more adapted to the conditions and they have capital in Russia.<sup>345</sup>

In Russia, most of Azerbaijanis engage with business. Even some intellectuals and academicians have small business. M1Diaspora from AZERROS said:

“As Azerbaijanis, we cannot live without business since doing business and trade is endowment and nature of all Azerbaijanis. Trade is almost in our blood.”<sup>346</sup>

On the other hand, this situation of Russian Azerbaijanis has changed in recent years. According to M5Diaspora,

“Until recently Russian Azeris were pushing their children to work at bazaars rather than to receive education. However, this has changed recently. Russian Azeri children are motivated by Azeri parents to have education instead of working at farmers markets. As a result of this, there has been a considerable increase in the number of Azerbaijanis who work at various sectors in Russia in recent years. I encounter many Azerbaijanis at hospitals, courts houses...etc. There are even many Azerbaijanis at City Dumas. Hence, Azerbaijanis are becoming more effective in different fields of Russia.”<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> See the official webpage of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Azerbaijan's GDP in January-November 2015: (<http://stat.gov.az/news/?id=3056>), date of access: 17.07.2016.

<sup>345</sup> C. Alieva, “Продолжается отток азербайджанских трудовых мигрантов из России (The outflow of Azerbaijani Labor Migrants from Russia continue)”, 14.11.2015, (<http://www.echo.az/article.php?aid=92108>), date of access: 15.07.2016.

<sup>346</sup> M1Diaspora, interview by auhtor, 21.09.2015, Moscow.

<sup>347</sup> M5Diaspora, interview by author, 14.10.2015, Moscow.

Azerbaijanis in Russia are mostly married with their compatriots. However, the notaries are more married with Russians in comparison with the immigrants. All of the interviewed Azerbaijanis desire their children to marry Azerbaijanis instead of Russians. According to them, Russian family structure and lifestyle do not match Azerbaijani culture and understanding since Russians are depraved and Russian men can not be goodfather and husband. Hence, Azerbaijanis prefer endogamous marriages. In spite of this, some of Azerbaijani families prefer to communicate with their children in Russian. In this context, I met many young Azerbaijanis in Russia who do not know Azerbaijani language. According to the research of RAN Sociology Institute on 2455 students for 8-11 graders in Moscow, mother tongue of two thirds of young Azerbaijanis is Russian language.<sup>348</sup> It might accelerate the process for assimilation of new Azerbaijani generations in the long-run. For the deputy chairman of AMOR, ‘‘today we note a tendency of assimilation. Young people feel they are more Russians than Azerbaijanis.’’<sup>349</sup>

Most of Azerbaijani migrants in Russia have moved to the big cities of Russia from rurals of Azerbaijan. As a result of this, some of them have had adaptation problem to Russia due to cultural differences and language problem. Furthermore, some Azerbaijani migrants have confronted some problems such as nationalism, dispute with Russian sellers and policemen. Migrants and nationalism are two important issues of Russia. Many immigrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia have been harassed by Russian nationalists so far. On the other hand, many Russians have bad impression on immigrants in Russia. They think that immigrants have potential for crime and damage Russian economy. According to the survey, 78% of Russians want that immigrants should be restricted. For 73% of Russians, illegal immigrants should be deported and 52% of them are totally against immigrants.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> ‘‘Тройка по толерантности (Three marks on Tolerance)’’, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, (<https://rg.ru/2007/03/22/tolerantnost.html>), date of access: 20.10.2017.

<sup>349</sup> ‘‘Azerbaijanis in Russia’’, Vestnik Kavkaza, (<http://vestnikkavkaza.net/analysis/society/37730.html>), date of access: 18.07.2016.

<sup>350</sup> ‘‘Rusya’da artan ırkçılığın arka planında ne var? (What is the reason behind rising racism in Russia?)’’, (<http://www.trtturk.com/haber/rusyada-artan-irkciligin-arka-planinda-ne-var-51688.html>), date of access: 18.07.2016.

The anti-migrant campaign revealed with the killing a Russian man in Moscow by Azerbaijani immigrant whose name is Orhan Zeynalov in 10 October 2013. In the 13 October, the anti-migrant protests were taken with a crowd of thousands including Russian nationalist groups. At this protests, angry protesters stormed into the warehouse and immigrants. They also clashed with police. Aftermath of this, the warehouse was closed and some of Azerbaijani immigrants were arrested by Russian authorities. Subsequently, many retail markets, such as Tcheriomushki, were closed with the rising anti-migrant campaign.<sup>351</sup> On the other hand, the Russian police were severely criticized by human rights activists and Azerbaijanis since suspected Orhan Zeynalov was kicked and stepped by security services, while he was being arrested in a Moscow park.<sup>352</sup> Azerbaijan sent two notes to Moscow for consular support to Zeynalov.<sup>353</sup> However, Azerbaijani authorities as well as Azerbaijan's ambassador Polad Bulbuloglu did not lash out at Russian authorities.

It was also claimed by some Azerbaijani writers that Zeynalov was sacrificed in order to increase attack and press on immigrants as well as Azerbaijanis in Russia. In the wake of this incident, Russian nationalists, called Skinhead, increased their attacks to Azerbaijani and Caucasian immigrants. A hundred Azerbaijani immigrants were also deported from Russia. Some analyst argue that immigrants are used a trump by Russia in order to push the Post-Soviet countries to the Eurasian Union.<sup>354</sup>

Aftermath of Zeynalov case, Polad Bulbuloglu got on Dojd TV. He said that “ there has been a decrease in the number of Azerbaijani immigrants in Russia in parallel with the development of Azerbaijan's economy. Hence, Azerbaijani immigrants in Russia do not have potential to affect Azerbaijan's economy.”<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Adeline Braux, “Azerbaijani Migrants in Russia”, *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, No. 57, 3 December 2013

<sup>352</sup> “Azerbaijan: Moscow Murder Investigation Stokes Anti-Russian Sentiment”, Eurasianet, 30.10.2013, (<http://www.eurasianet.org/node/67706>), date of access: 20.07.2016.

<sup>353</sup> “Azerbaijan presented another protest note to Russia because of Orhan Zeynalov”, Ukrainian National News, 19.10.2013, (<http://www.unn.com.ua/en/news/1262834-azerbaydzhan-vruchiv-rosiyi-chergovu-notu-protestu-cherez-orkhana-zeynalova>), date of access: 20.07.2016.

<sup>354</sup> “Rusya'da artan ırkçılığın arka planında ne var? (What is the reason behind rising racism in Russia?)”, (<http://www.trtturk.com/haber/rusyada-artan-irkciligin-arka-planinda-ne-var-51688.html>), date of access: 18.07.2016.

<sup>355</sup> For the speech of Polad Bulbuloglu on Dojd TV: ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQ3deNIsh\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQ3deNIsh_k))

The other blatant example regarding racism against non-Slavs was the murder of Metin Mehdiyev with knife in Moscow in 10 April 2012. He was Azerbaijani Muslim public figure and activist at 32 years old. According to witnesses, one of five people murdered Mehdiyev was a girl. Hence, it was claimed that he was a victim of racism. This murder had reactions by some ethnic groups in Russia.<sup>356</sup>

According to the interviewees, there has been a considerable decrease in racist attacks in Russia in comparison with the 1990s. MLawyer and P3Diaspora said:

“After the collapse of the USSR, racism strongly increased in Russia. During these years, I had some problems due to not being Russian. At the weekends, as students we were going out and we were pulled over by policemen many times. Policemen sometimes were tearing up our documents and then accusing us of not having documents. Subsequently, they were picking us up at police headquarters. We had to call our university teacher to take us from police stations. Hence, we had kind of problems in the 1990s. However, these problems ended after Putin came to power. However, Russian police sometimes still might behave like a mafia.”<sup>357</sup>

“Racism against Caucasians and Central Asians in Russia has decreased recently in parallel with growing problems with the West. Until the Ukraine case, Russians are eager to be more cooperated with the West. However, with the Ukraine case Russian nationalists have realized that the West is rival of Russia and the Caucasian and Central Asian countries are real friend of Russia. It has also reflected to Russian domestic politics, and thus nationalism is currently going down.”<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> “В убийстве Метина Мехтиева участвовала девушка (A girl was complicit in the murder of Metin Mehtiyeva)”, *Izvestiya*, 11.04.2012, (<http://izvestia.ru/news/521554>), date of access: 22.07.2016.

<sup>357</sup> MLawyer, interview by author, 01.10.2015, Moscow.

<sup>358</sup> P3Diaspora, interview by author, 21.10.2015, Saint Petersburg.

### 5.3FORMATION OF AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA IN RUSSIA

There are many Azerbaijani organizations in Russia at the present time. There has been an increase in the number of these organizations in parallel with rising of Azerbaijani population in Russia in recent years. The Azerbaijani government has also paid more attention to consolidate these organizations under its control in last decade. In Russia, there are mainly 13 organizations within 89 regions.<sup>359</sup> However, most of them are small-scale and inactive organizations. Among these organizations, the All-Russia Azerbaijanis Congress (VAK)<sup>360</sup> and the Federal National Cultural Autonomy of Azerbaijanis (AZERROS)<sup>361</sup> are the most active and known organizations. "Ojaq" Cultural Center, as the earliest established Azerbaijani organization in Russia, was founded by Azerbaijani intellectuals and scientists in Moscow in 1988. Its press organ was *Çıraq*. It also published *Ziya Newspaper*. Later, it incorporated into the All-Russian Congress of Azerbaijanis. Nevertheless, it still sometimes organizes cultural events in itself with the name of Ojaq Center.<sup>362</sup> Although the Karabakh war and Black January Tragedy in 1990 led to Soviet Azerbaijanis to unite behind their motherland, Ojaq has never laid its activities beyond cultural field.<sup>363</sup>

Alongside these organizations, Azerbaijani Youth Organization of Russia called AMOR and Heydar Aliyev Foundation, which belong to the Azerbaijani state, carry out their activities for Azerbaijanis in Russia. Since 2004, Heydar Aliyev Foundation has conducted many cultural, scientific, social activities around the world under the guidance of Mehriban Aliyeva<sup>364</sup> who is president of this foundation as well as wife of

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<sup>359</sup> 'Azerbaycan Diasporasının Maskunlaşma Coğrafiyası (The Settlement of Azerbaijani Diaspora Across the World)' (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?option=content&id=86>), date of access: 15.07.2016.

<sup>360</sup> See the official web-site of the All-Russia Azerbaijanis Congress: (<http://www.vakmos.org/>).

<sup>361</sup> See the official web-site of the Federal National Cultural Autonomy of Azerbaijanis: (<http://fnkaa.ru/>)

<sup>362</sup> See the official web-site of SCWD to get information regarding Ojaq Center: (<http://diaspora.gov.az/index.php?option=content&id=684>), date of access: 25.07.2016.

<sup>363</sup> Adeline Braux, "Azerbaijanis in Russia: an 'imagined diaspora'?", in Marlene Laruelle (dir.), *Migration and Social Upheaval as the face of Globalization in Central Asia*, Leiden, Brill, 2013, p. 167-187.

<sup>364</sup> See in detail: The Official Web-Site of Mehriban Aliyeva, (<http://www.mehriban-aliyeva.az/en/>), date of access: 20.10.2016.

Ilham Aliyev. Leyla Aliyeva<sup>365</sup> is also vice-president of this foundation as well as daughter of Ilham Aliyev. The main mission of the foundation is to perpetuate of memory of Heydar Aliyev; to arrange conferences, events, programs; to establish centers, projects in line with support to promotion of Azerbaijan's image worldwide. AMOR focuses on Azerbaijani students in the universities of Russia in order to enhance their integration into the Russian society and their ties with their homeland.<sup>366</sup>

Heydar Aliyev Foundation also sometimes conducts some events in Russia in cooperation with AMOR, VAK and the Azerbaijani Embassy in Russia. For instance, the foundation arranged Iftar Party in Moscow in the beginning of July 2016 with the representatives of AMOR, VAK and the Azerbaijani embassy in Russia.<sup>367</sup>

AMOR under the guidance of Leyla Aliyeva has been working in 70 regional divisions of Russia since 2008 and organizes forum each year in order to bring young Azerbaijanis together. AMOR performs cultural and sport activities which address to young Azerbaijanis in Russia. Moreover, AMOR conducts activity and campaign for Khojaly each year in February. "Justice of Khojaly" campaign is also one of missions of AMOR to announce to Russia. AMOR also has student clubs within 30 universities in Russia where 6000 Azerbaijani students study. AMOR sometimes have joint organizations with Russian universities. Leyla Aliyeva also received Pushkin medal by Russian President Putin due to her contribution to the relations with the Russian Federation by the way of her activities.<sup>368</sup>

VAK was established in 5 March 2001 with the guidance of Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev and support of Russian President Putin. As a diasporic organization, the missions of VAK are to pay attention to problems of Russian Azerbaijanis, to wide ties

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<sup>365</sup> See in detail: The Official Web-Site of Leyla Aliyeva, (<http://leyla-aliyeva.org/?lang=en>), date of access: 20.10.2016.

<sup>366</sup> "Goals of the Foundation", *Official Web-Site of Heydar Aliyev Foundation*, (<http://heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/en/content/index/48/Goals-of-Foundation>), date of access: 27.07.2016.

<sup>367</sup> "Heydar Aliyev Foundation arranges Iftar party in Moscow", *AzTV*, 05.07.2016, (<http://www.aztv.az/readnews.php?lang=en&id=3060>), date of access: 28.07.2016.

<sup>368</sup> See the official web-site of Leyla Aliyeva in order to have information about AMOR: (<http://leyla-aliyeva.org/>).

of Russian Azerbaijanis with their homeland, to enhance socio-economic and cultural cooperation between Russia and Azerbaijan. VAK also considers itself as the main diaspora organization representing all Russian Azerbaijanis.<sup>369</sup> VAK currently carries on its activities within 76 regions of Russia. The first congress of VAK was held in Moscow in 4 October 2001. One of frameworks of this congress was to create a strong national diaspora which has a political significance within Russia. Accordingly, the decision was taken to open regional branches in the districts of Ural, Volga, North-West and Eastern Russia. The Azerbaijani institutions and schools, such as Sunday School, have been opened with VAK's support in order to teach Azerbaijani language and culture to Azerbaijanis around Russia. VAK also publishes weekly newspaper with the name of "Azerbaijani Congress" in Russian language. The Third Congress of VAK was held in 25 November 2011. VAK works with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan as well as with SCAALFC. VAK has also cooperation with some Russian government agencies such as the State Duma, The Part of United Russia and The Faculty of History of Moscow State University. Besides that, VAK sometimes carries out activities with other diasporas at the Moscow's House of Nationalities. After the decree of the Russian Government regarding foreign workers in November 2007 which has made the social and legal situation hard for Azerbaijani migrants, VAK has need to more focus on the problems of Azerbaijani migrants in cooperation with the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Government.<sup>370</sup> Vladimir Putin also participated and made a speech in the Second Congress of VAK in 19 October, 2004. He said, "we appreciate the contribution of Azerbaijani diaspora to the Russian society within all areas."<sup>371</sup>

After VAK, the second most active and known Azerbaijani organization is The Federal National Cultural Autonomy of Azerbaijanis which called AZERROS. Unlike VAK, AZERROS was established earlier in 1st October of 1999 under the guidance of Söyün

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<sup>369</sup> "История ВАК (The History of VAK)", (<http://www.vakmos.org/vac/the-history-of-the-wac/>), date of access: 29.07.2016.

<sup>370</sup> "О конгрессе (About the Congress)", (<http://www.vakmos.org/vac/about-the-congress/>), date of access: 01.08.2016.

<sup>371</sup> Süleyman Elisa, "Moskvada Azərbaycan Dünyası (Azerbaijani World in Moscow)", Qurbanov Fondu, ISBN 978-5-8125-1077-0, Moscow, 2008, p. 16-20.



Gasimov as an independent organization from the Azerbaijani government. AZERROS publishes the newspaper *Azerbaycansı-Rossii*.<sup>372</sup> AZERROS also has many regional offices within various divisions of Russia. Şehriyar Meclisi, as an organ of AZERROS, was established by Azerbaijani writers and poets in 31 July 2001. Şehriyar Meclisi carries out cultural activities in order to familiarize Azerbaijani Turkish artists and intellectuals. For instance, they memorized 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet in 16<sup>th</sup> February of 2002.<sup>373</sup> After Abbas Abbasov became the chairman of AZERROS, the organization became more effective and founded by the way of Abbasov's influence. Abbasov is former first deputy prime minister of Azerbaijan and one of the richest Azerbaijani in Russia. In the summer of 2013, Abbasov left the chairmanship to Mehriban Sadıqova.<sup>374</sup>

AZERROS has some problems with both VAK and the Azerbaijani government. Hence, AZERROS has cooperation and good relations with Russian authorities rather than Azerbaijani authorities. Furthermore, there is a huge competition between VAK and AZERROS. During my interviews with the representatives of VAK and AZERROS, both of them claimed that their organization is the hugest and main diaspora organization of Azerbaijanis in Russia. Some of the interivewees also claimed that AZERROS under the leadership of Abbasov was supported by Russia in order to use it against Azerbaijan in case of deterioration of relations between Russia and Azerbaijan. AZERROS defines itself as a main and single diaspora organization and representative of Azerbaijanis in Russia since it was established in accordance with the adoption of the Federal Law of the Russian Federation on ‘National-Cultural Autonomy (Natsionalno-Kulturnaya Avtonomiya)<sup>375</sup>’. This Federal Law, which was

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<sup>372</sup> See the official web-site of AZERROS: (<http://fnkaa.ru/>).

<sup>373</sup> Babek Kurbanov, ‘Rusya’da Yaşayan Azeri Türkleri: Azerros Teşkilatı ve Şehriyar Meclisi (Azeri Turks Living in Russia: Azerros Organization and Şehriyar Council)’, *Atatürk University Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Journal*, Number 20, Erzurum, 2002, p. 292.

<sup>374</sup> ‘AzerRos’un iclası keçirilib: Federal Şuraya Mehriban Sadıqova sədr seçilib (Azerros’s General Assembly realized: Mehriban Sadıqova elected into the chair of the Council)’, 29.06.2013, (<http://modern.az/az/news/41014#gsc.tab=0>), date of access: 02.08.2016.

<sup>375</sup> ‘Федерального Закона РФ О национально-культурной автономии (The Federal Law of the Russian Federation on the National and Cultural Autonomy)’, (<http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102041937&rdk=&backlink=1>), *The Official Portal for Legal Information of the Russian Federation*, date of access: 20.10.2016.

approved by the Council of the Russian Federation in 1996, determines legal grounds of the national-cultural autonomy and conditions for management of national processes and inter-ethnic relations in the Russian Federation. According to this law, AZERROS has right to represent cultural and social interests of Russian Azerbaijanis in the bodies of state government of the Russian Federation.<sup>376</sup>

Unlike VAK's board of directors including businessmen and intellectuals, AZERROS is more homogenous since its board of directors mostly consists of medium businessmen. In addition to this, VAK is more representing Azerbaijan's ethnic diversity than AZERROS, because VAK has many members from Baku which was one of the most cosmopolitan capitals of the USSR.<sup>377</sup>

As is also understood from their publications, both VAK and AZERROS have political stance in parallel with the Azerbaijani government on the issues related with foreign policy of Azerbaijan such as the Karabakh and Armenian problems. Especially VAK's discourses totally cover the Azerbaijan government's official position due to being founded by the government. Moreover, both of them avoid criticizing the Russian government. Furthermore, almost all Azerbaijanis and representatives of Azerbaijani organizations have same stance in the case of the territorial integrity and Armenian-hatred. Hence, these cases become one of the reasons for being for all diasporic organizations in Russia as well as in other countries.

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<sup>376</sup> ‘‘Общая информация (General Information on AZERROS)’’, (<http://fnkaa.ru/%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B0%D1%8F-%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8F/>), *The Official Website of AZERROS*, date of access: 20.10.2016.

<sup>377</sup> Adeline Braux, ‘‘Azerbaijanis in Russia: an ‘imagined diaspora?’’’, in Marlene Laruelle (dir.), *Migration and Social Upheaval as the face of Globalization in Central Asia*, Leiden, Brill, 2013, p. 167-187.

#### 5.4 PROBLEMS AND INFLUENCE OF AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA IN RUSSIA

Although there are plenty Azerbaijani organizations around Russia, there is not strong influence of Azerbaijani diaspora on both Azerbaijani and Russian domestic and foreign policy. There are many reasons explaining this situation. First of all, most of them are small and inactive organizations bearing low members. Some of them do not even perform any activity. Furthermore, they do not have enough attempts to reach all Azerbaijanis in Russia. Many common Azerbaijanis with whom I talked in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, said to me “any organization has tried to communicate with me and I did not know there are Azerbaijani organizations in Russia.” MAcademician said:

“The Azerbaijani organizations are directed by inexperienced people. Some of rich Azerbaijanis in Russia, such as, Agalarov, not assist these organizations no longer, since some of head of organizations waste money and pocket.”<sup>378</sup>

Secondly, some of heads of these organizations consider their organizations as tool in order to improve their business network. In this sense, they strive to do business rather than lobbying via kind of organizations. For M5Diaspora, representative of one of young associations for Azerbaijanis in Russia,

“There are some Azerbaijani businessmen in Russia. They put photos of Heydar Aliyev and Putin behind their seat at their offices for show only. They also register their organizations, even though their organizations do not have many members. They find some Azerbaijani journalists to make a statement. They aim to leave the impression of having diaspora and being known in Russia. Thus, they are targeting to get self-advertisement. However, this view is slowly changing among Azerbaijanis today.”<sup>379</sup>

Thirdly, the Azerbaijani diaspora is an incipient diaspora unlike widespread and historical Armenian diaspora. It is also relevant with the Azerbaijani state due to being young state. The Azerbaijani state has concentrated on Azerbaijani Turks in foreign countries in recent years. In this sense, there is still long process to form strong Azerbaijani diaspora both in Russia and the world. Furthermore, Azerbaijani Turks had

<sup>378</sup> MAcademician, interview by author, Moscow, 05.10.2015.

<sup>379</sup> M5Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 14.10.2015.

limited organizations across the world and Russia before 1991. These organizations did not have influence and target for lobbying. For instance, Ojaq, even established in 1988, has just stressed cultural activities so far. Besides that, most of Azerbaijanis came to Russia later in the 1990s due to bad conditions in Azerbaijan, unlike Armenians and Georgians who have been residing in the Russian territory for centuries. Therefore, the formation of Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia mainly began towards the end of the 1990s unlike Armenians and Georgians. In addition to all this, bear in mind that Russian Armenians have been supported by Russia throughout history. As indicated in the Chapter 3, Armenian nationalists were supported and used by Russia against the Ottoman and Caucasians Turks. This Russian policy also provided Russian Armenians to have strong diaspora within Russia.

Fourthly, there is not a strong cooperation between the Azerbaijani embassy and diaspora in Russia. There are also many speculations on relations between Azerbaijani diplomats and diaspora members. For instance, there was a huge problem between Kudsi Osmanov, former Azerbaijani Consul in St Petersburg and Vagif Memişov, trader and head of small organization. Osmanov had been accused of racketeering with using the name of MTN by Memişov. He also conveyed to Ilham Aliyev that Osmanov got money from Azerbaijani trader as racketeering. Aftermath of this charge, Memişov were not invited by the government for the World Azerbaijanis Congress. Subsequently, Ilham Aliyev made a speech that ambassadors and consuls should work with representatives of diasporas.<sup>380</sup> Polad Bulbuloglu, current Azerbaijani Ambassador to Russia, has been strongly criticized by dissident media organs such as Musavat Newspaper. According to one of the Musavat's News, Soyun Sadıqov, former head of AZERROS, claimed that Polad Bulbuloglu has good relations with Abbas Abbasov in contrast with the interests of the Azerbaijani government since the government considers Abbasov and his diaspora activities as being against itself. For Sadıqov, Ambassador Bulbuloglu has not sufficiently struggled against Abbasov due to his secret relations with Abbasov. Bulbuloglu has never made a comment regarding these

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<sup>380</sup> “Daha bir iş adamının faciəli başlanğıcı (A bad starting of a businessman)”, *Azadlıq*, 05.10.2011, (<http://www.azadliq.info/9036.html>), date of access: 05.08.2016.

allegations.<sup>381</sup> PDeputy pointed out the reason of the low relations between the embassy and the diaspora:

‘‘Low relations between the embassy and diaspora are arising from the policy of the Azerbaijani state. Azerbaijani authorities do not want a strong formation of foreign Azerbaijanis since it can be a threat against the government in the future. Hence, Azerbaijani diplomats are not really interested with diaspora.’’<sup>382</sup>

The most significant problem of the diaspora is lack of unity and solidarity between each other, unlike Armenian diaspora in Russia. The organizations and head of them in Russia have many problems and competition each other. Some head of Azerbaijani organizations desire their organizationsto become in the forefront. Furthermore, when I asked the reason of the diaspora’s being weak, they resorted to accuse each other many times during my interviews. Especially, the competition and problem between VAK and AZERROS is one of the biggest obstacles to have unity in Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia. It directly splits the diaspora in half. Especially, in the term of Abbasov being head of AZERROS, the crisis between VAK and AZERROS had deepened, since AZERROS became more effective over Russian Azerbaijanis with the support of Milyarderlər İttifaqı (billionaires club).<sup>383</sup>

It damaged the effect of VAK over Azerbaijanis in Russia. During my interviews, some representatives of VAK said to me that Abbasov was targeting to divide the diaspora due to his political ambitions and his bad relations with Aliyev’s government. M5Diaspora emphasized:

‘‘Abbasov via AZERROS was supported by the Russian state in order to use against Ilham Aliyev at a push. Abbasov was targeting to become the president of Azerbaijan with the support of Russia.’’<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> ‘‘Polad Bülbüloğlu ittihamlara niyə cavab vermir (Why does Polad Bulbuloglu deny the allegations?)’’, 21.04.2015, ([http://musavat.com/news/siyaset/polad-bulbuloglu-ittihamlara-niye-cavab-vermir\\_261036.html](http://musavat.com/news/siyaset/polad-bulbuloglu-ittihamlara-niye-cavab-vermir_261036.html)), date of access: 10.08.2016.

<sup>382</sup> PDeputy, interview by author, Saint Petersburg, 21.10.2015.

<sup>383</sup> Milyarderler ittifaqı indicates the very rich Azerbaijanis in Russia including Abbas Abbasov. Some of them, especially Abbasov, do not have good relations with Ilham Aliyev’s government.

<sup>384</sup> M5Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 14.10.2015.

This statement of M5Diaspora indicates that even though the Azerbaijani diaspora does not have potential to affect the bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Russia, the diaspora might be affected by the bilateral relations. It also shows that Russia aims to have political instruments and trumps, like the diaspora, in order to use the Azerbaijani government at a push.

In 3th March of 2015, before the VI Congress of AZERROS, some of members of AZERROS sent a letter to President Putin in order to complain about Abbas Abbasov. According to this letter, Abbasov wants to get hold of AZERROS with unlawful ways and he damages both AZERROS and Azerbaijan-Russia relations. According to this letter, Abbasov's illegal activities should be banned by the Russian government.<sup>385</sup>

With the VI Congress of AZERROS in 14 April 2015, Söyün Sadıqov was elected director of AZERROS, and thus AZERROS divided into two groups. Gudsi Osmanov, deputy ambassador of Azerbaijani to Moscow, also participated in this congress. Within his speech he underlined that Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia should gather under a single roof and purpose. After this congress, an interesting and chaotic situation has revealed within AZERROS. While either of AZERROS is still being ruled by Söyün Sadıqov, the other AZERROS is being directed by Mehriban Sadıqova with the support of Abbas Abbasov.<sup>386</sup>

All these make the diaspora weak in Russia. The diaspora is unable to have enough effect on Russian politics, media and public opinion. What's more, the diaspora can not sufficiently voice problems of Azerbaijanis in Russia yet. For instance, after the murder of Azerbaijani Muslim public figure Metin Mehdiyev by racists in Russia, the

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<sup>385</sup> “Rusiya azərbaycanlıları Abbas Abbasovdan Putinə şikayət etdilər (Azerbaijanis from Russia complaint about Abbasov to Putin)”, *AzNews*, 03.04.2015, (<http://www.aznews.az/index.php?c=news&id=78447>), date of access: 10.08.2016.

<sup>386</sup> “Abbas Abbasov səfir Polad Bülbüloğlu ilə bir qayıqda yer alır – Söyün Sadıxovdan şok iddia (An allegation from Söyün Sadıxov that Abbas Abbasov and Polad Bülbüloğlu take a place on same boat)”, *Musavat*, 21.04.2015, ([http://musavat.com/news/siyaset/polad-bulbuloglu-ittihamlara-niye-cavab-vermir\\_261036.html](http://musavat.com/news/siyaset/polad-bulbuloglu-ittihamlara-niye-cavab-vermir_261036.html)), date of access: 11.08.2016.

Azerbaijani diaspora underreacted and did not have a common attitude for this murder, even though many NGO's stood up for his dead. The Azerbaijani diaspora especially avoided to criticize the Russian government as well as Putin. Söyün Sadıqov, director of AZERROS, made a speech that "it is not neglect of Putin and Kremlin. There might be a provocation since it happened after Putin's statement in Duma."<sup>387</sup> Likewise, the Azerbaijani diasporic organizations did not have same attitude within Zeynalov's case. VAK highlighted that there had been an increase in the number of racist attacks to Azerbaijanis. However, according to AZERROS, there had been not any campaign against Azerbaijanis in Russia. It was claimed that AZERROS avoided to criticize the Russian authorities in order not to damage its good relations with the Russian government since it is oriented by Kremlin.<sup>388</sup> Both Zeynalov and Mehdiyev cases demonstrated that diaspora is unable to go further beyond statements and stance of the governments. MAcademician said about this:

"The reaction of the Azerbaijani diasporas were very ineffective in these cases. If the killed men were Armenian, Armenian diaspora would have much more reaction."<sup>389</sup>

Furthermore, most of interviewees avoided to answer my questions about the cases of Zeynalov and Mehdiyev. For most of them, personal matters underlie these cases. In addition this, most of interviewees did not want to make a comment on domestic issues of Azerbaijan and Russia. However, M5Diaspora had an interesting comment on the Zeynalov case:

"There were some political reasons behind this case. The Russian state wanted to intimidate Azerbaijanis with Zeynalov in order to increase its influence over Azerbaijan. The Russian secret service is behind these cases."<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>387</sup> "Rusya'da Azeri Din Adamının Öldürülmesi (The Murder of Azeri Religion Activist in Russia)", (<http://www.sondakika.com/haber/haber-rusya-da-azeri-din-adaminin-oldurulmesi-3534134/>), date of access: 11.08.2016.

<sup>388</sup> "Rusya'da artan ırkçılığın arka planında ne var? (What is the reason behind rising racism in Russia?)", (<http://www.trtturk.com/haber/rusyada-artan-irkciligin-ar-ka-planinda-ne-var-51688.html>), date of access: 11.08.2016.

<sup>389</sup> MAcademician, interview by author, Moscow, 05.10.2015.

<sup>390</sup> M5Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 14.10.2015.

The Azerbaijani diaspora is also not effective on Russian media. Even though the Armenia and Karabakh are major issues into the agenda of the diaspora, the diaspora is unable to make propaganda instrumentally. During the Four-Day War between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the beginning of April 2016, the Azerbaijani diaspora remained very ineffective against Armenian information warfare in Russia. During the war, hardly any of Azerbaijani diaspora members defended arguments of Azerbaijan on Russian TV channels, even though many diasporic Armenians put forward their arguments on Russian channels. Hence, views and comments on Russian channels regarding Karabakh became in favour of Armenian interests in parallel with strong influence of Armenians on Russian media.<sup>391</sup> On the other hand, bear in mind that the Russian policy towards the Karabakh issue has been in favour of Armenians throughout history due to Armenians being historical ally of Russia. This also gives Armenians opportunity to utilize Russia media for their propaganda. The Russian state, which has strong control on the media, gives the Armenian diaspora permission to propagandize.

According to some interviewees, one of the reasons making the Azerbaijani diaspora ineffective that Azerbaijanis do not have priority to be promoted as much as Armenians into Russian state system. For them, being Azerbaijani is more disadvantageous in comparison with being Armenian or Russian. PDeputy emphasized:

‘‘If you are Azerbaijani, it is very difficult to promote to high positions in Russian bureaucracy. However, it is easier for Russians or Armenians to promote to higher position.’’<sup>392</sup>

One of interviewees also said to me that his son was unable to promote to police chief due to being Azerbaijani. He also did not want this statement being recorded during my interview. According to MLawyer,

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<sup>391</sup> Zaur Rasulzade, ‘‘В Москве Азербайджан остался в одиночестве (Azerbaijan stood alone in Moscow)’’, (<http://haqqin.az/news/67513>), date of access: 12.08.2016.

<sup>392</sup> PDeputy, interview by author, Saint Petersburg, 21.10.2015.



‘‘If you have Azerbaijani surname in Russia, you might have some obstacles to promote to high position into Russian state system. For him, Armenians more prefer to give Russian surnames to their children in order to eliminate these obstacles in the future.’’<sup>393</sup>

In spite of all these, Azerbaijanis in Russia are changing with each passing day. M4Diaspora and M5Diaspora, as young diaspora representatives, said something about these changes in Azerbaijanis:

‘‘Most of Azerbaijanis who came to the 1990s, began to engage in trade. However, farmers markets have been decreased and centralized by the Russian state with rising of supermarkets. As a result of this, the number of Azerbaijani stallholder has been rising in recent years. It leads more Azerbaijanis to work in different fields. Azerbaijanis families in Russia also compel their children to have good education. Thus, social-economic development of Azerbaijanis enhance in Russia.’’<sup>394</sup>

‘‘Azerbaijani diaspora is becoming more effective in parallel with the improvement of Azerbaijanis in Russia. Currently, Azerbaijanis achieve to higher positions in Russia. Furthermore, there is a tendency within the organizations to league together. Plus, the Azerbaijani embassy also strives the organizations to incorporate into VAK. I think that AZERROS and VAK should unify in order to have strong Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia. I believe that it will happen soon.’’<sup>395</sup>

As M5Diaspora underlined, more Azerbaijanis work in Russian governance and local parliaments. For instance, Araz Murseliyev, who is active member of the diaspora, became consult of the head of the State Duma’s Nationalities Affairs Committee Gadjimet Safariliyev in June 2015.<sup>396</sup> Furthermore, unlike migrants from Central Asia, the Azerbaijani diaspora is more integrated and have more potential for lobbying in favour of Azerbaijan.<sup>397</sup>

<sup>393</sup> MLawyer, interview by author, Moscow, 01.10.2015.

<sup>394</sup> M4Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 13.10.2015.

<sup>395</sup> M5Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 14.10.2015.

<sup>396</sup> ‘‘Azərbaycanlı Araz Mürsəliyev Rusiya Dövlət Dumasında Ekspertlər Şurasının üzvü seçilib (Azerbaijani Araz Murseliyev elected for the Experts Council of the State Duma’s nationalities affairs committee)’’, (<http://apa.az/siyaset-xeberleri/diaspor/azerbaycanli-araz-murseliyev-rusiya-dovlet-dumasinda-ekspertler-surasinin-uzvu-secilib.html>), date of access: 14.08.2016.

Some Azerbaijanis from AZERROS have joined VAK. Furthermore, there have attempts to unify all organizations under VAK since 2003 with the encouragement of the Azerbaijani state. In this respect, some organizations such as Azerbaijan Cemiyeti, Nizami Cemiyeti, Azeri-Derbend, Odlar Yurdu, have incorporated into VAK. Some Azerbaijani media organs are also founded by VAK, such as Inter-Azerbaijan company, Milletin Sesi, Asude Vaxt, Azerbaijani Congress newspapers and Elmi-Publisistik Journal.<sup>398</sup> However, AZERROS, as second biggest organization in Russia, does still not incorporate with VAK. AZERROS just prefers incorporation under the leadership of AZERROS. This rivalry among Azerbaijani organizations maintains to diminish influence of the diaspora in Russia.

## **5.5 IDENTITY PERCEPTION OF AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA IN RUSSIA**

The interviewees, who consist of Azerbaijani intellectuals and diaspora activists, generally identified themselves as Azerbaijani, Azeri, Azerbaijani Turk and Turk during my interviews. The Azerbaijani organizations mostly apply to identify themselves and their language as Azerbaijani in their publications. Most of interviewees also identified Azerbaijan as a Turkic country. Alongside being Turkic country, they defined Azerbaijan as a Caucasian, Muslim and both Occident and Orient country. They also defined Russia variously as a Slavic, Eurasian, Christian, Western and Asian country. For Turkey, there were different definitions referring to Turkic, Muslim, Occident, Orient, Middle Eastern, Eurasian country. In fact, they did not agree on the identification of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Russia. They had various definitions for all these countries.

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<sup>397</sup> Adeline Braux, "Azerbaijani Migrants in Russia", *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, No. 57, 3 December 2013, p. 4.

<sup>398</sup> "Rusiyada Azərbaycan diaspor təşkilatları (Azerbaijani diasporic organizations in Russia)", 27.02.2013, (<http://olaylar.az/news/diaspora/32441>), date of access: 10.08.2016.

Patriotism is very apparent within diasporic identity of Azerbaijanis in Russia. Both young and old Russian Azerbaijani poets have many patriotic poems.<sup>399</sup> This is a part from the poem called ‘‘Gurbanam’’ written by Nesib Nesiboglu who is known Azerbaijani poet in Russia:

‘‘I have known you as heartwarming, soul warming,  
Since started talking, I called you beloved, my life.  
Whenever I am I shouted Azerbaijan,  
I would sacrifice myself for your holy land’’<sup>400</sup>

For the all interviewees, Armenia is the biggest enemy of Azerbaijan. Most of them do not have any Armenian friend. Some of them retorted my question ‘‘Will you acknowledge if your child get married with Armenian?’’ M4Diaspora and M5Diaspora had very sharp answers for my question:

‘‘Armenian may not be a friend. It is impossible for my child to marry with any Armenian since I will teach my child who are Armenians’’<sup>401</sup>

‘‘I respect each nation; however Armenians are our single enemy. It is not possible to become friend with any Armenian.’’<sup>402</sup>

This Armenian hatred overlaps with the ideology of Azerbaijanism. The interviewees also mentioned Armenians many times like the roots of evilness. The commemoration of the Khojaly Massacre is one of the main activities of all Azerbaijani associations in Russia. Even some associations in Russia do not organize any activities except of the commemoration of the Khojaly Massacre within a year. In this sense, the Armenian issue is one of the significant elements bringing diasporic Azerbaijanis in Russia together in harmony with the current state ideology based on Azerbaijanism.

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<sup>399</sup> ‘‘Поэты Азербайджаны Москвичи: Антология (The Azerbaijani Poets from Moscow: Anthology)’’ edited by Abuzer Bagirov, Hudojestvennaya Literatura, Moscow, 2015.

<sup>400</sup> Kurbanov, 2002, p. 296.

<sup>401</sup> M4Diaspora, interview by auhtor, Moscow, 13.10.2016.

<sup>402</sup> M5Diaspora, interview by auhtor, Moscow, 14.10.2016.

Almost all interviewees just prefer Azerbaijani people for their child to marry in order to protect their tradition. They have also positive approach for their children to marry with Turkish people. They mostly think that their culture and traditions do not fit to cultures of Russians or other nations, and therefore their children should marry with Azerbaijani and Turkish to have good marriage. In this respect, diasporic Azerbaijanis are very traditionalist rather than being conservative Islamic, because their answers on the marriage of their child mostly based on tradition and nation rather than religion.

For almost all interviewees, Turkey is the best ally and friend of Azerbaijan. For my question “which football team would you support if Turkey and Russia held football match?”, most of them answered, “I would support Turkey.” They generally answered that after Turkey, the second ally of Azerbaijan is Russia. What’s more, for my question “which football team would you support if Kazakhstan and Russia held football match?”, most of them said, “I would support Russia.” However, I would like to point out that some of them avoided criticizing Russia during my interviews with audio recorder. For instance, one of the interviewees answered, “I would support Russia” during my interviewee with audio recorder. After the interviewee and turning of audio recorder, he said to me that, “actually I would support Kazakhstan instead of Russia, but I am targeting to be deputy in Russia. Therefore, I have to be careful when I make a statement.” In spite of this, they generally answered my questions faithfully.

For the interviewees Turkey bears more priority than other Turkic communities and countries, even though they know Azerbaijan shares same cultural and ethnicity elements with other Turkic communities. In the eyes of them, Turkey seems as elder brother of Azerbaijan and the Turkic world. P1Diaspora and M5Diaspora said:

“I tour around with Turkish flag in the streets of Saint Petersburg to celebrate when Turkish teams win...” “We are Turkish civilization. We share same history and future with Turkish people. Kazakhs, Uzbeks also our friends, but Turkey is our main brothers.”<sup>403</sup>

“I support Turkey if Turkey has match with Russia. However, I support Russia, if Russia has match with Kazakhstan. Because, I think Turkey and Azerbaijan are main Turkish countries.

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<sup>403</sup> P1Diaspora, interview by author, Saint Petersburg, 20.10.2015.

Kazakhs and Kyrgyz people in Russia do not have a strong national consciousness unlike Tatars who are still able to preserve their cultures and traditions even though they had many difficulties throughout history. They even organize Turkic feast. Nevertheless, I think Kazak and Kyrgyz people in their countries are different from whom living in Russia.’’<sup>404</sup>

MLecturer and P3Diaspora also emphasized the closed ties between Turkey and Azerbaijan through my question regarding the match:

‘‘I support Turkey if Turkey has match with Russia. However, I support Russia if Russia has match with Kazakhstan, because as Turkish and Azerbaijani people, we are more closed each other than Kazakh and Kyrgyz who are more different than us.’’<sup>405</sup>

‘‘I see Azerbaijan within Turkish civilization. Azerbaijani should follow Turkey as participating in any alliance where Turkey is also member, because Turkey is the most supportive of Azerbaijan.’’<sup>406</sup>

These ideas mostly overlap with Turkism and Elchibey’s foreign policy understanding rather than with Azerbaijanism since it is based on ethnic nationalism instead of territorial nationalism. Elchibey, as a Turkist leader, paid the most attention to relations with Turkey and was strongly underlining brotherhood between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

For the ideology of Azerbaijanism, Azerbaijan should pursue foreign policy based on balanced and pragmatism. Unlike the period of Elchibey, it has been ongoing foreign policy understanding of Azerbaijan since Heydar Aliyev. According to this policy, Azerbaijan has good relations with Israel because of its interests. Additionally, the Azerbaijani state pays attention to relations with Jewish diaspora because of its influence across the world. However, the Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia does not have private relations with Jewish diaspora. Furthermore, all of them indicated Turkey as the best ally of Azerbaijan. None of them also underlined the importance of Israel and

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<sup>404</sup> M5Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 14.10.2015.

<sup>405</sup> MLecturer, interview by author, Moscow, 22.09.2015.

<sup>406</sup> P3Diaspora, interview by author, Saint Petersburg, 21.10.2015.

Jewish diaspora. It does not accord with the diaspora policy of Azerbaijan based on Azerbaijanism.

Some of diaspora members and intellectuals have strong Turkist ideas. For instance, MWriter, who is an intellectual person within the diaspora, had strong Turkism and Turanism ideas. He underlined:

‘‘I am not Azeri, I am Turk. This Azeri word was created by Persians to divide us. Azerbaijan indicates a territory instead of a nation. I am from Northern Azerbaijan since South Azerbaijan is currently territory of Iran. Iran was also ruled over by Turks until 1926 for 2500 years...’’  
 ‘‘Culture is essence of Turkic identity. Firstly, we need to have common culture to achieve joint language and alphabet. We need to come together with the establishment of economic or cultural union of Turkic nations rather than aiming to have Turan state which might make the world alarm. We should make an effort in order to spread our Turkic values and culture into the world. We also had many strong empires and state as Turks in the past. We had one of the longest-living states throughout history, which is the Ottoman Empire...’’ ‘‘The Russian state intertwines with Turkic geography including Chuvashians, Kumuks, Tatars and borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey. We should not prefer these communities to use against Russia.’’<sup>407</sup>

Generally, the representatives and intellectuals of the diaspora have positive approach to the Turkic world due to sharing same cultural and ethnicity elements. They believe, the Turkic countries and communities should enhance ties among themselves. Some of them also underlined, Turkey is the most significant country to lead towards any Turkic union. MAcademician said:

‘‘Turkey should take initiative for establishment union among the Turkic countries. Especially, economic cooperation and foreign investment should be increased among the Turkic countries. Russia also should join this. Unless Russia participates, the Turkic communities should establish a union between each other.’’<sup>408</sup>

M3Diaspora strongly criticized Turkey because of its recent foreign policy:

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<sup>407</sup> MWriter, interview by author, Moscow, 15.10.2015.

<sup>408</sup> MAcademician, interview, by auhtor, Moscow, 05.10.2015.

‘‘Turkey stresses Arabs so much. Instead of Arabs, Turkey should pay attention to Turkic communities in Russia. Turkey should strive in order to gather Turkic communities in Russia. He also added, as Azerbaijani Turks and Turkic countries, we should have followed the democratic political system of Turkey due to our lack of democracy. Azerbaijan has also lack of becoming a state due to being a new state. However, Turkey has a strong experience and background on becoming a state since the Ottoman Empire.’’<sup>409</sup>

Turkic communities in Russia sometimes come together within joint organizations. The Newroz Festival is one of the significant activities in Russia to gather Turkic communities in 21st March of each year. Azerbaijani organizations also participate in Newroz Festivals each year. Alongside joining Newroz Festivals, the Azerbaijani diaspora organizes a fast-breaking meal in the month of Ramadan each year. For instance, under the guidance of the Russian Council of Muftis, Heydar Aliyev Foundation organizes a fast-breaking meal with the contribution of VAK and Azerbaijani diplomats in Russia. Approximately five hundred Russian Muslims join these activities each year.<sup>410</sup> I also participated in one of the fast-breaking meals organized by Heydar Aliyev Foundation in Moscow in June 2015. Other Azerbaijani organizations also organize a fast-breaking meal in various cities of Russia independently.<sup>411</sup> In these organizations, Azerbaijani diaspora representatives meet Turkic and Muslim people in Russia. M3Diaspora and M1Diaspora, representatives of different organizations in Moscow, mentioned:

‘‘As our organization, we have had many organizations targeting to gather Turkic communities in Russia. For instance, we organized the Festival for Turkic communities with the participation of many Turkic people from Yakut, Altai, and Crimea. Russia is also positive to kind of organizations.’’<sup>412</sup>

‘‘I do believe it is necessary to meet different communities and diasporas in Russia. In this sense, we sometimes meet them at Moscow’s House of Nationalities.’’<sup>413</sup>

<sup>409</sup> M3Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 08.10.2015.

<sup>410</sup> ‘‘Heydar Aliyev vakfi Moskova’da iftar düzenledi (Heydar Aliyev Foundation organized the fast-breaking meal)’’, *Gündem Avrasya*, 04.07.2014, (<http://www.gundemavrasya.com/haydar-aliyev-vakfi-moskovada-iftar-duzenledi-3190h.htm>), date of access: 10.08.2016.

<sup>411</sup> ‘‘Azeri Diasporasından Moskova’da İftar (The Azeri Diaspora Organized the fast-breaking meal in Moscow)’’, 18.07.2014, (<http://www.haberler.com/azeri-diasporasindan-moskova-da-iftar-6277200-haberi/>), date of access: 10.08.2016.

<sup>412</sup> M3Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 08.10.2015.

<sup>413</sup> M1Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 21.09.2015.

P3Diaspora, a diaspora representative in Saint Petersburg, talked about the meeting of different diasporas<sup>414</sup> in Saint Petersburg:

‘‘We meet once each month at the meetings of the Council for Nationalities and Religion belonging to the Governor of Leningrad Oblast. Furthermore, we sometimes meet different diasporas as well as Turkic diasporas at the Friendship House. There are sometimes activities at the Friendship House with the support of the Governor. We also sometimes invite Turkish and Azerbaijani embassies in Russia. We have chance to talk about problems of ethnic minorities in Russia.’’<sup>415</sup>

Other representatives of Azerbaijani organizations also said, ‘‘they rarely have joint activities with other Turkic communities and diasporas’’. However, these activities are not enough to have permanent cooperation among Turkic ‘‘diasporas’’ in Russia. Nevertheless, meetings with Turkic ‘‘diasporas’’ have potential to make the Azerbaijani diaspora more ethnic diaspora in the long run. As long as ties with Turkic ‘‘diasporas’’ enhance, the Azerbaijani diasporas might gain diasporic identity based on ethnic identity.

As the current ideology of the state, Azerbaijanism refers to civil and territorial nationalism rather than ethnic nationalism in order to be embraced by all ethnic groups within Azerbaijan. It is supposed that one of the reasons to stress Azerbaijanism is to prevent separatist movements such as Talysh and Lezgin movements that rose up in the 1990s. The interviewees did not agree on the cases of Talysh and Lezgin. They have various points regarding Talyshs and Lezgins. M3Diaspora and M4Diaspora underlined in this case:

‘‘We have lots of Talysh and Lezgian friends and good relations with them. Some of them portray themselves as Russian. Despite of that, most of them proud of being Azerbaijani.’’<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>414</sup> The ‘‘diaspora’’ word is used in Russia in order to identify different ethnic groups regardless of that they are real diaspora or not.

<sup>415</sup> P3Diaspora, interview by author, Saint Petersburg, 21.10.2015.

<sup>416</sup> M3Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 08.10.2015.



‘‘Our policy based on Azerbaijanism. We have closed relations with Talyshs, Lezgins and Avars. Most of them from Azerbaijan also identify themselves as Azeri. I think there are no Lezgi and Talysh problems. Probably some minor groups are supported by Russia. I think, Azerbaijanism policy is better in order not to have Talysh and Lezgi problems.’’<sup>417</sup>

Conversely, some of interviewees have different and negative approach to Lezgins and Talyshs. For instance, M5Diaspora and MLawyer said:

‘‘Actually I do not want to talk about them, because they may take offence. Lezgins have never benefited Azerbaijanis throughout history. If a war breaks out now, they firstly shoot us. They have more tendencies towards Russia and Dagestan.’’<sup>418</sup>

‘‘Even though it is written Azerbaijani in their passports, they identify themselves as Lezgi, Talysh as making a distinction. When they do good things, they define themselves as Talysh, Lezgi, Kurd. On the other hand, they define themselves as Azeri, when they do something bad. We feel more closed to Turkish people than them.’’<sup>419</sup>

According to the comments on Talyshs and Lezgins, there are both reflections of territorial and ethnic nationalism. Hence, it includes both Azerbaijanism and Turkism thought.

As is also understood from the answers of the interviewees in the context of Eurasianism, they are affected by Russian propaganda and media. There are reflections of Russian propaganda on their answers in the light of Eurasianism. Neo-Eurasianism bears imperial and nationalist vision of Russia. However, it is covered up by Russia in order to attract non-Russian communities into Russia’s sphere of influence. In this sense, Neo-Eurasianism ideology is offered by propagandist Russian thinkers, like Dugin, as an integrative ideology of Eurasian communities. According to the answers of the interviewees, imperial and nationalist vision of Neo-Eurasianism is overlooked by them.

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<sup>417</sup> M4Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 13.10.2015.

<sup>418</sup> M5Diaspora, interview by author, 14.10.2015, Moscow.

<sup>419</sup> MLawyer, interview by author, 01.10.2015, Moscow.

On the other hand, they generally think that both Azerbaijan and Turkey should have good relations with Russia. Furthermore, Turkism thought of the interviewees bears Eurasianism perspective. MAcademician emphasized: ‘‘

‘‘As Azerbaijan, we are part of Turkic and Islamic civilization. As for Russia, Russia is an Asian country rather than European country. Once upon a time, this Russian territory called Tatars’ territory. Russia is mixed of various cultures. In this sense, Azerbaijan and Turkey should join the Eurasian Economic Union.’’<sup>420</sup>

PRector has mixed political ideas of Turkism and Eurasianism. According to him:

‘‘Azerbaijani diaspora has a localist and small perspective, but it is a mistake. The diaspora should have Azerbaijani and Turkist perspective and ambitions. The diaspora should feel Turkic world inside. Turkism can bring us together. Furthermore, Turkic and Slavic world are near each other. Turkic communities spread on a large area which begins from Altai region of Russia. There is a known statement here, ‘you can find Tatar under the skin of Russian.’ Even though Turks and Slavs have different religion, they share many similar values such as justice and respect to the elders.’’ Turks and Russians have learned from one another in the context of language and culture so far. Neither Russia nor Turkey is closed to the Europe. If they together establish a union like the European Union, they can have a very big potential and power. Unless Turks and Slavs unite, they will be demolished by US and China. The West, particularly, British has wanted Turks and Russians to fight each other for 500 years. They have taken advantage of conflict between Turks and Russians.’’<sup>421</sup>

M3Diaspora also has both Eurasianist and Turkist ideas. His answer for my question ‘Which civilization does Russia belong?’

‘‘Russia is Slavic-Turkic country. As Slavs reveals Russia’s Slavic characteristic, but Turks cannot reveal Russia’s Turkic characteristic and heritage. Tatars just are one step ahead in this context. Although 70 percent of the nation currently consists of Russians, 70 percent of the current Russian territory is mainly territory of Turkic communities. Therefore, this territory is cradle of Turkic-Slavic civilization as hosting three communities which are Turk, Slav and

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<sup>420</sup> MAcademician, interview by auhtor, 05.10.2015, Moscow.

<sup>421</sup> PRector, interview by auhtor, 22.10.2015, Moscow.

Finnish. These three communities created a new ethnos and civilization that called Russian civilization.’’<sup>422</sup>

Later, I address a question to him: “Why there are some problems between the Slavic countries such as the current problem between Ukraine and Russia?” He answered it in the perspective of Neo-Eurasianism which portrays US as the biggest enemy:

‘‘Russians and Ukrainians share same blood and root. US shows discord among them. US is also enemy of all world.’’<sup>423</sup>

PDeputy has also ideas of Turkism and Eurasianism with some dilemmas:

‘‘Firstly, Azerbaijan is a member of Turkic civilization. Azerbaijan should have alliance with neighbor states and Turkic states.’’<sup>424</sup>

In the following question, his answer had Eurasianism perspective unlike his answer in the previous question:

‘‘Azerbaijan should join the Eurasian Economic Union instead of NATO or the EU. The EU and US are the biggest enemy of Russia. ...It is nice that Turkey and Russia have good relations. However, the Europe and America want to break up these good relations. I hope, the presidents of Turkey and Russia will not permit the destroying of these good relations by the West.’’<sup>425</sup>

Interestingly, he also answered the question related with the Armenian issue in contrast with his Eurasianism thought:

‘‘Russia does not want a strong Turkic state. Therefore, Russia supports Armenia.’’<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> M3Diaspora, interview by author, 08.10.2015, Moscow.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid.

<sup>424</sup> PDeputy, interview by auhtor, 21.10.2015, Saint Petersburg.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid.

For the Crimean Tatar issue, their general point of view indicating, “Crimean Tatars should keep good relations with Russia in order to take advantage of this situation and not to be suppressed. According to their view, if Crimean Tatars are embittered by relations with the Russian government, Armenians can replace their position in Crimea.”

Some of the interviewees mentioned Azerbaijan’s foreign policy choice in the light of Azerbaijanism referring to “it is better not to participate in any union for Azerbaijan and to have independent foreign policy in order to take advantage.” M4Diaspora was single interviewee who supports Islamic Union:

“Azerbaijan should participate in Islamic Union... Armenia is the biggest enemy of Azerbaijan and Zionism is the biggest enemy of all world.”<sup>427</sup>

Except of M4Diaspora, none of the interviewees had answers based on Islamism. It demonstrates that the Azerbaijanis diaspora members and intellectuals in Russia mostly do not have Islamic ideology. They consider Islam as their part of culture and national identity.

All interviewees were of the same mind that the Karabakh issue is the biggest problem of Azerbaijan. They agree on Karabakh that Azerbaijan should never leave due to being historical Azerbaijani territory. So to speak, it is central issue of the diaspora. This accords with the mission of the diaspora given by Heydar Aliyev that regaining of the occupied territory is mission of all Azerbaijanis across the world. It is also fundamental goal of Azerbaijanism. Furthermore, the evolution of the Karabakh conflict has been going in the same period of the formation of the diaspora. While the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan keeps on, the formation of the diaspora also continues in the meantime. Therefore, the Karabakh problem has direct effect over the diaspora. Karabakh theme also seems in the poems of Azerbaijani poets in Russia. This is a part from the poem “Bayatılar” written by Mehman Miskinli.

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<sup>427</sup> M4Diaspora, interview by author, Moscow, 13.10.2015.

‘My darling, to Karabakh,  
The sun is shining in Karabakh.  
I wish flowers would blossom in the thrall gardens,  
And it would snow in that garden’<sup>428</sup>

The interviewees generally pointed out that ‘‘firstly peaceful ways should be tried to achieve peace in Karabakh.’’ Unless it will not happen, the second option might be war. When I ask, ‘‘may it be better to give up Karabakh for Azerbaijan?’’ All of them strongly emphasized that, ‘‘it is impossible, because it is our territory.’’

Generally the interviewees are aware of that Russia supported Armenian within the Karabakh war in the 1990s. When I asked, ‘‘Is Russia guilty of the occurrence of the Karabakh problem?’’ Some of them avoided to criticize directly the Russian government or preferred the problem to link with the Russian previous government.

‘Russia supported Armenians in 1994. Armenians were supported by the previous Russian government. I think, Russia currently prefers solution of the problem.’<sup>429</sup>

‘If the Azerbaijani diaspora becomes stronger and strives for the Karabakh issue, Russia will might be helpful for Azerbaijan.’<sup>430</sup>

They generally consider Russia as a key actor for the solution, even though some of them criticized Russia and considered it as guilty in the case of Karabakh.

‘Azerbaijan is unable to have military action towards Karabakh because of Russia. It is impossible to achieve any solution without Russia in Karabakh. Russians even said that they are guilty of this problem.’<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> Kurbanov, p. 299.

<sup>429</sup> P2Diaspora, interview by author, 20.10.2015, Saint Petersburg.

<sup>430</sup> MAcademician, interview by author, 05.10.2015, Moscow.

<sup>431</sup> M4Diaspora, interview by author, 13.10.2015, Moscow.

‘‘The Karabakh issue is unable to achieve any solution because of Russia which does not want a solution. A solution depends on Russia. Russia does not want a strong Turkic state. Therefore, Russia supports Armenia....Azerbaijan has to be a friend with Russia, because Azerbaijan has no other option.’’<sup>432</sup>

MLawyerfrom Karabakh strongly criticized Russia:

‘‘I am from Karabakh and I remembered what happened there. I also remember Russian troops in Karabakh. There was a terrible situation in Karabakh during the war. Armenia obviously did not have a capacity to occupy Karabakh by itself. Everybody knows, Armenia occupied Karabakh with the support of Russia. A decision was taken by Moscow in January 1990 that Karabakh will be given to Armenia. Aftermath of this decision, many Azerbaijanis took to streets in order to protest. Russian military killed many Azerbaijanis in 20 January 1990. We were also killed in 1903, 1905, 1917. Hence, how can I say, Russia is our friend.’’<sup>433</sup>

However, one of my following questions that he answered in contrast with his previous statement. I asked, ‘‘which country is the best friend of Azerbaijan?’’ He said:

‘‘Firstly Turkey, secondly Russia rather than Iran. Russia is our both friend and enemy. Because, we love Russians due to being honest and objective. They also supported us against Iran.’’<sup>434</sup>

Actually, their answers related with Russia bear many dilemmas. It is obvious that Russia weights strongly on their mind as a dominant and regional power. The fact remains that they see Turkey as the most supportive of Azerbaijan in the case of Karabakh.

‘‘Turkey is a single country that supports us for resolution. Maybe, Russia solves the problem, if Russia considers us as a strategic partner.’’<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> PDeputy, interview by author, 21.10.2015, Saint Petersburg.

<sup>433</sup> MLawyer, interview by auhtor, 01.10.2015, Moscow.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>435</sup> MLecturer, interview by auhtor, 22.09.2015, Moscow.

‘‘Azerbaijan needs support from Turkey and Russia. Only Turkey’s support to Azerbaijan might be enough to solution.’’<sup>436</sup>

‘‘Turkey is the most supportive of Azerbaijan. Unless Turkey supports us in the 1990s, we were unable to remain standing.’’<sup>437</sup>

For my question ‘‘*How can the Karabakh problem be solved?*’’, M5Diaspora said, ‘‘*it can be solved with only war. After his answer, I asked ‘is it possible that Russia behaves like in Georgia in 2008?’*’’<sup>438</sup>

‘‘Azerbaijan thinks that peaceful ways for solution have not exhausted yet. Moreover, Georgia did not have a brother like Turkey, but Azerbaijan has brother Turkey.’’ ...Karabakh was occupied by Russia. However, Azerbaijanis in Russia do not want to say this, because they afraid of being deported from Russia. We should stop expectation from the OSCE Minsk Group including Russia and France which are brothers of Armenia. However, Turkey as my brother is not member of this group. Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia should come together to discuss every way for any solution. If Russia says to Sargsyan that you have to leave Karabakh, Armenia has to withdraw from Karabakh. For this happening, Azerbaijan has to sell its all petrol to Russia and join the Eurasian Union.’’<sup>439</sup>

None of them indicated that the West as NATO or the EU can be helpful for any solution in Karabakh. Only P1Diaspora mentioned the USA.

‘‘The USA and Russia can find a way to peaceful solution. If a war occurs, Turkey supports us.’’<sup>440</sup>

Former Sovietdiplomat Ali was single interviewee who indicated a bilateral meeting between Armenia and Azerbaijan for any solution.

‘‘The only way to solve the problem is to bring Armenians and Azerbaijanis together. It is the problem of two societies.’’<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> M1Diaspora, interview by auhtor, 21.09.2015, Moscow.

<sup>437</sup> P3Diaspora, interview by author, 21.10.2015, Saint Petersburg.

<sup>438</sup> M5Diaspora, interview by author, 14.10.2015, Moscow.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid.

<sup>440</sup> P1Diaspora, interview by author, 20.10.2015, Saint Petersburg.

<sup>441</sup> MDiplomat, interview by author, 29.09.2015, Moscow.

## CONCLUSION

The diaspora concept has been more topical as a new and arising phenomenon within various fields in social sciences in recent years. As long as this concept becomes more discussed and theorized, its definition becomes more ambiguous, since new definitions on diaspora are put forward by many thinkers. In parallel with this, new diasporas arise as trans-national communities in both the Post-Soviet space and the globalizing world. My thesis explored and analyzed the Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia as an incipient diaspora. One of the elements of the diaspora is to have ethno-national origin. In this respect, I based on ethno-national and state-linked diaspora definition of Sheffer in order to analyze the Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia in the context of diasporic identity.

Within my thesis I distinguished Azerbaijanis in Russia into two parts as migrants and diasporic Azerbaijanis. As a result of this, I mostly focused on diasporic and intellectual Azerbaijanis due to being the decision making group. In this sense, I met lots of Azerbaijanis and made semi-structured in depth interviews with Azerbaijani diaspora activists and intellectuals in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, while I was living in Russia. This field research in Russia deepened my researches and results to my thesis.

While Soviet Azerbaijanis were living in their homeland as Soviet citizen until the collapse of the USSR in 1991, they began to live in host land as a diasporic community from this date forward. Rising migration issues in Russia after 1991, reaching of Azerbaijani population in Russia up to 2 million, stressing of the Azerbaijani state on Russian Azerbaijanis and the making law on migrations in Russia in 2007 have accelerated the formation of Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia. Nevertheless, the Azerbaijani diaspora does not have a strong effect over Russian foreign and domestic policy, since the formation of Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia still continues. Besides that, the diaspora suffers from some problems and being dividedness into itself which diminishes the effect of the diaspora for lobbying.

The Azerbaijani state aged 25 years has more stressed Azerbaijanis living in foreign countries since 2001 through some organizations and governmental agencies such as SCWD. The Azerbaijani state aims to struggle against Armenian diaspora and consolidate its effect over foreign Azerbaijanis through its diaspora politics and



institutions. As long as the government's effect increases over foreign Azerbaijanis, it provides the government not to face a strong dissident outside of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani state based on Azerbaijanism ideology in the formation of national and diasporic identity. This ideology indicates territorial and civil nationalism based on being Azerbaijani.

The Karabakh is central issue of the diaspora. It also contributes to the formation of the diaspora and gathering foreign Azerbaijanis. This accords with the mission of the diaspora given by Heydar Aliyev that regaining of the occupied territory is mission of all Azerbaijanis around the world. It is also one of the principles of Azerbaijanism ideology imposed by the government. Furthermore, the evolution of the Karabakh problem has been going in the same period of the formation of the diaspora. While the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan continues, the formation of the diaspora also keeps on in the meantime. Therefore, the Karabakh problem has direct effect over the diaspora and diasporic identity. In conjunction with the Karabakh issue, the Khojaly massacre and Armenian hatred play a key role in the construction of diasporic identity in Russian Azerbaijanis. It indicates that tragedies and the need for other consolidate diasporic communities. For all interviewees, the Karabakh issue is the biggest problem of Azerbaijan and it is never possible to give up Karabakh due to being historical Azerbaijani territory. Moreover, Karabakh and patriotism are significant themes in poems and articles of Azerbaijani writers in Russia. The diaspora generally carries out its activists on the Karabakh and Khojaly in order to make propaganda. It links to territorial nationalism of the Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia in the context of Azerbaijanism. However, the elements of Azerbaijanism do not totally seem in the diasporic community in Russia. The Karabakh case also reflects on the diasporic identity with different dimensions bearing Turkism and Eurasianism ideologies alongside Azerbaijanism. For the interviewees, Turkey is the first and most supportive of Azerbaijan in Karabakh. According to some of them, the Karabakh problem may be solved with the support of Turkey. The Armenian issue also makes Armenia and Turkey more familiar each other since both of them suffer from this issue. As a result of this, a tendency towards ethnic nationalism in the diaspora goes up. On the other hand, they consider Russia as a key actor in the solution of the Karabakh problem as a regional and dominant power. In this context, the solution mostly depends on Russia from their

perspective. For some of the interviewees, if Azerbaijan has more developed relations with Russia in some ways such as joining the EEU, Azerbaijan is able to gain more support from Russia to achieve a solution in Karabakh. Furthermore, none of them indicates the West to both solution and be ally of Azerbaijan. Thus, alongside Azerbaijanism and Turkism, Eurasianism perspective on the diasporic identity arises from the Karabakh issue. Nevertheless, Azerbaijanism ideology gains more weight in the case of Karabakh.

In the cases of Talysh and Lezgi, the diasporic people did not share some view. One of the arguments that Azerbaijanism ideology is preferred by the government to prevent separatist movements such as Talyshs and Lezgins, since Azerbaijanism refers to inclusive and civil nationalism. However, diasporic Azerbaijanis have both Azerbaijanism and Turkism perspectives in the cases of Talysh and Lezgi. Some of them have negative approach to them in the context of ethnic nationalism linking to Turkism. According to them, Talyshs and Lezgins are possible threat which is supported by Russia and Iran. However, most of them evaluate this issue in the light of Azerbaijanism and being Azerbaijani.

Three ideologies stand out in foreign policy choices and ambitions from the diaspora perspective. First of all is Azerbaijanism referring to independent and balanced foreign policy. Some of the interviewees, bearing this view, argued that Azerbaijan should join any union which provides more advantageous to Azerbaijan. According to them, Azerbaijan should have good relations with every country. However, Azerbaijanism ideology less weights in foreign policy approaches of diasporic Azerbaijanis in comparison with Turkism and Eurasianism.

Almost all of them see Azerbaijan as a part of Turkic civilization. In addition to being Turkic country, they identify Azerbaijan as a Caucasian, Islamic, Occident and Orient country. They have also positive approach to development relations with Turkic communities due to sharing same culture and identity elements. Azerbaijani organizations in Russia also sometimes meet Turkic communities in Russia through some joint activities such as Newroz festivals and fast-breaking meals. However, these activities are not enough yet in order to establish permanent cooperation and integration among Turkic diasporas within Russia. There is tendency of the diaspora to enhance ties

with Turkic communities that refers to ethno-national diasporic identity. Some of them think that Turkic union should be established under the leadership of Turkey. Turkey has more priority as an elder brother and best ally of Azerbaijan in the eye of the diasporic Azerbaijanis. According to them, Turkey should more stress Turkic communities in both Russia and the world. Furthermore, for them it is necessary to improve relations with Turkic diasporas in Russia. In this sense, Turkism plays a significant role within the diasporic identity.

Apart from Azerbaijanism and Turkism, Eurasianism is effective on the diasporic identity. The Eurasianism idea of the diaspora also intertwines with Turkism and Neo-Eurasianism as a new aspect of Classical Eurasianism. In the context of Eurasianism, some of diasporic Azerbaijanis have strong geopolitical concept of Eurasia. They appreciate that Russian and Eurasian geographies are common area of Turks and Slavs who have lived together for centuries. According to them, Turks and Slavs share many common values. Therefore, Turks and Slavs should unite. In this respect, they believe that Turkey and Azerbaijan should participate in the Eurasian Economic Union. Even though some of them have critique on Russia due to its support for Armenia in the Karabak war and its historical attitude towards Azerbaijan, they think that Turkey and Azerbaijan should join this union. In particular, they put emphasis on the development of relations between Turkey and Russia. In this regard, there are reflections of Eurasianism on the diasporic identity of Azerbaijanis in Russia. In the light of Neo-Eurasianism, they consider the USA as enemy of Russia and other countries. None of them indicates that Russia, Turkey and Azerbaijan should have integration with the West. For some of them, the West has aimed to demolish Turkish-Russian relations throughout history to take advantage in favour of its interests. Likewise, the diaspora does not bear liberal and Western perspective regarding domestic policy of Russia and Azerbaijan. They generally did not strongly emphasize the importance of liberal values and democracy to Azerbaijan and Russia. For instance, they did not mention human right violations and media freedom case in both Russia and Azerbaijan. Only some of them mentioned corruption problem in Azerbaijan. They mostly perceive the West in terms of power and threat rather than with its values.

The formation of Azerbaijani diaspora still continues both in Russia and the world. Hence, the diaspora currently does not have a strong influence on Russian and Azerbaijani politics. However, the diasporic identity of Azerbaijanis in Russia shows that if the diaspora increases its influence for lobbying within Russia in the long run, it will be able to contribute to Azerbaijan and Turkey's relations with Russia. Even though the current Azerbaijani government mostly imposes Azerbaijanism ideology to the diaspora through the Karabakh, Armenian cases and being Azerbaijani, the components of the diasporic identity of Azerbaijanis in Russia consist of the ideologies of Turkism, Eurasianism as well as Azerbaijanism.

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**APPENDIX I**  
**INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEWEE DETAILS**

Name	Date of Interview	Place of Interview	Duration of Interview (Minutes)	Age	Profession	Hometown	Moving to Russia
M1Diaspora	21.09.2015	Moscow	55.57	44	Diaspora representative	Karabakh	1988
MLecturer	22.09.2015	Moscow	44.20	37	Lecturer	Baku	1996
MDiplomat	29.09.2015	Moscow	64.24	68	Retired USSR diplomat	Baku	1975
MLawyer	01.10.2015	Moscow	99.51	44	Lawyer	Aghdam	1993
M2Diaspora	02.10.2015	Moscow	30.05	30	Diaspora representative	Baku	2006
MAcademician	05.10.2015	Moscow	50.31	49	Academician, Assoc. Prof.	Baku	1984
M3Diaspora	08.10.2015	Moscow	61.18	55	Diaspora representative	Mingachevir	2002
M4Diaspora	13.10.2015	Moscow	Written	29	Diaspora representative	Ganja	1999
M5Diaspora	14.10.2015	Moscow	80.20	26	Diaspora representative	Baku	2010
MWriter	15.10.2015	Moscow	59.15	60	Writer	Ganja	1980
P1Diaspora	20.10.2015	SaintPetersburg	47.36	61	Diaspora representative	Imishli	1980
P2Diaspora	20.10.2015	SaintPetersburg	37.47	26	Diaspora representative	Baku	2005
PDeputy	21.10.2015	Saint Petersburg	32.22	55	Deputy	Spitak(Armenia)	1980
P3Diaspora	21.10.2015	SaintPetersburg	47.29	52	Diaspora representative	Jalilabad	1981
PRector	22.10.2015	Saint Petersburg	24.45	71	University rector	Karabakh	1962

## APPENDIX 2: ORIGINALITY REPORT

	<b>HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY</b> <b>GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES</b> <b>THESIS/DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT</b>
<b>HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY</b> <b>GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES</b> <b>TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</b>	
Date: 12/12/2016	
Thesis Title / Topic: DIASPORIC IDENTITY IN RUSSIAN AZERBAIJANIS	
<p>According to the originality report obtained <del>by myself</del>/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options stated below on 12/12/2016 for the total of 154 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled as above, the similarity index of my thesis is 12 %.</p>	
<p>Filtering options applied:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approval and Declaration sections excluded</li> <li>2. Bibliography/Works Cited excluded</li> <li>3. Quotes excluded</li> <li>4. Match size up to 5 words excluded</li> </ol>	
<p>I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.</p>	
<p>I respectfully submit this for approval.</p>	
 12.12.2016	
<p><b>Name Surname:</b> Ümit Nazmi HAZIR</p> <p><b>Student No:</b> N12222730</p> <p><b>Department:</b> International Relations</p> <p><b>Program:</b> Master's Thesis Program</p> <p><b>Status:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D. <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Ph.D.</p>	
<b><u>ADVISOR APPROVAL</u></b>	
APPROVED.  Asst. Prof. Dr. Anar SOMUNCUOĞLU	



HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
YÜKSEK LİSANS/DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORJİNALLİK RAPORU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 12/12/2016

Tez Başlığı / Konusu: RUSYALI AZERBAJCANLILARIN DİASPORA KİMLİĞİ


Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 154 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 12/12/2016 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda belirtilen filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 12 'tür.

Uygulanan filtrelemeler:

- 1- Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç,
- 2- Kaynakça hariç
- 3- Alıntılar hariç/dâhil
- 4- 5 kelimedenden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tez çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

  
12.12.2016

**Adı Soyadı:** Ümit Nazmi HAZIR

**Öğrenci No:** N12222730

**Anabilim Dalı:** Uluslararası İlişkiler

**Programı:** Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı

**Statüsü:**  Y.Lisans  Doktora  Bütünleşik Dr.




**DANIŞMAN ONAYI**

UYGUNDUR.



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Anar SOMUNCUOĞLU

### APPENDIX 3: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK

<b>ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK</b>	
<p><b>HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY</b>  <b>GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES</b>  <b>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENCY</b></p>	
Date: 12/12/2016	
Thesis Title / Topic: DIASPORIC IDENTITY IN RUSSIAN AZERBAIJANIS	
My thesis work related to the title/topic above:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.</li> <li>2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).</li> <li>3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.</li> <li>4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).</li> </ol>	
<p>I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.</p>	
I respectfully submit this for approval.	
 12/12/2016	
<b>Name Surname:</b> Ümit Nazmi HAZIR	
<b>Student No:</b> N12222730	
<b>Department:</b> International Relations	
<b>Program:</b> Master's Thesis Program	
<b>Status:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D. <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Ph.D.	
<b><u>ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL</u></b>	
  Asst. Prof. Dr. Akar SOMUNCUOĞLU	



HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
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HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
ULUSLAR ARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 12/12/2016


Tez Başlığı / Konusu: RUSYALI AZERBAJCANLILARIN DİASPORA KİMLİĞİ

Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmam:

1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır,
2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir.
3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir.
4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir.

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullar ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

  
12/12/2016

Adı Soyadı: Ümit Nazmi HAZIR

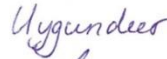
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Anabilim Dalı: Uluslararası İlişkiler

Programı: Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı

Statüsü:  Y.Lisans  Doktora  Bütünleşik Dr.

**DANIŞMAN GÖRÜŞÜ VE ONAYI**



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