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They are all waqfs belonging to the Sufi sheikhs. The new political sects are coming up against representatives of traditional Islam, which is giving rise to opposition between them. Recently, as the result of successful propaganda, the representatives of regional Islam and Sufism have gained a much stronger stand. The interest in so-called destructive sects has slackened off somewhat. The representatives of traditional Islam and Sufism are in favor of legalizing and democratizing society, against war and violence, against a split in society, and in favor of unity of faith and the nation.

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## GLOBALIZATION: SOCIOPHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF ITS IMPACT ON THE YOUTH OF AZERBAIJAN

### A b s t r a c t

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**T**he author analyzes the impact of the sociocultural changes that have taken place in the republic in the last few decades and concludes that the axiological landmarks of the younger generation are extremely important for the country's successful integration into the globalized world and for balancing the negative effects of this process.

### I n t r o d u c t i o n

The fast pace of technological advances in the information and communication spheres, which play an important role in molding a single political, economic, and sociocultural expanse, has already drawn the youth into the world-changing processes. More than that—by meeting the challenge of technological revolution the youth not only acquires an important role to play in economic life but also changes the descriptions of its civilizational and sociocultural context.

It should be said that the impact of globalization on the youth is not always positive, which in the final analysis, makes the entire society vulnerable in the face of global changes. Indeed, the social meta-technologies the global elite employs to manipulate people's minds, interests, and wishes contribute to neither domestic, nor regional, nor global stability. The widening social and civilizational gaps, mounting disillusionment with the modernization processes in traditional societies, and the crisis in the international legal system have already exacerbated social contradictions.

This is especially evident in transition societies, which means that the time has come for in-depth investigations of the globalization impact on the development of the educational system, employment potential, and the physical and mental health of the rising generation and youth subculture in Azerbaijan.

## Transformation of the Educational System

Education, a very important “human potential” component, is also one of the key factors of present-day states’ power and might. The state and civil society are both responsible for providing education to the rising generation irrespective of sex, race, ethnic origins, social and economic status, physical health, and place of residence. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 sets forth free and compulsory education for all as one of the fundamental human rights. The 1990 World Conference on Education for All held in Thailand universalized primary education as one of the aims to be achieved by 2000. Ten years later, in Dakar (Senegal), the forum confirmed its resolution: the states undertook the task of resolving the primary education problem by 2015 as one of the eight U.N. Millennium Development Goals. In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg pointed out that education was one of the lynchpins of sustainable development, environmental protection, and health services.

Today, globalization is opening up new vistas: there are virtual educational models, global information bases, distance learning, etc. Those educational systems responsible for personality development that remain connected to local systems are doomed—the systems that keep pace with the globalization challenges are coming to the fore. In cyber space, education is open, continuous, and distanced.

Globalization decentralizes education, which makes educational establishments and their private sponsors, rather than the state, responsible for the teaching methods and educational programs. Those who give money tend to promote their own interests; they insist on a much shorter time of accumulation of intellectual potential and expect immediate practical results. In Azerbaijan, some of the higher educational establishments in the oil and gas sector, the National Oil Academy of Azerbaijan among them, receive financial and technological support from commercial companies in exchange for their graduates. The best students and post-graduate students receive personal stipends and grants from private companies at home and foreign funds.

Zigmund Baumann, who in his *The Individualized Society* analyzed the changes in the educational sphere, also explained the academic institution’s weakened impact on the educational system. First, the universities lost their monopoly on shaping value orientations and criteria of competence and professionalism. Second, the ongoing technological progress limits the lifespan of acquired skills. In these conditions, writes the author, it is much more attractive (and much more preferable) to be trained by employers at the workplace and to acquire the necessary professional skills in a specific and narrow type of activity, as well as at flexible training courses and with the help of rapidly readjusting self-training materials that reach the market bypassing the universities, than to complete a university course, which promises nothing and cannot guarantee life employment.<sup>1</sup>

Late in the last century, narrow specialists were preferred to those with wider and less specialized knowledge; today, globalization requires even narrower specialization that does not require university education. This economically justified model cannot protect the working masses against market risks. Another author writes: “Premature specialization and professional activity that begin too

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<sup>1</sup> See: Z. Baumann, *Individualizirovannoe obshchestvo*, Transl. from the English, ed. by V.L. Inozemtsev, Logos Publishers, Moscow, 2005, p. 165.

early cut down the time needed for intellectual maturing in favor of consumption of knowledge as a productive process. Society runs the risk of losing its intellectual potential and narrowing down the long-term reserves of its development.”<sup>2</sup>

An open market undermines the pillars of the unified system of education as one of the social linchpins that ensures society’s moral health, social integrity, and prosperity. It is very important, therefore, to shift some of the educational functions to the social and economic spheres and to organize a system of continuous education and re-education to keep up with information revolution.

A. Panarin has also written that in these conditions the pace of economic development directly depends on the number of young people in society. To ensure social progress, the time spent on education should always be longer than the time spent at work, while time for leisure should be longer than the time needed for productive work.<sup>3</sup>

Since today skills and knowledge become quickly outdated, education should concentrate on independent studies. The educational level of young workers and higher school graduates is determined by the level of their professional knowledge, communicative competence, urge to upgrade professional skills, and ability to adequately assess situations and to think.

Azerbaijan, which is gradually adjusting its laws to the Bologna process (which it joined on 19 May, 2005 at the 4th Conference of the Ministers of the Bologna Process member states in Bergen, Norway) is moving toward the new educational system. It is expected that in the future the country and its leaders will ensure freedom of movement for students and teachers and introduce academic bachelor and master’s degrees in all fields of knowledge (these obligations should be fulfilled by 2010).

Today Azerbaijan is part of the international educational expanse, which means that its young citizens can study in Europe, America, China, and elsewhere; there is a State Program of Educating the Azeri Youth in Foreign Countries in 2007-2015. According to the Ministry of Education, in 2007 over 3 thousand Azeri citizens study abroad; in 2006, 560 Azeri students studied in Turkey on budget money; according to expert assessments there were over 1 thousand of them.<sup>4</sup>

Today, when universities are growing more independent, while the state withdraws part of its financial support from education, the relatively low-paid majority is deprived of access to education. The constantly growing education costs and the melting away of the few supported places in higher educational establishments limit the chances of young people from less affluent families to receive higher education. Unable to continue their studies at alternative professional or academic structures they have little chance of realizing their potential. This cannot but cripple the country’s intellectual resource.

Those living in the capital have access to better education than those living in the regions, which interferes with balanced regional policy and drives the youth away from the countryside, thus undermining the economic and political reforms now underway. This has already caused social splits that slow down the process of democratization and development of civil society.

## Labor Migration and the Youth

Brain drain is one of the curses of the countries with transition economies (Azerbaijan is one of them). It damages their intellectual and economic development and widens the gap between the rich

<sup>2</sup> A.S. Panarin, *Strategicheskaya nestabil’nost v XXI veke*, Eksmo, Algoritm, Moscow, 2004, p. 495.

<sup>3</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 491-493.

<sup>4</sup> See: A. Vlasov, Yu. Filippov, “Sistema vysshego obrazovaniya v Azerbaidzhane,” *Eurasian Home—analytical resource*, available at [<http://www.eurasianhome.org/xml/t/print.xml?lang=en&nic=expert&pid=431>].

and the poor. Globalization has radically decreased the need for qualified physical labor: the transnational corporations prefer to use cheap labor from the underdeveloped and developing countries. What is expanding is the services sphere which does not need high qualifications and which looks attractive to young people from poor families.

In the last decade, however, the share of unemployed youth (between 14 and 25) across the world has grown by 26.8 percent; the highest level was registered in the Middle East and North Africa (25.6 percent); they are followed by sub-Saharan Africa (21 percent), the countries of transition economies (18.6 percent), the Latin American and Caribbean countries (16.6 percent), Southeast Asia (16.4 percent), and South Asia (7 percent). The share of youth unemployment dropped in some of the economically developed countries from 15.4 percent in 1993 to 13.4 percent in 2003. These figures explain high migration rates. In 2002, there were 175 million international migrants, 15 percent (26 million) of whom were young people.

The size of the younger generation is outstripping the states' employment capacity. While in the last decade the total number of the young people all over the world increased by 10.5 percent (to reach a figure of 1.1 billion in 2003), employment among them over the same period increased by 0.2 percent (526 million new jobs). This gap can be only partly explained by the young people's desire to continue their education.<sup>5</sup>

In Azerbaijan unemployment is aggravated by the highly segmented labor market, the result of several factors (low wages, the impossibly wide gap between the oil and other economic sectors, the practically non-existing social insurance, and concentration of a large part of country's population in the capital). For these reasons young Azeris who failed to find employment at home move elsewhere in search of employment, mainly to the near abroad (Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan). Graduates of foreign universities stand a better chance at home, but the prospects are not tempting enough. According to a sociological poll of June 2007 conducted within the FAR Center project with the support of the U.S.A. National Endowment for Democracy, 50 percent of Azeri citizens between 18 and 30 who studied abroad are prepared to leave their country in search of a better life either permanently (16 percent) or at least for some time (34 percent).<sup>6</sup>

Even those who have no skills and poor command of foreign languages are undaunted by the hardships of living in a foreign country, despite the fact that "most migrants are either employed by uncompetitive, from the viewpoint of the new global realities, spheres or at the lowest level of serving the global elite."<sup>7</sup>

According to N. Vishnevskaya, "a workforce which is the least mobile production factor carries the heaviest burden of adaptation to the economic changes. The technologically backward branches that need serious restructuring are the most sensitive to open borders."<sup>8</sup>

An outflow of qualified young specialists, especially of those educated abroad, undermines both the private and public economic sectors. It does not pay, however, to keep back those wishing to work abroad. In his *In Defense of Globalization*, Jagdish Bhagwati wrote that in the absence of favorable working conditions, which does not provide the opportunity to communicate with specialists of various levels, the grudge borne by the ban on emigration. He goes on to search for different measures designed to compensate the negative impact of labor migration: wider involvement of diasporas in improving the everyday conditions of their compatriots working abroad; the Law on

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<sup>5</sup> See: *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, International Labor Office, Geneva, 2004, available at [<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/download/getyen.pdf>].

<sup>6</sup> The poll results were made public by Kh. Gajizade, who headed the project, at a press conference in the International Press Center of Baku on 3 August, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> *Naselenie i globalizatsia*, ed. by N.M. Rimashevskaya, V.F. Galetskiy, A.A. Ovsyannikova et al., Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 2002, p. 280.

<sup>8</sup> N.T. Vishnevskaya, "Rynok rabochey sily," in: *Mirovaia ekonomika: global'nye tendentsii za 100 let*, ed. by I.S. Korolev, Ekonomist Publishers, Moscow, 2003, p. 144.

Dual Citizenship; tax privileges for those who live or were educated abroad; new educational programs at home, etc.<sup>9</sup>

## The Information Society and Technogenic “Poisoning”

In their urgent desire to reach the international standards of quality and go beyond the limits of their basic education, young people are turning to information and communication technologies to develop their personal qualities and gain wider access to the labor market. On the other hand, digital entertainments are an extremely popular type of leisure. The FAR Center poll of June 2207 established that 37 percent of young people educated abroad described Internet communication and work that involves computers as their favorite leisure.

It should be said that the Internet is not merely a source of useful knowledge and skills; Internet users and those fond of computer games are often confronted with virtual violence. In his *High Tech/High Touch: Technology and Our Search for Meaning*, John Naisbitt of the United States identified six symptoms of “high-tech poisoning,” one of which is accepting violence as a norm of life.<sup>10</sup> He refers to what renowned psychologists Jane Healey and Prof. Stephen Cline wrote to reveal the role of TV and computer technologies in spreading violence among children. While the TV audience treats passively what it sees on the screen, computer games draw their audience into violence.<sup>11</sup>

Numerous experiments and observations carried out by American psychologists of Stanford University working under Albert Bandura concluded that violence on the TV screen caused strong aggressive impulses in the audience and that victims and their suffering merely intensified them.<sup>12</sup>

Digital equipment removes the young from the real world into a world of illusions in which they can satisfy some of their needs, such as independence and the feeling of being the “master of their own lives,” which is nothing but an illusion. Such people are unaware of the line beyond which their minds and attitudes toward reality change. Mikhail Deliagin from Russia offered the following comment: “In an information society people merely disseminate the stereotypes formed with their minimal involvement and carry out the decisions from which they were excluded. The fact that such people brim with self-importance and believe themselves to be myth-makers and ‘lords of the souls’ of billions of mediocrities, molders of opinion, and manipulators of human behavior merely throws their own insignificance into bolder relief.”<sup>13</sup>

Virtual reality breeds individualism, egotism, alienation, and—inevitably—psychological discomfort: virtual contacts cannot compensate for the lack of visual and tactile contacts. In search of a new lifestyle, teenagers willingly embrace the cultural images and myths typical of virtual reality. Over time, they become part of their real existence and, more often than not, negatively affect their spiritual and intellectual development.

Even if we push aside the physical damage computer and telecommunication technologies inflict on human health, the contemporary information society can hardly be described as healthy. Erich Fromm, brilliant thinker of the 20th century, used to say that a healthy society corresponded to objective, rather than imagined, requirements.

<sup>9</sup> See: J. Bhagwati, *V zashchity globalizatsii*, Transl. from the English, ed. by V.L. Inozemtsev, Ladomir Publishers, Moscow, 2005, pp. 289-290.

<sup>10</sup> See: J. Naisbit, *Vysokaia tekhnologia, glubokaia gumannost: Tekhnologia i nashi poiski smysla*, Transl. from the English, AST: Tranzitkniga, Moscow, 2005, pp. 24-27.

<sup>11</sup> See: *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>12</sup> See: Iu.I. Polishchuk, “O negativnom vliianii sredstv massovoy informatsii na psikhicheskoe zdorovie,” *Nezavisimiy psichiatricheskii zhurnal*, available at [<http://www.npar.ru/journal/2003/1/influence.php>].

<sup>13</sup> M.G. Deliagin, *Mirovoy krizis: Obshchaia teoria globalizatsii*, Infra-M, Moscow, 2003, p. 186.

So far the Internet had not become hugely popular in Azerbaijan: only 2 percent can be described as frequent users (the figure for 2003).<sup>14</sup> As of November 2007 there were only 6 computers per 100 of population. Only about 900,000 people (10.5 percent of the total population) use the Internet regularly.<sup>15</sup> Even though Internet providers offer cheaper services, regions with no business community or material well-being to speak of cannot even afford the cheaper services.

The global web, however, has already affected and continues to affect the teenager and youth environment. The forming sub-culture contains values previously absent from the Azeri culture—they were borrowed from abroad. There are no longer mechanisms of cultural education, the network of children and youth clubs shrank, which means that the state can no longer control the moral education process, the pillar of the younger generation's cultural and ethnic self-identification.

## Youth Values

The social environment, cultural exchange, and dialog help young people in their quest for psychological and cultural identity. If alienation and self-isolation triumph among young people (many of them unemployed or raised in the climate of intolerance), the very fabric of personal psychological and cultural identity will be destroyed.<sup>16</sup>

Today, the media, to a much greater extent than other factors, are responsible for young people's ideas about the world. In one of his books, Igor Panarin from Russia emphasized that the nation regards TV, which creates the illusion of involvement, as the most reliable source of information. "This creates a stable illusion of television's 'objectivity' and reliability. By superimposing his feelings on what he sees on the screen, the TV viewer involuntary takes visual information for the ultimate truth."<sup>17</sup>

Involvement in youth movements and organizations greatly affects young people's minds. Today, Ireli, founded in 2005, is the most active of the republican youth movements. As of September 2007, it united over 3,820 members; in the two years of its existence over 300 members have taken part in international conferences, training sessions, and attended youth camps.<sup>18</sup>

Some Western sociologists are convinced that adults should stay away from the spiritual and ethical development of the youth. This relates to schools and universities, among other factors. Melvin Delgado of the United States recommends that adults limit their involvement in youth development programs to let the young go on with decision-making unhampered by adult suggestions and influence. The American sociologist has written: "If the process is to work, youth must be completely in control of their own program. The adult roles throughout the programs are to act as mentor and facilitator, assisting the members during the allocation of funds and in the development of volunteer and community service projects. It is critical to have the adults oriented toward servant leadership, helping the young people realize their visions and work through the process, as opposed to having adults who are oriented toward finding fault, criticizing, and 'doing for' youth."<sup>19</sup>

This and similar attitudes disrupt the spiritual ties and continuity between generations, distort the traditional ideas about culture and religion, virtues and vices. Technological progress not only

<sup>14</sup> See: *Azerbaijan National Human Development Report 2003*, available at [[http://www.un-az.org/undp/nhdr2003/224\\_az.html](http://www.un-az.org/undp/nhdr2003/224_az.html)].

<sup>15</sup> From an interview by Deputy Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technologies I. Mamedov (see: Zerkalo, 24 November, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> See: R. Aslanova, *Globalization and Cultural Variety*, Elm Publishers, Baku, 2004, pp. 85-86 (in Azeri).

<sup>17</sup> I. Panarin, *Tekhnologia informatsionnoy voyny*, KCP+ Publishers, Moscow, 2003, pp. 237-238.

<sup>18</sup> See: *Euro Heber*, 4 September, 2007, available at [[http://www.euxeber.com/new/dispor\\_news0074.php](http://www.euxeber.com/new/dispor_news0074.php)] (in Azeri).

<sup>19</sup> See: M. Delgado, *New Frontiers for Youth Development in the Twenty-First Century: Revitalizing & Broadening Youth Development*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, p. 69.



changes the way of life but also widens the axiological and conceptual gap between the generations. The specific feature of the sociocultural shift allows us to identify two points of potential rupture: transition from the traditional to industrial societies and the emergence of consumer society with its distinctive values.<sup>20</sup>

I. Maliutin has written on this score: "The continued disintegration of public consciousness pushes young men toward inadequate values as their survival strategy amid spontaneous market development. Nobleness, magnanimity, fairness, and respect for the rights and honors of others are nearly forgotten. More than that, a large part of the younger generation does not associate its future with the future of its country. Individualism that has become the supreme value comes to the fore to suppress the moral norms and ethical principles of human society."<sup>21</sup>

In Azerbaijan, most of the younger generation is devoted to industrial values even though traditional culture and religious feelings are still respected, at least among some of the younger generation. The youth sub-cultures, a product of admiration of popular brands, pop stars, etc., are few and hardly tenacious, but they too play a great role in shaping ideas about the world in the minds of the rising generation and helping it formulate its life and civil positions. Consumerism inculcated by those who produce adverts and who pay for them promotes individualism; it undermines social ties and moral values, of which the traditional institution of family is the key one. The low income level of the larger part of society and the "elite" nature of some types of entertainment do not bridle the spread of individualism and utilitarianism; they even add to social tension and widens the income gap.

Drug addiction, non-traditional sexual behavior, and AIDS are all outcrops of the moral crisis in the youth environment. By February 2007, about 18 thousand drug addicts were registered at the Republican Narcological Dispensary; the majority of them (70 percent) being young people.<sup>22</sup> Experts believe that there are many more drug addicts in the country.

According to the Health Ministry of Azerbaijan, in the first nine months of 2007 there were 230 HIV patients; 52 of them (or 22.6 percent) were between 15 and 29. Between 1987 and 1 October, 2007, there were 1,187 registered HIV patients in Azerbaijan, the republic had already lost 189 people who died of AIDS.<sup>23</sup>

These facts and figures make cultural and spiritual survival as important as the country's political and economic security. The people should accept the national idea, which might serve as the driving force of social and cultural progress. Erich Fromm wrote in his *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* that to survive man not only needs a physical, but also favorable psychic environment. To function he should maintain a certain mental balance. If he stumbles across ideas that cast doubt on his axiological convictions, he responds to them as a threat to his vitally important interests. He rejects these ideas or tries to explain them in a rational way to clarify his rejection.<sup>24</sup>

Since the very first days of its independence, the nation has been trying to formulate a national idea; so far the academic and political communities have failed to agree on certain key issues. In her article, Rena Kadyrova wrote: "A kind of multicultural society in which a rich culture, the product of the concerted efforts of all the peoples of Azerbaijan, assumed the role of

<sup>20</sup> See: V.P. Ulanov, I.A. Petrulevich, "Tsennostnyy krizis i problemy sotsial'noy adaptatsii molodezhi Ingushetii. Molodezh' iuga Rossii: polozhenie, problemy, perspektivy," *Iuzhnorossiyskoe obozrenie TsSRIP IPPK RGU i ISPI RAN*, Issue 31, Rostov on Don, 2005, available at [[http://kavkazonline.ru/csrip/docs/pdfs/uro\\_31.pdf](http://kavkazonline.ru/csrip/docs/pdfs/uro_31.pdf)].

<sup>21</sup> I. Maliutin, "Molodezh' v sovremennom mire. O formirovaniy ee tsennostnykh orientatsiy," available at [[http://hronos.km.ru/text/2006/mal03\\_06.html](http://hronos.km.ru/text/2006/mal03_06.html)].

<sup>22</sup> See: *Kaspi* newspaper, 22 February, 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Interfax-Azerbaijan, 26 October, 2007, available at [[http://www.interfax.az/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=11649&Itemid=9](http://www.interfax.az/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=11649&Itemid=9)].

<sup>24</sup> See: E. Fromm, *Anatomia chelovechskoy destruktivnosti*, Transl. from the German by E. Teliatnikova, AST Publishers, Moscow, 2004, p. 269.

moderator.” At the same time, she is convinced that ethnic nationalism cannot serve as the cornerstone of the nation.<sup>25</sup>

“The Azeris molded their identity in the fire of struggle for survival and independence. Today, it has been enriched by the ‘political credo’ that can be described as the ‘Azeri credo.’ It has brought together ethnic solidarity, equality, and freedom for all members of society, as well as fairness. High educational and cultural potential, democracy, liberal economy, modernity, and integration with the West are its component parts.” The Azeri national identity is rooted in history, culture, and religion—the three components that make Azeri society and the individuality of its members absolutely unique.<sup>26</sup>

Ideology, on the other hand, might rest on the “elite” symbols and values that have nothing in common either with social reality or with the social development level. B. Erasov has investigated this possibility and concluded: “This approach does not reveal the true sources of such an ideology; it does not reveal the sources of its social value and its impact on the mass consciousness and behavior. In this case ideology is detached from its social basis to become a self-sufficient symbolic force independent of the social and economic factors.”<sup>27</sup>

A successful national idea is never a product of synthesis detached from political, social, economic, and cultural reality. It should take into account the nation’s natural social and spiritual requirements, the specifics of its cultural and historical development, the inertia of the economic and social transformations at different levels, and the geopolitical realia and prospects. Today, it is very important to assess the limits to growth and spread of the current political and axiological systems (liberalism, nationalism, monarchism, etc.), many of which have exhausted or nearly exhausted themselves.

## C o n c l u s i o n

The younger generation is developing amid the current economic reality, social processes, technological innovations, and alien cultural influences; most young people treat the state borders as absolutely transparent. Globalization allows the youth to study in America and Europe, to accumulate work experience in foreign companies, and to find the best possible application for their knowledge and abilities. At the same time, the state is still too weak to monitor the educational sphere; commercialized higher education keeps children from poorer families away from high-quality higher education, which is developing into an “elite phenomenon.”

Foreign cultures, the global web in the first place, negatively affect the rising generation’s moral and ethical ideas for the simple reason that the republic’s educational establishments are unable to arm its students with adequate axiological orientations. Young people’s “virtual dependence” alienates them from the traditional communication methods and cripples mental and even somatic health.

There is awareness that to combat this, the republic needs a healthy social environment conducive to the youth’s adequate intellectual, physical, cultural, and spiritual development. New approaches that involve students in the continuous education system and help them acquire social mobility are currently being tested. At the same time, young people should preserve their spiritual contact with the nation’s social and cultural heritage.

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<sup>25</sup> R. Kadyrova, “On Some Sociopsychological Conditions of the Development of National Identity of the Azeri Youth,” *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Vol. 1 (3), 2007, p. 90.

<sup>26</sup> See: R. Mekhtiev, *Na puti k demokratii: razmyshliia o nasledii*, Sherg-Gerb Publishers, Baku, 2007, pp. 609-610.

<sup>27</sup> B.S. Erasov, *Sotsial’no-kul’turnye traditsii i obshchestvennoe soznanie v razvivaiushchikhsia stranakh Azii i Afriki*, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1982, p. 101.

Recently spiritual education has come to the fore: the moral and ethical values that underlay the Azeri cultural tradition should be promoted among young people. Religious education is expected to maintain and promote the centuries-old tradition of mutual respect and ethnic and religious tolerance; much is being done to reveal the destructive nature of certain cults and religious extremist ideologies.

The cultural and ideological polarization of the Azeri youth adds urgency to these measures; in fact, it is next to impossible to avoid these and similar negative developments in a society moving toward democracy and open to a cultural dialog with the West and the East. Today, the youth identity is changing under the pressure of more frequent institutional, economic, and cultural contacts with the world. Under these conditions the organizations of civil society expected to neutralize the destructive nature of "extreme" manifestations of cultural and ideological expansion.

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