



The Journal of Iranian Studies
E-ISSN: 2651-4370
Vol: 7, No: 1, pp. 25-52
Received: 25.01.2023
Accepted: 09.05.2023
DOI: 10.33201/iranian.1242541

Iranian Azerbaijanis - from a “Well Integrated” Ethnic Minority to a Different Identity?

Gulamhuseyn Mammadov*

Abstract

Azerbaijan Turks constitute the second largest ethnicity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. They have faced pressure in the nation-building process that started with the coming to power of the Pahlavi dynasty, and this accelerated the formation of national consciousness in them. It was the result of these pressures that they took an active role in the Islamic Revolution. However, the formation of the national consciousness of the Azerbaijani Turks, who could not achieve what they wanted after this revolution, was triggered by the establishment of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1991. Azerbaijan Turks, who have been exposed to the great cultural influence of the Republics of Turkey and Azerbaijan with the advantages brought by globalization, have started to shift from the “best integrated ethnicity” of Iran to a different identity that is opposed to the Iranian identity. The continuation of the process in this way has the capacity to bring great changes for Iran and the entire region.

Keywords: Nation-building, Iran, Azerbaijan, South Azerbaijan, Iranian Azerbaijan.

* Ph.D. Candidate, Ege University, Institute of Social Sciences, qulam.memmed12@gmail.com, İzmir, Türkiye, ORCID: 0000-0001-8109-5619



İran Çalışmaları Dergisi
E-ISSN: 2651-4370
Cilt: 7, Sayı: 1, ss. 25-52
Geliş Tarihi: 25.01.2023
Kabul Tarihi: 09.05.2023
DOI: 10.33201/iranian.1242541

İran Azerbaycanlıları – “İyi Entegre” Olmuş Etnik Azınlıktan Farklı Bir Kimliğe?

Gulamhuseyn Mammadov*

Öz

Azerbaycan Türkleri, İran İslam Cumhuriyeti'nin ikinci büyük etnisitesini oluşturmaktadır. Pehlevi hanedanının iktidara gelmesiyle başlayan ulus inşası sürecinde baskılarla karşılaşmışlar ve bu durum onlarda milli bilincin oluşmasını hızlandırmıştır. İslam Devrimi'nde aktif rol oynamaları da bu baskıların bir sonucudur. Ancak bu devrimden sonra istediklerini elde edemeyen Azerbaycan Türklerinde milli bilincinin oluşması 1991 yılında Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nin kurulmasıyla yeniden tetiklenmiştir. Küreselleşmenin getirdiği avantajlarla Türkiye ve Azerbaycan Cumhuriyetlerinin büyük kültürel etkisine maruz kalan Azerbaycan Türkleri, İran'ın “en iyi bütünleşmiş etnisitesinden” İran kimliğine karşıt farklı bir kimliğe doğru kaymaya başlamıştır. Sürecin bu şekilde devam etmesi İran ve tüm bölge için büyük değişimler getirme kapasitesine sahiptir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ulus inşası, İran, Azerbaycan, Güney Azerbaycan, İran Azerbaycan'ı.

* Doktora adayı, Ege Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, qulam.memmed12@gmail.com, İzmir, Türkiye, ORCID: 0000-0001-8109-5619

1. Introduction

Iran, like many other countries in the Middle East, has a multi-ethnic structure. The exact number of ethnic minorities living in the country is not clearly known, however, it is estimated that the Persians, the country's titular ethnic group, make up just over half of the country's population. Despite many researchers on occasions mistakenly call the entire population of the country Persians, the supreme identity of the country is Iranian. The largest ethnic group in the country after the Persians is the Azerbaijani Turks or Azerbaijanis.¹ The number of Azerbaijanis living in Iran is not clear. As the Iranian identity was built on Shiism and Iranian Azerbaijanis were also Shiites, a census was not conducted specifically for the Azerbaijani Turkish ethnic minority. Apart from West Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan, Ardabil and Zanjan² provinces, where Azerbaijanis make up the absolute majority of the population, it is difficult to give an exact figure on Azerbaijani Turkish population in Iran due to the large migration from Iranian Azerbaijan to Tehran and other industrial centers and unfeasibility of calculating the ethnic proportions of the population in these cities. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, at the turn of the 21st century, the estimated number was more than 15 million (Etheredge, 1998, parag. 1). Christian Elling Rasmus, in his book citing a CIA Factbook and US Library Congress, reported this being between 12 and 18 million, or 16 to 24 percent while emphasizing the complicated nature of the issue (Elling, 2013, p. 18). According to Brenda Shaffer's estimate 27 million Azerbaijanis lived in Iran in 2002 (Shaffer, 2002, p. 189). As mentioned above, although there is no official consensus in regards to the number of Azerbaijanis living in Iran, there are some figures provided by officials. During an official visit to Türkiye in 2012, then-Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi told reporters that 40 percent of Iran's population spoke

¹ Researched community has different naming in terms of exonym and endonym. In most of the sources they are referred as Azerbaijani Turks, Azeris, Azerbaijanis or simply Turks. Since it's commonly referred as Azerbaijanis (or Iranian Azerbaijanis), or Azerbaijani Turks in most peer reviewed sources, this research has also used the same reference to identify the group. It may be stated that, accuracy of the naming can be debatable from different context.

² Other than these ostan, Iranian Azerbaijanis have settled in other ostan, such as Hamadan, Kurdistan, Qazvin, Markazi, Gilan and Kermanshah ostan.

Turkish³ while emphasizing the cultural closeness between Türkiye and Iran (Salehi, 2012). This means that Iran, with a population of just over 83 million according to the 2019 census, had a total of 33 million Turks.

The current number of Azerbaijani Turks and their compact settlement in a large terrain, the long rule of their ancestors in Iran, as well as their role in mass adoption of the religion in Iran, which is now the main pillar of current identity, have led to identity confusion in the eyes of the state and society and subsequently an alteration of historical consciousness. For example, long-term ruling allowed them mixing with Iran's elite and, even sometimes forming a completely ruling elite while their predominance of Shi'ism prevented them from resolutely breaking away from their Shi'ite-based Iranian identities. Moreover, their compact settlement and literary language, changing historical consciousness, and a rapprochement with related ethnic groups due to the co-use of the products offered to them by the globalizing world prevent them from fully assimilating into the Persian-based Iranian identity as a whole. In the context of Iranian Azerbaijanis, the Iranian identity plays the role of "Janus" for them – while its face, reflecting Shiite past and long-term coexistence, integrates Iranian Azerbaijanis into the ruling identity and society, its other face, with a separate language and story (historical narrative), prevents this and sometimes leads to events such as decentralization or federal state demands. In this article, we examine the role and identity of Iranian Azerbaijanis in Iranian society throughout the twentieth century based on general theories of identity. After reviewing its integration or disintegration from a historical perspective, we will examine the evolutionary process of the last 30 years - mainly after another Azerbaijani group established its own independent republic on the northern borders.

While some scholars consider Azerbaijani Turks in Iran as a well-integrated minority (Binder, 1962, pp. 160-161; Elling, 2013, p. 29; Gökay, 2001, p. 30; Higgins, 1984, p. 59), in this study, it will be attempted to prove that the emergence of Iranian Azerbaijanis in Iranian society as a different ethnic identity is not only a product of modern times, but also existed in the Middle Ages to some extent, whereas in the last 30 years, after its ups

³ Should be noted that, not all Turks living Iran are Azerbaijani Turks. Irani Turks include Azerbaijanis, Turkmens, Qashqais, Khalajs, etc.

and downs throughout the twentieth century, it has been moving towards the formation of a different identity in a modern sense. The driving forces of this evolution are as follows: the ease of communication as a result of the development of technical means of communication and the flow of information consequently, especially from neighboring Türkiye and Azerbaijan, promoting the formation of different ethnic backgrounds and spreading aspirations among Azerbaijani Turks in Iran; public dissatisfaction with state policy based on religious coercion which has led them to legitimize their political demands and gather support from others; and most importantly the emergence of a secular state to the north of the borders on the Araz River, a community of the same ethnic group that possess what they (Iranian Azerbaijanis) do not own. In particular, this process has further been accelerated by the victory of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Second Karabakh War in 2020 (Asgharzadeh, 2007, pp. 217-218; Cabbarlı, 2020, parag. 1, 6, 7) and may have serious consequences for Iran in the near future. In general, the process is divided into two main stages - before and after 1991. The year 1991 was chosen because it was a significant date in terms of the initiation and development of processes both in the world and inside Iran.

2. Different Identity - A Legacy of The Past

As noted by John Armstrong (1982, p. 47) in his book - *Nations Before Nationalism*, identities are not static and can change over time. An example of this is the identity changes we have mentioned above, seen in the last 30 years. It should be borne in mind that when we say change, we mean the most recent national identity formed due to these changes.⁴ However, these identity changes or formation of identities have not only been related to political or social events in modern times, but some of the foundations of identity differences have existed since the Middle Ages.

⁴ Whether the discussed identity could be called "national identity" is not a matter of our discussion. It interests us whether formed tendency in our context is actually challenging the Iranian identity or not. First of all, when we say national identity, we mean a political community, at least in a weak sense. For more information, see: (Özkırmı, 2010; Smith, 1991).

As in other parts of the world, religious and ethnic identities in this region have been closely linked.⁵ Just as religious divisions prevented communities of the same ethnic group from uniting in the same consciousness for a long time, they also created conditions for different ethnic groups to coexist. Considering that the Shiite Azerbaijani Turks and Shiite Persians living in the empire formed a “small Shiite island in the Sunni Sea” and that there were wars between this “sea” and the “island” for almost 300 years at different intervals and for different reasons, we can see that the motives of religion (here Shiism) also have a strong function of uniting different ethnic groups (Litvak, 2017, p. 10). Although this separation played a “milestone” role in the formation of the Azerbaijani Turks as an exceptional ethnic community, it was not strong enough to unite them with the Persians, there were other factors that would prevent this. In our opinion, the most important of these factors is language - the main factor that distinguished the Persians and the Azerbaijani Turks and prevented them from mixing completely with each other since neither of these two languages was rootless enough to disappear.

As we are briefly speaking about the concept of nation in East-West thinking, we must first clarify that while in the West the concept of nation can be chosen by an individual, in the East it is quite the opposite - national identity is almost the same as ethnic identity (Smith, 1991, pp. 10-12). In the same way, the law, belonging to the “imagined community” (Anderson, 2016, pp. 6-7), “the daily plebiscite” (Renan, 2001, parag. 33) in the Western civilized model has been replaced by the local ethnic culture, in other words, the language, which is the most obvious feature of culture. Therefore, the difference of language, which is the main feature of the ethnos, a simpler social construction than nation, is the basis for the emergence of the above-mentioned separate identity.

Here we would like to give historical examples of strong, or at least the existent linguistic-based ethnic differences between Azerbaijani Turks and Persians. At present, the Turkification of the territories inhabited by Azerbaijanis or Azerbaijani Turks dates back to the 11th century, ie the

⁵ Here, it is intended that ethnic Persians and Azerbaijani Turks are from the same religion (Islam), furthermore the same Madhhab (Shia). Considering the fact that surrounded communities are representing Sunnah, it is important to understand the role of Shia Madhhab.

influx of Seljuks into the region. Following that, the emergence of the Mongols on the stage of history, the great Turkic migrations from Central Asia to the west in light of their attacks, and finally with the Turks who came to the region with the Mongols, the process of Turkification came to an end to a large extent (Golden, 1992, p. 385).

Moreover, on this premise, literature in Azerbaijani Turkish has appeared in the region since the 13th century. The literature, which began with Izzeddin Hasanoglu (who wrote under the pseudonyms of Hasanoglu and Pur-e Hasan), Gazi Burhaneddin and Nasimi, became even stronger during the Qara Qoyunlu period. The Qaraqoyunlu ruler Jahanshah, who kept many poets who wrote poems in this language in the palace, was also writing poems in Azerbaijani Turkish under the pseudonym "Haqiqi" (Minorsky, 1954, p. 283). However, the 16th century was more significant for literature written in Azerbaijani Turkish (Javadi & Burril, 2012, parag. 10).

Apart from great poems written in this language by Shah Ismail Safavi and Mohammad Fuzuli (Minorsky, 1942, p. 480), another special event for Azerbaijani Turkish was the beginning of its use as the state language. Azerbaijani Turkish had a special status in the Safavid state. In addition to being the main communication language in the palace and the army (Floor & Javadi, 2013, pp. 569-581), it was also used in religious circles and international correspondences (Balayev, 2002, p. 58; Lajos, 1936, pp. 269-274). According to the information provided by European travelers of that period, there was a certain rivalry between Persian and Azerbaijani Turkic within the empire. For example, the Italian traveler Petro della Valle wrote that as per Qizilbash leaders Persian was a soft and sweet language, so it was used by women in poetry, whereas Turkish was more masculine and was suitable for men and warriors, so it was the language of Shahs and Emirs (Floor & Javadi, 2013, p. 573). Another European traveler, Adam Olearius, noted that the Persians taught Azerbaijani Turkish to their children so that they could advance in government positions throughout the Safavid Empire. Roger Savory, a prominent researcher of his period, wrote that "like their Shahs, Qizilbashes spoke Turkish in the Azeri branch, and their limited ability to speak Persian [including the Shahs] caused the diminishing of pure classical standards of Persian language" (2007, p. 213).

These rivalries between Azerbaijani Turkish and Persian continued in the following periods. Also during the Qajar period, which restored the

central government after the Afshars, Azerbaijani Turkish was used as the mother tongue of the shahs, as well as in the army, palace and sharia. Lately, Smirnov, a Russian officer who was the teacher of the last Qajar king, Ahmad Mirza Qajar, wrote in his reports that “The Persians and the Azerbaijanis are different in spirit and have long despised on another. The impetuous, arrogant Azerbaijani considers the submissive Persian a coward, while the Persian considers the Azerbaijani insolent...” (2002, pp. 89-90). Another interesting point mentioned by Smirnov is that predicted that uprising in Tabriz would eventually result in the separation of Azerbaijan from Iran (Abrahamian, 1982, pp. 97-100; Siegel, 2017, parag. 71, 72). As confirmed by Smirnov, one of the first Pan-Turkist sentiment appeared in South Azerbaijan during this period. The reason for in addition, to the rule of despotic shah and the deterioration of the economic situation, was the relations with Northern Azerbaijan and the 1908 revolution in the Ottoman Empire. During Iranian Constitutional Revolution a large amount of aid was sent from Northern Azerbaijan to the South Azerbaijan (Siegel, 1992). Evaluated as a Pan-Turkic revolution, this revolution influenced the expansion of Pan-Azerbaijaniism based on Turkism in South Azerbaijan (Swietochowski, 1985, p. 68). As a result, those who rebelled against the center’s repressive response to the constitutional demand in Tabriz declared that “the sultan would be as good as the shah” (Browne, 2006, p. 250). However, the Young Turks who has not yet fully seized power response to the events was limited for the known reasons, and the Tabriz-based movement was suppressed by military intervention. After the defeat in the Battle of Sarıkamış, the Ottomans made a new attempt to capture the Caucasus. This time they tried to advance from the south - Iranian Azerbaijan - to capture Baku, but this ended up failure again. Prominent historian Tadeusz Swietochowski noted that the Ottomans, led by the Union and Progress, wanted to build a unified Azerbaijan under own control consisting of Azerbaijan on both shores (Minorsky et al., 2007, p. 496; Swietochowski, 1985, p. 79).

The establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) in the North of Araz in May 1918 initially worried the central government in Iran. They regarded the naming of the state as Azerbaijan as the basis for an irredentist claim to the Azerbaijani province on their territory. However, the meetings of the Iranian Prime Minister in Baku in 1919 during his visit to Paris, three meetings with Topchubashov in Istanbul, as well as changes

in the international political situation forced the two countries to establish close ties. However, the idea of Pan-Azerbaijaniism or Azerbaijan-centered Turkism has not completely disappeared. In a telegram sent to the center in January 1920, Adil khan Ziyadkhanov, an appointed official representative to Iran, wrote that, unlike Iranian officials, Iranian Azerbaijanis had brotherly relations with the ADR and aspired to independence or autonomy (Mahmudov et al., 2005, p. 472).

This desire was achieved in the first half of 1920. However, Mohammad Khiabani's movement was not a movement that demanded complete secession from Iran, and was largely leftist and anti-imperialist.⁶ Although this character distanced him from the British ally, the ADR, which he considered the main enemy, it brought him closer to organizations such as the left wing of Musavat, Hummat and Adalat. This rapprochement led to the development of a sense of unity in the revolutionary organizations on both shores, which was one of the reasons for the formation of the short-lived Azerbaijani National Government by the USSR-backed leftists at the end of World War II. This government, led by Pischevari and backed by the USSR, was more articulate about autonomy than Khiabani. According to some, these desires even went so far as to secede from Iran or unite with the Azerbaijani SSR. On January 6, 1946, the law on language was adopted. According to this law, the Azerbaijani language was to be used in all state bodies, and officials who did not speak the language had to learn it. In one of his public speeches, Pischevari's emphasis on the special importance of the Azerbaijani Turkish language and its beauty, contrary to what the Persians appraise (Abrahamian, 1983, pp. 401-402), can be seen as a sign of intensifying linguistic based identity differences that have existed in Iran for a long time. However, the government he founded did not last long. Concurrently, the Soviet Union, which also claimed land from Türkiye (Karakaş, 2013, pp. 161-162), began to withdraw its troops from the region under pressure from the United States, Britain

⁶ Thoughts and purpose of the Khiabani and supporters are complicated and open to discussion. While Khiabani mentions that the purpose of the movement is for the people of Iran, it was clearly stated in his letters with center that he will not accept anyone sent from Tehran. Ahmad Kasravi also contributed to these doubts. Touraj Atabaki stated in his book that Xiyabani had no intentions of separating Azerbaijan from Iran but considered to have a local autonomous government. For more information, see: (Atabaki, 1993).

and the United Nations, and consequently large concessions were made to the central government.⁷ Finally, in late 1946, the organization was completely disbanded (Lenczowski, 1972, p. 49). During this process, about 500 people connected with the National Government were killed (Swietochowski, 1995, p. 154), in general, according to some eyewitnesses and unofficial Azerbaijani sources, 50 thousand people were killed during the process in Iranian Azerbaijan and Iranian Kurdistan (Asgharzadeh, 2007, p. 102), books in Azerbaijani Turkish were burned (VOA Farsi, 2009), ordinary people were manslaughtered, arrested and raped, and 15,000 people emigrated (Atabaki, 1993, p. 175) to the Azerbaijani SSR (Douglas, 1951, p. 45). The relative independence, which lasted about a year, left an important mark on the history of thought of Iranian Azerbaijanis (Atabaki, 1993, p. 80).

After the end of the Second World War, the nation-building work that had begun before the war was accelerated under the leadership of the Pahlavis. Centralization policy by Reza Shah Pahlavi played an important role in the formation of the social base of the Azerbaijani movement led by Pishevari. In fact, the nationalism formed from the bottom was spontaneously supported by the upper class during the Qajar period, and was fully supported by the government during the Pahlavi rule. While the main reason for this initially reluctant but lately overt support was to prevent large and developed empires such as Britain and Russia from “swallowing” the state’s provinces, whereas compensation for the loss of the legitimacy of religion (especially during the Pahlavi period) and nationalism as a result of the rise of modernity were also among the reasons. The construction of an Iranian identity based on Persian language and literature since Reza Shah Pahlavi came to power, the ban on the use of ethnic minority languages and dresses in public, the “cleansing” of the Persian language from Arabic and Turkish words, (Litvak, 2017, p. 14) and other measures prevented integration of ethnic minorities into Iranian identity. The renunciation of Shiism, or Islam, which is considered one of the main pillars of Iran’s identity, was observed by an exaggeration of pre-Islamic history, especially the Achaemenid and Sassanid states (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 520).

⁷ More information about this crisis, see: (Hasanli, 2006).

According to Ali Ansari (2012, p. 85), the enforcement of a Persian-based Iranian identity, which was one of the reasons why Azerbaijani Turks and Kurds fought for autonomy just after the Second World War, was racially motivated against Turkic tribes. The pressure from the center was not just about centralization. The budget allocated to Tabriz, the center of trade with Russia and Europe, where much of Iran's economy is concentrated, including the 19th century, was also extremely low. This was seen by Azerbaijanis as another example of discrimination. For example, in the 1944-1945 budget, although Tehran was three times smaller than the Azerbaijani province, the funds allocated there were 20 times more than in Azerbaijan (Forran, 1993, p. 409).

"Azeri or the language of ancient Azerbaijan" written by Ahmad Kasravi during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi caused a great stir. In this book written at a time of heated debates over the origins of the Turks in Türkiye and Azerbaijan, Kasravi stated that the ancient Azeri language did not belong to the Turkic languages (Manafzadeh, 2012, parag. 22). Kasravi's theory, being his first serious work, caused a great deal of controversy in Oriental Studies and was widely supported by the Iranian government who was trying to enforcing the Persian based Iranian identity alongside with the scientific community. Generally, when the Pahlavis came to power, historical narratives which is very important for nation-building was almost ready in Europe. This narratives had based on Ariyanism.⁸ According to the government's propaganda, Iranian Azerbaijanis, besides being a part of the Aryan race, became Turkicized after the arrival of the Seljuks in the region. According to this theory, the Azerbaijani Turks belonging to the higher race, ie the Aryan race, were genetically the heirs of the Azeris, Iranian-speaking tribes living in present-day Iranian Azerbaijan in the early Middle Ages, and their current Turkish language was simply a historical mistake (Asgharzadeh, 2007, p. 125). Like Kasravi, Seyid Hasan Taghizadeh, both from Tabriz and originally from Azerbaijan, wrote on the subject:

Persians are not an ethnic group... Iranians do not understand this... culture and geography are a unifying force ... language and religion are not important ... culture is the most important ... Persian has always been taught in Azerbaijan ... Everyone,

⁸ For more information, see: (Asgharzadeh, 2007, p. 102; Yılmaz, 2015).

even 100 percent Iranian can speak other languages ... We can't call [Azerbaijani] Turkish speakers Turks ... They consider themselves Iranians ... the language [Azerbaijani Turkish] has been applied to them from the past ... Don't write or read Turkish ... only Persian .. everyone should learn only Persian. (Ansari, 2017, p. 113)

Apparently, if Kasravi claimed that the Azerbaijani Turks were in fact of Aryan origin, Seyid Hasan, one of the prominent figures of his time, claimed that the Turks should no longer speak their language without the need to touch on the issue of origin at all. However, the policy, which the center attempted to implement, did not succeed. The Pahlavi monarchy was overthrown in 1979, much to the displeasure of many, including ethnic minorities and religious groups. After nearly 50 years of pressure, prohibitions and restrictions from the Pahlavi period, their overthrow, like other ethnic minorities, offered great hopes for Iranian Azerbaijanis.

Immediately after the revolution, Muslim People's Republican Party (MPRP) was formed, the members of which were mainly supporters of Ayatollah Shariatmadari and Iranian Azerbaijanis, against the Islamic Republican Party of Khomeini's supporters. The party advocated for the rights of ethnic minorities in Iran, the abolition of centralization, and the establishment of provincial parliaments. Despite the party-backed Shariatmadari's strong opposition to the new constitution, Radio Tabriz falsely claimed his fatwa calling for a vote in favor of the constitution. After realizing this false news, the Iranian Azerbaijanis revolted and seized control of Tabriz and then some of the surrounding cities. However, in the end, the movement was suppressed, the MPRP was shut down, and shortly afterwards, Shariatmadari was removed from politics (Afary, 1999, parag. 11; The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2003, parag. 2). The capture of Tabriz and other cities at the expense of the army and punishment of Shariatmadari, known as a figure supported by Iranian Azerbaijanis, can be considered the first time in the post-Islamic revolution that Iranian Azerbaijanis had started to doubt about the revolution.

In school textbooks, immediately after the the revolution, nationalism was seen as an object that served Western imperialism and prevented the formation of a united Muslim community, however, this notion began to change in the second half of the 1980s. In the war against Iraq, Muslim

country with predominantly Shiite population, there was a need for religiously motivated nationalism in order to mobilize people. For example, Ali Khamenei, then president of Iran and current Supreme Religious Leader, emphasized the international importance of Persian in a 1988 televised speech entitled "The Greatness of the Persian Language and the Importance of Preserving It" and concluded that "Persian is the language of truth and revolutionary Islam" (Litvak, 2017, p. 18). The speech of Khamenei can be considered a sign of the gradual transformation of the Islamic revolution also into Persian-based nationalism. If we remember the primary reasons for the revolution during the Pahlavi period which was the oppression of ethnic minorities, the significance of this turn deserves more attention. President Hashemi Rafsanjani's visit to Persopolis, one of the symbols of Pahlavi nationalism, his acclaim for Iran was a great civilization prior to Islam and Iranians should be proud of it and should not ignore their history, were met with surprise (The New York Times, 1992, parag. 2, 3).

Events reminiscent of the Pahlavi era, shortly after the revolution, once again raised concerns among ethnic minorities. Although the anti-Pahlavi movement in Iranian Azerbaijan was part of a general movement in Iran, the protests were particularly heated here. One of the most violent protests was performed by the students of Tabriz University. Day of protest was on the anniversary of Pishhevari government, most likely to send a message to the regime (Shaffer, 2000, s. 465). This can be explained by the fact that the population here was even more alienated from the regime (Shaffer, 2000, p. 451). Publishing houses in Azerbaijani Turkish started to appear immediately after the revolution, also as a likely outcome of the influence of the Pahlavi period prohibitions. Earlier, during the Qajar period, Tabriz was considered the largest city with Persian and Azerbaijani Turkish publishing houses, but during the Pahlavi period, publications in Azerbaijani Turkish were banned. Although there was no legal basis for these bans, it was restrained by the authorities. It can be suggested as an exception 1941-1946 years when Iranian Azerbaijan was de facto out of the central control, and the last year was almost independent (Javadi, 1996, pp. 84-85). After the revolution, like in 1941-1946, publishing houses in Azerbaijani Turkish suddenly appeared and began to proliferate. During this period, 11 newspapers and magazines began to publish in this language. According to an interview with Javad Heyat in 1993, the

circulation of “Varlig” magazine and “Yol” magazine alone was 250,000 and 150,000, respectively. This period was not only remarked by the growth of newspapers and magazines, but also publications of Persian-Turkish dictionaries and works on the grammar of Azerbaijani Turkish were recorded (Javadi, 1996, p. 87).

The traumas of the Pahlavi period led to the emergence of a language based national identity struggle from the first day of the revolution. Anjuman-i Azerbaijan, founded in 1979, stated in its charter that it would fight for the rights of the national language and Azerbaijani Turkish culture. Going even further, they opposed the expected policy of centralization, called for the use of Azerbaijani Turkish in official circles and confederate relations with Tehran, and demanded that all other issues, including foreign relations, be resolved by a local assembly elected by the Azerbaijani people (Shaffer, 2000, p. 455). Despite Article 15 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran which allows ethnic minorities to use their own languages for publishing, media and educational (Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2022), the implementation of this article has been prevented by creating artificial obstacles which is still being continued. Statements such as “there is no difference between Muslims who speak different languages in Islam,” and “such demands are created by forces that do not want Muslims to unite” by Supreme Leader Khomeini have blocked the application of the article (Litvak, 2017, p. 20). Disregard of this article created a necessary legal basis for Iranian Azerbaijani activists. Many activists still use the article to legitimize their movements and to avoid more severe punishments.

3. 1991 and Later - Acceleration of The Process

The period since 1991 can be characterized as a new phase of language, federation and autonomy demands of Iranian Azerbaijanis. In our opinion, some factors played an important role in this.

- Failure of the Islamic Revolution to meet the expectations, Independence of Azerbaijan and Karabakh wars
- Globalisation and Türkiye’s soft power effect

Prior to Azerbaijan's independence, the "South Azerbaijan" problem was one of the major motivators on the road to Azerbaijan's independence. In late 1989, Azerbaijani Turks gathered on both banks of the Araz River protested a separation of 70-year due to strict border rules. On December 31, thousands of people gathered on both sides of the Araz River attacked border posts. A few days later, on January 4, a crowd of about 150,000 held a rally in Baku to protest the tough border rules with Iran. At the same time, a large number of people from both sides crossed the border illegally (AzərTac, 2020; Brown, 2004, p. 577). Soviet Union's delibetry overlook to the construction and propaganda of Whole Azerbaijan narrative in Soviet Azerbaijani literature and history as a potensial tool in foreign policy during the deteriorating relations especially during the Pahlavi era was the reason that the "South Azerbaijan" problem was so strong in the North, in the light of nearly 200 years of official separation and 70 years of virtually non-existent relations (Laçiner & Demirtepe, 2004, p. 450).

The enthusiasm on the other end, an be attributed to the traumas left by the Pahlavi period and the dissapointment in the Islamic Revolution which did not meet the expectations. Another factor was affinity. After 1920 invasion of Bolsheviks, many Azerbaijanis stayed on the other side of Araz river. Worsening of the relations later on and tourism policy of Soviet Union has resulted in lack of communication between these families until 1990s. As a result, IRNA News Agency reports that in 1992, about 400 families visited each other weekly (Shaffer, 2000, pp. 451-452). The independence of Azerbaijan in 1991 gave impetus to the further development of the Turkish or Azerbaijani national consciousness in Iran, which has been awakening since the Islamic revolution. This process is also due to the fact that Azerbaijani youth living in Iran, where the majority of the population is under 30, do not want to associate themselves with the theocratic state. Especially in the context of admiration for the West (independent and secular Azerbaijan also belongs to that civilization to some extent), the example of Azerbaijan and Türkiye occupies a special place (Souleimanov et al., 2013, pp. 74-75). Weakening of the religious identity that binds them to Iran due to periodic racist attacks by the state or state-backed groups and exacerbating the pre-Islamic period in literature and filmography which saw state support give additional momentum to the process . In some cases, this leads to protests initiated by Azerbaijani Turks. For example, in 1996, protests were organized in cities such as Tabriz and Urmia demanding the

teaching of Azerbaijani Turkish (Shaffer, 2000, pp. 464, 465). The 2006 cartoon scandal can be considered the culmination of this process (Ciddi, 2020, parag. 1, 2, 3). The blatant humiliation and resemblance of Iranian Azerbaijanis to insects by state-funded media outlets angered them, leading to widespread protests. According to Amnesty International (2007, parag. 13), dozens of Azerbaijani Turks were killed by government forces.

The use of force by government to suppress protests further accelerated the identity difference that had already speed up since 1991, the outcome of this process reflected itself in the 2009 presidential election. The dubious defeat of Mir Hussein Mousavi, a reformist Iranian Azerbaijani, and election of conservative Ahmadinejad have re-sparked protests. These protests were not only organized by Iranian Azerbaijanis but also were accompanied by the Persians opposing the theocratic regime, although both sides had different motives. While the Persians objected to the religious nature of the regime, the Azerbaijanis also protested the repression, especially for the unfulfilled promises on language rights (Souleimanov et al., 2013, p. 77).

Due to the impossibility of party representation in the current political system, football matches were another way for Azerbaijani Turks to react against state policy. This function for Iranian Azerbaijanis is performed by the Tabriz Tractor S.C. In particular, the games with the Esteghlal and Persopolis, known as the Persian teams, is almost always accompanied by clashes between the Persians and Azerbaijani Turks, the two largest ethnic groups in Iran. During away games of Tractor, whose fans usually outnumber opponents even during the away matches (because there are many Azerbaijanis living in Tehran. Some sources say that around 1/3 of Tehran consists of Azerbaijanis [Ramezanzadeh, 1996, p. 147]), both groups shout ethnic derogatory slogans at each other. These slogans can help define the nature and level of dissatisfaction between two ethnic groups. Azerbaijanis protest against the Persian slogans such as “Turk-e Khar” (donkey Turks) with “Tabriz, Baku, Ankara, who are we and who are Persians”, “Death to Persian fascism”, “Long live independent Azerbaijan”, “Azerbaijan is ours, Afghanistan is yours”, “Persian monkey” (Rashidi, 2019, p. 62; Souleimanov & Kraus, 2017, pp. 26-27). One of the most protested issues in Tractor’s games was Iran’s support for Armenia in the Karabakh conflict (Əfəndiyev, 2019; Lazerte, 2021; Süleymanov, 2019). In general, we see a reaction to many issues related to the Republic

of Azerbaijan at the Sahand stadium (the stadium where Tractor FC plays its home games). In fact, this can be considered a continuation of the tradition formed since the declaration of Azerbaijan's independence in 1991.

The independence of Azerbaijan in 1991 was warmly welcomed in Iranian Azerbaijan. In particular, the sensitive approach of the president of the newly established republic, Abulfaz Elchibey, to the issue of South Azerbaijan and the Karabakh war caused Iranian Azerbaijanis to think more about the Azerbaijanis in the north (Mustafayev, 1998, pp. 121-133; Savalan, 2018). However, on the one hand, the defeat of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Armenia in the First Karabakh War caused this interest to decline, on the other hand, Iran's support for Armenia in this war caused some of the Azerbaijani Turks there to distance themselves from their Iranian identity. Some researchers and activists believe that the reason for Iran's support for Armenia is the fear that the Republic of Azerbaijan will implement an irredentist policy against Iran or support activists there after the settlement of the Karabakh problem (Babayev, 2021; Priège, 2007, parag. 5; Şahinoğlu, 2012). Also, prior to the Second Karabakh War, in Iran it was believed that Azerbaijan was a defeated republic with a small economy and undemocratic governance (Souleimanov et al., 2013, p. 76). However, we see that the Republic of Azerbaijan's defeat of Armenia in a short period of time opened the way for this thinking to change. In addition to the victory of Azerbaijan, Iran's Karabakh policy, which helped Azerbaijani Turks in Iran identify themselves (Quluncu, 2020a, parag. 1, 4) with a different identity, expanded its sphere of influence during Second Karabagh War. From the first days of the war, support demonstrations were organized in most of the cities inhabited by Azerbaijani Turks, which afterwards turned into protests over the transportation of Russian weapons to Armenia through Iran (Quluncu, 2020b, parag. 1). The protesters demanded ending arms shipments to Armenia and many of these protesters were arrested and tortured (Quluncu, 2020c, parag. 1, 3).

After the war, the poem "They Separated Araz" recited by Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the Victory Parade in Baku on December 10, 2020, and later the issue of illegal transportation of goods from Iran to Azerbaijan territories created a new tension (Akifqızı, 2021, parag. 6, 8; Yeni Şafak, 2020, parag. 1, 3, 4). Later, tensions eased slightly with the visits of state officials, was observed with new wave of arrests and court rulings for previously arrested Iran Azerbaijanis.

It was the first time in the post-war tensions that Türkiye was involved such heavily. Asked about the tension between Azerbaijan and Iran, President of the Republic of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who previously indirectly participated in the Azerbaijan-Iran relations, said, "... Because today's ratio of Azeri population in Iran is obvious. It makes [them] think. It is not easy [situation]..." (Hürriyet, 2021, parag. 59, 60). This statement, may be accepted as a signal of Türkiye's involvement in the further processes as an active player by some activists, but considering that Türkiye has its own ethnic problem, its active intervention in this issue does not seem very possible. Türkiye's main role is with its soft power, and this role may have been formed against its own will. Türkiye's soft power influence goes even farther among Iranian Azerbaijanis. The role played by Türkiye can be understood if we take into account that since the Pahlavi period, Turkishness was perceived as a sign of backwardness and the Turkish language had no importance other than the local and insufficient language. According to Iranian Azerbaijanis perception Türkiye is one of the major regional powers, its army is one of the strongest, its democratic system is at a more advanced level than Iran, the use and status of the Turkish language at the highest level and these kind of assertions lead to the formation of a sense of pride in Turkishness among Iranian Azerbaijanis. With the development of modern technologies in the world, Türkiye is increasing its influence among Iranian Azerbaijanis. Thousands of Iranian citizens (they are mainly Iranian Azerbaijanis) study in Türkiye every year, and the films produced by Turkish television are watched by millions of people in Iran (Erdem, 2022; Kömüş, 2021; Kurşun, 2019; Stratejik Ortak, 2018; Şahin, 2022).

Thus, it can be argued that the growing soft power of Türkiye has been directly linked to the opportunities created by globalization. As the means of communication have significantly developed in the last 30 years, it allowed Azerbaijanis in Iran to see outside world, as well as Iranian Azerbaijani immigrants living abroad to communicate with their compatriots in Iran and conduct propaganda. Remarkably, the number of internet users in Iran, increased from 1 million in 2000 to 50 million in 2015. This expansion not only avoided government propaganda but also provided access to other sources of information, allowing them to keep in touch with Azerbaijan and Türkiye, tracking changes there, and watching channels such as GunAz TV set up for local audience by migrants abroad (Gresh, 2017,

pp. 232-233). While widespread satellite dishes and watching Turkish channels helped to prevent forgetting Azerbaijani Turkish, which is close to the Turkish language spoken in Türkiye, its combination with Türkiye's secular, pro-Western and powerful image created an impetus to convert ethnic difference thoughts to ethnic pride. Also, an Iranian Azerbaijani, who visits a large number of tourist centers in Türkiye (as well as in Baku) every year, returns with thoughts (Souleimanov & Kraus, 2017, pp. 32-33) that may lead to the acceleration of identity crisis.

4. Conclusion

The Azerbaijani Turks acquired a more moderate environment after the Islamic Revolution, despite after short time, their language and other political demands would be suppressed. In the following years, Iran's gradual return to a Persian-centered identity system was also accepted as ethnocracy by Azerbaijani Turks and met with dissatisfaction.

Motivation from the independence of Northern Azerbaijan, Iran's attitude to Karabakh wars combined with the ease of communication and information exchange as a result of globalization, led to the rapid development of Azerbaijani-centered Turkish consciousness in Iran. The failure of the Islamic Revolution to meet the expectations and the dissatisfaction with the religious authorities further provokes the evolution of the consciousness of the Azerbaijani Turks in Iran, where the majority of the population is young. While the pressure from central government, non-recognition of national rights, and a sense of Persian supremacy weakened Iranian identity among ethnic minorities, Azerbaijan's independent and secular existence compiled with acceptance of Türkiye as an example of Western civilization strengthen Azerbaijani Turkish consciousness. Along with all this, the rate of representation of Azerbaijani Turks in high positions has also decreased compared to previous times (Solatani, 2021). Therefore, the closeness of Armenian-Iranian relations, Iran's support of Armenia in the Karabakh wars, as well as the expansion of relations between Iranian Turks and neighboring Turks has played an important role in the departure of the Azerbaijani Turks from Iranian identity. These tendencies increase the perception that they are discriminated and thus they are not fully Iranian.

It is claimed that Iranian Azerbaijanis are a linguistic minority that is well integrated into the state due to their long shared history with Persians. But taking into consideration that even in Safavid era there was identity and language competition and during the last century Iranian Azerbaijanis had tried at least 3 times to get some autonomy or full independence, so we can claim that despite of long shared history, in the light of modernization in the region and above-mentioned processes, Iranian Azerbaijanis tend to separate from Iranian identity more than previous times. As Brenda Shaffer (2000, p. 471) puts it, "...historical relationships influence the present-day choice of a nation, they do not dictate it, and new circumstances can give birth to new identity preferences." Considering Iran's insistence on not accepting the demands of ethnic minorities, it can be argued that events can be evaluated as a major threat to Iran's security. As Joshua Fishman (1976, p. 118) has observed, "Ethnicity grows stronger when denied, oppressed, or repressed, and becomes more reasonable and more tractable when recognized and liberated."

Disclosure

The article is exempt from the Ethics Committee Decision. There are no participants. The author received no financial support from any institution and there's no conflict of interest. No material subject to copyright is included.

Beyan

Bu makale etik kurul kararından muafır. Çalışmada katılımcı bulunmamaktadır. Çalışma için herhangi bir kurum veya projeden mali destek alınmamıştır. Çalışmada kişiler ve kurumlar arası çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır. Telif hakkına sebep olacak bir materyal kullanılmamıştır.

References

- Abrahamian, E. (1982). *Iran between two revolutions*. Princeton University Press.
- Afary, J. (1999, July 26). Government and society. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Iran/Justice>
- Ahmed, A. (1973). *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish politics, 1908-1914*. Columbia University Press.
- Akifqızı, S. (2021, October 1). İran və Azərbaycanarasında gərginliyin səbəbi nədir, sonu nə olacaq?. *BBC Azərbaycanca*. <https://www.bbc.com/azeri/azerbaijan-58732756>.
- Ali, A. A. (2012, January 22). *Iranian Foreign Minister: %40 of the Iranians speak Turkish*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vc9WJ9U2uHo>.
- Amnesty International, (2007). *Iran – Annual Report*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070713224215/http://www.amnestyusa.org/annualreport.php?id=ar&yr=2007&c=IRN>.
- Anderson, B. (2016). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso.
- Ansari, M.A. (2012). *The politics of nationalism in modern Iran*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ansari, A. M. (2017). Iranian nationalism and the question of race. In Litvak, M (Ed.), *Constructing nationalism in: From the Qajars to the Islamic Republic* (p.101-117). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315448800>
- Armstrong, J. (1982). *Nations before nationalism*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Asgharzadeh, A. (2007). *Iran and the challenge of diversity: Islamic fundamentalism, Aryanist racism, and democratic struggles*. Palgrave Macmillan
- Atabaki, T. (1993). *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and autonomy in twentieth-century Iran*. British Academic Press.
- Azərtac (Azerbaijan State News Agency) (2020, December 26). *Naxçıvanda başlanan sərhəd hərəkəti Azərbaycan xalqının müstəqillik arzularının*

- təcəssümü idi.* https://azertag.az/xeber/Naxchivanda_baslanan_serhed_herekati_Azərbaycan_xalqinin_musteqillik_arzularinin_tecessumu_idi-1675371
- Babayev, E. (2021, October 5). Erməniperəst İran - onu həyacanlandiran nədir?. *Modern İnformasiya Agentliyi*, <https://modern.az/news/323138/ermeniperest-iran-onu-heyacanlandiran-nedir/>
- Balayev, X. (2002). *Azərbaycan dilinin dövlətdili kimi təşəkkül tarixindən (XVI-XX əsrlər)*. Elm və Həyat.
- Binder, Leonard. (1962). *Iran: Political development in a changing society*. University of California Press.
- Brown, S. C. (2004). Wanting to have their cake and their neighbor's too: Azerbaijani attitudes towards Karabakh and Iranian Azerbaijan. *Middle East Journal*, 58(4), 576-596. <https://doi.org/10.3751/58.4.13>
- Browne G. E. (2008). *Letters from Tabriz: The Russian suppression of the Iranian Constitutional Movement*. Mage Publishers
- Browne, E. G. (2006). *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*. Mage Publishers
- Bulovalı, A. H. (2018, December 17). 'İran halkının yüzde 80'i Türk dizilerini ilgiyle izliyor'. *Anadolu Ajansı*, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/kultur-sanat/iran-halkinin-yuzde-80i-turk-dizilerini-ilgiyle-izliyor/1341000>
- Cabbarlı, R. (2019). İranda etnik etirazların dinamikası. *Milliyyət Araşdırmalar Mərkəzi*. <https://milliyyet.info/sosiologiya/iranda-etnik-etirazlarin-dinamikasi/>
- Cabbarlı, R. (2020, October 31). Dağlıq Qarabağ müharibəsi İranda etnik bölünməni gücləndirir. *Milliyyət Araşdırmalar Mərkəzi*. <https://milliyyet.info/sosiologiya/dagliq-qarabag-muharib%c9%99si-iranda-etnik-qarsidurmani-gucl%c9%99ndirir/>
- Ciddi, B. (2020, November 25). 2006-dan bəri İran Azərbaycanı və Tehran arasında yaranan çat müharibədən sonra daha da dərinləşdi. *Amerikanın Səsi*. <https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/behzad-ciddi/5675797.html>
- Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, <https://www.shora-gc.ir/en/news/87/constitution-of-the-islamic-republic-of-iran-full-text>.

- Douglas, W. O. (1951). *Strange lands and friendly people*. Harper & Brothers.
- Elling, R. C. (2013). *Minorities in Iran: Nationalism and ethnicity after Khomeini*. Palgrave Macmillan
- Etheredge, L. (1998, July 20). Azerbaijani. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Azerbaijani-people>
- Erdem, A. K. (2022, November 23). Gerginliğin artması yeni bir göçü tetikler mi? *Independent Türkçe*, <https://www.indytrk.com/node/579496/dünya/iran-islam-devriminden-sonra-2-milyon-kışı-türkiyeye-gelmişti-gerginliğin>
- Əfəndiyev, C. (2019, March 12). Futbol siyasətin özüdür. *Milliyyət Araşdırmalar Mərkəzi*, <https://milliyyet.info/siyaset/futbol-siyasetin-ozudur/>
- Fishman, J. A. *Bilingual education: An international sociological perspective*. Newbury House.
- Forran, J. (1993). *Fragile resistance: Social transformation in Iran from 1500 to the revolution*. Westview Press.
- George, L. G. (1972). United States' support for Iran's independence and integrity, 1945-1959. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 401(1), 45-55. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162724010010>
- Golden, P. B. (1992). *An introduction to the history of the Turkic peoples*. Otto Harrasowitz.
- Gökay, B. (2001). *The politics of the Caspian oil*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gresh, G. F. (2017). Beyond boundaries: Iranian Azeris in age of globalization. In Litvak, M (Ed.), *Constructing nationalism in: From the Qajars to the Islamic Republic* (p. 229-248). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315448800>
- Hasanli, J. (2006). *At the dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American crisis over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941-1946*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc.

- Higgins, Patricia J. (1984). Minority-state relations in contemporary Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 17(1), 37–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210868408701621>
- Hürriyet. (2021, October 21) *Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan 10 büyük elçi mesajı*. <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/son-dakika-cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-10-buyukelci-mesaji-bunlari-ulkemizde-agirlamak-gibi-bir-luksumuz-olamaz-41921903>
- Javadi, H. (1996). Research note: Azeri publications in Iran. *Critique*, (8), 79-88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10669929608720084>
- Javadi, H. & Burrell, K. (2012). Azeri Turkish literature in Iran. *Encyclopædia Iranica*. <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/azerbaijan-x>
- Karakaş, N. (2013). *Türk-Amerikan ilişkileri (1939-1953)*. Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi.
- Kurzman, C. (2005). *The unthinkable revolution in Iran*. Harvard University Press
- Kurşun, M. (2019, November 15). İranlı gençler arasında yükselen trend: Türk dizileri ve oyuncular. *Anadolu Ajansı*, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/kultur-sanat/iranli-gencler-arasinda-yukselen-trend-turk-dizileri-ve-oyunculari-/1646489>
- Kömüş, M. (2021, August 12). Yabancı öğrenci Doğu'dan geliyor. *Birgün.net*, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/yabanci-ogrenci-dogu-dan-geliyor-354888>
- Laçiner, S., & Demirtepe, T. Nationalism as an instrument in a Socialist foreign policy: The Southern Azerbaijan problem in Soviet-Iranian relations. *The Review of International Affairs*, 3(3), 443-457. [10.1080/1475355042000250548](https://doi.org/10.1080/1475355042000250548)
- Lajos, F. (1936). İran şahlarının iki Türkçe mektubu. *İstanbul Üniversitesi Türkiyyat Mecmuası*, 5(0), 269-274. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/iuturkiyat/issue/18502/194946>
- Lazerte, S. (2021, August 6). How a soccer team is amplifying the voices of Azerbaijani-Turks in Iran. *The Caspian Post*, <https://caspianpost.com/en/post/perspectives/how-a-soccer-team-is-amplifying-the-voices-of-azerbaijani-turks-in-iran>

- Litvak, M. (2017). Construction of Iranian national identity: an overview. In Litvak, M (Ed.), *Constructing Nationalism in: From the Qajars to the Islamic Republic* (p. 10-32). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315448800>
- Mahmudov, Y., Ağayev, İ., Bağirova, İ., Əhmədova, F., İsgəndərov, A., Maksvell, N., Məmmədov, X., Məmmədova, E., Mirzəyev, M., Paşayev, A., Süleymanov, M., & Şükürov, K. (Ed.). (2005). *Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti Ensiklopediyası (II Cild). Lider nəşriyyatı.*
- Manafzadeh, A. R. (2012). Kasravi, Ahmad I. life and work *Encyclopædia Iranica*. <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/kasravi-ahmad-i>
- Minorsky, V. (1942). The poetry of Shah Ismail I. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 10(4), 1006-1029. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X00090182>
- Minorsky, V. (1954). Jihān-Shāh Qara-Qoyunlu and his poetry. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 16(2), 271-297. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X00105981>
- Minorsky, V., Bosworth, C. E., & Blair, S. S. (2007). Tabriz. In Bosworth, C. E. (ed.), *Historic cities of the Islamic world* (p. 486–498). Brill. <https://doi.org/10.4000/remmm.6563>
- Mustafayev, V. (1998). *Cənubi Azərbaycan və milli şüur*. Əbilov, Zeynalov və oğulları.
- Özkırımlı, U. (2010). *Theories of nationalism: A critical introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan
- Priege, A. (2007). *Armenia-Iran relations and their implications for Nagorno-Karabakh*. Comentaros UNISCI No. 1
- Quluncu, Ə. (a) (2020, October 21). İranın Qarabağ siyasəti Güney Azərbaycanda türklük şüuru və vətən anlayışını gücləndirir. *Amerikanın Səsi*. <https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/mehsa-mehdili/5629648.html>
- Quluncu, Ə. (b) (2020, October 02). İran Azərbaycanında Qarabağa dəstəkmitinqlərində onlarla vətəndaş həbs edilib. *Amerikanın Səsi*. <https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/iran-azerbaycani-qarabaga-destek-mitinqleri/5606001.html>

- Quluncu, Ə. (c) (2020, October 27). Təbrizdə keçirilən aksiyada İran-Ermənistan sərhəd məntəqəsinin qapadılması tələb edilib. *Amerikanın Səsi*. bit.ly/3Q0XWqk
- Ramezanzadeh, A. (1996). *Internal and international dynamics of ethnic conflict: The case of Iran*. Doctoral Thesis, Katholieke Universiteit.
- Renan, E. (2001) *What is a Nation?*. http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/core/hss3/e_renan.html
- Rashidi, V. (2019). Tractor Sazi FC and the civil rights movement of Turks in Iranian Azerbaijan. *The International Journal of Sport and Society*, 10(02), 57-68. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2152-7857/CGP/v10i02/57-68>
- Savalan, İ. (2018, January 3). İbrahim Savalanla müsahibə: İrandakı etirazlardan gözlənti nədir?. *Milliyyət Araşdırmalar Mərkəzi*, <https://milliyyet.info/musahibe/ibrahim-savalanla-musahibe/>
- Savory, R. (2007). *Iran under the Safavids*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shaffer, B. (2000). The formation of Azerbaijani collective identity in Iran. *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, 28(3), 449-477. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713687484>
- Shaffer, B. (2002). *Borders and brethren: Iran and the challenge of Azerbaijani*. The MIT Press.
- Siegel, E. (1992). Mulla Nasr ud-Din and the Iranian Constitutionalist Revolution, 1906-1907. *Middle East Studies Association*, 1-57. <https://124.im/hYUK0>
- Siegel, E. (2017). *A review of the memoirs of Konstantin Nikolaevich Smirnov, Crown Prince Ahmad's Tutor*. <http://iran.qlineorientalist.com/Articles/Smirnov/Smirnov.html>.
- Smith, A. (1991). *National identity*. University of Nevada Press.
- Smirnov, K. N. (2002). *Zapiski Vospitatelya Persidsogo Shakha (1907-1914 godi)*. Ivrus.
- Solatani, E. (2021, June 10). Tozi-e Ghodrət dar Dolathayeh Iran. *Asriran*, <https://www.asriran.com/fa/news/788264/> - از - استان - سهم - هر - کشور
سهم - هر - استان - از - ارشد - کشور
%C2%A0مقامات - اجرایی - ارشد - کشور

- Souleimanov E., Pikal, K., & Kraus, J. (2013). The rise of nationalism among Iranian Azerbaijanis: A step toward Iran's disintegration?. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 17(1), 71-91. <https://124.im/0G8q>
- Souleimanov, E., & Kraus, J. (2017). Iran's Azerbaijan question in evolution: Identity, society and regional security. *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program*. <https://www.silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/SilkRoadPapers/2017-souleimanov-kraus-irans-azerbaijan-question-in-evolution.pdf>
- Süleymanov, E. (2019, June 26). Traktor Sazi FC: Futboldan daha çox əhəmiyyət kəsb edən klub. *BBC Azərbaycanca*. <https://www.bbc.com/azeri/region-48758580>
- Swietochowski T. (1995). *Russia and Azerbaijan: A borderland in transition*. Columbia University Press.
- Swietochowski, T. (1985). *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920 : The shaping of a national identity in a Muslim community*. Cambridge University Press
- Stratejik Ortak. (2018, August 8). *İran Türkleri ve Kürtlerinin Türkiye'ye Bakışı*. <https://stratejikortak.com/2018/08/iran-turklerinin-turkiyeye-bakisi.html>
- Şahinoğlu, E. (2012, August 6). İran-Azərbaycan münasibətləri ilə bağlı hesabat. *Qafqazinfo*, <https://qafqazinfo.az/news/detail/iran-azerbaycan-munasibetleri-ile-bagli-hesabat-21-sehife-22645>
- Şahin, H. (2022, June 6). Türkiye'de okumak isteyen İranlı öğrenciler Tahran'da sınav heyecanı yaşadı. *Anadolu Ajansı*, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/egitim/turkiyede-okumak-isteyen-iranli-ogrenciler-tahranda-sinav-heyecani-yasadi/2607102#>
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, (2003). Mohammad Kazem Shariat-Madari. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mohammad-Kazem-Shariat-Madari>
- The New York Times. (1992). *With new pride, Iran dusts off the crown jewels*. <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/05/08/world/teheran-journal-with-new-pride-iran-dusts-off-the-crown-jewels.html>

- VOA Farsi. (2009). *Interview with Reza Baraheni*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIt-SParfyY>.
- Willem, F. & Javadi, H. (2013). The role of Azerbaijani Turkish in Safavid Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 46(4), 569–581. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2013.784516>
- Yeni Şafak. (2020). *Türkiye'nin Tahran büyükelçisi Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın Bakü'de okuduğu şiir gerekçesiyle İran Dışişlerine çağrıldı*. <https://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/turkiyenin-tahran-buyukelcisi-cumhurbaskani-erdoganin-bakude-okudugu-siir-gerekcesiyle-iran-disislerine-cagrildi-3589126>.
- Yılmaz, H. (2013). The Soviet Union and the construction of Azerbaijani national identity in the 1930s. *Iranian Studies*, 46(4), 511-533. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2013.784521>
- Yılmaz, H. (2015). A family quarrel: Azerbaijani historians against Soviet Iranologists. *Iranian Studies*, 48(5), 769-783. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2015.1058642>