

National-Cultural Relations in the Cultural System: Modern West and Renewed Azerbaijan

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Abstract: *Located at the crossroads of the West and the East and of various civilizations, modern Azerbaijan has been shaped by an environment of cultural diversity and a rich national culture for centuries. In this country, which is an example for the world, representatives of various cultures live in an environment of mutual understanding, religiosity, and dialogue. It is no coincidence that the tolerance historically inherent in Azerbaijanis has become an integral part of the lifestyle and activities of every citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan, regardless of their national culture, language and religion. Today, the tolerance model of the Azerbaijani people, which can be an example for many countries, is also confirmed by existing literary-artistic, scientific-philosophical, and political-legal sources and documents.*

Tolerance in Azerbaijan is implemented at the level of state policy.

Tolerance, which is considered one of the main paradigms of the cultural life of the 21st century, has found its embodiment in real reality as a means of humanism, free cultural self-expression and the right to protect the cultural identity of all citizens of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's culturally diverse national culture has developed as a unity of Eastern and Western values, uniqueness, and universality, and is considered an example of multiculturalism and tolerance throughout the world.

Keywords: *Azerbaijan, cultural relations, cultural diversity, multiculturalism, tolerance, postmodernism.*

Cultural relations are a factor of particular importance in the cultural system, which is a broad, complex concept. International cultural relations are actively influenced by various factors, including globalization, democratization, integration, etc. processes. This system of alliance includes relations in the fields of artistic and aesthetic culture, science, education, sports and tourism. Along with interstate relations, diaspora and international organizations also play a special role in the development of cultural relations at the global level.

Azerbaijan's international cultural relations, which occupy a worthy place in the system of global intercultural relations, have a rich and ancient history. Azerbaijan, which has lived in conditions of close cultural relations with the East, later established cultural relations with Western countries. Modern Western and Azerbaijani cultural relations can be classified as follows based on socio-philosophical analysis:

1. Azerbaijan-North America (USA, Canada) cultural relations.
2. Azerbaijan-Western Europe cultural relations.
3. Azerbaijan-Eastern Europe and post-Soviet countries-the Baltic re-

publics, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Moldova, Romania, etc. mutual cultural relations between countries.

The development of cultural relations between the modern West and the renewed Azerbaijan depends on a well-thought-out and mutually beneficial cultural policy at the present time. Researchers rightly point out that theoretical research in this area lags behind the dynamics of cultural globalization¹. There are probably many reasons for this, and one of them is the gradual narrowing of real distances between cultures. Claude Levi-Strauss once said about this that “people are seriously experiencing the shock of a very high degree of rapprochement of other cultures, as more and more people settle in the places where they live. I believe that, in fact, they need distances to live a healthy life. Individuals, social groups, and cultures need sufficient space and distance to eliminate various pathologies that now exist”².

In the process of studying culture, including national culture, which is its component, history is often referred to. This is natural. Because the content of culture requires the study of the historical path it has taken. It is no coincidence that forgetfulness is considered the greatest vice of man. In this sense, a people who have forgotten their history are considered to have lost their national identity. The ideas of each people about history are in their past. Regardless of the path the people have taken, they have participated in this past. In this process, the history of the human race living in

the forms of community, tribe, people, ethnic group and nation that have appeared on the stage of history since the 19th century has been written. Every people, which still feels the need to preserve its mentality and uniqueness, tries to preserve the territorial integrity it has formed as a result of the historical path it has taken to purify its national values. To do this, it is forced to turn to strong leaders, religious beliefs, a certain proportion of regional relations, the power of the state, moral values and many other opportunities. In an integrating world, new technologies play a leading role. Communication is becoming simpler; its possibilities are expanding, and its influence is increasing. Culture is also subject to these influences. Observations show that “the differences that have arisen in the modern era along religious, civilizational, national, and historical lines have not only been eliminated or diminished; they have even begun to enter a very dangerously acute stage. The growth of wealth paradoxically intensifies not only cultural but also socio-economic contradictions”³.

The influence of the culture of the indigenous peoples of South America on the cultural life of peoples considered foreign, or “alien”, is quite large. Along with the widespread Spanish language, local dialects are also used in this region. In addition, the peoples living in that region maintain their religious beliefs, customs and traditions at a fairly high level. Sometimes foreign, sometimes local cultures are the leading parties in such processes.

The factor influencing this ratio is the socio-political and economic development of the country. When a country has rich resources, more international firms and companies are interested in using and benefiting from them. As a result, the country gains more opportunities to innovate and live a modern life. There is also diversity in the use of this opportunity. The role played by the oil factor for oil countries is well known. This powerful development factor plays an extremely important role in the lives of many countries, including in the field of culture. As the real ground for integration into the world expands, the opportunities to benefit from various cultural areas also increase.

From this point of view, one can turn to the example of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has a leading role due to its strategic position in the region. This is due to both its geographical location and the oil factor. The “oil era”, which spanned nearly two hundred years, played an exceptional role in the development of Azerbaijani culture. It is well known how Baku, considered the “oil capital” of the world, has developed in terms of architecture and fine arts. The harmonious development of various Eastern and Western art schools and styles has resulted in the creation of wonderful, human-pleasing architectural gems in this country. Baku has become a modern city of unparalleled beauty, formed at the junction of two or more architectural and fine arts styles⁴.

Similar processes can be observed in all other places where people live.

The economic factor has played a major role in the formation and development of the capitals of the world, large cities, and urban culture in general. K. Marx, one of the founders of social philosophy, once wrote about this.

The development of production results in the formation of a new way of life. And the stability of development is ensured by the customs and traditions, the forms of social life we are accustomed to, including processes taking place in the areas of language, religion, everyday life, family, and production. Currently, peoples who “suffer” the pain and suffering of the process called “multiculturalism” are trying, first of all, to preserve its universal content (this content, as researchers note, is clearly manifested in the principles of tolerance, political tolerance, and respect for human rights)⁵. Social groups and associations representing different cultural norms should be able to combine their efforts in the direction of beneficial cooperation.

In addition to inviting cooperation, the task of developing the rules of intercultural dialogue also falls on philosophers. At meetings held at various levels, the world philosophical community can operate more effectively in the following ways:

- to analyze and improve the philosophy of education in more depth;
- to conduct scientific research together with representatives of other social and humanitarian sciences, strengthening the practical side in this area. (To do this, work on real projects around common problems that con-

cern countries with a common language, religion, and historical destiny – moral values, the language problem, social structure, and spiritual heritage);

- to create chronological and logical development schemes of cultural processes, identify their similarities and differences, and build future development scenarios of these schemes using communicative opportunities;

- to try to raise the level of development of areas that constitute specific national cultural values, together with specialists in these areas, etc.⁶.

It should be noted that among the ideas formed about the future development of human society, there are also ideas about a “post-human” being, similar to F. Nietzsche's idea of “superhuman”. Cultural diversity can be distinguished against the background of a certain identity in human society. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the freedom and individuality of man, which are an important component of culture, and the path taken by his rights historically.

As researchers have shown, the development of cultural values throughout history has mainly gone in two directions – the development of internal uniqueness and the formation of universal identity. In other words, here we are talking about the general and the particular, the essence and the event. The development along both lines continue even now. Although this process reflects the essence of uniqueness and individuality built on self-determination, it is built on the

idea of identity, difference, and the affirmation of the existence of others. While uniqueness is unique, identity is multiple and diverse⁷.

Tolerance is a social phenomenon that allows us to accept diversity as one of the meanings that express the essence of the modern globalized world and, on its basis, to confirm the idea that each manifestation is important.

In modern society, along with the circumstances that allow people to evaluate events from the position of tolerance, there are other development trends that undermine individuality, leading to its massification and, at the same time, to a crisis of identity. As is known, the so-called “mass” society began to take shape approximately after World War II, and this process is still ongoing.

It can be said that McClure's idea of the “network society” and “network culture” is now also finding its confirmation. Diversity is increasing; however, the massification that has prevailed for about a hundred years is gradually giving way to the expansion of the growing opportunity for choice. Although there is currently no sufficiently acceptable common ideal, project, or idea in the universal human space, the forms of identity that have been achieved provide stability and peace, even if real processes in the political, socio-economic, legal, and some cultural fields leave the further development of society without ideals. The possibilities for using that opportunity are expanding, and the children of humanity can increase their success

in designing the future, based on their cultural diversity.

In order to clearly imagine the general picture of the currently forming world cultural diversity, it is first of all necessary to deeply study the uniqueness of local cultures. This applies to both researchers and carriers of all cultures. In short, the formation, genesis and modern state of culture is a methodology for studying the role it plays in the world today and the directions of influence, as well as the characteristics of development. Without doing this work, it is impossible to adequately analyze the processes taking place. Also, it is difficult to assess the formation and development characteristics of Azerbaijan's culture in the history of Azerbaijan and determine its place here without studying the cultural processes of the countries located in the region. The same can be said about the cultural history of other peoples.

It should be borne in mind that ethnocultural diversity is managed at the domestic, regional and international levels. In management, the political factor is of particular importance, first of all, because all management is based on political power. Thus, the political factor plays a significant role in the formation of tolerance and conducting intercultural dialogue as a leading factor in the current globalization process. The democratic, open-society management model introduced by the West is currently gaining a universal nature and spreading throughout the world⁸.

In modern conditions, a very important factor ensuring the stability of world unity is the prevention of the emergence and deepening of conflicts. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that the processes of individuality and acculturation, by denying each other, create the basis for the emergence and development of these conflicts.

In general, from what has been said, we can draw the following conclusion: since globalization is in different positions in different countries in modern times due to its spread area and influence, cultural diversity increases, and the process of development and formation of subcultures becomes quite diverse. Here, each national culture, while preserving its national color, also faces losses. Mass media are actively developing, and new information and communication technologies are being created. As a result, the cultural values of each nation are rapidly spreading and being assimilated or replaced by others. Since this process is bilateral, national cultures are subject to losses, degradation and deformation.

In this sense, researchers face many tasks: to study various aspects of the globalized world, including its political, economic, and spiritual characteristics; to analyze the changes that have occurred in language, religion, education, everyday life, and mental representations during this process, to evaluate it adequately, etc. Sometimes, when they say multiculturalism, they mean not cultural diversity, but intolerance, hatred, and ag-

gression, which undermines the true meaning of real processes. In the current situation, the main aspect should be human identity. Intercultural dialogue conducted for the sake of human values and stereotypes based on the principle of humanism should become a strategic development line of the modern contradictory world. Along with tolerance, that is, tolerance, a person also needs respect, love, trust, and sympathy⁹.

But what should be the limits of tolerance? An acceptable answer to this question has not yet been found. Tolerance can also be understood as indifference. Therefore, cultural dialogue based on tolerance is not yet enough. In order for tolerance not to become just a tool of globalization, it is necessary to think about the basis on which this should occur. In addition to forming a unified world, the extremely increased cultural relations allow us to eliminate the negative consequences of technical progress and perceive all its positive advantages, and this opportunity should be used to the maximum extent possible.

The structure, development and future of the world depend primarily on its freedom and the increase in the responsibility of man arising from it. Here, not only tolerance but also all universal values obtained in human history as a whole are of great importance.

In modern times, the global world is also analyzed from a postmodern perspective. How is the role of culture imagined in a globalized world from the perspective of postmodernism? Postmodernism is considered a reac-

tion to the development of technogenic civilization as a whole¹⁰. It is believed that postmodernism was a reaction to the "modern movement" that took place in the philosophy and design of urban planning in the first half of the 20th century. In this process, disorder in the expression of content, violation of rules, and a critical approach to oneself and others prevail¹¹.

In modern conditions, national cuisine, national clothing, gender differences, national medicine, and the national education system are mixed with other cultural areas in the new information space, significantly losing their nationality. The technologies and content of education are also approaching each other and becoming integrated. In such conditions, although the development prospects of national cultures are different, a single space inevitably creates certain limitations. In the best case, equality should be created in the starting state so that each nation can develop in the way it considers acceptable and can preserve at least its ethnographic characteristics.

Let us recall that political relations and the national ideology and culture built on them are an important component of public life. The mentioned areas play the role of a template, a framework for ideas about man and the surrounding world, determining the features of the political organization of society, the nature of management, its ideals and patterns of behavior. Like political relations, national culture is also built on the inter-

ests and needs of various human groups. In the history of society, the understanding of the achievements of national culture in the fields of literature, art, etc. has played a role of stimulus for their further development. At the same time, the possibility of regulating the development of national culture through ideology has begun to be widely used. At this point, the importance of the international legislative system should also be specially emphasized.

National culture within the country significantly affects the management structures, the nature of the mutual relations of social classes and groups, and the development of important social institutions – family, education, science, art. That is why the dissemination and promotion of the ideals of national cultures among the countries of the world, primarily developed countries, is extremely important in bringing peoples closer together and establishing various mutually beneficial relations.

As is known, Azerbaijan establishes relations with many countries of the world in various fields, and many of them have deep historical roots. First of all, it is necessary to talk about European countries. Because Azerbaijan, with its rich natural resources and favorable geographical conditions, has always been in the sphere of interest of economically powerful countries in those regions. Among the relations of a traditional nature, it is necessary to mention, first of all, the relations formed with Germany, Italy and France. Among

the priorities of these and other countries, constantly competing with Russia for the sphere of influence, national ideology and national culture have also been among the priorities.

Among the works carried out within the framework of intercultural dialogue, first of all, one can mention the policy carried out in the socio-economic and cultural spheres, the construction of oil and gas pipelines, the restoration of the “Silk Road”, the implementation of the TACIS-TRACECA international project, the application of the Bologna system in education, our country's joining a number of Western European framework programs for the development of science, active participation in various international events in sports, etc.

As is known, Azerbaijan actively participates in these processes in relevant programs and events, together with UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and other international organizations. As experts believe, “Azerbaijan's foreign policy priorities include integration into the European Union system, where Western countries are represented, as well as into the global world political space in the economic, political, social, and cultural spheres. By joining this system, Azerbaijan gains the opportunity to use its existing resources more efficiently, safely, and without losses to ensure the prosperous life of its people, as well as to achieve the rapid entry of advanced world technologies, investment, and foreign capital into the country's economy and the development of the non-oil sector. In this

regard, conditions are also created to reform the country's internal economic, social, and other structures using the opportunities of the European Union and the United States and bring them up to world standards''¹².

Despite some negative effects of the recent political processes in Azerbaijan and the region as a whole, the main priorities for the development of national culture have been selected, and intensive and useful work is being carried out in these areas. Among these, cooperation in various cultural fields can be mentioned. To expand the prospects of this cooperation, it is necessary to further intensify work in the following areas:

- strengthening the economic level - this opens up a wide path for cultural ties;

- complex problems in the foreign policy of the state require the transfer of its management to various organizational structures with full responsibility. Foreign policy itself is a set of various activities of the state in the international world and reflects attempts to channel the result of each activity process in this area into the channel of certain procedural flows. The resources used by the state for its foreign policy – political, diplomatic, economic, military, legal, and informational directions – require its management by separate organizational-structural units – the ministries of foreign affairs, defense and finance, and necessitate regular improvement of activities in this area;

- Although the scope of authority of each organizational-structural unit for the formulation and implementation of foreign policy is determined in advance, their activities may sometimes overlap. In this case, coordination by the central government is required. The top leadership is responsible for the development and implementation of the policy course and determines which organization will deal with this or that problem.

- To increase the efficiency of foreign policy research and the identification of priority directions, new research centers, higher education institutions, etc., are being created. One of such centers is the Center for Strategic Studies. The search for new opportunities for intercultural dialogue should be one of the leading directions of activity in the work of this Center.

Conclusion

Western-Azerbaijani national-cultural relations are successfully developing in the global system of socio-political relations. In short, cultural integration between the modern West and Azerbaijan is carried out within the framework of the exchange of material and spiritual cultural samples, holding these cultural days, twinning of cities, organizing exhibitions, establishing cultural centers, translating works, and developing cooperation in the field of preserving cultural heritage. One of the main aspects that develops cultural relations between the modern West and the renewed Azerbaijan is the creation of an effec-

tive legal framework that can facilitate cooperation at the state level in this area. By the way, let us note that Azerbaijan successfully fulfils the role of a bridge both in terms of geographical location and intercultural relations. In his speech at the opening of the Second World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in Baku, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. İlham Aliyev, said, “We are united by the development of multiculturalism, the successful future of intercultural dialogue, and, thus, the

strengthening of positive trends in the world. In this case, we must also try to strengthen these positive trends with our own work, with our own practical steps”¹³.

Thus, a comprehensive, systematic and philosophical analysis of the topic under study based on factual materials proves that cultural relations are an important phenomenon that occupies a key place in the cultural system, mutually introduces, disseminates, and promotes national cultures, and enriches global culture.

Notes

- ¹ М. Култаева, “Локальное в лабиринтах всемирного общества: методологический аспект”, *Вопросы философии*, nr. 9, 2011, pp. 34-44.
- ² Константина Барлевена и Галы Наумовой, “Беседа с Клодом Леви-Строссом”, *Вопросы философии*, 2009, nr.5, pp. 66-79.
- ³ А. А. Гусейнов, “Единство мира и многообразие культур (материалы «круглого стола» украинских и русских философов)”, *Вопросы философии*, nr. 9, 2011, pp. 3-34.
- ⁴ Е. İbrahimov, “Azərbaycan xalq cümhuriyyəti dövründə keçirilən dil siyasəti”, *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim*, nr. 9/4 2020, pp. 1411-1424.
- ⁵ А. А. Гусейнов, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-34.
- ⁶ Д.В. Сергеев, “Культурно-семантические стратегии преодоление культурного кризиса в общественном сознании”, *Вопросы философии*, nr. 10, 2011, pp. 28-36.
- ⁷ А. А. Гусейнов, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-34.
- ⁸ *Ibidem*.
- ⁹ А. А. Гусейнов, *op. cit.*, pp.3-34.
- ¹⁰ А.В. Рубцов, “Архитектоника постмодерна: время”, *Вопросы философии*, nr.10, 2011, p. 37.
- ¹¹ *Ibidem*.
- ¹² AZƏRBAYCAN beynəlxalq aləmdə, <http://files.preslib.az/projects/azerbaijan>.
- ¹³ BAKIDA II Ümumdünya Mədəniyyət-təcrarəsi Forumunun açılışında Azərbaycan Prezidenti İlham Əliyevin nitqi, “Azərbaycan” qəzeti, nr. 117 (6392), 31 may 2013-cü il, p. 1.

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