

Chapter 13

The Role of the Diaspora in Strengthening Azerbaijani–Russian Relations

Laman Garayeva

Baku Slavic University, Azerbaijan

ABSTRACT

Development of relations between Azerbaijanis around the world and assistance in the formation of diaspora organizations in foreign countries are priorities of the policy of the Azerbaijani government. It is noteworthy that one of the most powerful Azerbaijani diasporas is the diaspora in the territory of the Russian Federation. The Azerbaijanis, who were on the territory of a foreign state, tried to stay together, rallying to various groups, the most effective of which were “Ojag” and FNKA “AzerRos,” a youth organization AMOR All-Russian Azerbaijan Congress. The history of settlement and residence of Russians in Azerbaijan covers a period of more than 160 years. In order to preserve and develop the Russian language, culture, and traditions, as well as the languages and traditions of the peoples of the Russian Federation, Russian compatriots living in Azerbaijan created public associations. The most numerous of them are the Russian community, the Commonwealth, the Tatar Society of Tugan Tel, the Cossack Land of Azerbaijan, and others.

INTRODUCTION

At present, in addition to the long-established actors of international relations entering into traditional interstate relations, new participants in world processes are emerging. Diasporas are one of these new actors.

Diasporas have existed for many centuries, but only recently has interest in them increased significantly. The fact is that in the context of globalization, migration processes have a significant impact on the formation of the modern international system. The increase in the scale of migration and the simultaneous desire of immigrants to unite leads to a continuous increase in the number of diasporas in the world (Sorokina, 2010).

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The development of ties between Azerbaijanis from all over the world, helping to form diaspora organizations in foreign countries, and strengthening the ties of Azerbaijanis with their historic homeland is one of the priorities of the government of Azerbaijan.

It is noteworthy that the term diaspora was originally used only in relation to the Jewish community. Literally, it means “the totality of the nationality of the Jews who scattered (since the Babylonian captivity, 586 century BC) outside Palestine” (Soviet encyclopedic, 1979). However, over time, this concept began to be applied to other religious and ethnic groups living in a new area of their settlement in the position of a national-cultural minority (Mehdiyeva, 2010).

Today diasporas act as full-fledged and interested participants in modern social modernization, often influencing the system of interethnic relations. In this regard, the strengthening of the role of diasporas is determined by the state at the political and legal level, as evidenced by the Concept of the State National Policy of the Russian Federation and the Federal Law “On National and Cultural Autonomy” (June 1996) (Astavatsaturova, 2001).

However, this was not always the case. Until the early 1980s, scholars and politicians largely underestimated the significance of the diaspora phenomenon. The last years of the XX century and the beginning of the new century brought with them the activation of the factor of ethnicity and, accordingly, an increase in the socio-political, cultural and economic role of ethnic groups and ethno-national diasporas in the life of modern societies (Sheffe, 2014).

Scientists have realized that the ability of diasporas to influence the course of events in cultural, economic, social and political life is continually increasing. Of course, this also applies to the Azerbaijani diaspora in the Russian Federation, which plays a significant role in the development of bilateral cooperation between Russia and Azerbaijan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out on the basis of historical analysis, identifying the historical roots and the role of diasporas in the development of the Azerbaijan and Russian states. This method made it possible to identify an analogy in the activities of diaspora organizations. The comparative method of research was also of great importance, thanks to which it was possible, on the basis of examples, to determine the positive and negative elements. At the same time, it was possible to find effective ways to develop diaspora activities in both countries through a systematic study. The text was divided into parts, where the main questions were answered. At the end, the study was summarized and the results determined.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In bilateral interstate relations, the diaspora acts as a connecting link. The policy of the state of residence in relation to the diaspora can influence foreign policy decisions, and is also an indicator of the attitude towards the homeland of the diaspora. States can use the resource of the diaspora for the realization of national interests, for example, in establishing relations with foreign partners. In this case, the diaspora provides an economic, cultural and linguistic presence. The diaspora is directly involved in the life of the host society and has the opportunity to create a positive image of their homeland, the level of participa-

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