

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Sciences

**SPIRITUAL VALUES IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
(ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH)**

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I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

The relevance and degree of development of the subject.

National and spiritual values are a vast and multifaceted concept. The main aim of the research is to explore national and spiritual values from an ethnographic perspective. In the modern era, the processes of globalization, along with the rising demand for national sentiments and national-spiritual values in society, make the study of national and spiritual values a highly relevant issue. The national and spiritual values of a people can provide insights into its historical stages, among other aspects. One of the key areas of ethnographic research is the system of national and spiritual values. In this dissertation, the concept of "national and spiritual values" is explicitly examined in the context of "traditional values" and "ethno-spiritual values." The preservation and advancement of ethno-cultural values has become one of the most pressing issues of the contemporary era. Ethnographers are particularly concerned with questions such as how ethnic values manifest in modern material, spiritual, and socio-normative cultural domains, what has been lost in this process, and how such values can be restored. The issue of the ecology of ethno-cultural heritage is among the most frequently debated topics in contemporary discourse. Ethno-cultural characteristics or markers of national identity- including language, elements of socio-normative culture, national psychology, traditional norms of etiquette, and family relations - are internalized within the corresponding ethno-cultural environment.

In the contemporary era, the processes of transition from national culture to global culture, the intrusion of Western mass culture into the traditional culture of the people, the emergence of the global information space, the virtual world, and the virtual human, pose a threat to the transformation of national culture and ethno-cultural values, thereby making the study of traditional culture highly relevant. The processes of globalization in modern society are not universally accepted. In such circumstances, the issue of preserving the language, cultural identity, and uniqueness of the people becomes a significant problem. The majority of researchers believe that the identity of the "ethnos" primarily manifests itself in intra-group

behavioral norms. *“These norms include language, psychological, spiritual, aesthetic, religious, etc. norms. Other indicators of ethnos identity include its common history, the presence of common symbols, and the unification around a common territory. However, even if individuals or groups do not possess any of these characteristics, they still identify themselves with a particular ethnos”*¹.

The preservation of traditional values is one of the most discussed issues in the contemporary period. President İlham Aliyev has repeatedly addressed this in his speeches: *“Of course, we share universal values and hold European values in high regard. “However, for us, national values, Azerbaijani values, are superior to everything else.”*².

The success of the multiculturalism model in Azerbaijan has been influenced by its statehood traditions and the value of tolerance inherent in its people.

These policies are influenced by factors such as the national element and the traditions of statehood, as well as the value of tolerance inherent in the people. These values, in turn, facilitate the implementation of the multiculturalism policy. Multiculturalism is a policy aimed at preserving and developing cultural differences, supported by a model that justifies this policy. One of the key conditions for the successful implementation of the multiculturalism model is the mutual understanding and respect among all the peoples living in the country towards each other’s culture. To clarify all these processes, it is crucial and relevant in the contemporary context to examine the national psychology of Azerbaijanis and the factors influencing their traditions of tolerance, especially in terms of spiritual values.

One of the greatest blows to the national and spiritual values of Azerbaijanis was the division of Azerbaijan into North and South, leading the Azerbaijanis to fall under the influence of different cultures. The establishment of Soviet rule in Azerbaijan (the North)

¹ Nuruzadə, Ş.T. Etnik münaqişələr. Bakı: Mütərcim. - 2015. - s. 7.

² Azərbaycan Respublikası prezidenti İlham Əliyevin Novruz bayramı münasibətilə ümumxalq şənliyində nitqi 19 mart 2013, 13:40 [Elektron resurs] <https://president.az/az/articles/view/7671>

resulted in the exposure of the nation's cultural heritage to foreign influences. However, despite all these challenges, the people managed to preserve their culture and cultural heritage. During the 70 years of Azerbaijan's inclusion in the Soviet Union, the campaign against traditional spiritual culture, based on Soviet national policies, and the formation of "Soviet values" and the "Soviet man" as their carrier were unsuccessful. With the collapse of the Soviet regime, processes of returning to traditional values began. The impact of these processes on the spiritual values of Azerbaijanis and the investigation of national self-awareness and self-return processes further enhance the relevance of the topic. Ethnic language, national music, folklore, customs, folk and religious holidays, and others are spiritual values that preserve the uniqueness of the ethnic group. From the early years of Soviet rule, a policy was pursued to eliminate the distinctiveness of the peoples of the republics within the Union and to form "all-Soviet values," which to some extent was achieved.

During Azerbaijan's period within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), issues related to national and spiritual values remained largely overlooked by ethnographers due to Soviet national policies. These topics were relegated to the status of "forgotten" or "forbidden" matters. However, the restoration of independent statehood in Azerbaijan at the end of the 20th century created favorable conditions for revisiting many previously neglected subjects, particularly those deemed "threatening" under Soviet national policies.

It should be noted that while the issue of national and spiritual values has not been extensively studied from an ethnographic perspective, the tangible and intangible cultural heritage that embodies these values has been explored by ethnographers and educators. Additionally, folklore and mythology, which reflect the spirit and worldview of these values, have been examined by folklorists.

These studies represent a valuable scientific foundation for the ethnographic and ethnological examination of national-spiritual values. The historical and comparative analysis of these values, alongside the investigation of the Soviet government's policies aimed at shaping "Soviet values" and the processes of "self-

awareness" and "return to roots" during the years of independence, provide an opportunity to assess the importance of national-spiritual values for the nation and statehood in contemporary times. Additionally, the study of how these values were manifested during the Karabakh wars underscores their role in fostering national unity, reinforcing the ideology of Azerbaijanism, and strengthening statehood ideals, thereby emphasizing the relevance of this issue.

In the modern era, conflicts have heightened the relevance of examining the state's role in preserving and promoting national cultural heritage and integrating it into the global cultural legacy. The destruction and appropriation of Azerbaijan's national cultural heritage in territories previously occupied by Armenia, as well as the falsification of historical narratives, have driven the Azerbaijani government to pursue a purposeful policy aimed at protecting this heritage and asserting its authentic Azerbaijani origins to the international community. Following Azerbaijan's victory over Armenia in the Second Karabakh War, one of the key priorities for the Azerbaijani state is the restoration of the nation's spiritual and cultural heritage, which was systematically destroyed during the period of occupation.

National and spiritual values are the essence of the nation's spirit. The national spirit, in turn, plays a crucial role in the development of society and in shaping the younger generation into patriotic individuals who are loyal to their customs and traditions. In his speech, President Ilham Aliyev emphasized that this issue holds significant value in preserving statehood traditions: *"We must ensure that the younger generation grows up with a national spirit, is patriotic, loyal to the homeland, and works for the homeland. To achieve this, a strong sense of patriotism and national spirit is essential. At the foundation of national spirit lie national traditions, music, literature, and the mother tongue"*³.

The heroism of the people during the Karabakh wars, their elevation of the flag, statehood, and homeland in the fight to liberate the homeland from Armenian occupation, also demonstrated that these are vital components of national spirit, national psychology,

³Ilham Əliyev. Milli-mənəvi dəyərlər [Elektron resurs]
<https://ilhamaliyev.preslib.az/docs/i20.pdf>

and the national and moral values formed over the centuries by the people. One of the important and current issues facing the field of Azerbaijani ethnography today is the study of national-spiritual values, the historical-comparative research of their ethnographic features, and the demonstration of their historical development mechanism. This is particularly relevant in response to Armenian attempts to falsify history in the occupied territories, their false claims about toponyms, and material and spiritual cultural heritage as “theirs”. The goal is to assert once again our ownership of this cultural heritage and land.

The determination shown by Azerbaijani soldiers and officers, regardless of nationality, in the Karabakh war, their attitude towards the land, homeland, statehood, flag, martyrdom, and heroism, as well as their national unity during the struggle for these values, the support provided to soldiers and their families during the war, and similar issues highlight the importance of investigating the moral and historical foundations of these matters. Undoubtedly, all of this is closely linked to the ethnopsychology, historically formed spirituality, and national character of the people. The sections of this dissertation aim to explore the answers to these questions in connection with various aspects of both material and spiritual culture. It is also important to note that the people's characteristics, such as generosity, kindness, and tolerance, manifest themselves in other conflicting global issues as well.

The topic “Spiritual Values in the Republic of Azerbaijan (Ethnographic Research)” has not been the subject of a separate theoretical study until now. For the first time, an initiative has been made to carry out a scientific-theoretical and generalized investigation of the issue, and a historical-comparative study has been conducted on the national and spiritual values of Azerbaijanis that have reached the present day

The various aspects of the problem have been studied from an ethnographic perspective by a number of researchers. The theory of values has been explored from different angles by scholars such as H.Rickert⁴, Max Weber⁵, Neil Smelser⁶, Shalom Schwartz⁷, and

⁴ Риккерт, Г. Науки о природе и науки о культуре. Г. Риккерт - Москва: Республика, - 1998, - 413 с.

others. The research by historian Z. Göyalp⁸ also plays a significant role in the theoretical approach to values. It should be noted that their main research subjects have been spiritual, moral values, culture, and worldview concepts. The theoretical approaches of these researchers to the problem of values provide an ethnological approach to the formation of the national and spiritual values of Azerbaijanis, particularly to the system of values of the people. In the modern era, these theories are of great importance in the historical-comparative study of the traditional values preserved in Azerbaijani national culture.

The ethnopsychological approach to spiritual values is reflected in the monographs of Sh.Nuruzadeh⁹. This approach examines how the ethnopsychological factor manifests in the people's religious and family values, Sharia law, folk and religious holidays and ceremonies, as well as in the levels of everyday, mass, and public consciousness regarding belief in religion. It also discusses how the views of national intellectuals on religion and atheism are reflected and the degree to which the Soviet government's struggle against religious ideology and the national mindset influenced the formation of "Soviet values". The component of Azerbaijani national and spiritual values, religion, has been studied by H. Mammadov¹⁰. The research addresses various cultural environments in the Azerbaijan SSR, the constitutional foundations of national-cultural policies, state-religion relations, and ethnoconfessional environments. However, the theoretical approach

⁵ Вебер, М. Критические исследования в области логики наук о культуре. Избранные произведения / М.Вебер - Москва: Прогресс, - 1990. - 808 с.

⁶ Смелзер, Н. Социология: пер. с англ. / Н. Смелзер - М.: Феникс, - 1994. - 688 с.

⁷ Шварц, Ш. Культурные ценностные ориентации: природа и следствия национальных различий. // - Москва: Психология. Журнал Высшей школы экономики, 2008. Т. 5, № 2. С. 37–67.

⁸ Göyalp, Ziya. Türkçülüğün Əsasları / Z.Göyalp; tərcümə: Elman Mustafa – Bakı: Xəzər Universiteti, - 2010, - 208 s.

⁹ Nuruzadə, Ş. XX əsrin 20-30-cu illərində Azərbaycanca etnokonfessional şərait / Ş.T.Nuruzadə - Bakı: Xəzər Universiteti, - 2010. - 218 s.: Nuruzadə, Ş.T. Etnik münaqişələr / Ş.Nuruzadə - Bakı: Mütərcim, - 2015. - 132 s.

¹⁰ Məmmədov, H.N. Azərbaycan SSR-də milli-mədəni və dini siyasətin siyasi-hüquqi əsasları. Dərs vəsaiti / H.N.Məmmədov – Bakı: Mütərcim, – 2017. - 80 s.

to Azerbaijani religious values has not been the object of research in this study.

Ethnographer G.Gadirzade¹¹ has studied one of the most actual problems of Azerbaijani ethnography – spiritual values. In his monograph, spiritual values have been examined from the perspective of Turkism, and the holidays, customs, and traditions that embody Azerbaijani national and spiritual values have been reflected descriptively. G.Gadirzadeh's research is a valuable source for studying the customs and traditions, which are part of the national-spiritual heritage of the people.

The various aspects of spiritual culture, such as folk holidays and ceremonies, have been studied by ethnographers like H.Guliyev¹², G.Yologhlu¹³, M.Allahmanli¹⁴, and others. Prominent ethnographers G.Geybullayev¹⁵, N.M.Guliyeva¹⁶, Sh.Bunyadova¹⁷, and M.Pashayeva¹⁸ have explored family and household

¹¹ Qədirzadə, Q. “Milli-mənəvi dəyərlərimiz: bayramlar, mərasimlər, adətlər, münasibətlər / Q.Qədirzadə - Naxçıvan: “Əcəmi” Nəşriyyat Birliyi, - 2012 - 128 s.

¹² Quliyev, H., Bəxtiyarov, A. Azərbaycanda qədim dini inanclar və onların məişətdə qalıqları / H.Quliyev, A.Bəxtiyarov - Bakı: Kommunist, - 1968. - 112 s.

¹³ Yoloğlu, G. Mövsüm mərasimləri (türk xalqlarının materialları əsasında tarixi-etnoqrafik tədqiqat) / G.Yoloğlu – Bakı: Xəzər Universiteti nəşriyyatı, - 2009. – 218 s.

¹⁴ Allahmanlı, M. Azərbaycanın Qərb bölgəsinin mənəvi mədəniyyətindən (tarixi-etnoqrafik tədqiqat) / M.Allahmanlı - Bakı: Nurlan, - 2011, - 176 s.

¹⁵ Qeybullayev, Q. Azərbaycanlılarda ailə və nighah (XIX əsr və XX əsrin əvvəlləri) I hissə: tarixi etnoqrafik tədqiqat / Q.Qeybullayev – Bakı: Elm, - 1994. – 264 s.; Azərbaycanlılarda ailə və nighah (XIX əsr və XX əsrin əvvəlləri). II hissə : tarixi etnoqrafik tədqiqat / Q.Qeybullayev – Bakı: Elm, - 1994. – 437 s.

¹⁶ Quliyeva N.M. Azərbaycanda uşaq etnoqrafiyası / N.Quliyeva – Bakı: “Avropa” nəşriyyatı, - 2021, - 216 s. ; Quliyeva N.M. Müstəqillik illərində Azərbaycan ailəsi / N.M.Quliyeva – Bakı: Elm, - 2006. -94 s. ; Quliyeva, N. Etnoqrafiya və Etnologiya (dərs vəsaiti). Ali məktəb tələbələri üçün vəsait / N.Quliyeva - Bakı: ADPU, - 2009. - 157 s.; Quliyeva, N.M. Azərbaycanda müasir kənd ailəsi / N.M.Quliyeva - Bakı: Elm, - 1997. – 242 s.

¹⁷ Bünyadova, Ş. Orta əsr Azərbaycan ailəsi / Ş.Bünyadova - Bakı: Elm, - 2012. - 384 s.; Bünyadova, Ş.T. Münasibətlər müstəvisi / Ş.T.Bünyadova – Bakı: Mütərcim, - 2018. – 152 s.

¹⁸ Paşayeva, M. Azərbaycanlıların ailə mərasimlərində etnik ənənələr (XIX-XX əsrin əvvəlləri. Şəki-Zaqatala bölgəsinin materialları üzrə) / M.Paşayeva – Bakı: Azərnaşr, - 2008, -308 səh+24 s.

relationships. Religious scholar R.Aliyev¹⁹ has studied these matters from the perspective of family Sharia law. In the research by ethnographer M. Pashayeva²⁰, the customs and beliefs of Azerbaijanis in the 19th-20th centuries have been examined. The national character, which is a part of the spiritual value system of Azerbaijanis, was analyzed in the scientific article by ethnographer E.Karimov²¹. This article serves as a valuable source for studying the people's worldview and mentality. In his studies, ethnographer F.Valiyev²², researched the material and spiritual culture of Azerbaijanis, household life, folk customs, and beliefs. Azerbaijani women's adornments were studied by K.Hadiyeva²³, and the craftsmanship of Baku was examined by M.Khalilova²⁴.

However, in these studies, the theoretical aspect of Azerbaijani national and spiritual values has not been the main research focus.

Philosophical and ethnological approaches to spiritual values are reflected in the research of ethnographer K.Khalilli²⁵. This article explores the unity of history and philosophy, as well as the process of the formation of national and spiritual values. The researcher has shown that in Azerbaijani historiography, spiritual values were influenced by Soviet national policy. However, this article does not address other aspects of Azerbaijani national and spiritual values as a research problem.

¹⁹ Əliyev, R. İslamda ailə və nikah münasibətləri / R.Əliyev - Bakı: İrşad İslam Araşdırmaları Mərkəzi, - 1999. - 236 s.

²⁰ Paşayeva, M. Azərbaycanlıların adət və inancları (XIX-XX əsrlər) / M.Paşayeva - Bakı, - 2019. – 292 s.

²¹ Керимов Э. Этнопсихологический портрет азербайджанцев. // - Баку: Irs, - 2011. № 1 (49), - с. 4-9.

²² Vəli, F.İ. Azərbaycanın milli-mənəvi və maddi dəyərləri (məqalələr toplusu) / F.İ.Vəli – Bakı: Mütəcim, - 2018. – 352 s.

²³ Hadiyeva, K. XIX-XX əsrin əvvəllərində Azərbaycanda ənənəvi qadın bəzəkləri (tarixi-etnoqrafik tədqiqat) / K.Hadiyeva - Bakı: Xəzər Universitetinin nəşriyyatı, - 2009. - 198 s.

²⁴ Xəlilova M. XIX əsrin sonu-XX əsrin əvvəllərində Bakıda sənətkarlıq / M. Xəlilova – Bakı: “Elm” nəşriyyatı, - 2009. – 200 s

²⁵ Xəlilli, X. Tarix və onun problemləri. // Tarixin fəlsəfi: retrospektiv və perspektiv. - Bakı: Azərbaycan, - 2018. – 704 s.

The material and spiritual culture of Karabakh, from ancient times to the 19th century, was researched historically by G.Hacıyev²⁶.

The national and spiritual value of the people, folklore and mythology, has been studied in the theoretical-methodological context by S.Rzasoy²⁷. The researcher examined folklore as a product of the people's consciousness and analyzed its semantics, providing a theoretical approach to the concepts of "Oghuz myth" and "epic". The genesis and evolutionary process of Azerbaijani mythology was explored by R.Garafov²⁸. The mythological views of Turkic peoples were reflected in the research of Turkologist and philologist F.Jalilov²⁹. However, here, only folklore and mythology were studied, and other aspects of Azerbaijani national and spiritual values were not considered as a scientific problem.

The issues of the formation of "Soviet values" and the politicization of folklore studies in Azerbaijan during the early years of Soviet rule are reflected in the monograph of folklorist J.Gasimov³⁰. The research outlines the repressive policies carried out by the Soviet government against folklore and folklorists to destroy the national and spiritual values of the people. The researcher primarily examines the Soviet policy towards the destruction of common Turkic-Islamic culture and national-spiritual values during the period of totalitarianism, including the repression against national music, traditional instruments, and the epic "Book of Dede Korkut", as well as the intellectuals and musicians who were carriers of these national values. J.Gasimov demonstrates that prominent intellectuals such as Firidunbay Kocharli, Bahlul Bahjat, Salman Mumtaz, Yusif

²⁶ Hacıyev, Q. Qarabağın maddi və mənəvi mədəniyyəti / Q.Hacıyev – Bakı: Təhsil, - 2010. – 152 s.

²⁷ Rzasoy, S.G. Mifologiya və folklor: nəzəri-metodoloji kontekst / S.Rzasoy – Bakı: Nurlan, - 2008. – 188 s.; Rzasoy, S. Oğuz mifologiyası (metod, struktur, rekonstruksiya) / S.Rzasoy - Bakı: Nurlan, - 2009. - 363 s.

²⁸ Qafarov, R.O. Azərbaycan türklərinin mifologiyası (qaynaqları, təsnifatı, obrazları, genezisi, evolyusiyası və poetikası): / fəlsəfə elmlər doktoru dis. avtoreferatı. / Bakı, 2010.

²⁹ Ağasioğlu, F. İslamöncəsi Türk tarixi (Doqquz Bitik). V Bitik. Mifologiyada tarixi // F. Ağasioğlu - İstanbul: - 2009. – 455 s.

³⁰ Qasımov, C. Azərbaycan folklorşümasılığı və sovet totalitarizmi / C.Qasımov - Bakı: Nurlan, - 2011. - 599 s.

Vazir Chamanzaminli, Vali Khulufli, Hanafi Baba oghlu Zeynalli, and Amin Abid were carriers of national and spiritual values.

The creator and bearer of national and spiritual values is the people themselves; however, the role of Azerbaijan's prominent figures in preserving these values and protecting them from various socio-political pressures is undeniable. These prominent figures, intellectuals, are products of the people and can be considered the thinking minds of the nation.

The Islamic values of Azerbaijanis from the perspective of statehood have been studied in the monograph by Adil Abdulla Al-Falah³¹. The monograph highlights the contributions of the National Leader Heydar Aliyev in preserving religious values and fostering a tolerant environment in Azerbaijan. The author evaluates Heydar Aliyev's work in this area as follows: *"In this way, Heydar Aliyev, as a true political-ideological leader, was able to correctly identify both the theoretical-strategic and practical-tactical issues of constructing a new country and a new life that combined traditions and modern requirements, and was in line with the mentality and psychology of the people"*³².

In the research of I.Huseynov and N.Abbasov³³, some aspects of national and spiritual values have been studied from a cultural and pedagogical perspective. I.Huseynov demonstrates that national customs and traditions are *"the main indicators of public and cultural progress at all stages of history"*³⁴. He proposes that the national and spiritual values of Azerbaijanis are connected with the roots of the people. Indeed, the preservation of national and spiritual values is possible through educating the younger generation based on a national culture that relies on these values. As seen from this thesis, the family and society, especially the state, play a crucial role in

³¹ Əl-fələh Abdulla, A. Heydər Əliyev və milli-mənəvi dəyərlər / A. əl-fələh Abdulla. - Bakı: Qismət, - 2007. - 108 s.

³² Əl-fələh Abdulla, A. Heydər Əliyev və milli-mənəvi dəyərlər / A. əl-fələh Abdulla. - Bakı: Qismət, - 2007. - 108 s.

³³ Abbasov, N. Mədəniyyət siyasəti və mənəvi dəyərlər / N.Abbasov. – Bakı: Təknür, - 2009, 444 s.

³⁴ Hüseynov, İ. Azərbaycan milli adət və ənənələrinin bədii-estetik mahiyyəti. (monoqrafiya) Azərbaycan dilində. Red. N. Şəmsizadə, rəs.E.Nəzərov, Bakı: Mars-Print, 2002, 305 s.

safeguarding spiritual values. The issue of spiritual values from the perspective of art studies was explored by N.Abbasov. The researcher examined the essence of the state's cultural policy, its planning, the nature of national culture, and issues related to UNESCO and the Council of Europe's cultural policies. As seen, N.Abbasov approached the issue from a political standpoint.

The issue of the manifestation of the national and spiritual values of Azerbaijanis in folk pedagogy has been studied by A.Hashimov³⁵. In his research, the role of folk wisdom, historically acquired experience, and customs and traditions as educational tools, as well as issues related to moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and physical education in oral folk samples, have been reflected. However, in these studies, issues other than ethnopsychology and folk pedagogy, which are part of the national and spiritual heritage of the people, have not been the focus of research. It should be noted that the study of national and spiritual values allows us to say that their strengthening in the system of the people's spiritual values and their manifestation in customs, traditions, and ethnopsychology are historically formed and closely related to their roots.

The problem of spiritual values in Azerbaijani philosophy and cultural studies was explored by the cultural scholar F.Mammadov³⁶, and his research serves as a valuable source for the philosophical and state value perspectives on the issue. However, in his studies, he did not approach the problem from an ethnological standpoint, and the historical comparative analysis of Azerbaijani national and spiritual values was not the focus of his research.

In the research of F.Alakbarli³⁷, the formation of the national-spiritual values of Azerbaijani Turks and the contributions of prominent Azerbaijani figures in the development of the national

³⁵ Həşimov, Ə., Sadıqov, F. Pedaqogika (Tərbiyə nəzəriyyəsinə dair mülahizələr) / Ə. Bakı: Təbib, 1995. – 248 s.; Həşimov, Ə.Ş. Pedaqogika kursunun tədrisində xalq hikmətindən istifadə / Ə.Ş.Həşimov - Bakı: Maarif, - 1991. – 240 s.

³⁶ Məmmədov, F. T. Kulturologiya və insan inkişafı. / F.Məmmədov - Bakı: "OL" NPTK, - 2019, – 344 s.; Məmmədov, F.T. İdarəetmə mədəniyyəti Xarici ölkələrin təcrübəsi / F.Məmmədov - Bakı: "Apostrof" Çap Evi, - 2013. - 672 s.

³⁷ Ələkbərli, F.Q. Milli ideologiya probleminə tarixi-fəlsəfi baxış (II hissə). / F.Ələkbərli – Bakı: Elm və təhsil, - 2014. - 500

ideology of Turkic peoples were examined, with the issue approached from a philosophical-historical perspective. However, other problems that are central to the doctoral dissertation were not addressed in these studies.

A valuable source for the study of Azerbaijanis' material and spiritual culture is the monograph published by the Russian Academy of Sciences³⁸, which provides detailed information on the distinctive features of the material and cultural heritage of Azerbaijan's historical and ethnographic regions, including the structure of houses, clothing and decorations, material cultural heritage such as food, etc. Traditions related to house construction, clothing and decorations, which represent the spiritual heritage of the people, were researched by F. Valiyev, traditional food and drinks by S. Aghamaliyeva and SMaharramova, traditional crafts by S.Mahrramova, family and domestic life by Q.Rajabli, the institution of elders in the social institution system, folk music and dances, musical instruments by academician T.Bunyadov, religious beliefs in spiritual culture by T.Shahbazov, S.Nuruzade, T.Babayev, X.Zahidova, professional culture by I.Habibbayli, V.Gafarov, F.Alakbarli, A.Salayev, X.Zeynalova from an ethnographic perspective. Additionally, the process of the formation of the Azerbaijani language, which occupies a unique place in the system of Azerbaijani spiritual values, and other related issues were examined by A.Balayev. The process of the formation of the Azerbaijani nation in the second half of the 19th century and the 20th century was studied by A.Balayev and A.Mammadli. Modern ethno-cultural processes in Azerbaijan were researched by A.Mammadli³⁹.

A valuable source for the study of the national and spiritual values of Azerbaijanis from a pan-Turkic perspective is the scientific works of Turkish researcher Y. Kalafat⁴⁰. In his academic research,

³⁸ Азербайджанцы. / отв. ред. А. Мамедли, Л.Т.Соловьева. - М.: Наука, - 2017. - 708 с.

³⁹ Мамедли, А. Современные этнокультурные процессы в Азербайджане: основные тенденции и перспективы / А. Мамедли – Баку: Университет Хазар, - 2008. – 246 с.

⁴⁰ Kalafat Y., Abdurrezzak Ali O. Totem / Y.kalafat, A.O.Abdurrezzak – Ankara: Berikan, - 2018, - 124 s.; Kalafat Y., Kamalov İ. Tatar Efsaneleri [Elektron resurs]

Kalafat approaches various areas of spiritual culture from the perspective of pan-Turkic values, with particular attention given to the initial meaning and significance of these values for Turkic peoples. In this regard, the works of the researcher should be regarded as an important and rich source for the study of Azerbaijani spiritual culture in terms of values.

Thus, the problems addressed by the study titled “Spiritual Values in the Republic of Azerbaijan (Ethnographic Research)”, particularly the theoretical approach to national and spiritual values, the process of their formation and evolution, the establishment and promotion of “Soviet values” during the Soviet rule, the processes of self-awareness and self-reconnection following the collapse of the USSR, the reflection of national and spiritual values during the Karabakh wars, and the historical transformation or preservation of these values for various reasons, have not been comprehensively examined as a scientific research subject.

For the first time, this dissertation ethnographically explores the semantics of cultural artifacts both tangible and intangible heritage preserved to this day, using ancient and medieval sources, archaeological findings, examples of folklore and mythology reflecting the worldview of the Azerbaijani people, and field ethnographic materials obtained in contemporary times. The study also investigates the traditions that have endured, as well as the attributes of statehood of the Republic of Azerbaijan (primarily the national flag) in the context of national policy through historical-comparative analysis.

Source database of the research. The dissertation utilizes archaeological and field ethnographic materials, folklore examples, archival documents, periodicals, and scholarly literature. The source base of the research work includes photos obtained by the author during field ethnographic expeditions from the early 2000s to recent

file:///D:/Ya%C5%9Far%20Kalafat/299249409_kalafat.pdf; Kalafat, Y. Altaylardan Anadoluya kamızın (Başlangıçtan günümüze tenqriçilik-Göktengri inam sistemi). [Elektron resurs] file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Yasar_Kalafat _ALTAYLAR _DAN _ANADOLU _YA _KA%20(1).pdf ; Kalafat, Y. Dedem Korkut Yurdu Anadolu’da Türk Uluları // Kitab-ı Dede Korkud Destanı’nın 1300 Yıllık Yübiyleyi Sempozyumu, - Bakı: - 6-8 aprel - 2000 və s.

years. Among these are personal photos of ethnographer-scientist Sh. Bunyadova, V. Bakarov from the village of Hil in the Gusar, E. Hacıyev from the city of Zangilan, and veteran of the Second Karabakh War E. Valiyev. The author expresses his gratitude to these individuals. These photos have been included in the dissertation. Through epics, mythology, folklore samples, and various academic studies, it has been possible to conduct a historical-comparative analysis of the initial meanings attributed to values during their formative stages, their processes of historical development, and the evolution of cultural heritage preserved into the contemporary era. In particular, extensive use has been made of the works of Turkish scholar Y.Kalafat. For addressing these issues, the Oghuz Epics and The Book of Dede Korkut serve as invaluable resources. Additionally, to investigate the Soviet government's national policies, its strategies for fostering Soviet values, and the concept of the "Soviet individual", archival documents from that era and data obtained from informants were consulted.

The object and subject of the research. The object of the research work is the moral values of Azerbaijanis. The subject of the research is the study of factors influencing the formation of moral values of Azerbaijanis, the continuity of generations in the preservation of national and moral values, theoretical views on traditional moral values, and their status in the modern era.

The goals and objectives of the research. The purpose of this dissertation is to conduct a historical-comparative study of the ethnographic characteristics of the national moral values of Azerbaijanis. To achieve this purpose, the following objectives are addressed:

- Define the concept of moral values and its place within the discipline of ethnography;
- Examine contemporary ethnocultural processes and their influence on traditional values;
- Identify the impact of the promotion and establishment of a "new way of life" during the Soviet era on traditional moral values;
- Analyze the processes of self-awareness and cultural revival during the independence period, along with changes in societal attitudes toward traditional moral values;

- Contextualize and substantiate the manifestation of the Azerbaijani people's national moral values during the Karabakh wars from a historical perspective;
- Investigate the roots and reasons for the formation of moral and national values within elements of moral culture such as religion and Sharia, familial and domestic relationships, funeral rites, traditional etiquette norms, festivals, folk games, ethnomusicology, folklore, and mythology;
- Determine the role of social institutions within the system of national moral values;
- Analyze aspects of traditional material culture—such as traditional clothing, carpet weaving, and dietary systems—from the perspective of national moral values;
- Explore family and domestic relationships, including intra-family dynamics and wedding and funeral customs, in terms of their moral significance.

Methods of research. The primary methodology employed in this research is the historical-comparative analysis method. The moral values of Azerbaijanis were examined from historical, cultural, and geographical perspectives, emphasizing their connection to their roots. In analyzing the collected material, a comprehensive and systematic approach was applied, prioritizing scientific generalizations and comparative analysis. During ethnographic expeditions, materials were collected through interviews with informants, participant observation, and surveys. Typological classification methods were also employed. Additionally, the comparative-functional (cross-cultural) method was utilized to identify commonalities in the formation of shared values between Azerbaijanis and other nations, particularly Turkic and Muslim peoples, and to analyze the underlying reasons for these similarities.

The main provisions of the defence are the following:

- The spiritual values of Azerbaijanis should be examined from a historical perspective. In the modern era, although spiritual values have changed from their original form due to various historical processes, they still provide an understanding of the historical development stages of the nation's culture and its roots. Changes in the ethno-history of the people, driven by various economic,

political, and social processes, have led to some modifications of traditional values. As a result, innovations (such as Islamic values – Sharia, Islamic monuments, etc.) have been introduced into material and spiritual culture, and over time, the cultural heritage of the people has taken on new forms and become richer. However, these processes (including Azerbaijan's inclusion in the Russian Empire and the USSR) have not separated Azerbaijanis from the broader Turkic culture;

- Historical-comparative analysis shows that the formation of the spiritual values of the Azerbaijani people has been significantly influenced by the common Turkic culture, as well as by the culture of the ethnic and ethnographic groups living in the country. Especially, the spiritual values of Muslims, regardless of their national affiliation, particularly their religious values, family and household relations, national character, and national statehood values, have acquired a pan-Azerbaijani character. This was most evident in the political processes occurring in the country and in the national solidarity during the Karabakh wars;

- The nutrition and table culture, holidays and ceremonies, clothing culture, family and household relations, and other areas of spiritual culture have been shaped under the influence of traditional occupations, common Turkic culture, and Sharia law;

- Although the spiritual culture and values of Azerbaijanis are characterized as part of the common Turkic, Islamic, and Caucasian cultures, they also possess a number of local features. Close neighborly relations with neighboring peoples are also reflected in the formation of a similar culture. Historically, long-term cultural and economic connections between neighboring and even non-neighboring peoples (especially when there is a common religious factor) make the mutual appropriation of cultures possible;

- In some cases, there have been instances where neighboring peoples (such as Armenians) have falsified the historical roots of the Azerbaijani people's cultural heritage and presented it as their own. Therefore, it is crucial to study the cultural heritage of the people from an ethno-historical perspective and to ensure its preservation;

- The process of the formation of the spiritual values of the Azerbaijani people has gone through several historical stages. The

religions present in the country – pre-Islamic beliefs, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam – have played a significant role in the formation of the people’s spiritual values and ethnocultural heritage;

- The following stand out as values of national culture: beliefs, folklore, rituals, worldviews, ideals, national character, ethnopsychology, traditional etiquette, national ideology, etc. Since traditions are accepted as values, they can be considered as the heir of cultural values. Traditions guide and correct daily norms and behaviors;

- Although the core values of the people, such as funeral and wedding customs, and the nutrition system, have undergone changes under the influence of historical processes, they maintain their original form. Funeral and wedding customs, as well as food and drinks, act as relatively stable values. However, they are also subject to the effects of contemporary globalization and integration processes;

- Although national and spiritual values have undergone several changes due to the demands of the modern era, they preserve their roots and foundations. Global events, such as conflicts (particularly the Nagorno-Karabakh wars), have shown that when values are under threat, national sentiments are further awakened. Based on ethnopsychology, these processes are accompanied by an increased interest in cultural heritage, the desire to protect and defend one's own, and a demand for a return to national and spiritual values. Thus, national sentiments may appear dormant due to various processes or influences, but when the spiritual values of the people are threatened, they awaken once again with greater intensity.

Scientific novelty of the research. The scientific novelty lies in the fact that, for the first time in Azerbaijani ethnography, the ethnographic characteristics of the national and spiritual values of Azerbaijanis have been studied in a comprehensive manner based on rich literature, archival, and field ethnographic materials using a historical-comparative method. The dissertation introduces a theoretical approach to the concept of spiritual values in Azerbaijani ethnography for the first time. The ethnographic analysis of the national and spiritual values of the Azerbaijani people and the new approaches presented regarding the preservation and development of

these values in the modern era confirm that the preservation of ethnocultural heritage not only involves the restoration of traditional values, but also aims at integrating these values into modern society and transmitting them to future generations.

In the context of contemporary challenges, the examination of national and spiritual values introduces a new perspective in Azerbaijani ethnography. The scientific novelty of this research is reflected in several aspects: the analysis of the spiritual values of the Azerbaijani people in the interrelation between traditional culture and the dynamics of modern society leads to the novel theoretical conclusion that national and spiritual values are not limited to the preservation of traditional culture but are also renewed and reshaped according to the development trends of the modern era. The study of the outcomes of ideological manipulations during the Soviet period, particularly the pressures on national and spiritual values, and the processes of self-awareness after independence, provides, for the first time, the opportunity to trace the transformation of national and spiritual values between the Soviet era and the post-independence period.

One of the new aspects of the research is the focus on the manifestation of the national and spiritual values of the people during the Karabakh War and the processes of strengthening national unity and statehood ideology. During the war, the people's self-confidence, their attachment to their lands and national identity, and the demonstration of moral strength in serving the homeland constitute the scientific novelty of this approach. The research introduces a new ethnographic methodology, demonstrating that globalization processes have both positive and negative impacts on spiritual values, and that national and spiritual values have been both preserved and subjected to certain changes in line with modern demands. The application of these methods in the analysis of the contemporary manifestations of national and spiritual values reveals that, under the influence of globalization and modern socio-political changes, the national and spiritual values of the Azerbaijani people manifest in various forms. In some cases, there is the renewal and adaptation of traditional values, while in others, the alteration or loss of older values is observed. This finding also highlights the

challenges and opportunities faced in the preservation and adaptation of national values to contemporary demands. This approach shows how traditional values are maintained in the modern era.

The theoretical and practical significance of the research.

The ethnographic study of spiritual values is crucial for understanding the factors influencing the formation of the Azerbaijani people's system of spiritual values, as well as the role of ethnocultural heritage and traditional values in the life of the people.

This dissertation can serve as a helpful tool in scientific research, in the delivery of specialized courses at universities, in the development of national cultural policies, and in the formulation of cultural-historical concepts in education and upbringing. It can also be applied in the teaching of various academic disciplines (such as ethnography, folklore, philosophy, culturology, pedagogy, ethnopsychology, and others).

The approbation and application of the research. The main findings of the dissertation have been presented in the materials of various international and national conferences, as well as published in both international and national scientific journals, including those indexed in international citation databases.

The organization where the dissertation work was performed. The dissertation was carried out at the "Modern Ethnology" Department of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

The total volume of the dissertation in terms of characters, with the volume of each structural section specified separately, is as follows: The dissertation consists of an introduction, five chapters and 15 paragraphs, a conclusion, a list of references, appendices, and a list of abbreviations and symbols. The Introduction of the dissertation contains 31,340 characters, Chapter I - 57,865 characters, Chapter II - 112,340 characters, Chapter III - 142,870 characters, Chapter IV - 90,020 characters, Chapter V - 66,125 characters, and the Conclusion contains 20,411 characters. The total volume of the dissertation is 524,285 characters.

II. THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

In the “**Introduction**” section of the research work, issues such as the relevance and degree of development of the topic, the source base of the research, the object and subject, the goals and objectives, the research methods, the main propositions presented for defense, the scientific novelty of the research, its theoretical and practical significance, the approbation and application of the research, the name of the organization where the dissertation was carried out, and the structure of the dissertation are explained.

In the first chapter titled “**The Concept of Spiritual Values and Its Place in the Field of Ethnography**”, issues such as various scientific and theoretical perspectives on the concept of “moral values” and the approaches of Azerbaijani ethnographers have been examined.

In the first paragraph of the first chapter titled “**Different Scientific-Theoretical Perspectives on the Concept of 'Moral Values'**”, the approaches of world scholars to the issue are highlighted. First and foremost, different perspectives on moral values are presented from philosophical, religious, pedagogical, psychological, and state viewpoints, showing that ethnic culture is the result of the historically developed worldview, values, and philosophy of an ethnic group.

After World War II, the shift in the direction of values made the study of this issue more relevant, and the theory of cultural relativism expanded further. The core idea of cultural relativism can be summarized as follows: each ethnic group, as a coherent system, creates its own culture to sustain its survival. The war, along with universal human values, also contributed to the increasing tendency of nations to preserve their own cultural heritage. In the 1950s, most anthropologists adopted the view that virtually all aspects of social life are grounded in the foundational values that characterize a culture and distinguish it from others. The theory of values aims to explore the relationship between the different expressions of culture and to define the mechanisms through which spiritual values are formed. It holds that values and their evaluation have existed since the inception of life itself.

In this paragraph, the theoretical approaches of Y.V. Bromley, N.Chavchavadze, and L. Gumilyov to the problem are also reflected. In Soviet ethnography, the concepts of "culture" and "values" were largely defined in accordance with the state's national policies, and the role of national ideology in the formation of values was highlighted. Undoubtedly, in this context, national ideology refers to Soviet ideology. Thus, although there are certain differences in the theoretical approaches to the problem of spiritual values, overall, the human factor is considered fundamental in the formation of spiritual values and culture.

The propositions put forward in this paragraph have been reflected in the following articles⁴¹.

In the second paragraph of the first chapter, titled **“The Problem of “Spiritual Values” in Azerbaijani Ethnography”**, the approaches of ethnographers to the problem of values are discussed. For example, the perspectives of A. Mammadli, A. Allahmanlı, and others are analyzed. A. Mammadli highlights that *“the historical path of each nation is connected to a certain socio-cultural system, ethnic psychology, and a stable system of values formed throughout history”*⁴².

In Azerbaijani ethnography, the concept of national and spiritual values was first studied by G. Qadirzadeh. In his monograph, he explores various aspects of national and spiritual values, including calendar-related holidays and ceremonies, their history, the genesis of customs and traditions, the Novruz holiday and its origin, winter-related calendar customs, the “Khadir Nabi” holiday, issues related to the groom in Nakhchivan weddings, and the concept of nobility in “Kitabi Dede Korkud”. These are presented as part of the cultural heritage and core values of the Azerbaijani people.

⁴¹ Nuruzadə, Ş. Milli-mənəvi dəyərlərə nəzəri yanaşmalar // - Bakı: Tarix və onun problemləri: nəzəri, elmi, metodik jurnal, - 2015. №2, - 246-254; Nuruzadə, Ş.T. Etnik münaqişələr / Ş.Nuruzadə - Bakı: Mütərcim, - 2015. - 132 s.

⁴² Məmmədli, Ə. Azərbaycanda etnoqrafiyanın müasir vəziyyəti və əsas inkişaf istiqamətləri haqqında [Elektron resurs] http://www.elibrary.az/docs/jurnal/jrn2014_641.pdf

As seen from the research of the ethnographer G. Geybullayev, considering that the historical past is closely related to spiritual culture, it can be said that the system of a nation's moral values and its cultural heritage to some extent preserve the history of the past. The spread of Islam in the Middle Ages played an important role in the formation of traditional moral values of Azerbaijanis.

However, pre-Islamic values did not completely disappear, but instead became enriched with Islamic values. As a result of these changes, the influence of Islam was firmly established in the material and spiritual culture of the people. This idea is also reflected in the research of A. Mustafayev. The studies of N. Guliyeva, Sh. Bunyadova, and M. Pashayeva have explored topics such as family relationships, ethnopedagogy, and behavioral norms, among others. Ethnographers studies suggest that the traditional material and spiritual cultural examples created by people, which reflect their history and national uniqueness, are their national-spiritual values. The national-spiritual values of Azerbaijanis form the basis of their ethnic identity.

In the second chapter titled, **“Ethnocultural and Ethnosocial Processes in Contemporary Conditions and Their Impact on Spiritual Values”**, the Soviet government's national policy and the process of forming 'Soviet values,' as well as processes such as national revival and self-awareness during the years of independence and their impact on the system of spiritual values, and the manifestation of the national and moral values of the Azerbaijani people in the Karabakh wars are examined.

In the first paragraph of Chapter II, titled **“The Formation and Propagation of the Artificial “New Way of Life” during the Soviet Era”**, the process of ethnic consolidation of the Soviet peoples from the early days of Soviet power is examined. The primary objective was to establish new values—Soviet values—that could unite the diverse peoples who, having gone through various historical stages, held different religious views, customs, traditions, lifestyles, and, in general, distinct spiritual values. In order to shape the 'Soviet values,' a plan was implemented to gradually 'erase' traditional values from people's 'minds.' For this, it was undoubtedly necessary to make fundamental changes in the traditional worldview

and lifestyle. This effort was part of the broader plan to reshape the social and cultural fabric of the Soviet Union. For this purpose, great importance was attached to the policy of ethnic consolidation. On one hand, the policy of consolidation of the Soviet peoples, and on the other hand, the deportations against Azerbaijanis, demonstrate that the Soviet government was implementing contradictory policies. The “cultural revolution” implemented in the USSR was supposed to play a crucial role in shaping Soviet culture and the formation of Soviet values. This plan was reflected in the documents adopted by the Communist Party and the government, especially in the Communist Party's program.

All areas of culture were expected to promote the Soviet way of life, ideology, and create a “Soviet person” who adhered to “Soviet values” and a shared worldview. Under the influence of socialist internationalism, processes occurring in the realm of public consciousness were supposed to play a significant role in bringing together the various Soviet peoples. Firstly, a suitable psychological environment had to be created for interaction among these peoples. At first glance, no negative aspects of this policy seem apparent. On the other hand, the slogans of “internationalism” and “friendship of peoples” were intended to apply only to relations among socialist countries. The provisions put forward in this paragraph are reflected in the following articles⁴³.

In the second paragraph of Chapter II, titled **“The Processes of Return and Self-Awareness during the Years of Independence and the Changes in the Life of the People”**, it is indicated that the emergence of the national awakening movement in Azerbaijan during the 1980s demonstrated the failure of the Soviet government's policy to establish values that would support the ideology of

⁴³ Нурузаде Ш. Пропаганда и формирование «советских ценностей» в годы советской власти в Азербайджане. //The Caucasus and the world. – Tbilisi: - 2022. № 24, - с. 139-145 (<http://ru.lazika.com.ge/2022/02/01/>); Нурузаде Ш. Традиционные ценности азербайджанцев в контексте этнокультурных и этносоциальных процессов //“Tarixiy Obyektlar Va Tabiiy Maskanlar Uyg‘Unligi Asosida O‘zbekistonning Turistik Salohiyatini Rivojlantirishning Asosiy Yo‘Nalishlari Va Istiqbollari” Mavzusidagi Xalqaro Ilmiy-Amali Konferensiyasi Maqolalari To‘Plami, 17 aprel 2024, Toshkent – s. 436-442.

socialism. Under the influence of the national liberation movement, the process of returning to values such as homeland, land, language, names, customs, religion, ancestry, music, traditional clothing, and holidays began. The concept of 'freedom' now implied liberation from the 'Soviet empire. In the minds of Azerbaijanis, the concept of “national liberation” encompassed a return to their national culture and spiritual values in all aspects of life and culture. Thus, the interest of Azerbaijanis in their traditional spiritual values and historical heritage reached a new level. The processes of self-awareness and return to roots spurred the giving of names reflecting the nation’s history and values to newborn children. The processes of national self-awareness and return to roots were also reflected at the societal and state levels in attitudes towards cultural heritage and traditions. The national policy implemented by the state creates conditions for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people and their benefit from the universal cultural heritage. During the years of independence, the processes of self-awareness and return to roots in Azerbaijan, in terms of confessional aspects, were primarily reflected in the regulation of state-religion relations, the protection of religious monuments, and the national policy carried out by the state. These processes are characterized by the restoration and construction of mosques, synagogues, churches, and other places of worship, as well as a return to religious values, such as holidays and ceremonies, and more.

The provisions put forward in this paragraph are reflected in the following articles⁴⁴.

In the third paragraph titled **“The Reflection of the Spiritual Values of the Azerbaijani People in the Karabakh Wars,”** it is

⁴⁴ Nuruzadə, Ş. Azərbaycan Respublikasının milli mədəni irsin qorunması siyasəti // - Bakı: Journal of Qafqaz University – History, law and political sciences, - 2015. № 2, – s. 160-169; Nuruzadə, Ş. Azərbaycan Respublikasının multikulturalizm siyasəti və milli-mənəvi dəyərlərin qorunması // - Bakı: Dövlət idarəçiliyi: nəzəriyyə və təcrübə, - 2015. - №3 (51), - s. 113-118; Nuruzadə Ş. Azərbaycanda müstəqillik illərində ənənəvi dəyərlərə qayıdış prosesi // 2. Uluslararası Balkanlar, Anadolu, Kafkasya Ve Türkistan Coğrafiyası Sanat, Kültür, Tarih Ve Folklor Kongresi, 09-12 Mayıs, 2022, Aydın-Türkiye. – s. 189-192.

highlighted that values such as “land,” “homeland,” “flag,” “religion,” “Allah,” “bravery,” “patriotism,” “friendship,” and “national solidarity” hold a special place in the worldview and the system of spiritual values of Azerbaijanis. In the modern era, the formation of Azerbaijanis’ love for their homeland and land has been influenced by historical memory (historical heroes, epic tales reflecting their bravery, songs, fairy tales, and legends), collective memory, religious views, and traditions. The formation of these values, which became more pronounced during the Karabakh wars, was influenced by several factors. Primarily, the recitation of heroic epics by ashiks (folk poet-musicians) at Azerbaijani festivals and ceremonies, the transmission of values such as family honor, homeland loyalty, and love for the land within families and society through various means, and the teaching of these heroic narratives in educational institutions all contributed to instilling love for the homeland and land in the younger generation. The phrases “The Homeland is Mother!” and “Motherland” hold particular significance in equating the homeland with a mother and the land, playing a crucial role in shaping the worldview of every Azerbaijani. Thus, the collapse of the USSR and the process of Azerbaijan becoming an independent state resulted in a significant leap in the return to traditional values within the current system of spiritual values. Undoubtedly, this was a natural process from an ethnopsychological perspective. These processes showed during the Karabakh wars that values such as Azerbaijani identity, national unity, Turkism, and statehood had deeply rooted themselves in people's worldviews. It can be concluded that traditionalism, historical memory, and heritage played a significant role in shaping these values. These propositions are reflected in the following articles⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ Nuruzadə, Ş. Qarabağ müharibələrində Azərbaycan xalqının mənəvi dəyərlərinin təzahürü // İkinci Qarabağ müharibəsi yeni nəsil müharibə kimi. 44 günlük Vətən Müharibəsində qazanılan qələbənin ildönümünə həsr olunmuş beynəlxalq elmi-praktik konfransın materialları, - Bakı: - 21–22 oktyabr, - 2021, - s. 315-317; Nuruzadə, Ş. Qarabağ müharibələrində Azərbaycan xalqının mənəvi dəyərlərinin təzahürü // İkinci Qarabağ müharibəsi yeni nəsil müharibə kimi. 44 günlük Vətən

In **Chapter III**, titled **“Traditional Spiritual Culture and Spiritual Values”**, issues such as religion and Sharia, hospitality, mutual assistance, ethnopedagogy, folk and religious holidays, ethnomusic, folklore, and the mythical thinking of the people are examined from the perspective of spiritual values. In the first paragraph, titled **“Religion and Sharia”**, it is concluded that the religious values of the people are embodied in their worldview, beliefs, religious monuments, religious holidays and rituals, family and social relations, and so on. Islam forms the foundation of the lifestyle, culture, thought, and behavior of Muslims. Therefore, Islamic values play a leading role in the daily life and overall lifestyle of Azerbaijanis. Islam, as one of the defining factors of the national self-awareness and ethnic identity of the people, also allows them to perceive themselves as part of the unified Islamic world or Islamic civilization. With the spread of Islam in Azerbaijan, the laws of Sharia began to play an important role in the lives of Azerbaijanis. In Sharia, both secular and religious issues are interpreted from the Islamic perspective. It encompasses laws that regulate economic life, moral and ethical norms, Muslim rituals and holidays, as well as provisions that define the behavior of believers and the lifestyle of the entire Muslim community, all of which are unified within a single system. During the Soviet period, one of the primary targets of anti-religious campaigns was to distance Sharia law from family and social relations. Despite these efforts, the level of religiosity among Muslims remained relatively high. Although Sharia law was officially removed from the legal system, its influence persisted in the cultural and spiritual life of the people. In modern Azerbaijan, Sharia law does not serve as a legal foundation; however, its impact is reflected in the traditional customs and moral values of the Azerbaijani people. This suggests that Azerbaijan, while a secular state, continues to be a carrier of Islamic culture and values. These influences manifest in various aspects of life, including religious holidays, rituals, and general moral principles.

These propositions are reflected in the following articles⁴⁶.

In the second paragraph of Chapter III, titled “**Social Institutions in the System of Spiritual Values**”, it is demonstrated that the traditional moral values of Azerbaijanis primarily manifest in social institutions such as ethnopsychology, hospitality, ethnopedagogy, and mutual aid. The ethnopsychological portrait of the people is closely linked to ethnocultural processes. One of the key aspects of studying these ethnocultural processes is identifying how the broader population adopts cultural values and understanding the mechanisms through which this process occurs. National character is a stable moral value that reflects individuals' understanding of the world and mentality. The ethnogenetic kinship of Azerbaijanis with the Turkic world is reflected in their spiritual and material cultural traditions. At the same time, Azerbaijanis are an independent ethnic group with distinctive characteristics of national identity, a rich spiritual realm, and ethnocultural and ethnolinguistic unity. The characteristic features of the Azerbaijani people's character are reflected in mythological thinking, traditional customary legal norms, empirical knowledge, and Muslim ethical standards. One of the key qualities that characterize the ethnocultural portrait of the people is the custom of hospitality. Hospitality is one of the main social institutions in Azerbaijani society. An important aspect of the Azerbaijani mentality is the respect shown to representatives of other nations. A clear example of this is the custom of kinship. Another notable characteristic of Azerbaijanis is their respectful attitude towards elders. Azerbaijani ethnopedagogy is deeply rooted in rich educational traditions. From an early age, children are instilled with respect for their parents and elders, which is a foundational aspect of their upbringing. The long-standing tradition of industriousness, alongside the cultivation of respect for elders, relatives, and neighbors, holds particular importance in

⁴⁶ Nuruzadə, Ş. Azərbaycan Respublikasının Konstitusiyasında dövlət-din məsələləri. Azərbaycanşünaslığın aktual problemləri “Ümummillî Lider Heydər Əliyevin anadan olmasının 91-ci ildönümünə həsr olunmuş V Beynəlxalq elmi konfransın materialları”, - Bakı: - 05-07 may, - 2014, - s. 547-550; Nuruzadə, Ş. Müasir dövrdə Azərbaycanda dini vəziyyət // - Bakı: Pedagoji Universitet Xəbərləri, Humanitar elmər bölməsi, - 2014. № 4, - s. 179-184.

Azerbaijani culture. Children are taught to adhere to strict norms of etiquette and manners when engaging with older individuals, fostering a deep sense of respect and social harmony. Another significant moral value in Azerbaijani culture is mutual assistance. The practices of mutual aid have largely been preserved, particularly in rural areas. In social institutions such as hospitality, ethnopedagogy, and mutual assistance, the status of elders plays a crucial role. The role of elders is pivotal in sustaining social harmony, guiding the younger generations, and reinforcing traditional values centered around cooperation, support, and solidarity within the community. These practices not only reflect the importance of intergenerational relationships but also underscore the cultural significance of collective responsibility and mutual care. Another important value that characterizes the ethnocultural portrait of Azerbaijanis is their traditional etiquette (ethnoetiquette) or codes of conduct. The formation of etiquette norms has been influenced by factors such as the historical development, ancestry, religious beliefs, and geographical environment of the people. The communication forms and behaviors in Azerbaijani family and social relationships, as well as the close connection of etiquette norms with pre-Islamic rituals, religious beliefs, and folk pedagogy, continue to be observed today. Although the policy of forming a unified Soviet culture during the Soviet era had some impact on traditional etiquette norms, even during that period, Azerbaijanis preserved their traditional etiquette codes. Etiquette norms are not merely a simple expression of ethical principles; rather, they reflect the worldview, character, mentality, and other aspects of the people. The influence of Islam on Azerbaijani etiquette norms is still evident today. In the traditional codes of conduct of Azerbaijanis, the impact of folk beliefs and Islam is profound. For example, when talking about any task (going on a trip, visiting someone, building a house, getting married, birthday greetings, etc.), expressions such as “If Allah wills”, “With Allah's permission”, “Under Allah's protection” are commonly used. The traditional value that reflects the aesthetic taste and cultural heritage of Azerbaijanis is table culture. Sitting at the table with “etiquette and decorum,” dining etiquette, conversations during meals, and the seating arrangement at the head of the table, as well as

the positioning of family members, all characterize the traditional culture of the people.

The propositions put forward in this paragraph are reflected in the following articles⁴⁷.

The third paragraph of Chapter III, titled “**Holidays**”, highlights the significant role holidays hold within the system of Azerbaijani national and spiritual values. It notes that in the modern era, the increasing role of national and spiritual values in society has elevated the importance of traditional and religious holidays. Holidays encompass numerous elements of the nation’s culture and serve as a vital means of preserving traditions and transmitting them to younger generations. In the Middle Ages, with the adoption of Islam by the Azerbaijani people, their system of national and spiritual values largely came to be rooted in Islamic principles. This was also reflected in holidays and ceremonies. Holidays incorporate various elements of the nation's cultural heritage and provide individuals with the opportunity to participate in the preservation of these values. Consequently, people assume the role of carriers of holidays, which form an essential component of the national and spiritual value system. The value system is based on the choices between the secular and sacred, human and nature, individual and society, as well as the traditional and innovative aspects of culture. Holidays are a special period in which all these spheres come into direct contact. This approach is reflected in the traditions and rituals of the Novruz holiday. Novruz is a distinctive set of values that mirrors the historical memory, worldview, customs, religious beliefs, and mythology of the Azerbaijani people. The traditions of Novruz reflect positive qualities of the people, such as kindness and sharing in each other's sorrows. The national and spiritual values of the people, expressed through festivals and rituals, create an understanding of their ethnogenesis. The motifs of festivals and rituals, the stories that form their central themes, and the symbols used serve as rich sources of

⁴⁷ Nuruzade, Ş. Azərbaycanlıların geleneksel ailə dəyərləri və çağdaş zorluları // - Ankara: II. Uluslararası insan hakları sempozyumu. Ailənin korunması haqqı, - 2019 / apri 29-30, - 2019. – s. 614-634; Nuruzadə, Ş.T. Müasir azərbaycanlı ailəsində milli-mənəvi dəyərlər // - Bakı: Azərbaycan arxeologiyası və etnoqrafiyası, - 2015, - № 1, s. 182-188.

information about the historical roots and belief systems of the people. Along with folk holidays, religious festivals also provide an opportunity to study the ethnocultural and ethnopsychological portrait of the Azerbaijanis. Religious holidays and ceremonies hold a prominent place in the system of spiritual values of all Muslim communities residing in Azerbaijan. With the spread of Islam, the observance of religious holidays and rituals —such as Ramadan, Eid al-Adha, Ashura, and others — became an integral aspect of the population’s lifestyle. For every Azerbaijani, participation in the Eid al-Adha ceremonies signifies active engagement in the process of mutual aid. Both those who offer assistance and those who receive it perceive themselves as active members of society, thereby positioning them as bearers of ethnocultural heritage. Thus, like folk festivals, religious holidays and ceremonies should also be regarded as social events that bring people together, distinct from the everyday life of society. In Azerbaijani society, the functions of bringing people together and fostering socialization are primarily fulfilled by the Eid al-Adha, Ramadan, and Ashura ceremonies. The rituals held during these religious holidays and ceremonies have the potential to strengthen familial ties, as well as enhance religious and national solidarity within society. However, from the perspective of spiritual values, some of these holidays may vary in significance. Official state holidays can be abolished with a change in the political regime or ideology. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, while several holidays from the Soviet era were abolished, some holidays and ceremonies continued to be observed. At the same time, new holidays with historical and ideological significance for the Azerbaijani people, such as “State Flag Day” and “November 8 – Victory Day”, which are celebrated at the national level, were established. It should be noted that holidays play an important role in shaping the national identity and self-awareness of the younger generation.

The propositions put forward in this paragraph are reflected in the following article⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ Nuruzadə, Ş.T. Azərbaycan ənənəvi bayramları xalqın milli-mənəvi dəyərləri sistemində // - Bakı: Azərbaycan arxeologiyası və etnoqrafiyası, - 2015. - № 2, - s. 209-214.

In the fourth paragraph of Chapter III, titled **“Ethnomusic, folklore and the mythical thinking of the people”** it is highlighted that ethnomusic, folklore, and mythology serve as cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation through various aspects of Azerbaijani spiritual values, such as family and domestic relations, religious and national holidays, and ethnopedagogy, among others. These three components of cultural heritage are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. The earliest source regarding the history of dances in Azerbaijan can be considered the petroglyphs on the Great Stone of Gobustan. It seems that the movements in these dances express the intense emotions of people, attempting to control their spirits. Ancient dances reflected the worldview and daily life of people. These dances have evolved from representations related to the stages of development in the ethnohistory of the people, connected to social and political changes. Like folk songs, dances are also a form of cultural heritage that embodies the values of the people, such as family life, heroism, hard work, patriotism, and religious beliefs. For example, dances such as “Cangi”, “Yalli”, “Gaytaghi”, “Gazaghi”, “Misri”, and “Cidir” belong to the genre of military dances that call for heroism and battles for the homeland. The rhythm of these dance melodies evokes a sense of determination for battle and uplifts the spirit. Thus, the folklore and mythology of the people are forms of their self-awareness as a socio-ethnic entity. Internal narrative syncretism is also characteristic of folklore and mythology. National music has developed based on the moral and spiritual values and rich traditions formed throughout history. Traditional culture, especially its component, national music, serves as the carrier of the people's cultural identity, cultural codes, and more precisely, their memory. It is natural that the music and dance cultures, folklore, and mythology of the peoples historically living in Azerbaijan share common elements. The similarities and common features in rhythm, content, and song traditions are most clearly evident among the Muslim peoples. Centuries of close neighborly relations among the peoples of Azerbaijan have led to the convergence of ethnic and cultural traditions across the country. In many cases, the values of one people are appropriated by another neighboring people. For example, the assertion by Armenians that

the folk song “Sari Gelin” (meaning “The Yellow Bride” - is a famous Azerbaijani folk song, often performed at weddings and other cultural events. The song typically expresses themes of love and separation) is their own can be cited as an example. Even Azerbaijani composer songs, such as “Maktab illari” (School Years), are translated into Armenian and appropriated as their own. The folklore tradition of rituals and ceremonies is closely connected with everyday household culture. Household songs, ritual prayers, and epic, historical, love, labor, and humorous songs, as well as children's folklore, preserve the nation's ethnohistory, family relationships, religious beliefs, historical events, and, most importantly, its historically formed worldview and inner world. This explains their place in the system of the people's spiritual values. According to ancient mythological beliefs, ethnomusic and dance are connected with the other world, the realm of spirits. In the art of the Ashik (folk poet-musicians), music, poetry, narration, dance, pantomime, and elements of theater art are combined. Ashiks play a significant role in the transmission of folklore, epics, and Ashik melodies from generation to generation, thereby preserving this art. Ashik songs reflect the worldview, characteristic features, bravery, patriotism, and cultural heritage such as epics and other values of the people. The heroic epics, widely spread in folklore, play a major role in promoting national sentiments, values of heroism, bravery, patriotism, and in maintaining national unity. Both legendary and historical heroic epics are closely connected with the nation's worldview and history.

The ideas presented in this paragraph are reflected in the following article⁴⁹.

The IV chapter is titled “**Spiritual Values in Traditional Material Culture**”. This chapter explores the manifestation of spiritual values in the fields of material culture, such as traditional national clothing, carpet products, and the nutrition system.

In the first paragraph of the chapter titled “**Traditional Clothing and Decorations**”, it is emphasized that clothing, as both a

⁴⁹ Nuruzade, Ş. Halkın milli manevi değeri olarak azerbaycanlıların geleneksel düğün töreni. Kùltür Evreni-Universe Culture-Мир Культуры / - Kars: 2018 / Sayı- 35. S. 64-77.

material and spiritual cultural expression, represents one of the key indicators of the ethnic identity of the Azerbaijani people. The traditional clothing complex employed by Azerbaijanis reflects various aspects, including the nation's worldview, national character, lifestyle, economic activities, historical interactions and mutual influences with other cultures, folk art, and the social strata and class distinctions within society. These elements collectively provide insight into the cultural and social dynamics of the Azerbaijani people. Thus, clothing, along with the decorative items that form an essential part of the clothing complex, should be viewed as a reflection of the stages of development of Azerbaijanis' ethnocultural heritage, as well as their ethnogenesis, within the framework of their contemporary spiritual value system. The discovery of belts and other adornments during archaeological excavations serves as evidence that the jewelry art and other forms of craftsmanship among Azerbaijanis have a long history, deeply rooted in the ancient periods, and have evolved as an integral part of the nation's cultural heritage. Clothing and adornments initially served the function of protecting individuals from the cold, while also reflecting their inner world, and cultural values. The patterns on clothing and the use of various stones can be considered an early version of primitive humans' efforts to protect themselves from evil forces, such as wearing animal bone amulets around their necks or applying tattoos to their bodies. The various embroidery, bells, and coins on traditional women's clothing and adornments indicate that they once served the protective function mentioned above. The embroidery and decorative elements on traditional Azerbaijani women's headgear also appear to have carried a protective function. This belief is also observed among other Turkic peoples. The bird motif in traditional Azerbaijani women's clothing and adornments can be linked to the bird cult. For example, the bird representations on Herat-style kerchiefs and the "bird-embroidered robe" mentioned in the *Kitabi-Dede Korkud* epic were intended to protect the woman or warrior wearing them from evil forces. In ancient cultures, the symbolic function of clothing in mythological thinking reflects the worldview and belief systems of those societies. This approach allows us to assert that the decorations and ornaments on traditional clothing

carry semantic meaning. The deep historical roots of traditional clothing culture and its close connection with the ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani people are also supported by toponyms found in historical Azerbaijani territories. Prior to the spread of Islam, various patterns and decorative items were used on Azerbaijani headwear as protective symbols against evil forces. However, with the adoption of Islam, inscriptions related to the religion began appearing on men's hats, and various prayers were attached to the collars. For this purpose, women would also carry amulets inscribed with Quranic verses, and wealthy women, in particular, wore pendants known as "Guranqabi", which contained a small-sized Quran. As previously noted, clothing and adornments provide insight into the ethnocultural identity of the people. The traditional national costumes of Azerbaijanis in the 19th century did not differ significantly from those of earlier periods in terms of typology. Folk clothing can be classified into various categories, including everyday wear, ceremonial attire, garments related to the professional affiliation of different social groups, wedding and festive clothing, seasonal wear, and among others. In general, the reason Azerbaijani women, upon reaching a certain age, used fewer luxurious clothes and ornaments is closely related to national mentality, particularly the concept of modesty and propriety. Thus, clothing also serves as an indicator of the nation's national character. By the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the patterns and decorative elements on traditional garments had lost their original meaning. All these features now primarily reflect the people's refined taste and serve as markers of social and age-related distinctions. The headwear of Azerbaijanis is associated with values such as honor and chastity. For example, proverbs reflecting the people's attitude towards the hat include: "A hat that is lost from the head can never return", "If you don't have pants, look for a hat", "A pot cannot be without a lid, and a hero cannot be without a hat", "A girl belongs to the one with a hat, not to the one without it", and so on. As a result, the significance of traditional clothing in the cultural heritage of Azerbaijanis can be determined as follows: Azerbaijani clothing culture reflects both primitive beliefs and the influence of Islam. In traditional women's attire, ritualistic ornaments and decorative motifs on fabrics were

prevalent. Festive garments not only fulfilled an ethnic function but also served an aesthetic purpose. The selection of the clothing's form and color took into account the age and marital status of the woman, in accordance with the social norms and etiquette of Azerbaijani culture. As noted, national costumes continue to hold significant importance today as a rich source that reflects the ancient historical, cultural, and economic connections of Azerbaijanis. The names of Azerbaijani national costumes, as well as the fabrics and accessories used, are also found in the lexicons of other peoples. Another major event influencing Azerbaijani clothing culture was the 1813 Gulistan Treaty and the 1828 Turkmenchay Treaty, which divided Azerbaijani territories between Iran and Russia. In the 19th century, the rapid development of capitalism in Azerbaijan, accompanied by the rise of new social classes—such as the bourgeoisie and proletariat—also influenced the clothing culture. However, European-style clothing coexisted with traditional national attire for a long time and did not completely replace it. The new style of clothing was mostly adopted by the bourgeoisie, intellectuals, and high-ranking merchants in the cities, while the common people preferred traditional attire. In the early years of Soviet rule, traditional clothing was criticized as a symbol of “backwardness” and as “bourgeois” clothing. On the other hand, the demands of industrial production required changes in clothing, particularly urban attire. In the modern era, traditional folk clothing has become a symbol of folklore. At the same time, during various national celebrations, particularly the Novruz holiday, folk groups showcase national costumes. Although modern people no longer wear traditional clothing in their daily lives, it remains valuable as it reflects the history of the people and constitutes an essential element of their cultural heritage.

The approach presented in this paragraph is reflected in the following article⁵⁰.

In the second paragraph of Chapter IV, titled **“Carpet Products in the Worldview of Azerbaijanis”** it is emphasized that,

⁵⁰ Nuruzadə, Ş. Milli geyimlər xalqın etnomədəni irsi kimi (Naxçıvan və Azərbaycanın digər bölgələrinin materialları əsasında) // - Naxçıvan: Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyası Naxçıvan Bölməsinin Elmi əsərləri, - 2022. № 1, – s. 114-119.

despite the processes of globalization in the contemporary era, carpet craftsmanship continues to occupy a significant position in the domestic life of Azerbaijanis, particularly within their system of national and spiritual values. The spiritual significance of carpets and carpet products for Azerbaijanis is primarily rooted in their status as part of the cultural heritage of the nation. Each carpet weaver regards the carpets they create as unique works of art. For Azerbaijanis, carpets serve not only as material possessions but also as objects of aesthetic value. When a woman marries, carpets, kilims, and other carpet products (depending on the number of rooms) hold a prominent place in her dowry. In rural areas, it was customary for girls to weave their own dowry carpets. The act of including a handwoven carpet in the dowry holds considerable spiritual significance, both for the bride herself and for her future family, particularly her offspring. The widespread presence of carpet weaving in the daily life and household of the people has also given rise to a variety of beliefs, rituals, customs, as well as games and recreational activities associated with this craft. The tradition of gifting carpets to special guests persists to this day. When guests arrive, the home is decorated with carpets. This reflects Azerbaijani family relationships and hospitality customs. Azerbaijanis do not walk on carpets with shoes. This attitude toward carpets is also maintained among other Turkic peoples, such as Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Uzbeks. There are several reasons for this practice: carpets are the result of the painstaking and long-lasting labor of their weavers; and because they are made of wool and silk, walking barefoot on them is beneficial for one's health. The motifs found on carpets, as well as in archaeological materials, mythology, and symbols passed down through generations, demonstrate that carpets are an integral part of Azerbaijani history and ethnoculture. The ornaments commonly found on Azerbaijani carpets can also be observed in the carpets of other Turkic peoples, as well as in the carpet designs of ancient peoples who lived in the same regions as the Turks. For example, the ornamentation elements on the wedding chest (sendek – in Buryat) and carpets of the Buryats are identical to those found on the carpets of the Kyrgyz and other Turkic peoples. .E. Petri classifies these ornamental motifs into three groups: 1. “Sun and

Moon”, 2. “Ram's Horn”, and 3. “Geometric Patterns”⁵¹. It should be noted that these ornaments form the semantic foundation of Azerbaijani carpets as well as the carpets and other material culture artifacts of other Turkic peoples. Azerbaijani folktales also confirm that the beliefs associated with these depictions are a product of the mythical thinking of the Azerbaijani people. In the modern era, several efforts are being made at the state level to preserve carpet weaving. To regulate the relationships arising from the preservation, study, promotion, and development of Azerbaijani carpets handwoven by folk artisans, craftsmen, and artists, the “Law on the Preservation and Development of Azerbaijani Carpet Art”⁵² was adopted in 2004.

The conclusion put forward in this paragraph is reflected in the following article⁵³.

In the third paragraph of Chapter IV, titled “**Food Culture as an Indicator of Ethnic Identity**”, it is highlighted that food reflects the vital aspects of a nation's culture and thus becomes a carrier of information. Daily and festive meals, dishes and utensils, the role of the table as a symbolic space, and hospitality can all be characterized as elements of food culture in a broad sense. The nutrition system of the people should primarily be studied in relation to the general Turkic and Islamic food systems. The Azerbaijani nutrition system has deep historical roots, with its key characteristics closely tied to the broader development of the nation's ethnocultural identity. The functions of food and beverages within the human body are multifaceted. Primarily, food satisfies the biological needs of the individual. The diversity of traditional Azerbaijani cuisine and beverages is largely influenced by the variety of products cultivated across the country's distinct climatic zones. Additionally, the

⁵¹ Петри, Б.Е. Орнамент кудинских бурят // Сборник Музея Антропологии и Этнографии АН СССР. СПб: 1918, - 215-251 с., с. 228[электронный ресурс] https://www.uochnp.ru/file/4385/petri_b_e_ornament_kudinskih_buryat_spb_1918.pdf

⁵² Azərbaycan Respublikasının Mədəniyyət və Turizm qanunvericiliyi toplusu, I c. [2 cildə]. Bakı: Avrasiya Press, - 2011. – 522 - .s 224.

⁵³ Nuruzadə, Ş. Azərbaycanlıların məişətində xalça və xalça məmulatlarının yeri // Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyası Naxçıvan Bölməsinin “Xəbər”i, İctimai və humanitar elmlər seriyası, - 2017. № 3, Cild 13, - s. 161-168.

nutrition system plays a crucial role in facilitating social interaction among individuals. Gathering around a table for a meal, for various reasons, represents one of the most significant forms of social engagement.

The act of eating at any ceremonial table also serves to strengthen the symbolic significance of social interaction. Azerbaijanis approach food as a divine blessing, abundance, and “gismet” (fate). In general, food is of great importance as it is essential for human survival. Over time, this necessity has led to the performance of various religious rituals aimed at ensuring the availability and abundance of food. As a result, concepts surrounding the sanctity of certain vital food products, such as grains, bread, eggs, and others, as well as meals and beverages, have emerged. These concepts culminated in the creation of ritual dishes intended to honor and appease both gods and spirits. For example, Khidir Nabi’s roast, Khidir Nabi’s pie, and Khidir Nabi’s soup were prepared for the spirits. Among ceremonial dishes, “hedik” (Hedik is a sweet dish, primarily made from wheat, sugar, or other ingredients, and is especially prepared during ceremonies and holidays) and halva (halva is a traditional sweet dish, holds cultural significance, often prepared for special occasions, holidays, and religious ceremonies) hold a special place. In Azerbaijani food culture, the division of food according to age, gender, and social status reflects key aspects of the ethnocultural characteristics of the community. Concepts such as “the elder's share”, “the senior's portion”, “the younger's share”, and “the father's portion” stem from this distribution system. Such practices suggest that food allocation fulfills a symbolic role within the social structure, reinforcing notions of respect, hierarchy, and the differentiation of roles within familial and social settings. Thus, the meals prepared for both everyday and festive occasions in Azerbaijani households represent a rich source of the nation’s national and spiritual values, food culture, and hospitality traditions. For Azerbaijanis, food and beverages hold significance not only in fulfilling physiological nutritional needs but also as reflections of the cultural knowledge, skills, and experiences involved in their preparation. Festive dishes also serve as symbols of the people’s religious beliefs. For instance, sweets like “shekerbura,” “shorgogal,”

and “baklava,” served during the Novruz holiday, reflect the ancient astral beliefs of the people. In this context, food is a key indicator of ethnocultural heritage. From an ethnographic standpoint, the focus should not only be on the recipes and preparation methods but also on the ethnocultural essence and social function of food. Therefore, daily and ceremonial meals, as well as the names of dishes and drinks, should be regarded as carriers of collective memory and markers of the ethnocultural history of the community.

In Chapter V, titled “**Family and Domestic Relations in the System of Spiritual Values**”, internal family relationships, as well as wedding and funeral customs, are examined as carriers of the traditional spiritual values of the people. In the first section, titled “**Family Relationships**”, it is concluded that the family institution plays a crucial role in the preservation of Azerbaijani ethnocultural values to this day. Wedding and funeral traditions, etiquette rules, hospitality, ethnopedagogy, and similar values are passed down from generation to generation through family and domestic relations. The family also plays a significant role in the continuation of national foods and beverages. Each of these values embodies numerous aspects of the people's culture, including folklore, mythology, fairy tales, legends, folk games (especially children's games), and so on. Thus, the family serves as an institution where the historically formed customs, traditions, and worldview of the people are concentrated. In the early years of Soviet rule, the family policy pursued by the Soviet state in the field of legal and marital relations led to the collapse of the traditional patriarchal Azerbaijani family. However, despite the policies implemented by the Soviet government regarding the family, the Azerbaijani family preserved its traditional nature to a certain extent. For example, even during that period, Sharia law played an important role in Azerbaijani families, and every household had a Qur'an. The traditional family values of Azerbaijanis are based on the Caucasian factor, the Turkish factor, and the Islamic factor. In the modern Azerbaijani family, values characteristic of Turkic peoples prevail. The family values of Azerbaijanis reflect the characteristic features of their culture. These traditional values have developed based on historically established customs and traditions, religious beliefs, mentality, and household

practices. Within family relationships, particular importance is placed on respect for parents and grandparents. It is considered essential for younger family members to show respect towards elders, including parents, women, and the elderly. The stabilization of the institution of marriage and family, the restoration of high family values, and the prevention of future negative trends in family-marriage relations require the strengthening and promotion of national and moral values within ordinary and collective consciousness. Research allows us to conclude that the modern Azerbaijani family, while being influenced by various aspects of civilization, still retains to some extent its traditional character and system of traditional national and moral values. The conclusions drawn in this paragraph are reflected in the following article⁵⁴.

The second paragraph of Chapter V, titled **“Wedding Traditions”**, states that wedding ceremonies are among the values passed down through generations by the institution of the family. Due to their significance, wedding ceremonies constitute one of the relatively stable components of the nation’s traditional culture. These ceremonies preserve and reflect various cultural values. The formation of wedding traditions should be examined within the broader context of Turkic and Islamic culture. At the same time, the roots of these traditions extend back to the pre-Islamic period. In modern times, the pre-Islamic beliefs present in wedding rituals have evolved into cultural traditions unique to the people. Frequently, these customs are carried out without individuals fully understanding their original meanings, serving instead as symbols of heritage. Thus, wedding ceremonies stand out among all other social events in the lives of the people due to their richness and depth. To determine the place of wedding ceremonies within the system of Azerbaijani national and spiritual values, it is essential to highlight both traditional wedding customs and the transformations they have undergone in the modern era. One of the Islamic values preserved in the wedding ceremony is the religious marriage contract (kabin), which is conducted before the wedding. Two or three days before the

⁵⁴ Nuruzade, Ş. Azərbaycanlıların geleneksel aile degerleri ve çağdaş zorluları // - Ankara: II. Uluslararası insan hakları sempozyumu. Ailenin korunması hakkı, - 2019 / april 29-30 2019. – s. 614-634.

wedding, the bride's "*jehiz*" (dowry) is brought to the groom's house by her brothers, uncles, aunts, and other close relatives. The groom's mother gives the bride's brother a gift of money (namar) as a token of goodwill and sweetness. The bride's dowry is adorned with red ribbons, reflecting pre-Islamic beliefs.

This practice, known as "*shahbezeme*", was part of the wedding rituals of the ancient Oghuz Turks. It symbolizes the beginning of a new life for the young couple, who must fulfill their duties in continuing life by bearing children and raising them according to the traditions and values of the people. This highlights the persistence of both Islamic and pre-Islamic beliefs in Azerbaijani wedding customs.

The performance of national music and dances, which are part of the Azerbaijani people's spiritual and cultural values, plays a significant role in their preservation and transmission from generation to generation, especially during wedding ceremonies. Wedding songs reflect the life of the people, capturing their inner world, desires, thoughts, joys in happy times, and sorrows in difficult times. Typically, traditional wedding celebrations include games and entertainments such as national wrestling, horse racing, and various folk games, all accompanied by special songs and mugham music. Traditional wedding festivities are complemented by instruments like the "*saz*", "*black zurna*", and "*qoshanaghara*", adding to the vibrant atmosphere of the celebration. Wedding ceremonies play a crucial role in the transmission of traditional values such as hospitality, unity, mythological thinking, the culture of celebration, and etiquette norms preserved during the ceremonies, contributing to the preservation of national identity across generations. Unfortunately, it should be noted that over time, the content and form of traditional wedding ceremonies have changed, with many of the folk games and entertainments once performed during these celebrations fading from daily life and surviving only as elements of folklore.

The conclusions drawn in this paragraph are reflected in the following article⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ Nuruzade, Ş. Halkın milli manevi değeri olarak azerbaycanlıların geleneksel düğün töreni. Kültür Evreni-Universe Culture-Мир Культуры / - Kars: Yıl-Year-Год 2018 / Sayı-Number 35. S. 64-77.

In the paragraph titled “**Funeral Customs**” of Chapter V, it is indicated that one of the relatively stable values within the family institution is funeral customs. Death and life are closely intertwined with time and eternity, the present life, the future, the past, fate, and memory. These concepts form a crucial part of the worldview and cultural identity of the people, and funeral rituals serve as a means of expressing and preserving these beliefs. People have sought answers to these questions in religion, mythology, and conceptions of life and the afterlife, and continue to search for them. In mourning customs, the concepts of “*death*” and “*life*” hold a special place in the worldview of Azerbaijanis. In Islam, there is a belief that those who do good deeds in this world will be resurrected after death. Beliefs related to death, as well as the rituals performed during mourning ceremonies, undoubtedly stem from the desire to understand “*death*” and “*what happens after death*”, as well as from fear or some form of belief—such as “*faith in the afterlife*”, “*the forgiveness of the deceased's sins before God*”, and “*bringing comfort to the soul of the deceased*, etc.

The rituals carried out during burial, such as the recitation of prayers, the sprinkling of “gulab” (rosewater) on the grave after interment, the offering of “halva” to mourners, and the sprinkling of rosewater on their hands, are intended to beseech God for the forgiveness of the deceased's sins in the “*afterlife*”. These practices reflect a deep belief in the spiritual significance of the afterlife and the desire to ensure the peace of the departed's soul. Through these acts, the living seek divine mercy for the deceased, expressing the interconnectedness of life, death, and the afterlife in Azerbaijani cultural and religious traditions. Thus, in the system of Azerbaijani national and spiritual values, beliefs related to death, mourning, and burial hold a prominent place. The mourning and burial customs embody the people's worldview, mythology, traditions, religious beliefs, etiquette norms, as well as national character and other core values.

The conclusions drawn in this paragraph are reflected in the following article⁵⁶.

⁵⁶ Nuruzadə, Ş. Azərbaycanlıların yas adətləri ilə bağlı bəzi inancları mənəvi dəyərlər sistemində.// - Bakı: Milli Azərbaycan Tarix Muzeyi, - 2018. s. 252-262.

The investigation of the ethnographic characteristics of the issue of Azerbaijani spiritual values in the **Conclusion** section allows for the following conclusions:

- Firstly, based on various theoretical approaches, it should be noted that national-spiritual values manifest in both the material and spiritual culture of the people, while also influencing their formation. National-spiritual values represent the national spirit and identity of the people. The ethnographic study of spiritual values requires an approach that takes into account the factors influencing the formation of the worldview of the people, their ethnocultural history, political processes, social institutions, and both material and spiritual culture, incorporating philosophical, ethnopedagogical, religious, and other perspectives;
- As proponents of cultural relativism argued, each nation, as a whole system, creates its own unique culture and value system. They believed that cultures should not be evaluated according to universal criteria, but rather within the framework of their own internal context. According to this approach, each culture develops based on its own history, geography, and social conditions, and this cultural diversity contributes to the richness of human society;
- The Karabakh wars allowed us to observe the process of recognizing national heroes, tales reflecting bravery, songs, dances, and other such moral values. Historical-comparative analysis, cross-cultural, and observational methods led to the conclusion that in the difficult times of the nation, traditional national values manifest with renewed strength and give impetus to the strengthening of national unity;
- The study of traditional spiritual culture in terms of national and spiritual values allows for the conclusion that religious and Sharia norms, social institutions, holidays and ceremonies, folk music, folklore, and the mythical thinking of the people play an important role in the system of spiritual values. These elements carry a range of values themselves and act as intermediaries in transmitting them from generation to generation. Azerbaijanis have historically held unique religious values, and although they may not always perform daily religious rituals, every Azerbaijani considers

- themselves a Muslim, with religious values forming the core of their spirituality;
- The study of the ethnopsychological portrait of Azerbaijanis allows for the identification of the mechanisms through which the norms characteristic of them have been formed as values. Mythology, national music, fairy tales and legends, proverbs, customary and Sharia norms, national etiquette rules, empirical knowledge, behavioral norms in family-marriage relationships, customs and traditions, holidays, and ceremonies offer insight into the ethnopportrait of the people and their value priorities;
 - As a result of the challenges of the modern era, many religious holidays and ceremonies have been forgotten. On the other hand, a number of processes have increased interest in national and religious holidays and ceremonies, even leading to the creation of new ones. Ethnological research shows that any holiday or ceremony arising from a significant historical event for the people can acquire the status of a spiritual value;
 - In the system of Azerbaijani spiritual values, cultural heritage—particularly ethnomusic, folklore, and mythology—reflects a number of values, primarily national character and worldview. Folk music and folklore serve as valuable sources for studying the ethnogenesis and ethnocultural history of the people. Through them, we can trace the evolution of the nation's customs, religious beliefs, and philosophical views;
 - Dances and folk music rhythms serve as sources reflecting the people's values, such as heroism and battle spirit, aesthetic taste, agricultural life, religious beliefs, and more. The study of folklore and mythology from a values perspective can help prevent the appropriation of certain aspects of Azerbaijani cultural heritage by other nations and the distortion of its history. Unfortunately, many examples of our folklore have fallen outside the interest of the younger generation in the modern era. This has been influenced by Soviet national policies, as well as the processes of European integration and globalization in the contemporary period;
 - The study of traditional material culture from the perspective of spiritual values leads to the conclusion that traditional clothing and ornaments, carpet products, and the food system are rich

- sources of information about the people's worldview, religious beliefs, the country's natural environment, historical socio-economic connections, and foundational values. They serve as a cultural heritage that reflects the people's high taste and the existence of developed craftsmanship and weaving arts. Through the forms of material culture examples, the semantics of decorations and patterns, we can gain insight into primitive religious beliefs, goddess worship, Islam, ancestral ties, natural and geographical conditions, cultural and political connections with neighboring nations, agricultural life, aesthetic and cultural tastes, and more;
- The transformation in this domain can be distinctly traced under the influence of contemporary economic and political dynamics. The emergence of new values corresponding to each historical period, shaped by political events, and the subsequent elevation of specific elements of attire into symbols of spiritual significance, underscore this process. For instance, following the Karabakh conflict, the Azerbaijani military uniform and the Khari Bulbul flower were elevated to the status of symbols representing the nation's victory. This exemplifies the creation of new national and spiritual values within the context of socio-political change;
 - To determine the place of the food system within the framework of national and spiritual values, an examination of traditional foods and drinks, ceremonial dishes, and table culture from the perspective of values allows for the creation of an understanding of the national character, taste and aesthetic preferences, religious beliefs, empirical knowledge, historical-cultural connections, nature, and other aspects of the people;
 - The research shows that examining the names of foods and beverages in relation to their origins and, in some cases, their connection to religious beliefs could offer solid evidence to counter the claim by some neighboring countries that these foods are part of their national cuisine;
 - The examination of family and household relationships from the perspective of values leads to the conclusion that the family is a social institution that both produces and consumes values. In wedding and funeral ceremonies, intra-family relationships,

- religious beliefs, empirical knowledge, ancestral connections, folklore, mythology, and traditions are enacted, reflecting the national identity of the people;
- The national policy of the Soviet government led to certain changes in traditional Azerbaijani family values. Research shows that when traditional values are under threat, people resist in order to preserve their customs and traditions. The changes observed in modern family relationships, as well as in funeral and wedding customs, are linked to global processes. The traditional Azerbaijani family continues to resist these changes. This suggests that when national identity is threatened, there is a reaction to defend “one's own culture”;
 - Thus, the system of Azerbaijani spiritual values has historically been shaped under the influence of worldview, socio-political processes, and other factors. For example, symbols like the Khari Bulbul and Buta, the pomegranate, Shabake (is a decorative motif found in folk art, particularly in carpets and other cultural artifacts, consisting of symmetric and interconnected lines, symbolizing connection and unity), and characters from folk tales and narratives, as well as from Üzeyir Hacıbəyov's operas, are commonly reflected in tea and dining sets, serving as emblems that signify the nation's historical and cultural identity;
 - In order to safeguard our material and spiritual culture and prevent the distortion of its history, it is crucial to refer to archaeological materials in addition to historical-ethnographic sources. In the absence of written or oral sources, anthropological research should be conducted. The preservation of spiritual values is essential for meeting the natural need to maintain the continuity of the people's ethnohistory and ancestral connections;
 - The research concluded that moral values can undergo transformation and new values can emerge under the influence of various factors, such as religious beliefs, economic-political processes, and others, throughout different periods;
 - However, despite this, moral values withstand the test of time, becoming strengthened within the value system of the people and transforming into its core values. Despite the influence of historical processes, certain core values, such as the worldview of

the people, ethnic characteristics, and family relations, have largely retained their traditional nature

In the same way, we find it important to present the following practical recommendations:

- First and foremost, a legal and normative framework for the preservation of national and spiritual heritage should be established;
- The introduction of relevant subjects in education and the organization of holiday festivals and conferences should be planned;
- Ensuring the participation of the young generation, the future of the nation, in the holiday celebrations organized in the regions on special holiday days can play an important role in educating them based on national and spiritual values;
- Considering that most information is currently transmitted through the internet and mass media, it would be purposeful to prioritize programs that promote family values, which embody the positive aspects of tradition and modernity, playing a significant role in preserving cultural heritage, particularly national and spiritual values;
- The publication of scientific and popular books reflecting the history and significance of national-spiritual values can contribute to the expansion and promotion of knowledge about these values;
- Multidisciplinary Research: Studies exploring the roots and evolution of national-spiritual values should be encouraged through the combined efforts of ethnography, history, archaeology, and anthropology.
- Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage: National-spiritual values, such as traditional foods, ornaments, and crafts, should be meticulously documented and promoted to preserve their significance. This includes creating archives, organizing exhibitions, and integrating these elements into cultural education programs to ensure their transmission to future generations.

The main content of the dissertation is presented by the author in the following works:

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