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RUSSOPHILIA IN AZERBAIJAN: THE EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD RUSSIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research paper is to examine the historical evolution of Russophilia in Azerbaijan by dividing it into distinct developmental phases. Russophilia, as a concept reflecting admiration and affinity towards Russia, has significantly influenced Azerbaijan’s socio-political landscape. This research aims to provide a structured periodization of Russophile attitudes, offering insights into how these sentiments have transformed over time in response to key historical, political, and social changes. The study spans the period from the 19th century, marked by the Russian Empire’s influence, to the present day.

The scientific novelty. This research makes a contribution to the existing literature by being the first to systematically periodize the evolution of Russophile attitudes in Azerbaijan. By dividing the development of Russophilia into distinct phases, the study provides a structured framework for understanding how these attitudes have changed over time in response to various historical, political, and social factors. This new periodization not only fills a gap in the academic literature but also offers a more nuanced understanding of Azerbaijan’s complex relationship with Russia.

Conclusions. Russophilia in Azerbaijan has traversed four stages over the past two centuries and persists to this day. The historical trajectory of Russophilia in Azerbaijan reveals its formative phase from 1830 to 1900, full consolidation from 1900 to 1920, peak influence from 1920 to 1980, sharp decline from 1980 to 1990, and a gradual weakening under control since the 1990s.

A sociological analysis of Russophilia in Azerbaijan reveals the complex interplay of socialization, hegemony, identity formation, and social change in shaping attitudes toward Russia. The historical evolution of Russophilia reflects broader social processes and dynamics, including the role of education, cultural transmission, political power, and resistance movements. Understanding these sociological dimensions provides a deeper insight into the persistence and transformation of Russophilia in Azerbaijani society over the past two centuries. As Azerbaijan continues to navigate its post-Soviet identity and geopolitical position, the legacy of Russophilia remains a salient and multifaceted aspect of its social fabric.

Keywords: Russophilia, Azerbaijan, Political History, Soviet Influence, National Identity

РУСОФІЛЬСТВО В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНІ: ЕВОЛЮЦІЙНИЙ РОЗВИТОК ПОЗИТИВНИХ СТАВЛЕНЬ ДО РОСІЇ

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Метою статті є дослідження історичної еволюції русофільства в Азербайджані шляхом виокремлення окремих етапів його розвитку. Русофільство як явище, що відображає захоплення та прихильне ставлення до Росії, істотно вплинуло на соціально-політичний ландшафт Азербайджану. Це дослідження має на меті запропонувати структуровану періодизацію русофільських настроїв, показавши, як ці настрої трансформувалися з часом у відповідь на ключові історичні, політичні та соціальні зміни. Хронологічні рамки дослідження охоплюють період від 19 ст., позначений впливом Російської імперії, до сьогодення.

Наукова новизна. Дослідження робить внесок у наявну наукову літературу, вперше систематично періодизуючи еволюцію русофільських настроїв в Азербайджані. Поділ розвитку русофільства на окремі етапи дає змогу створити цілісну аналітичну модель для розуміння змін цих настроїв під впливом різноманітних історичних, політичних і соціальних чинників. Запропонована періодизація не лише заповнює прогалину в академічних дослідженнях, а й забезпечує більш нюансоване бачення складних взаємин Азербайджану з Росією.

Висновки. Русофільство в Азербайджані протягом останніх двох століть пройшло чотири основні етапи розвитку та зберігається дотепер. Історична траєкторія русофільства в Азербайджані засвідчує його становлення у 1830-1900 рр., повну консолідацію в 1900-1920 рр., пік впливу у 1920-1980 рр., різкий спад у 1980-1990 рр. і поступове ослаблення під контролем з 1990-х рр.

Соціологічний аналіз русофільства в Азербайджані виявляє складну взаємодію процесів соціалізації, гегемонії, формування ідентичності та соціальних змін у формуванні ставлень до Росії. Історична еволюція русофільства відображає ширші соціальні процеси та динаміку, зокрема роль освіти, культурної трансмісії, політичної влади та рухів опору. Усвідомлення цих соціологічних вимірів дає глибше розуміння стійкості й трансформації русофільства в азербайджанському суспільстві протягом двох століть. У контексті формування пострадянської ідентичності та геополітичного позиціонування Азербайджану спадщина русофільства залишається помітним і багатовимірним елементом його соціальної структури.

Ключові слова: русофільство, Азербайджан, політична історія, радянський вплив, національна ідентичність

INTRODUCTION

Russophilia is employed as a conceptual framework to signify a sentiment of reverence and affection directed towards Russia. This sentiment encompasses an appreciation for the nation's historical legacy, cultural heritage, and societal traditions[1]. The emergence of Russophilia dates back to the 19th century[2]. Following that era, numerous changes have been observed in the conceptualization and historical progression of Russophilia. In the modern times, Russophilia has evolved into a concept closely aligned with the interests of the Russian state, thereby elevating it to a matter of national significance.

The employment of Russophilia as a tool of public diplomacy by Russia in various countries has become a core element of its strategic initiatives[3]. The primary social foundation for such endeavors in the realm of public diplomacy consists of Russophiles. Within this framework, one of the central objectives pursued by the Russian state is undoubtedly the augmentation of the ranks of Russophiles. This effort initially focuses on countries within Russia's sphere of influence, and subsequently, the reach is extended to a broader geographical scope[4]. This phenomenon prompts an inquiry into the underlying motivations driving such fervent support, often devoid of rational discourse. From this perspective, a significant need exists to examine the causes and historical formation of Russophilia in various countries.

The Russian government maintains that Russia holds a legitimate right to intervene in regions where ethnic Russians, Russian speakers, and Russophiles reside in concentrated communities[5].

In light of the foregoing, the study of Russophilia in Azerbaijan is highly relevant for understanding the socio-political dynamics of the region, particularly given the historical and contemporary influence of Russia on Azerbaijan's political, cultural, and economic landscape. Analyzing the evolution of positive attitudes toward Russia offers valuable insights into processes of formation of social and political alliances, as well as the persistence of cultural ties that continue to shape Azerbaijan's domestic and foreign policies. Understanding these developments is crucial for evaluating the broader geopolitical relations between Azerbaijan, Russia, and the wider post-Soviet space.

In this regard, *the purpose of the research paper* is to elucidate and analyze the roots of Russophile behaviors existing in contemporary Azerbaijani society from a historical evolutionary perspective. For this purpose, the formation of Russophilia in Azerbaijan is divided into several historical phases, with the unique characteristics of each phase being emphasized.

To achieve the research objectives more precisely, a diverse range of data sources was employed. Primary sources comprised various materials published during the period under investigation, including propaganda content from the 1800s and the

[1] *Иванов А., Казин А., Светлов Р.* Русский национализм: основные вехи исторического осмысления. *Вестник Русской христианской гуманитарной академии*. 2015. Т. 16. Вып. 4. С. 148.
[2] *Ripetsky S., Sereda O.* Russophiles. *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. 1993. Vol. 4. URL: https://cutt.ly/Ttk9S5nZ
[3] Путин: русский язык объединяет цивилизационное пространство СНГ. *Mir24*. 2021. 15 октября. URL: https://cutt.ly/Mtk9DLOo
[4] Чварков: культурная экспансия может угрожать нацбезопасности России. *РИА Новости*. 2016, 26 января. URL: https://ria.ru/20160126/1365455123.html
[5] *Ashby H.* How the Kremlin Distorts the 'Responsibility to Protect' Principle. *U.S. Institute of Peace*. 2022, April 7. URL: https://cutt.ly/0tk9Fepq

early 1900s, as well as periodicals from the period under study. Secondary sources included books, scholarly articles, and online resources.

The scope of the research encompasses the period from the Treaty of Turkmenchay, when Northern Azerbaijan came under Russian rule, to the era of independence. This is because there is insufficient evidence to assert that the Azerbaijani people exhibited Russophile attitudes prior to the Treaty of Turkmenchay. Furthermore, the period following the attainment of independence in 1991 constitutes a distinct subject of study. Therefore, the research primarily focuses on the period from the 1830s to the late 1980s.

This research contributes to the existing literature by being the first to systematically periodize the evolution of Russophile attitudes in Azerbaijan. By dividing the development of Russophilia into distinct phases, the study provides a structured framework for examining how these attitudes have changed over time in response to various historical, political, and social factors. This new periodization not only fills a gap in the academic literature but also offers a more nuanced understanding of Azerbaijan's complex relationship with Russia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Azerbaijan, Russophilia has not been examined from sociological, sociopsychological, politological, or any other academic perspectives. No books or articles have been found on the subject, nor has a single comprehensive study been identified. Extensive research conducted in the Central Library of Azerbaijan, the library of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the Presidential Library, and the library of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan yielded no results. No direct scholarly sources on this topic exist. Analyses have primarily focused on Azerbaijan's relations with Russia during various periods and the attitudes of Azerbaijanis towards Russian rule within a historical context. Examples can be found in general histories of Azerbaijan by various authors. Consequently, no studies directly or closely related to Russophilia in Azerbaijan have been identified. Therefore, this study may represent the first systematic investigation in this field.

While no direct studies exist on Russophilia, there are indirect and valuable resources that explore aspects related to the historical development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan. First, it is important to highlight the study by J. Jahangirli and J. Jabarov[6], which examines the developmental dynamics of Russophilia in Europe as a methodological example. In the context of post-Soviet identity transformations, J. Jabarov[7] offers a timely sociological classification of Russophile groups in Azerbaijan, shedding light on how historical legacies and contemporary geopolitical alignments shape cultural attachments. His work contributes to understanding Russophilia not as a monolithic sentiment but as a multifaceted phenomenon rooted in modern social dynamics.

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[6] *Jahangirli J., Jabarov J.* The Historical Evolution of Russophilia in Europe: A Study of the Development and Transformation of Positive Attitudes Towards Russia. *Емінак*. 2023. № 3 (43). P. 113-133. DOİ: https://doi.org/10.33782/eminak2023.3(43).661

[7] *Jabarov J.* Sociology of Russophilia in Azerbaijan: A Classification for Russophile Social Groups. *Changing Societies & Personalities*. 2024. Vol. 8 (4). P. 942-963. DOİ: https://doi.org/10.15826/csp.2024.8.4.307

The works reflect the theoretical and ideological foundations of Russophilia in Azerbaijan by presenting key aspects of Leninist-Marxist thought. Lenin's writings, such as 'The Tasks of Russian Social-Democrats'[8], 'On Marxism'[9], and 'Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism'[10], illustrate the intellectual and ideological appeal of Soviet socialism, which was instrumental in fostering Russophile sentiments in regions like Azerbaijan. Notably, these works were translated into Azerbaijani, making Soviet ideals more accessible and influential within the local context. The collaborative work 'On the October Revolution' by V. Lenin and I. Stalin[11], provides further insight into the revolutionary principles and anti-capitalist narratives that aligned with local aspirations for modernization and social change. Such literature, by disseminating Soviet ideals in the Azerbaijani language, contributed significantly to the development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan, promoting an affinity for Russian political ideologies and the Soviet model of governance.

In another work[12], I. Stalin discusses the tactical strategies of Russian communists during the October Revolution. The work serves as an important reference for understanding the methods used by Soviet leaders to consolidate power and propagate communist ideals, which were influential in shaping pro-Soviet sentiments in Azerbaijan.

The other works reflect a range of Soviet-era publications in Azerbaijan, each contributing to the development of Russophilia by promoting a positive image of Russia and its people. 'The Great Russian People' by B. Volin[13] highlights the achievements of the Russian people, which was translated into Azerbaijani to enhance local appreciation for Russian culture. Glazer's 'The Great Russian Commander Suvorov'[14] glorifies Russian military heroes, aligning with Soviet narratives that emphasized Russian leadership and strength. 'Our Big Brother', an anthology of Azerbaijani poets' works[15] dedicated to the Russian people, reinforces the notion of Russia as a 'big brother' guiding and supporting Azerbaijan. Shahgeldiyev's works, 'The Brotherhood Aid of the Great Russian People'[16] and 'The Role of the Russian People in the Victory of Soviet Power in Azerbaijan'[17], emphasize Russia's role in Azerbaijan's development, portraying it as a supportive ally. Finally, Gahramanov's 'On Russian-Azerbaijani Literary Relations'[18] illustrates literary ties, celebrating Russian-Azerbaijani cultural unity. Collectively, these texts fostered a positive perception of Russia, reinforcing its status as a benevolent and culturally rich ally, thereby shaping and supporting Russophile sentiments in Azerbaijan.

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[8] *Lenin V.I.* Rus sosial-demokratlarının vəzifələri. Bakı: AK(b)F MK nəşriyatı, 1933. 32 s.
[9] *Lenin V.I.* Marksizm haqqında. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1930. 27 s.
[10] *Lenin V.I.* İmperializm kapitalizmin ən yüksək bir pilləsi kimi. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1932. 107 s.
[11] *Lenin V.I., Stalin İ.V.* Oktyabr revolyusiyası haqqında. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1939. 52 s.
[12] *Stalin İ.V.* Oktyabr inqilabı və rus kommunistlərinin taktikası. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1935. 42 s.
[13] *Volin B.* Böyük rus xalqı. Bakı: Uşaqgəncnəşr, 1940. 52 s.
[14] *Qlyazer S.* Böyük rus sərkərdəsi A.V. Suvorov: bioqrafiya. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1940. 94 s.
[15] *Rüstəm S.* (red.). Böyük qardaşımız: Azərbaycan şairlərinin böyük rus xalqına həsr olunmuş şeirləri. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1953. 191 s.
[16] *Şahgəldiyev H.* Böyük rus xalqının qardaşlıq köməyi. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1951. 231 s.
[17] *Şahgəldiyev H.* Azərbaycanda Sovet hakimiyyətinin qələbəsində rus xalqının köməyi. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1960. 203 s.
[18] *Qəhrəmanov Ə.* Rus-Azərbaycan ədəbi əlaqələrinə dair. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1962. 123 s.

THE FIRST STAGE: THE EMERGENCE OF RUSSIAN STATEHOOD IN AZERBAIJAN

Prior to the incorporation of Azerbaijan into the Russian state as a result of the Treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Turkmenchay (1828), Azerbaijani khanates maintained trade relations with Russia. Notably, the northern khanates, particularly the Quba Khanate, had more extensive connections. Russia's focus on Caspian Sea trade positioned Azerbaijan as one of its most important regional partners. Consequently, the Azerbaijani khanates, experiencing economic turmoil, became increasingly economically dependent on Russia[19]. This dependency altered the structure of the local economy, directing trade routes and markets towards Russia. The trade relations facilitated greater contact with Russian culture and language, fostering an interest in Russian culture and language within Azerbaijani society and laying the groundwork for the early formation of Russophilia. These trade relations also cultivated a positive image of Russia among the Azerbaijani khanates, generating sympathy towards Russia and a desire for increased cooperation. During Russia's subsequent incorporation of Azerbaijani territories, several Azerbaijani khanates voluntarily surrendered to the Russian Empire[20].

Nevertheless, the reality of occupation remained. There were military interventions and bloodshed. Consequently, attitudes toward Russians, who intervened militarily in Azerbaijan in the early 1800s, were largely negative during that period[21]. In this context, the Treaties of Gulistan and Turkmenchay, which served as the official documents of Russia's initial intervention in Azerbaijan, can be identified as the earliest significant documents laying the foundations for Russophilia in Azerbaijan.

Subsequent to the comprehensive annexation of Azerbaijan and the conclusion of the Treaty of Turkmenchay with the Iranian state in 1828, the Russian state began the gradual implementation of its administrative framework within the region, concurrently extending the Russian educational system into Azerbaijan. Consequently, Russian-Azerbaijani schools were established across Azerbaijan, contributing to the secularization of education. Simultaneously, during the 1830s, nonconformist Russians were subjected to exile, dispersed to diverse provinces within Russia, including Azerbaijan[22]. The aforementioned exile measures resulted in an influx of Russians into Azerbaijan, thereby giving rise to the establishment of several Russian settlements within the country. This process not only had a substantial impact on Azerbaijan's demographic landscape but also facilitated increased familiarity of the local population with Russian culture. It is noteworthy, however, that the arrival of Russians was not the sole migration occurring during this period, as Armenian communities from various countries also commenced relocating to the western regions of Azerbaijan. Consequently, this confluence of migrations contributed to the emergence a more cosmopolitan outlook among Azerbaijanis[23].

Consequently, throughout the latter half of the 19th century, Russian influence in Azerbaijan expanded comprehensively, encompassing both cultural and bureaucratic

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[19] *Mustafazadə T.* Azərbaycan-Rusiya münasibətləri: XVIII əsrin ikinci yarısı – XIX əsrin əvvəllərində. Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, 2013. P. 286-287.

[20] *İsmayıl M.* Şəki xanlığı. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1997.

[21] *Mustafazadə T.* Azərbaycan-Rusiya münasibətləri… P. 8-9.

[22] *Гулиева З.* Переселенческая политика Российской империи. *История*. 2018. Вып. 21, Т. 1. С. 10.

[23] *Əliyeva İ.* XIX əsr Şimal-Qərbi Azərbaycanın çar Rusiyası tərəfindən işğalı. A*zərbaycan arxeologiyası və etnoqrafiyası*. 2014. № 1. P. 243.

spheres. It can be argued that the emergence of the first Russophiles occurred during this period. The Azerbaijani elite, in particular, displayed a pronounced inclination toward Russophilia. This proclivity can be attributed to the elite's educational advantages, as Russian education was widely perceived as superior, their cultivation of a more refined cultural outlook (given the pervasive influence of Russian culture on cultural life), and their representation within the upper echelons of the bureaucracy, where Azerbaijani officials were politically subordinated to the Russian state. Notably, from this period onward, obtaining an education in Russia was regarded as a marker of elitism and nobility among Azerbaijanis[24]. In addition, Russian education was considered the most secular and highest-quality education available to Azerbaijanis who had not yet set foot in Europe at that time[25].

This gradual process fostered an entire generation of Russophiles in Azerbaijan, as the Russian tsar was simultaneously regarded as the sovereign of the Azerbaijani population, who were considered subjects of the Russian Empire. This aspect is of particular importance for the formation of national identity and a sense of belonging. The perception among Azerbaijanis of belonging to the Russian state naturally facilitated the spread of sympathies toward Russia within the country.

Historical sources describing Azerbaijan during this period indicate that a highly cosmopolitan society prevailed[26]. The average resident of Baku routinely interacted with Russians, Armenians, and Jews in everyday life. These ethnic groups had a stronger presence in commercial enterprises, governmental positions, and various public domains. Consequently, the ordinary Azerbaijani did not perceive Russians as foreign or external entities, nor as distinct from themselves. Rather, they regarded them as fellow compatriots and integral members of their society.

Undoubtedly, at this juncture, the notion of a cohesive society among Azerbaijanis was still in its nascent stages. The majority of Azerbaijanis, lacking substantial socio-political awareness – with the exception of a privileged stratum – had not yet developed a clear understanding of key issues such as national identity and the concept of a national community[27]. The Russian state likewise had no interest in encouraging such development. For example, the newspaper Akinchi, edited by Hasan bey Zardabi, was closed in 1877 by an order from Moscow due to its nationalist views[28]. State propaganda also promoted attachment to a cosmopolitan social order. From this perspective, Azerbaijanis did not identify themselves as Azerbaijanis or Turks during this period, except for a very small number of intellectuals. The community of Azerbaijani Turks primarily identified themselves as Muslims[29]. Building their identity on religious affiliation, Azerbaijanis lacked a clearly articulated

[24] *Avşar Ə.* Türkiyə-Azərbaycan mədəni əlaqələrinin inkişafında ziyalıların rolu. *525-ci qəzet*. 2018. May 5. P. 9-12.
[25] *Qənbərov A.* XIX əsrin sonu XX əsrin əvvəllərində Azərbaycanda təhsil islahatları: üsuli-cədid və Azərbaycan-rus məktəbləri. *"İslam Sivilizasiyası Qafqazda" II Beynəlxalq Simpoziumunun Materialları*. Bakı: AMEA Z.M. Bünyadov Adına Şərqşünaslıq İnstitutu, 2019. P. 363.
[26] *Ömərov V.* Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyətini yetişdirən şərait (Birinci Dünya müharibəsi) və azərbaycançılıq. *Səs*. 2012. May 16. P. 14.
[27] *Abdullazadə T.* Azərbaycan millətçiliyinin tamamlanmamış sosiogenezisi. *Milliyət Araşdırmalar Mərkəzi.* 2022. URL: https://cutt.ly/4tk99zSl
[28] *Nəsib E.* "Əkinçi" də maarifçilik ideyalarının təbliği. Bakı: Elm və təhsil, 2012. P. 7.
[29] *Hacıbəyli Ü.* Milli və Sosial Düşüncələri. *Milliyət Araşdırmalar Mərkəzi*. 2015, Sentyabr 19. URL: https://milliyyet.info/sosiologiya/uzeyir-hacibeylinin-milli-ve-sosial-dusunceleri/

national ideology. Thus, the period between 1830 and 1900 may be defined as the first stage in the development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan. This stage can be systematically characterized, as presented in Table 1 in the appendices.

THE SECOND STAGE: THE INTRODUCTION OF IDEOLOGIES BY RUSSIANS INTO AZERBAIJAN

In the early 20th century, Baku underwent a notable transformation into a cosmopolitan, capitalist city due to burgeoning oil exports, the arrival of foreign investors, and the exacerbation of social inequality across national lines. Consequently, Baku society shifted its focus from national to class identity. This shift facilitated the emergence of socialist and Bolshevik ideology in Azerbaijan. Bolshevik emissaries began arriving from various regions of Russia, training local socialists and organizing workers' uprisings to advocate for the rights of the working class, irrespective of nationality. These emissaries not only deepened Azerbaijan's existing cultural, bureaucratic, and economic dependence on Russia but also fostered political and ideological dependency on Moscow. As a result, socialist forces in Azerbaijan operated in accordance with directives from the Bolshevik center in Moscow, thereby fostering admiration and sympathy for the Russian capital. This stage may be identified as the second phase in the development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan. During this period, the advancement of socialist ideology played a significant role in constraining the rise of nationalism within the country[30].

This period witnessed significant political transformations in Europe and Russia, as well as the impact of World War I and other factors on the South Caucasus region. Simultaneously, there was a burgeoning development of the press, facilitating the expansion of information circulation and the gradual transmission of social and political knowledge from intellectuals to broader social groups. Consequently, the formation of nationalism and other political ideologies was already underway in Azerbaijan. As a result, by the 1910s, Azerbaijani society had become divided along Ottomanophilic, Iranophilic, and Russophilic fronts. This division is evident in historical sources, as well as in literary and journalistic materials from the period[31].

It should be noted that nationalists gained power in Armenia during this period, and territorial disputes arose between Armenia and Azerbaijan. As these disputes were accompanied by armed raids and military confrontations, over time they escalated into ethnic hatred[32]. This phenomenon reinforced the prominence of nationalist ideology in the South Caucasus, leading to its ascendancy over alternative ideological currents. It is therefore unsurprising that following the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Transcaucasian Seim – comprising all three South Caucasian entities – existed only briefly before giving way to the emergence of national states in the region. However, these newly formed states were swiftly reoccupied by Bolshevik Russia in subsequent developments.

World War I constituted an additional catalyst for the acceleration of Russophilia in Azerbaijan. As an integral part of Russia, Azerbaijan became entangled in the military campaign, experiencing the profound impact of the war alongside the rest of

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[30] *Həsənov F.* Qədim Bakı və Azərbaycan tarixi. Bakı: Mütərcim, 2010. P. 12-13.

[31] *Kərimov Z.* XX əsrin əvvəllərində Şimali Azərbaycanda ictimai-siyasi vəziyyət mətbuat səhifələrində. Bakı: Turxan NPB, 2017.

[32] *Mustafa N.* Mənbələr azərbaycanlıların 1905-1906-cı illər soyqırımı haqqında. *Xalq qəzeti.* 2009. Mart 31. P. 4.

the Russian Empire[33]. Factors such as shared objectives and aspirations, mutual sacrifices in pursuit of common goals, widespread militaristic propaganda, and the collective efforts of the Azerbaijani population as subjects of the Russian state contributed to the strengthening of ties between Azerbaijanis and Russians.

Following the attainment of independence by the national states, Bolshevik activists were actively operating in their respective territories. Despite the existence of national governments, Bolshevik sympathizers were present in sufficient numbers in all three South Caucasus countries, including Azerbaijan. The democratic structure of the national states established in 1918 expedited the formation of political parties throughout the region. This situation enabled Russian-leaning factions in Azerbaijan to coalesce into a unified front. Accordingly, it is unsurprising that in 1920, when the Russian army advanced into Azerbaijan from the northern direction, little resistance was encountered. Mediated by Azerbaijani Bolsheviks, the Russian and Azerbaijani governments reached a set of conditions, ultimately leading to the seizure of Baku by the Red Army without encountering organized opposition[34].

Following Azerbaijan's integration into the Soviet Union, a third phase of Russophilia emerged within the country. This phase began with the establishment of the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic in Azerbaijan, which endured from 1920 to 1936, and subsequently with the federation's inclusion in the USSR starting in 1922. The key distinction between the first and second stages lies in the nature of Russophilia itself. The first stage centered on the Russian state's efforts to consolidate its presence in Azerbaijan through the introduction of new educational and administrative systems – processes that were largely completed by the end of the 19th century. In contrast, the second stage, which emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, marked Russia's full consolidation within Azerbaijan, with its governance structures firmly in place. During this period, Russophilia in Azerbaijan was driven primarily by the activities of specific political groups, rather than by direct state-led initiatives.

However, there are no sharp boundaries between the first and second stages. It is difficult to determine the exact year in which the transition from the first stage to the second stage occurred. Such evolution does not occur within one-two years; rather, it unfolds as the result of sociological processes lasting many years. In general, the second stage, encompassing the years 1900-1920, may be systematically characterized as presented in Table 2 in the appendices.

THE THIRD STAGE: THE ERA OF THE 'BIG BROTHER'

With the establishment of the USSR in Azerbaijan, a new stage in the development of Russophilia began. The USSR employed a more centralized and totalitarian system than the Russian state that had existed until 1917[35]. Through the combined influence of radical state policies and technological advancement, the central authority of the country – including regions such as Azerbaijan – exercised significantly enhanced control.

[33] *Ömərov V.* XIX əsrin II yarısında Azərbaycan maarifçiliyində azərbaycançılıq ideyası məsələləri. *Səs qəzeti.* 2012. Mart 13. P. 12.

[34] AXC Ensiklopediyası, Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti ensiklopediyası. 2 cilddə: 2-ci cild. Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, 2014.

[35] *Shlapentokh V.* A Normal Totalitarian Society: How the Soviet Union Functioned and How It Collapsed. New York: Routledge, 2001. P. 13.

In the early phase of Soviet rule, the socialist government implemented policies aimed at confiscating land and substantial property holdings from wealthy landowners who possessed extensive estates and assets. These confiscated resources were subsequently redistributed among the peasantry[36]. This policy rendered the Soviet government highly popular in Azerbaijan. This policy, however, also earned the Soviet government bitter enemies and was accompanied by acts of disobedience and rebellions in various regions[37]. Nevertheless, the level of support for this initiative remained significantly higher. The peasantry, long subjected to feudal exploitation, began to perceive the Soviet government as a liberator, largely due to the pervasive influence of 'Leninist propaganda'.

It is noteworthy that Lenin established a highly effective propaganda apparatus that extended not only to the political center of the USSR but also to its remote provinces, including Azerbaijan. Through this campaign, a sense of admiration for Moscow and its socialist ideology was cultivated across much of the Soviet periphery, indirectly fostering appreciation for Russian culture. Stalin initially continued this propaganda strategy; however, from the mid-1930s onward, he embarked upon a distinct policy trajectory[38].

In the 1920s, the idea of the fraternity of peoples was actively promoted throughout the USSR[39]. The 'elder brother' in this hierarchy was, of course, the Russian people. This constituted one of the key factors in the development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan.

In the 1930s, this ideological narrative weakened, and revolutionary rhetoric replaced it. Subsequently, repression against nationalist intellectuals intensified. During this period of repression, known in history as the 'Great Purge' or the 'Year of '37', a large number of Azerbaijani nationalist poets, writers, and artists were either executed or sent into exile. Intellectuals educated in Turkey and associated with Turkish culture were particularly targeted. In addition, religious figures educated in Iran were also subjected to repression[40]..

This period was so dangerous that individuals occupying leadership positions could arrest others they personally disliked under the pretext of anti-Soviet propaganda. In other words, it was not even necessary to be a nationalist or pro-Turkish figure to be arrested. Personal animosities often resulted in accusations of being a 'secret nationalist'[41].

Thus, during this period, Azerbaijani Turkic and nationalist intellectuals were systematically eliminated, while writers with a cosmopolitan outlook who actively participated in Soviet propaganda and expressed loyalty to and gratitude toward the

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[36] *Baranov A.* Land reforms in Soviet Russia and the peasant uprisings of the 1920s in the context of the concept of Theodor Shanin (regional aspect). Old and New Worlds: The Global Challenges of Rural History. Lisbon: SEHA, 2016. P. 3.

[37] *İbişov F.* Azərbaycan kəndində sosial-siyasi proseslər: 1920-1930. Bakı: Mütərcim, 1996. P. 46.

[38] *Plokhy S.* Lenin vs Stalin: Their Showdown Over the Birth of the USSR. *History*. 2019. February 1. URL : https://www.history.com/news/lenin-stalin-differences-soviet-union

[39] *Лурье С.В.* "Дружба народов" в СССР: национальный проект или пример спонтанной межэтнической самоорганизации? *Demoscope Weekly*. 2011. № 475-476, 29 августа – 11 сентября. URL: http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2011/0475/analit02.php#_FNR_1

[40] Azerbaijans, Repressiya faciəsi. Milli faciələr. *Azerbaijans*. 2022. URL: https://www.azerbaijans.com/content_1709_az.html

[41] *Əliyeva İ.* Repressiya burulğanı. Bakı: Letterpress, 2015. P. 333.

Russian people were promoted. During this period, not only Turkic Azerbaijanis were killed; ordinary Azerbaijanis were also removed from public offices[42]. These positions were subsequently filled by Russians transferred to Azerbaijan.

A single statistical comparison suffices to illustrate the situation. While there were 220,545 Russians in Azerbaijan in 1926, this number increased to 528,318 in 1939. Thus, in 1926, Russians constituted 9.72 percent of Azerbaijan's population, whereas by 1939 their share had risen to 16.48 percent[43]. In 1931, 45 percent of officials in the Baku Soviet were Russians, 17 percent Armenians, and 16 percent Azerbaijanis[44]. According to statistics from the same year, only one of the 12 institutions of higher education in Azerbaijan – the newly established Pedagogical Institute – provided instruction in the Azerbaijani language, while all others taught in Russian[45].

In the subsequent period, a policy of intensive Russification was implemented in Azerbaijan. Official correspondence and documentation in public offices were conducted in Russian. Marriage to Russians facilitated promotion within administrative structures. Armenians (particularly women) often occupied the roles of secretaries and assistants to department heads[46]. The first leader who sought to challenge this Russification policy was Imam Mustafayev, who headed Azerbaijan in 1954-1959. His defense of the native language within the Azerbaijani administrative system ultimately resulted in his removal from office[47].

As can be seen, in the 1930s, Azerbaijanis were dependent on Russians in nearly all spheres of social life and developed an inferiority complex vis-à-vis Russians. At the same time, propaganda was intensified. All these factors contributed to the formation of entrenched Russophilia in the country.

Another factor that facilitated the establishment of Russophilia in Azerbaijan was the frequent reform of school textbooks beginning in the 1920s. With each revision, additional propaganda material was incorporated. This policy continued throughout the 1930s. In Azerbaijan, in 1940, the Latin alphabet was abolished in all educational institutions and replaced by the Cyrillic alphabet[48]. This decision was implemented so abruptly that the first textbooks were imported directly from Russia.

More broadly, between 1922 and 1939, several alphabet reforms were carried out in Azerbaijan. Until 1929, the Arabic alphabet was in use. With the reform of 1929, it was replaced by the Latin alphabet. Just four years later, another reform followed, and between 1933 and 1939, an updated Latin alphabet was introduced. In 1939, the transition to the Cyrillic alphabet took place, and this system remained in use until 1991[49].

Undoubtedly, World War II stands as a pivotal event that forged closer bonds and fostered a sense of fraternity between the Azerbaijani and Russian populations. As in

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[42] AMEA Tarix İnstitutu, Azərbaycan Tarixi. VI cild. Bakı: Elm, 2008. P. 365.
[43] Ibid. P. 365.
[44] *Жиромская Б.В.* Всесоюзная перепись населения 1931 года: общие итоги. Сборник документов и материалов. Москва: Российская политическая энциклопедия, 2007. С. 107.
[45] AMEA Tarix İnstitutu… P. 205.
[46] *Yaqublu N.* Azərbaycanın aprel işğalı. *Karabakh Media*. 2019. Aprel 26. URL: http://karabakhmedia.az/main/15708-azrbaycanin-aprel-isgali.html
[47] *Sabiroglu*. İmam Mustafayev 1959-cu il hadisələri haqqında. *YouTube*. 2016, Dekabr 10. URL: http://y2u.be/EHiezb75VHQ
[48] *Camal A.* Bir əsrdə üç dəfə dəyişən Azərbaycan əlifbası. *Türküstan qəzeti*. 2016. Avqust 22. P. 11.
[49] Ibid. P. 11.

the preceding World War I, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Georgian, Russian, and other peoples fought on the same front lines, shared common values, and fought for a shared objective. By the time of World War II, Moscow had acquired substantial expertise in conducting large-scale and sophisticated propaganda campaigns. The scale, complexity, and intensity of propaganda increased significantly.

Wartime propaganda in the USSR during this period encompassed three key components: 1) anti-Nazi propaganda, 2) propaganda promoting the invincibility of the USSR, and 3) the idea of fraternity among the diverse peoples of the USSR. Once again, Russia assumed the role of the 'elder brother', or guiding force, during this period.

During the 1950s through the 1970s, Russophilia permeated nearly every facet of Azerbaijani social life. Numerous initiatives emerged in the fields of education, literature, music, theater, and cinema that actively promoted Russophilic values. As a result, sentiments of affinity toward Russia and Soviet culture took root within society.

Concurrently, a profound wave of modernization swept across the country, facilitated by Russian support and institutional oversight. Azerbaijani society experienced the spread of secularism across all spheres, including the women's movement. Azerbaijanis gained access to higher-quality education under Russian guidance, leading to literacy levels that were remarkably high for the era. Significant advancements were also observed across artistic fields[50].

Naturally, these developments fostered a deeper sense of attachment among Azerbaijanis to the Soviet Union and the Russian people.

In schools across the USSR, the Komsomol organization functioned as the primary propaganda mechanism, and Komsomol membership was regarded as a source of great pride among schoolchildren. The activities of Komsomol organizations, which had been highly active since the 1920s, actively promoted cosmopolitan values. These organizations were, of course, controlled by Russians[51]. This constituted a significant source of Russophilic sentiment.

Another factor contributing to the development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan during this period was the 'fear of Moscow'. When citizens were dissatisfied with the performance of public offices, educational and health institutions, or other public organizations, they initially addressed their grievances to the leadership of the Azerbaijan SSR. When this proved ineffective, they appealed to Moscow. Officials wary of inspection teams from Moscow were often compelled to satisfy public demands. The situation reached such an extent that even in minor household disputes, the phrase 'I will write to Moscow!' was sufficient to resolve the problem[52].

As a result, Azerbaijanis increasingly perceived Moscow as a problem solver and savior, which further deepened Russophilia in the republic. The third stage of the development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan, covering approximately 1920-1980s, may be systematically characterized as presented in Table 3 in the appendices.

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[50] *Nəcəfli T.* Azərbaycan tarixi. Bakı: Qafqaz Universiteti, 2015. P. 187.

[51] *Özdemir B.* Rusya'nın Kırsal Kesiminde Komünist Gençler Birliği'nin (Komsomol) Kuruluşu ve Sovyet İktidarının Güçlenmesindeki Rolü: 1981-39. *Marmara Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*. 2016. Cilt III Sayı 1. P. 24.

[52] *Afşar Y.A.* Moskvanın qüdrəti, rəisin "mərhəmət"i. News.milli. 2016. Yanvar 29. URL: https://news.milli.az/culture/402610.html

1980s: 'RAZVYAZKA' (DENOUEMENT)

In Russian literature and drama, denouement ('razvyazka') is defined as the resolution of events occurring after the climax of the plot and marking the falling action of the narrative. In the 1980s, there was a significant turning point in attitudes among Azerbaijanis toward Russians and the Russian state. Russophilia in Azerbaijan underwent partial erosion in the latter half of the 1980s, coinciding with the emergence of nationalist movements across various regions of the USSR, including Azerbaijan.

Taking advantage of this political climate, nationalist actors mobilized support in favor of independence. In several locales, the activation and mobilization of nationalist sentiments among neighboring ethnic groups reactivated long-standing ethnic and territorial conflicts that had remained suppressed during the Soviet period[53]. Karabakh represented a prominent example of such a conflict, alongside numerous others that unfolded simultaneously.

The USSR leadership's inadequate and delayed responses to these challenges contributed to a climate of instability in multiple regions. During this period, the effectiveness of Soviet law enforcement agencies was notably diminished[54]. The sluggish performance of the USSR's security and coercive structures generated public dissatisfaction and undermined the perception of Russians as protectors. Moreover, the inconsistent and often chaotic actions of Soviet military units deployed to suppress ethnic conflicts alienated both sides involved.

Nationalist factions skillfully exploited this situation by disseminating narratives portraying the Russian army as favoring opposing groups and acting with hostility toward local populations[55]. Similar patterns emerged in Azerbaijan as well as in other parts of the USSR. In particular, developments in Karabakh prompted Azerbaijanis – whose nationalist consciousness had already intensified – to further distance themselves from Russians.

Naturally, the factors contributing to the growing alienation between Azerbaijanis and Russians during this period extend beyond the factors discussed above. Following the late 1980s, the Soviet government decided to suppress nationalist movements by force in various regions, including Azerbaijan. In January 1990, widespread demonstrations and the mobilization of nationalist crowds compelled the government of the Azerbaijan SSR to seek assistance from Moscow.

The military intervention ordered by Moscow in Baku involved the use of force against civilian protesters, resulting in the tragic loss of 117 Azerbaijani lives. Subsequently, numerous Azerbaijani nationalist intellectuals were arrested and transferred to Russia[56]. This shattered Azerbaijani public confidence in the central Soviet authorities. The population experienced both profound grief and shock. This was particularly shocking, as since the mid-1920s the Red Army had not conducted military operations of such scale against civilians in Azerbaijan.

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[53] *Hajda L.* Ethnic Politics and Ethnic Conflict in The USSR and The Post-Soviet States. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*. 1993. Vol. 19, No. 2. P. 194-195.

[54] *Hoffmann D.L.* The Soviet Collapse. *Origins*. 2021, December. URL: https://origins.osu.edu/article/soviet-collapse-yeltsin-putin-gorbachev-russia

[55] *Elçibəy Ə.* Rəqiblərimiz cığallıq edir. *Azadlıq qəzeti*. 1992. Aprel 28. P. 3.

[56] *Rəşid L.* 20 Yanvar faciəsinin tarixi, siyasi, hüquqi amilləri. *Azertag*. 2021. Yanvar 19. URL: https://azertag.az/xeber/20_Yanvar_faciesinin_tarixi_siyasi_huquqi_amilleri-1692099

Prior to these events, the reputation of the Red Army had been exceptionally high throughout the USSR, including Azerbaijan. Due to systematic Soviet propaganda and nostalgia associated with World War II, the Red Army enjoyed considerable prestige in Azerbaijani society. It should be noted that many Azerbaijanis had served in its ranks. As a result, many felt a strong sense of belonging to the Red Army. Consequently, witnesses of the events later expressed their feelings as follows: "we could never have imagined that the Red Army – our own army – would use weapons against us"[57].

All the events and processes discussed above ultimately led to a sharp decline in Russophilia in Azerbaijan and even to the emergence of pronounced antipathy toward Russians. Subsequent developments placed Russia and Azerbaijan in nearly opposing positions. The seizure of power by nationalist forces in Azerbaijan altered the regional balance.

The nationalist government, which employed openly confrontational rhetoric toward Russia and Iran and declared that 'Russians and Persians are our historical enemies', expelled the remaining Russian military units from Azerbaijan[58]. This action, along with the revocation of numerous other privileges previously held by Russians, effectively eliminated Russia's role as a 'mediator' in the Karabakh conflict. Russia subsequently announced that it was 'withdrawing' from the conflict resolution process[59].

Behind this diplomatic formulation, however, relations between Russia and Armenia were elevated to the level of strategic cooperation across multiple spheres, including the military domain. Furthermore, reports that the Russian 366th Motorized Rifle Regiment was involved in the Khojaly massacre on February 26, 1992 generated widespread revulsion toward Russia within Azerbaijani society[60].

During the nationalist government's rule, the military conflict expanded beyond Nagorno-Karabakh, encompassing additional territories and resulting in the occupation of Azerbaijani lands. Throughout this period, Azerbaijanis asserted that Russia provided extensive assistance to Armenian military units, a claim corroborated by the Azerbaijani government[61]. This contributed to the perception of the Russian state as an adversary within Azerbaijani society. At the same time, the nationalist government mobilized public opinion against Russia through recurrent confrontational rhetoric.

This situation, however, proved short-lived, as a military coup occurred in the country. One month later, Heydar Aliyev returned to Azerbaijan and assumed power following a series of political processes[62]. Shortly after Heydar Aliyev was elected president of Azerbaijan, military operations between Armenia and Azerbaijan were halted, and a ceasefire agreement was signed.

The replacement of the nationalist government by Heydar Aliyev, a former First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, marked the transition of

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[57] *Laçın S.* Qanlı Yanvarın canlı şahidləri. *Həftə içi*. 2015. Yanvar 21. P. 4.
[58] Rus qoşunları Azərbaycandan necə çıxarıldı? *Azadlıq radiosu*. 2014, Mart 3. URL: https://www.azadliq.org/a/25283776.html
[59] *Salamov S.* Karabakhskiy konflikt: Istoki, prichini, posledstviya. Bishkek: Uluu Toolor, 2018. P. 49.
[60] *İsmayılqızı S.* Xocalı faciəsinin yeni şahidi. *Azərbaycan ordusu*. 2005. Fevral 27. P. 4.
[61] *Elçibəy Ə.* Azərbaycan Cümhuriyyətinin 75 illiyi münasibətilə Respublika prezidenti Əbülfəz Elçibəyin mayın 28-də Azərbaycanm xalqına televiziya ilə müraciəti. *Azərbaycan qəzeti.* 1993. İyun 1. P. 2.
[62] *Nəcəfli T.* Azərbaycan tarixi. Bakı: Qafqaz Universiteti, 2015. P. 203.

Russophilia to a new stage in Azerbaijan. This fourth stage in the development of Russophilia covers the period of independence and continues to the present day. The 'razvyazka' stage may be regarded as exceptional in a specific sense, as it represents virtually the only period of decline in Russophilia, which had followed an overall upward trajectory since the 1830s, despite rebellions, protests, and repression. This exceptional phase may be summarized in a single sentence: the weakening of Russophilia in Azerbaijan and the collapse of Russia's reputation from the late 1980s until Heydar Aliyev replaced the nationalist government in power.

The phase extending from Heydar Aliyev's return to power in 1993 to the present day constitutes the fourth stage in the development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan. However, this phase lies beyond the scope of the present study, as the social, political, and economic factors defining this period are embedded in a context distinct from earlier periods and reflect the specific dynamics of the contemporary era.

Factors such as independent Azerbaijan's relations with its neighbors, its strengthening position within the international system, and Russia's regional and continental policies as the successor state to the USSR render this fourth phase a unique field of research in its own right.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND THEORETICAL CONCLUSIONS

From a sociological perspective, the development and evolution of Russophilia in Azerbaijan can be examined through the lens of sociological theories and concepts. This perspective allows for a deeper examination of the underlying social dynamics, structures, and processes that have shaped attitudes and behaviors toward Russia across different historical periods.

One of the key mechanisms through which Russophilia has been reproduced in Azerbaijani society is socialization and cultural transmission. Socialization – the process by which individuals learn and internalize the norms, values, and behaviors appropriate to their society[63] – has played a central role in shaping Russophile sentiments. The integration of Russian educational systems, the establishment of Russian-Azerbaijani schools, and the widespread use of the Russian language and culture in public life facilitated the transmission of Russophile attitudes from one generation to the next.

This cultural transmission was not limited to institutional settings but also occurred at the familial and community levels, where Russian cultural practices and values were adopted and perpetuated.

The concept of hegemony, as articulated by Antonio Gramsci, is particularly useful for understanding the dominance of Russophile attitudes in Azerbaijan. Hegemony refers to the cultural, ideological, and economic influence exerted by a dominant group over subordinate social groups[64]. In the context of Azerbaijan, the Russian state – first under Tsarist rule and later under Soviet authority – established and sustained hegemony through various means, including political control, economic dependency, and cultural dominance. This hegemony was further reinforced by propaganda and the promotion of Russian culture and ideology, thereby shaping the social

[63] *Settersten R.A.* Socialization and the Life Course: New Frontiers in Theory and Research. In: *Settersten R.A., Owens T.* New Frontiers in Socialization. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2002. P. 13-40.

[64] *Gramsci A.* The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

consciousness of the Azerbaijani population in alignment with Russian interests and perspectives.

The formation of a collective identity is a central theme in sociological theory[65], and the development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan can be productively analyzed through this lens. The integration of Azerbaijan into the Russian state and later the USSR facilitated the emergence of a hybrid identity among Azerbaijanis, blending elements of Azerbaijani and Russian cultural traditions.

This hybrid identity contributed to a degree of social cohesion within Azerbaijani society, as shared cultural practices and values fostered a sense of belonging and solidarity. However, this process also generated internal tensions and divisions, as nationalist movements and alternative ideological projects emerged, challenging the dominant Russophile narrative and its social legitimacy.

The historical trajectory of Russophilia in Azerbaijan is also characterized by periods of social change and resistance. Sociological theories of social change, such as those proposed by Max Weber and Karl Marx, emphasize the dynamic nature of societies and their potential for conflict and transformation[66]. The decline of Russophilia in the late 1980s and early 1990s can be interpreted as a response to broader social, political, and economic changes within the USSR and Azerbaijan.

The rise of nationalist movements, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the subsequent reassertion of Azerbaijani independence all contributed to a reevaluation and renegotiation of national identity and attitudes toward Russia. This period of resistance and transformation underscores the fluidity and contested nature of social identities and cultural affiliations.

CONCLUSIONS

The primary objective of the article was to periodize the evolution of Russophilia in Azerbaijan. This goal was achieved by the study, which identified and delineated the key phases of Russophilia's formation and development in the country. In this regard, the study introduces a novel framework for understanding the historical evolution of Russophilia in Azerbaijan by categorizing it into four distinct stages. Such systematic categorization has not previously been undertaken in academic studies.

The rationale for this categorization stems from the recognition that following the establishment of Tsarist rule in Azerbaijan in the 1830s, a continuous process persisted until the early 1900s, displaying consistent characteristics. The emergence of political awareness and the deepening of ideological divisions in the early 1900s mark the beginning of the second stage. With the exception of the brief interlude of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the period extending into the Soviet era exhibits relatively homogeneous features.

The third stage is defined by the formation of the USSR in the 1920s as a new central state, explicitly distancing itself from the legacy of Tsarist Russia, criticizing its state structure, and introducing new ideological and systemic interpretations of the Russian nation and Russophilia. However, subsequent years witnessed the perpetuation of Russian nationalism and the persistence of Russophilia, revealing a disjunction between the proclaimed 'brotherhood of peoples' and political reality.

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[65] *Hall R.B.* National Collective Identity. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
[66] *Form W., Wilterdink N.* Social change. Encyclopedia Britannica. 2024. URL: https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-change

The exceptional period spanning the 1970s to the early 1990s aligns with neither the former nor the latter stages and therefore warrants classification as a distinct phase. The fourth stage, commencing with Heydar Aliyev's return to power, signifies a new era, as it curtailed the anti-Russian sentiment that had prevailed in Azerbaijan for nearly a decade and clarified Azerbaijan's perception of Russia and the Russian nation-state.

Consequently, Russophilia in Azerbaijan has passed through four stages over the past two centuries and continues to the present day. The historical trajectory of Russophilia in Azerbaijan reveals a formative phase from 1830 to 1900, a phase of full consolidation from 1900 to 1920, a period of peak influence from 1920 to 1980, a sharp decline from 1980 to 1990, and a phase of gradual weakening under political control since the 1990s.

In conclusion, a sociological analysis of Russophilia in Azerbaijan reveals a complex interplay of socialization, hegemony, identity formation, and social change in shaping attitudes toward Russia. The historical evolution of Russophilia reflects broader social processes and dynamics, including the role of education, cultural transmission, political power, and resistance movements. Understanding these sociological dimensions provides deeper insight into the persistence and transformation of Russophilia in Azerbaijani society over the past two centuries. As Azerbaijan continues to navigate its post-Soviet identity and geopolitical position, the legacy of Russophilia remains a salient, multifaceted aspect of its social fabric.

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Form, W. & Wilterdink, N. (2024). Social change. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-change [in English].

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APPENDICES

Table 1. The Characteristics of the First Stage of the Development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan

The Characteristics of the First Stage of the Development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan (1830-1900)	The occupation of Azerbaijan by the Russian Empire
	Relocation of Russians and other nationalities to Azerbaijan and interaction with the local population
	Creation of a cosmopolitan environment in Azerbaijan
	Adaptation of the Russian system of education and government to Azerbaijan
	Sending Azerbaijanis to Russia to study
	Being of cultural activities under the influence of Russian culture and being exposed of the elites to this influence
	Acceptance of Azerbaijanis as a part of the Russian state under the influence of propaganda and other channels
	Almost non-existence of national identity and therefore nationalism in Azerbaijan

Table 2. The Characteristics of the Second Stage of the Development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan

The Characteristics of the Second Stage of the Development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan (1900-1920)	Inflaming the class struggle of the socialist political groups of capitalist Baku
	The existence of political ideology with the development of political thought and press
	Start of emerging of Russian admiration under the influence of the socialist ideology spreading from Moscow
	Ideological division of society
	Participation of Azerbaijanis in the World War I and sharing common values and goals with the Russian people
	Between 1918 and 1920, with the development of democracy in the country, the occurrence of political partisanship and the unification of pro-Russian forces in one front

Table 3. The Characteristics of the Third Stage of the Development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan

The Characteristics of the Third Stage of the Development of Russophilia in Azerbaijan (1920-1980s)	The propagating the brotherhood of peoples of the USSR and Russia's being the biggest brother by socialist-communist government throughout the USSR, including Azerbaijan
	Carrying out a merciless struggle against the nationalist and Turkophil intellectuals of Azerbaijan
	Implementation of the Russification policy in the regions of the USSR
	Conducting systematic propaganda through television, press, textbooks, Komsomol organizations and other means
	Strengthening of Russophilia by the World War II in many ways in the regions of the USSR
	Problem solver and savior image of Moscow from the 1950s to the late 1980s