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Master's Thesis

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Can Nationalism Influence Democracy

– Analyzing the Impact of Azerbaijan Nationalism

Master's Thesis

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Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on 07/31/2024   Jingjing Xu

References

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the complex relationship between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan, focusing on the period from 2011 to 2017. Through a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, the study examines the roles of civil society, the government, and external actors in shaping democratic processes. Initial findings indicate that civic nationalism has not effectively promoted democratization in Azerbaijan, raising questions about the factors influencing its earlier successes in the early 1990s. The qualitative analysis of government rhetoric reveals that exclusive nationalism has significantly contributed to democratic decline, with the government's nationalist agenda having a greater impact during stable periods. Additionally, the influence of external actors such as Turkey, the United States, and the European Union is assessed, highlighting their limited capacity to alter Azerbaijan's democratic trajectory without robust interventions. The study's innovations lie in its differentiated analysis of nationalism's impact and its use of both quantitative and qualitative data to reduce subjective bias. However, limitations include the reliance on secondary data and the specific focus on Azerbaijan's unique political context. This thesis aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how nationalist sentiments can both support and undermine democratic development, offering insights into the dynamic interplay between nationalism and democracy.

Abstrakt

Tato práce zkoumá složitý vztah mezi nacionalismem a demokracií v Ázerbájdžánu se zaměřením na období od roku 2011 do roku 2017. Prostřednictvím smíšeného přístupu kombinujícího kvantitativní a kvalitativní analýzy zkoumá roli občanské společnosti, vlády a vnějších aktérů při utváření demokratických procesů. Prvotní zjištění naznačují, že občanský nacionalismus účinně nepodpořil demokratizaci v Ázerbájdžánu, což vyvolává otázky ohledně faktorů, které ovlivnily jeho dřívější úspěchy na počátku 90. let 20. století. Kvalitativní analýza vládní rétoriky ukazuje, že výlučný nacionalismus významně přispěl k úpadku demokracie, přičemž nacionalistická agenda vlády měla větší vliv ve stabilních obdobích. Kromě toho je hodnocen vliv vnějších aktérů, jako jsou Turecko, Spojené státy a Evropská unie, přičemž je zdůrazněna jejich omezená schopnost změnit demokratickou trajektorii Ázerbájdžánu bez razantních zásahů. Inovace studie spočívají v diferencované analýze vlivu nacionalismu a v použití kvantitativních i kvalitativních údajů, aby se snížila subjektivní zaujatost. Mezi omezení však patří spoléhání se na sekundární údaje a specifické zaměření na jedinečný politický kontext Ázerbájdžánu. Cílem této práce je poskytnout diferencované pochopení toho, jak mohou nacionalistické nálady podporovat i

podkopávat demokratický rozvoj, a nabídnout vhled do dynamické interakce mezi nacionalismem a demokracií.

Keywords

Nationalism, Democratization, Azerbaijan, Nationalism and Democracy Relationship, Civil Society Nationalism, Government-Leading Nationalism

Klíčová slova

Nacionalismus, Demokratizace, Ázerbájdžán, Vztah Nacionalismu a Demokracie, Nacionalismus Občanské Společnosti, Nacionalismus Pod Vedením Vlády

Název práce

Může Nacionalismus Ovlivnit Demokracii - Analýza Dopadu Ázerbájdžánského Nacionalismu

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Introduction

In recent years, the relationship between nationalism and democracy has emerged as a critical area of study in political science, particularly in countries with complex sociopolitical landscapes such as Azerbaijan. Nationalism, often characterized by a sense of shared identity and collective goals, can play a dual role in shaping democratic processes. While civic nationalism is generally perceived to foster democratic values by promoting inclusivity and political participation, the rise of xenophobic sentiments can undermine democratic principles by excluding certain groups and stifling dissent. Azerbaijan presents a compelling case study for examining these dynamics, given its unique historical, cultural, and geopolitical context.

Since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Azerbaijan has experienced fluctuating levels of democracy, marked by periods of liberalization and authoritarian regression. The early years of independence saw a brief but notable democratic transition influenced by civic nationalism. However, this progress was soon disrupted by internal and external challenges, including economic instability and the protracted conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. These issues contributed to a decline in public confidence in democratic governance and the rise of authoritarian leaders.

As demonstrated by the data, the democracy score for Azerbaijan has been in steady decline since 2013. Key indicators contributing to this decline include restrictions on political rights, suppression of civil liberties, and issues related to the rule of law. Specifically, the government has imposed severe limitations on opposition parties, hindered fair electoral processes, censored the media, and restricted the activities of civil society organizations. Additionally, the lack of judicial independence, pervasive corruption, and absence of accountability in governance have further eroded democratic norms.

This thesis seeks to explore the intricate relationship between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan by analyzing the influences of three key actors: civil society, the government, and external entities. Initial quantitative analysis indicates that civic nationalism has not effectively promoted democratization in Azerbaijan. This raises the question of why civic nationalism succeeded in the early 1990s but failed in subsequent decades. A transition to a qualitative analysis reveals that government nationalism, characterized by exclusionary rhetoric and policies, has played a significant role in this democratic decline. The evidence suggests that the more exclusive the government's nationalism, the lower the levels of democracy.

Furthermore, the dynamic interplay between civil society and government nationalism appears to be contingent on the stability of the state. During periods of instability, the

influence of civil society on democratization increases, as seen in the early 1990s. Conversely, in more stable periods, the government's power grows, and its nationalist agenda has a greater impact on democratic processes. For example, the economic and wartime crises of 1993 led to a decline in democratic confidence, paving the way for authoritarian rule.

The role of external actors, such as Turkey, the United States, and the European Union, also warrants examination. While these entities can influence Azerbaijan's internal dynamics, their impact is often mediated through their interactions with the government and civil society. Without strong and consistent measures, external actors have limited capacity to alter the democratic trajectory of the country.

The innovations of this study include the differentiated analysis of nationalism's impact through three distinct objects—civil society, government, and external others—rather than treating nationalism as a monolithic force. Additionally, by employing both quantitative data from public opinion surveys and democracy indices, and qualitative data from presidential speeches and government documents, the study reduces subjective bias and provides a more holistic understanding of the relationship between nationalism and democracy.

However, the study also faces certain limitations. The reliance on secondary data sources, the focus on a specific period (2011-2017), and the unique political context of Azerbaijan may limit the generalizability of the findings. Further research could benefit from a comparative approach involving multiple countries and extended time frames to validate the conclusions drawn here.

In conclusion, this thesis aims to provide a nuanced analysis of the complex interplay between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan. By examining the roles of civil society, the government, and external actors, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how nationalist sentiments can both support and undermine democratic development.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Theory of Nationalism

The study of nationalism has undergone significant evolution since the concept first gained prominence. Scholars trace the origins of nationalism to the Latin term "natio," which initially referred to a broad notion of tribes (Nairn & James, 2005). According to Gellner (1983, p.1), nationalism emerged as a political doctrine during the late 18th century, particularly with the French Revolution, advocating that "the political and the national unit should be congruent." This period marked the beginning of the idea that nations should self-govern and that political systems should protect a shared national

identity encompassing culture, ethnicity, language, religion, and history (Smith, 1979, p.13).

Subsequent research has explored how the definition of a nation has expanded with the Industrial Revolution and globalization. These developments have led to a more inclusive and varied understanding of nationalism, resulting in the identification of different forms. Scholars (Smith, 1991; Kohn, 1945) have classified nationalism into different forms, notably ethnic nationalism, which emphasizes shared heritage and cultural unity, and civic nationalism, which is based on shared political values and citizenship.

Furthermore, modern scholars have expanded on these foundational theories, examining how nationalism adapts to contemporary contexts. For instance, Anderson (2016) introduced the concept of "imagined communities," arguing that a nation is a socially constructed community, imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group. This perspective highlights the fluid and dynamic nature of national identities in the face of global interconnectedness. We will talk about more different modern nationalism in the following context.

1.1.1 Classical Dichotomy Theory

Ethnic nationalism, as the name suggests, is a type of nationalism that defines nationality by ethnicity. Ethnicity represents a sense of kinship, shared ancestry, common language, and a common faith (Muller, 2008). These characteristics existed long before the advent of nationhood. Due to the sense of self-determination right, some ethnicities tended to question the existing political boundaries and nations (Shrinkhal, 2021). They tried to unite people with similar ancestry across national borders, even by force. Germany and Japan in World War II are typical examples of ethnic nationalism (Söderman, 2023).

Civic nationalism, however, usually associated with culturally inclusive. It is based on the common political identity of citizens, on common rights, obligations and civic values, and is not affected by ethnic or cultural differences (Roshwald, 2015). It emphasizes territorial sovereignty. The United States is usually seen as representatives of civic nationalism because it has millions of migrants speaking the same language, English and Spanish.

The difference between ethnic and civic nationalism can be attributed to the order in which nations and ethnic groups emerged. For Kohn (1945), Great Britain, France and the United States represents the most ideal civic nationalism. In these countries, the state emerged before the nation. The ethnicity is established and guided by the state. Therefore, the interests of the state and the nation are the same. So on the surface, this kind of country is more inclusive. Whereas in the east countries, the emergence

of nations is earlier than the establishment of the country. They formed a country by annexing one and the other regions. Therefore, their ethnic boundaries do not overlap with national boundaries, and the various ethnic groups within the country are still full of conflicts. This is why ethnic nationalism is full of xenophobia and exclusive. This exclusive doctrine was shared by many scholars at the time (Hjerm, 1998), who claimed that civic nationalism was inclusive while ethnic nationalism was exclusive.

Maybe because the horror of WWII contrasts sharply with the growing strength and prosperity of the United States, scholars in the 20th century to agree with this dichotomy and to view civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism as contrasts. Perhaps because of fear and hatred of Hitler's behavior, various articles (Gellner, 1983, 1997; Ignatieff, 1994; Sugar, 1997, 1999) praised civic nationalism and criticized ethnic nationalism, or saying that civic nationalism was liberal while ethnic nationalism was violent and dictatorship (Ipperciel, 2007). Scholars have even divided this type of nationalism into different levels, representing the East and the West (JaskułOwski, 2010). East nationalism is described as characteristic of the early stages of a nation's development, motivated by self-abasement and solve problems only through the war. While West nationalism is characteristic of a more advanced stage of national development. They are confident, well-educated and seek collaboration based on mutual respect.

1.1.2 Modern Nationalism Theories

The prevalence of dichotomy in academic discussions of nationalism has gradually shifted since the 21st century. With globalization blurring national boundaries and fostering the emergence of diverse groups based on thoughts, spirits, and other factors, scholars have developed various new frameworks for classifying nationalism as a continuation of the dichotomy (Schulman, 2002; Larsen, 2017; Coakley, 2018). Murdiono and Wuryandani (2021) highlight that contemporary nationalism is multifaceted, incorporating liberation nationalism, cultural nationalism, ethnic nationalism, civic nationalism, and religious nationalism. They argue that people today must be loyal not only to their cultural heritage but also to the political frameworks of their nations.

Triandafyllidou (2020) introduced an analytical framework that examines how nations interact with diversity in the 21st century. She distinguishes between neo-tribal nationalism, which rejects diversity and seeks a unified national identity based on race, culture, or religion, and plural nationalism, which focuses on inclusiveness and respects differences among its members. Triandafyllidou emphasizes the importance of considering both "internal others," such as historical minorities or post-migration communities, and "external others," like regional political entities (e.g., the EU). She argues that interactions with these groups are crucial for understanding modern nationalism, as transnational social entities increasingly influence national dynamics.

Other scholars have questioned or sought to move beyond the traditional dichotomy of civic and ethnic nationalism (Brubaker, 1999; Kuzio, 2002; Tinsley, 2019; Cohen, 2022). Jaskułowski (2010) critiques Kohn's dichotomy, pointing out its limitations and errors when applied to real-world situations. He suggests that this classification system functions more as a system of metonymy, which may help people understand concepts based on experience but lacks practical applicability.

Tamir (2019) opposed the dichotomy of nationalism, believing that ethnicity and civicism cannot be completely distinguished in reality, and that they are two stages that every country will go through. He states that, in theory, ethnic nationalism is driven by emotions for primitive culture and ancestors, while civic nationalism is driven by rationality and universal principles of the same ideas and concepts. These two are indeed very different. However, in reality, it is difficult for us to completely distinguish which kind of nationalism a country or region has, because in many real cases they may have both worship of ancestral culture and understanding or recognition of other modern concepts. This phenomenon occurs because ethnic and civic nationalism is the order of the development process of a country or society. The author believes that homogeneity is the prerequisite for the establishment of a country, even in the United States, France and England. He called this stage as "banal nationalism". All countries are not open to diversity from the beginning, and even the most civic-minded countries, which are currently relatively open and tolerant societies, have racial, cultural and linguistic prejudices. Nation-building requires a certain degree of unity, and diversity only occurs after a country has developed and is able to accept other ideas.

Zhuravlev and Ishchenko (2020) refuted the dichotomy from the perspective of the exclusive nature of ethnic nationalism and the inclusive nature of civic nationalism. They admit that the civic and ethnic nationalism both exist, but they believe that "civic nationalism can be as exclusivist as ethnocultural nationalism". Trough the case study of Euromaidan in Ukraine, they proved that one can either be inclusive and exclusive. The participants from different regions and milieus claimed that they united Ukrainians according to the protests. However, they also said that they are different from those "Pro-Soviet" person in Donbass. This is a paradox which combine both civic and ethnic nationalism. So they proposed that the civic nationalism is more like a commitment to specific events, but not a stable principle, and even the civic nationalism can be exclusive.

There are also still some scholars tried to develop a new dimension for the traditional ethnic and civic nationalism. Lecours (2000) argues that these categories are too simple to capture the real-life complexities of how national identities form and evolve. He suggests that nationalism is not a fixed concept but rather something that changes over time, influenced by various historical and political factors. Instead of sticking to

the old categories, Lecours proposes looking at how nationalisms are shaped by their contexts, which allows for a more nuanced understanding. This perspective shows that ethnic and civic elements can coexist and influence each other within the same nation-state, making nationalism a more dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon.

In summary, the definitions of nationalism were keeping changing with different socio-political landscapes and globalization. While early theories distinguished sharply between ethnic and civic nationalism, contemporary analyses reveal a more complex interplay of inclusive and exclusive elements within national identities. As globalization continues to reshape national boundaries and identities, new forms of nationalism like neo-tribal and plural nationalism emerge. So we are going to use the characteristic of inclusiveness and exclusiveness as a measurement for nationalism and analyze its relationship with democracy in the following context.

1.1.3 Quantitative Nationalism

Since subjective evaluation of nationalism is inevitably biased, many scholars have adopted quantitative methods to measure it. One of the first quantitative studies of nationalism was conducted by Merritt. In his 1965 article, he used various indicators to analyze the process of "Americanization" of British colonists in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Merritt, 1965). By counting the frequency of nationalist-related language in randomly selected newspapers, books, and political documents, he found that over time, the use of symbols of American common identity, such as "Americans", "continent" or "country" and "American colonies" increased significantly, and has never been less than fifty percent since 1775. This article is the first and one of the few to conduct a data analysis on nationalism. It shows us the feasibility and replicability of quantifying nationalism. He counted the frequency of different keywords that appear in the magazine and used this as a proxy for the identity of British Americans. However, this does not take into account that some part of the articles may deny or criticize them, but do not agree on the symbols. What's more, he only considered the changes in nationalism in newspapers and magazines. However, with the development of the Internet, there are too many channels for information dissemination, and the analysis of newspapers and magazines alone is limited.

Talking about Internet, Wibowo (2021) developed a new modern quantification method. Using the software Node XL, they captured hashtags on Twitter to analyze the development of Cyber-Nationalism in Indonesia and Malasia. However, the data and indicator in this article is too simplistic. The authors determined whether a person is nationalist just by whether the accounts used the hashtag with the name of their country. Nationalism can be expressed in many forms. Even in social media or cyberspace, one should not simply use their country name as an expression of nationalist or patriotic. Anyway, this article provides a good idea for analyzing young people's nationalism.

The two quantitative analyses of nationalism above are both based on normal people in civil society. So, does nationalism also exist in the academic world, which is known for its fairness and rationality? Tetik (2022) studied academic papers related to International Relationship (IR) in Turkey to get the answer. He firstly found the eligible articles during 2015 and 2019 from various academic research engine. Then, coding them based on their abstract and content to LA, UA, and OA. Finally, he counted the number of each type of paper in each year and plotted the changes and their proportions to illustrate the large presence of Methodological Nationalism (MN) in IR papers. The results showed that 80% of the works are MN. However, manual judging LA and UA are too subjective and the author did not give us their criteria. Without clear requirements, there will be large errors and the research is difficult to replicate.

Although rare, some scholars have tried to use quantitative methods to analyze the relationship between nationalism and other things. For example, Gabrielsson (2017) studied in his thesis whether two nationalisms, civic and ethnic, are related to people's attitudes toward democracy. He used data from the European Social Survey to measure which nationalism people belong to and made a hypothesis to analyze whether it is related to attitudes towards democracy. He concluded that higher levels of diversity and established democracy within a country generally enhance support for democracy. Peng Clarie Bai (2011), also a Master student, conducted a questionnaire survey to investigate whether the interpersonal contact theory (the more contact with foreigners, the less hostile be to them) held true in China. She proposed that, according to theory, with globalization, people's nationalism should decrease. But why did China have "angry youth" who were full of resistance to foreign products and foreigners? Her conclusion recognized the contact theory. But she also explained that economic globalization would lead to "bottom-up competition" in labor-intensive developing countries. Labor rights could not be guaranteed, so those people in China hated globalization. In addition, China's nationalism came from the prejudice that was deliberately and persistently instilled by the communist party. Simonsen and Bonikowski (2020) focus on the relationship between nationalism and anti-Muslim attitudes in Europe. Through analysis and regression of survey data from 41 European countries, they found that Anti-Muslim is positively correlated with ascriptive concepts of nationhood (ethnic) and negatively correlated with elective concepts of nationhood (civic). However, there are exceptions in Western Europe and Northern Europe. The more civic nationalism there is, the more people dislike Muslims. The authors believed that this was because civic nationalism was also exclusive in this region. Muslims are incompatible with European liberal values, which have strengthened the public's rejection of them in northwestern Europe.

1.2 Theory of democracy and democratization

Before talking about the relationship, it is necessary for us to understand what is

democracy and democratization, why we care about the democracy and what are the influencing factors of democratization. The term "democracy" is so widely and indiscriminately used that it is difficult for us to find a clear definition. Discussing it from its origins and characteristics may be a good way to acknowledge it.

The word democracy comes from the Greek word "demos", which means rule by the people (Brander et al., 2015). Democracy is a political system in which people have equal rights to participate in public policy. The most original and simple meaning of democracy is that all people, rather than their elected representatives, participate equally and without discrimination in national decision-making and management (Held, 1996). However, when people talk about democracy today, they often deviate from the original meaning of "democracy", but means "representative democracy", which is the most common form of democracy in the world today (Dahl, 1989). Actually, even the most famous symbol of Greek democracy, Athens, is not a true democracy. n Athens, only citizens could participate in political decision-making, and only Athenian men over the age of 20 could be eligible for citizenship. Women, male slaves, and foreigners cannot become citizens (Ober, 2008). The number of citizens was only about one-tenth of the total population (Cartledge, 2016). Athenian democracy was only enjoyed by a little number of "citizens" and excluded the vast majority of people. The so-called "rule of the majority" in Athenian democracy was actually based on slavery and the class rule (Finely, 1991).

1.2.1 Modern Democracy

Modern democracy gradually became popular in social movements around the world with the establishment of the United States and the development of the Great Revolution in the 18th century. The early national period in the United States is characterized by both revolutionary changes and the establishment of new governmental structures. These new governments claimed to derive their authority from the American electorate, marking a significant shift from colonial charters to self-governance based on popular consent (Pole, 1962). Although acknowledging democratic features such as broad suffrage and popular participation, Pole proposed that the constitutions often maintained conservative structures that reflected the social and economic hierarchies of the time. This included property qualifications for voting and office-holding, which limited broader democratic participation (Wood, 1992; Keyssar, 2000).

More than a hundred years later, World War II established the democratic system in Western Europe. After the war, Western European countries established representative governments to reflect the general will of the people (Bermeo, 1992). Since the 1990s, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and some Arab and African countries have gradually moved towards a more liberal and democratic system (Diamond, 1999; Levitsky & Way, 2010). The color revolutions that began in 2003 and the Arab Spring

that broke out in 2010 have changed the political landscape of Central Asia, Eastern Europe and other countries, leading to the fall of some authoritarian and rigid governments (Beissinger, 2007). Since then, the academic community has been conducting more and more research on democracy, and democracy has been widely regarded as a "cause". There has been an endless stream of research on democracy and social policy, economic policy, citizenship and human rights, military and criminal justice, and overall governance. Gerring, Knutsen and Berge (2022) believed that the role of democracy has been exaggerated in various research results. They analyzed 1,100 cross-national analysis results in 600 journal articles published after 2000. Most of these research reports on various aspects of society showed a positive or negative correlation with democracy. Although they pointed out these studies are suspected of being exaggerated, the large amount of praise still shows that democratic systems are highly recognized around the world.

Modern democratic systems can be classified based on various rights and different governance structures. Mukand and Rodrik (2020) distinguished electoral democracy and liberal democracy by dividing the power granted by democracy into three categories: property rights, political rights, and civic rights. Property rights protect the asset holders from infringement by others. It mainly benefits the wealth and elites because it is a necessary condition for the development of a market economy. If property has no ownership or can be confiscated by force or power, no one will be willing to produce on their own initiative. Suppose, if robbers took over the house you built by force, you would not be willing to build houses anymore, but want to seize the fruits of other's labor. No rich elites want to be targeted. Political rights guarantee free and fair electoral contests, and also constraint the winner to act by decentralize power to various departments. This is designed for poor majorities. Civic rights ensure the equality and non-discrimination to all the public, including citizens and minorities. The electoral democracy can only protect the property rights and political rights, whereas the liberal democracy takes all three into accounts. In this thesis, the rights we want to discuss are the property and political, because liberal democracy is so rare in reality that it is difficult for existing democratic countries to develop into such a system, let alone the transitional countries we are discussing.

According to different governance structures, democracy can be categorized as direct and representative (Dahl, 1989). Held (2006) explains that direct democracy means every citizen should participate in the political decision-making process. This is democracy at its most radical, but it comes at a high price. With the population explosion today, this form is very time-consuming and labor-intensive, making it impractical for any country. Therefore, it now only exists in small-scale groups and tribes (Smith, 2009). Apart from the time and money consumption, direct democracy is also controversial. Dahl (1998) argues that some people do not have the knowledge to deal with relevant issues, so if they are asked to make decisions, they are prone to make wrong judgments or be bribed.

The mainstream of modern democracy is representative democracy. Heywood (2014) states that various forces and opinions can be expressed legally and openly, usually based on the separation of powers, representative government, and the implementation of the constitution. Although it does not mean that all democratic goals can be achieved, it can guarantee the legitimacy of the change of power. However, Mansbridge (2003) notes that because there are few people with actual decision-making power, it is easy to be eroded by corruption.

Though the classifications of democracy is dazzling, their core problems are the same. As a political system, what practical problems should democracy be able to solve? Warren (2017) simplified and framed democratic problems by three kinds. "It should empower inclusions, form collective agendas and wills, and have capacities to make collective decisions." By stating empower inclusion, the author means citizens should be entitled to express and speak their interests and preferences, but not waiting to be asked by the government. After adding individual's own interests to the community, a peaceful internal communication is very important. Communication within the group should achieve a harmonious balance between the interests of individuals and the collective. After achieving a balance of interests, the political system should also establish a complete system to ensure that group willing can be satisfied, that is, the policy can truly play its role.

These core issues highlight the practical challenges that any democratic system must address. However, the journey to achieving a functional democracy is influenced by various factors that facilitate or hinder this process. Transitioning to democracy involves overcoming barriers and leveraging facilitators that impact each of Warren's democratic problems. Factors such as socioeconomic development, institutional frameworks, civil society engagement, and international influences all play crucial roles.

1.2.2 Democratization Factors

Lipset (1959) was the first to propose that economic development, industrialization, and urbanization lead to democratic transition and stability. He suggested that higher levels of economic development facilitate the creation of a large middle class, which in turn supports democratic institutions. This idea, known as modernization theory, has been further explored by scholars such as Inglehart and Welzel (2005), who argue that economic development leads to cultural shifts that favor democratic values. However, Przeworski et al. (2000) highlighted that economic development does not necessarily mean the transition towards democracy. He admitted that democracy is "extremely fragile when facing poverty, whereas in wealthy countries they are impregnable". However, he added, "political regimes have no impact on the growth of total income." Authoritarian governments can also rely on labor force growth and low

wages to increase gross domestic income and achieve economic development. The most notable examples are Taiwan, Singapore and China.

Geddes (1999) investigated how different autocratic regimes transition to democracy, emphasizing the role of political institutions in this process. He divides the political institutions in transition into two categories: military regimes and personalist regimes. Military regimes typically transition due to internal splits and negotiations, often concluding with a degree of bargaining and moderation. It usually happened before national protests. In contrast, personalist regimes hold onto power until ousted by uprisings or coups, often involving violence. Single-party regimes, especially post-Soviet, tend to negotiate under pressure from donors and public opposition. They preferred to retain control while allowing some liberalization, mostly because of the international opinion and requests for assistance. This differentiation underscores the varied dynamics of democratization processes, influenced by the type of autocratic rule and the associated internal political regimes.

Demographic factors such as population size, growth, and density, as discussed by Dahl and Tufte (1974, p.113). They suggested that "representative democracy in a large country is neither more nor less prone to destruction from internal conflict than in a small country". Alesina and Devleeschauwer (2003) studied how ethnic, linguistic, and religious heterogeneity can influence democratization. Historical and geopolitical contexts are also important. Bernhard (2004) proposed that former British colonies have better prospects for democracy due to their inherited political institutions.

Huntington (1996) explored the impact of cultural values and religions on democratic development, suggesting that the spread of Protestantism promotes democratic norms all over the world. Welzel (2005) also supported this view, arguing that shifts towards self-expression values and individualism are conducive to democracy. They believed "if a given public emphasizes these values relatively strongly, democratization is likely to occur".

Although there are many factors that influence democratization, nationalism remains a relatively unpopular factor that has not received excessive attention. There is a small amount of research on nationalism's impact on democratization, but it has not been taken as seriously as other factors. Can the role of nationalism in shaping democratic transitions be crucial? Could nationalism's impact on political development be more profound than previously considered or has it been overestimated?

To address these questions, we adopted a unique analytical approach. Based on previous literature, we identified the main objects influencing democratization: civil society, government, and external others. Therefore, we will analyze in parts whether the nationalism of different objects affects the democratization process of a country. By examining the dynamics of nationalism, we aim to provide a nuanced

understanding of its impact on democratic development and address the practical challenges identified by Warren's framework.

1.3 Existing Research on the Link Between Nationalism and Democracy

Classical theories of nationalism and democracy can be traced back to the work of Hans Kohn. He distinguished between "civic nationalism", which is inclusive and closely linked to democratic principles, and "ethnic nationalism", which is exclusive and often undemocratic. He believed that "nationalism and liberal democracy were compatible, and indeed that enlightened nationalism was inseparable from liberalism" (Kohn, 1945). Kohn argued that civic nationalism can support democratic development by fostering a sense of shared political community, raising individual's personal dignity to prepare the spiritual foundation of democracy.

Ernest Gellner (1983) also emphasized the role of nationalism and national identity in the formation of modern states. He suggested that the emergence of national identities was crucial for the development of democratic institutions, as it unified diverse populations under common political frameworks. Gellner's theory posits that industrialization and the need for a standardized culture to facilitate communication and economic integration were key drivers of nationalism, which in turn supported the development of democratic governance. Christian Welzel and Ronald Inglehart (2008) also argued that shifts towards self-expression values and individualism, often linked with certain forms of nationalism, are conducive to democracy.

The wave of decolonization after World War II brought new perspectives on nationalism and democracy. By studying the newly independent states in Africa and Asia, Crawford Young (1976, p.72) noted that the results were mixed. As some nationalist movements led to authoritarian regimes instead of democracies. Nationalism is just the premise of independence but not the determinant of the political structure. As an ideological formulation of identity, it stipulates the nation as terminal community, "to whom ultimate loyalty is owed, it invests the nation with transcendent moral sanction and authority". Donald Horowitz (1985), Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner (1994) also explored the dual nature of nationalism. They noted that while nationalism could unify and democratize, it could also exacerbate ethnic conflicts and undermine democratic processes if it became exclusionary. Horowitz explained through the support from ethnicity. He said once an ethnic party established, it is difficult for it to become multiethnic because "a small fraction of support from another ethnic group can provide at best a bit of leaven, insufficient to divert a party from the interest of the group that provides its overwhelming support. Party leadership will pursue such minority support only insofar as it is low cost and does not threaten the more valuable principal source of support" ((Horowitz, 1985, p. 292). Even now, taking advantage of nationalism to legitimize their own interests still exists, as Toomey (2018) stated. He studied the relationship between nationalistic discourse

and Hungary's 'illiberal turn' from the election of Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party in the 2010 Hungarian elections up until 2015 and found those strategies could only benefit Fidesz but not any Hungarian citizens.

The late 20th century saw more systematic and detailed comparative studies. Samuel Huntington's "the third wave" analyzed the global wave of democratization from 1974. He noted that national identity played a crucial role in many transitions. Huntington argued that countries with strong national identities were more likely to sustain democratic transitions. Although he proposed that "Nationalism is also a popular force and can equally well legitimate democratic as authoritarian rule" (Huntington, 1991) However, in communism and one-party system country such as China, this is a hidden danger. Their ideology was imposed by external forces, that means the regime "could benefit from the ideology but not from nationalism". That is always a potential source of instability. Once the countries' nationalism is opposed to communism, they will be more easily to reestablish their national identity to democracy during transition, for example in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Recent research has continued to refine our understanding of the relationship between nationalism and democracy. But most studies still draw two types of conclusions. First, nationalism, national identity and self-expression can promote democratization (Inglehart & Wellzel, 2008; Pappas, 2019). Second, the more inclusive or civic nationalism is, the more conducive it is to democracy (Helbing, 2009; Tudor & Slater, 2021). On the contrary, if a country's nationalism is more ethnic or exclusive, it is not conducive to democracy and is more likely to promote the establishment of authoritarianism (Muller, 2016; Gagon, 1995). In addition, the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism remains a central theme with more research method in current era (Calhoun, 2007; Triandafyllidou, 2020). Researchers like Marc Helbling (2009) continue to explore how these different forms of nationalism impact democratic stability and quality. After analyzing the complementary and competing logic in previous researches about the relationship of nationalism and democracy, he proposed that such a clear division oversimplifies the argument. "The debate about whether nationalism and democracy are complementary or competing logics is more a question about degrees than completely opposite positions". He called on us to pay more attention to the problem itself, to the impact of nationalism, xenophobia and ethnic conflict.

Although the conclusions to their relationship didn't change a lot, 21st century researches tend to favor civic/ethnic nationalism or inclusive/exclusive theory. Tudor and Slater (2021) emphasized the different effects of the exclusive and inclusive characteristics of nationalism, focusing particularly on India and Malaysia. Both of them possessed a well-organized nationalist movement with sufficient organizational power, India successfully establishing a lasting democracy but Malaysia experiencing durable authoritarianism. They argued, "where the national community was defined

as inclusive in both ethnoreligious and popular terms, democracy has proven stronger. Alternatively, where the foundational national bargain was more exclusive with respect to salient identity cleavages and popular classes, authoritarianism has been reinforced". May (2003) even suggested to be more inclusive and legitimate national minority languages within the civic realm of nation-states to stabilize the European countries.

The history of research on nationalism and democracy reveals a complex and nuanced relationship. While nationalism has the potential to support democratic development, particularly through inclusive civic nationalism, it also carries risks, especially when it becomes exclusionary or ethnically divisive (Helbling, 2009). Ongoing research continues to explore these dynamics, seeking to understand how different forms of nationalism or other factors combined with it can either promote or hinder democratic governance (Müller, 2016; Tudor & Slater, 2021). What's more, with the collapse of the former Soviet Union and development of globalization, scholars develop more novel perspectives to evaluate their relationships (Zaslavsky, 1992; Hiers & Wimmer, 2013;).

Nationalism and Democracy: Dichotomies, Complementarities, Oppositions edited by André Lecours and Luis Moreno (2010), provides a range of case studies showing how nationalism interacts with democratic processes in different regions. These studies highlight that the impact of nationalism on democracy can vary widely depending on their different historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts. Similarly, Sabatovych (2018) the contrasting results of two popular movements, Ukraine's 'Maidan' revolution and Poland's 'Solidarity' movement, to show that "the role of nationalism, in this respect, was shaped and interpreted by political leaders".

However, there are also some bold arguments which raise the idea that nationalism and democracy are not two separate things (Nodia, 1992). He proposed "without the idea of democracy, and that democracy never exists without nationalism". Though nationalism is not so liberal, it can be tamed. Ethnic pride in common ancestors, a glorious history, great traditions, and so on, can be transferred to the sense of achievements created by us together. It can firstly help us to develop a democratic country then stabilize it with our honor.

Different from this, Bingol (2004) completely denied the opinion that nationalism is compatible with, and indeed is the same as, democracy. Through looking at four of the five Central Asian republics: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, he proposed that there is a significant degree of trade-off between nationalism and democracy. He argued that, at least in Central Asia, xenophobic nationalism, not liberal democracy, was the true political successor to communism. This kind of nationalism serves as the core ideology of these countries, and is impossible to gradually transform towards democracy. Spencer and Wollman (1997) also expressed their worries towards nationalism in post-communist societies. They suggested Eastern Europe to

find a politics which can both accommodate ethnic differences and avoid weakening the rights of minorities.

Whatever, these varied perspectives highlight that the post-Soviet region provides valuable cases for studying the factors influencing democratic transitions. This thesis chooses Azerbaijan as the object of analysis. The unique socio-political landscape of Azerbaijan, shaped by its post-Soviet legacy and ongoing ethnic and national dynamics, offers an insightful case for understanding the relationship between nationalism and democracy.

1.4 Azerbaijan's Political Regime (2011-2017) and Existing Research

The relationship between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan presents a unique and complex dynamic that scholars have been exploring with increasing interest. The period from 2011 to 2017, characterized by Ilham Aliyev's leadership, is especially significant in understanding how nationalism manifests within both governmental and societal contexts and how it influences democratic tendencies (Cornell, 2011). During this time, Azerbaijan continued its path of strong centralized governance while navigating the delicate balance between national identity and democratic principles (Guliyev, 2013).

Existing research on Azerbaijan's political regime during these years often highlights the use of nationalism as a tool for political control and legitimacy (Ismayilov, 2019). The government's emphasis on national identity has been employed not only to consolidate power domestically but also to navigate its position in the international arena (Koch & Valiyev, 2015; Hirose, 2016). Scholars (Troebst, 2002; Matveeva, 2018; Zhang, Dumitrica & Jansz, 2024) have noted that state-driven nationalism frequently serves to unify the populace under a common identity, often sidelining democratic discourse in favor of political stability and control. However, the impact of such nationalism on democracy is multifaceted and warrants closer examination.

Research suggests that the nationalism promoted by the Azerbaijani government often aims to fortify the ruling regime's legitimacy by fostering a strong national identity that resonates with the public (Simons & Westerlund, 2015). This form of nationalism, centered around cultural pride and historical narratives, is seen as a means to bolster the government's standing, especially in the face of external pressures and internal dissent (Salehi, Navazeni & Jafarinezhad, 2018). However, this approach raises critical questions about its implications for democratic governance. Can such nationalism coexist with democratic ideals, or does it inherently suppress political plurality and civic participation?

On the other hand, civil society in Azerbaijan represents another facet of nationalism that interacts with democratic aspirations. Despite the government's efforts to

control and direct nationalist sentiment, there exists a vibrant undercurrent within civil society where nationalism is often expressed through grassroots movements and public discourse. Some notable movements are Nida civic movement, Ismayilli protests, and "Khadija Is Not Alone". This form of nationalism, distinct from state-driven narratives, offers a potential avenue for democratization by empowering citizens and fostering political engagement.

1.5 Gaps in the Literature and Research Questions

The relationship between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan remains a complex and often contentious subject. As noted in the existing body of literature, much of the research has focused on state-led nationalism and its implications for the country's political regime. The Azerbaijani government has historically utilized nationalism as a tool for maintaining political control and legitimacy. However, there is a tendency in prior studies to treat nationalism as a monolithic construct, often overlooking the nuanced differences between government-driven nationalism and the nationalism emerging organically from civil society.

Our research seeks to address this oversight by proposing a more differentiated view of nationalism, distinguishing between **civil society nationalism** and **government-ledding nationalism**. This distinction is crucial because nationalism within a nation is not static and can vary significantly depending on political, social, and economic contexts. By dissecting nationalism into these two categories, we aim to uncover how these different forms influence democratic processes in Azerbaijan and how they interact with each other during both stable and transitional periods.

Furthermore, our study addresses another significant gap in the existing literature: the need for a robust methodological approach that combines **quantitative and qualitative analyses** to examine the interplay between nationalism and democracy. While qualitative analysis provides deep insights into the socio-political dynamics at play, relying solely on qualitative data risks introducing subjective biases, especially given the emotionally charged nature of nationalism and democracy studies. As noted by scholars like Brubaker (1996), emotional analyses in democracy research are often exaggerated or skewed, potentially leading to inaccurate interpretations of trends.

To counteract this, our research employs a mixed-methods approach, beginning with quantitative analysis to identify exact trends and shifts in nationalism and democracy over time. This is complemented by qualitative analysis, which provides context and explanations for the observed trends, as well as insights into the actors driving these changes. For instance, the decline in exclusive nationalism from 2011 to 2017, as observed in our quantitative data, can be further explored through interviews and case

studies that highlight the underlying socio-economic and political factors.

By integrating these methods, we aim to create a more comprehensive and balanced view of how nationalism influences democratic practices in Azerbaijan, ensuring that our conclusions are grounded in both empirical data and rich contextual understanding. This approach not only addresses the methodological gaps in previous research but also provides a more nuanced perspective on the dynamic relationship between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan.

2. Transitions In Azerbaijan: A Comparative Framework

Interestingly, Azerbaijan was originally seen as a strong candidate for democracy. However, its performance in recent years is obvious to all over the world. It has gone down the path of dictatorship and seems difficult to turn back. Following its reestablishment of independence in 1991, Azerbaijan exhibited promising signs for democratic development, with a highly literate population, significant untapped oil wealth, and an active entrepreneurial spirit (Cornell, 2011). However, the nation's journey has been fraught with challenges, including the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the widespread corruption (De Waal, 2004). The political system became authoritarian under the rule of Aliyev family, with opposition groups marginalized, co-opted, or crushed, and the civil society of the 1990s and early 2000s suppressed (Guliyev, 2011). Youth movements and next-generation opposition faced severe repression (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

2.1 Azerbaijan Background

Before talking about its nationalism and democratization, let's briefly introduce the history and geopolitics so that we can understand why Azerbaijan's transformation and democratization is so important for us to pay attention to. As one successor of the former Soviet Union, Western politics definitely wanted it to be a democratic country. They were also actually doing so at the beginning of the transformation (Altstadt, 2017). Though the path fulfilled with troubles, it was still hopeful because of their historical legacies, nationalism against communism, rich oil resources and the important geographical location for the West (De Waal, 2004).

Before annexed by the Russia, Azerbaijan has a history of being democratic country. Their elites formed Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in May 1918 after the destroy of Russia Empire. The leaders also drafted a constitution to guarantee electoral rights and civic rights, including freedom of speech and enfranchised women (Cornell, 2011). Various political parties emerged, representing different ethnic groups and political views, such as Russian, Armenia, Islamic, Jewish, socialist, nationalist parties and even Russian communist party. However, the good times only lasted until April 1920, then Azerbaijan was forced to be a Soviet Socialist Republic (Swietochowski, 1995). Many

democrats have been suppressed and persecuted, however, the seeds of democratic national identity have been planted in the hearts of Azerbaijanis. In the era of Gorbachev in late 1980s, dissents can be revealed. The Nagorno-Karabagh (NKAR) conflict, which was caused by the Soviet Union's policy of ethnic assimilation and integration, also began to emerge in 1987. In this situation, dissatisfaction within Azerbaijan towards Soviet Union was gradually growing. They hoped that Armenia can return the areas that originally belonged to them. "Within that context, Baku's (Azerbaijan's capital) intellectual elite in the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences and Baku State University formed the Azerbaijan Popular Front, an organization that gave voice to public anger over the Karabagh issue and many other points of political and social contention" (Altstadt, 2017).

Azerbaijan borders the Caspian Sea to the east and has rich reserves of high-quality light crude oil and natural gas. Those hydrocarbon resources are the great wealth and give the Azerbaijani government tremendous power to support its independence and security. For western countries, especially European countries, Azerbaijan's abundant resources are the best choice for them to offset their reliance on Russian gas (Guliyev, 2013). So when it just became independent, the majority of foreign businessmen influx into Baku to develop and construct its oil and gas industries, including exploration, extraction and pipeline construction. Citizens believed that with American oil companies enter Azerbaijan to mine, their democratic independence process will surely proceed smoothly (Ipek, 2009; Yildirim, 2012). After all, the United States will certainly not let their oil be threatened by Russia. Ipek (2007) made suggestions to the US government, believing that appropriate assistance should be given to Central Asian countries who were facing democratization challenge. Therefore, many countries and researchers at that time had great hopes for the democratization process of Azerbaijan.

However, things changed drastically after Heydar Aliyev became president in 1993. Scholars like Aslund (2012) have examined how the trajectories of post-Soviet states, including Azerbaijan, have diverged, with economic interests often overshadowing democratic aspirations. Aslund argues that the combination of authoritarianism and resource wealth can hinder democratic development, a phenomenon observed in several other post-Soviet states such as Kazakhstan and Russia. These countries, rich in natural resources, have often experienced a consolidation of power in the hands of authoritarian leaders, who use resource revenues to maintain control and stifle democratic movements (Fish, 2005; McMann, 2006).

2.2 Political Transition and Their Impact

2.2.1 Post-Soviet Transitions (1991-1993)

The first big step in Azerbaijan's political transitions began in November 1988, before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Thousands of people gathered in Lenin Square to

denounce Azerbaijan's government and the Communist Party for over two weeks. Although several leaders were arrested, public anger fueled the establishment of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan (PFA) (Altstadt, 1992). In 1989, the Azerbaijan Communist Party (AzCP) was forced to recognize the legitimacy of the Popular Front, marking a critical turning point in the republic's political landscape (De Waal, 2003).

The second pivotal event was "Black January" in 1990. During this period, tensions in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAR) escalated. More than ninety Armenians were murdered and dozens more were wounded by radicals who insisted on independence (Croissant, 1998). However, the AzCP framed it as an ethnic conflict and did not intervene until Gorbachev's Council arrived in Baku to announce that Soviet troops would come to "restore order." This move was intended to warn other republics and discourage similar movements elsewhere in the USSR (Dawisha & Parrott, 1997). Soviet military forces launched an armed crackdown on Azerbaijani civilians, leading to significant casualties. Anger towards Moscow intensified, changing the movement's focus from demanding justice for NKAR's status within the Soviet Union to demanding complete independence (Altstadt, 2017).

In August 1991, under the pressure of the Popular Front, the first secretary of Baku, Ayaz Mutalibov, declared Azerbaijan's independence (Cornell, 2001). This declaration marked the formal break from the Soviet Union and established a presidential system with a parliament and judiciary intended to decentralize power. However, the transition was fraught with challenges.

Within six months of the Soviet Union's collapse, the Popular Front came to power during ongoing fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh. On June 7, Abulfaz Elchibey, a leader of the Popular Front, was elected President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This election was the first relatively free and fair election in Azerbaijan since 1920. The Popular Front proposed electing a new parliament, but the old Supreme Soviet, dominated by former communists, resisted losing their power and rejected the proposal. The Popular Front was outnumbered by the old guard, creating a significant political impasse (Herzig, 1999).

The decision not to re-elect the parliament was a critical error in the Popular Front's political transition strategy. Another major mistake was the reappointment of former Soviet government officials, contrary to the reformist ethos they promoted. In the early days of independence, the Popular Front struggled to find qualified individuals familiar with Azerbaijani governance, forcing them to rely on former officials who lacked both loyalty to the new regime and democratic ideals (Gould & Sickner, 2008). This inaction and reliance on the old guard directly contributed to the domestic rebellion led by Surat Huseynov.

The domestic situation was chaotic. The Turkish government, which had close ties with

Azerbaijan, persuaded Heydar Aliyev to return to stabilize the situation (Aras et al., 2017). Aliyev, a former member of the Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB) and first secretary of AzCP (1969-1982), was known for his charisma and political acumen but also for his Soviet influences. Despite the Popular Front's reluctance, they acknowledged Aliyev as the best option to regain control over the domestic turmoil. In June 1993, he announced he would temporarily serve as president, though his ambitions quickly became apparent (Cornell, 2011).

2.2.2 Transition from Popular Front to Heydar Aliyev (1993 Onwards)

Once in power, Heydar Aliyev began systematically dismantling the Popular Front's influence and targeting dissidents within the government. He orchestrated a campaign to discredit Elchibey and other political opponents, imprisoning many and preventing their parties from participating in future elections (Cornell, 2011). By August 1993, Aliyev consolidated his position, securing the presidency with an overwhelming 98.8 percent of the vote in an election widely criticized for lack of transparency and fairness (Ottaway, 2003; International Crisis Group, 2004).

Heydar Aliyev's presidency marked the beginning of a new era of authoritarianism in Azerbaijan. He strengthened his grip on power by replacing parliament members with loyalists, and even the fifteen members of the Central Election Commission (CEC) were handpicked by him to ensure electoral control (OSCE PA, 2000). Furthermore, he continued to suppress opposition politicians and journalists, limiting the scope of free expression and political dissent (Sultanova, 2014).

The ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan in May 1994 further consolidated Aliyev's power. According to Rasim Musabayov, an advisor to the previous president, the ceasefire allowed Aliyev to tighten state control, as it removed a significant distraction for the administration (De Waal, 2004). The electoral process remained marred by fraud, including disqualifying opposing candidates and manipulating vote counts. In 2000, opposition parties attempted to boycott the CEC during the parliamentary election, but they were even banned from contesting the election (OSCE, 2000).

2.2.3 Transition from Heydar to Ilham Aliyev (2003)

After Heydar Aliyev passed away in 2003, his son Ilham Aliyev assumed the presidency. The transition maintained the continuity of the Aliyev dynasty, as Ilham was quickly embraced by his father's inner circle, who continued to wield significant influence within the government (Peuch, 2003). Ilham perpetuated electoral fraud and justified it by portraying Azerbaijan as a young democracy, where mistakes were inevitable (Human Rights Watch, 2003).

Ilham Aliyev learned from his father's tactics, continuing to suppress youth activism and dissents including journalists, human rights lawyer and opposition parties (Gambar, 2020). In a bold move, Ilham initiated a constitutional amendment through a referendum on March 18, 2009, to abolish presidential term limits (Versteeg et al., 2020). This amendment paved the way for him to remain in power indefinitely, solidifying his authoritarian rule. By February 14, 2024, Ilham had begun his fifth term in office, illustrating the entrenched nature of dynastic governance.

The Azerbaijani political system had become characterized by oligarchic control, with the Aliyev family at its center. Other powerful families also exerted influence, creating a complex web of power dynamics that stifled democratic reform (Guliyev, 2013). Ergun Özbudun's (2010) hope that democratic change could be driven by the ruling elite seems increasingly unattainable, as the regime shows little interest in genuine democratization.

2.2.4 Current Political Regime Under Ilham Aliyev

Ilham Aliyev's regime continues to maintain a tight grip on power. Under his leadership, Azerbaijan has witnessed a deterioration of democratic norms, with freedom of expression, assembly, and the press severely curtailed. The government employs sophisticated surveillance and censorship mechanisms to monitor and control dissent.

Internationally, Azerbaijan has leveraged its strategic position and energy resources to maintain favorable relations with key global players, such as Russia, Turkey, and the European Union. These relationships have, in many cases, provided the regime with a degree of insulation from international criticism regarding human rights abuses and democratic deficits (Cornell, 2011; De Waal, 2004).

The Aliyev regime also faces ongoing challenges, such as economic diversification, corruption, and public dissatisfaction with governance. Despite these issues, Ilham Aliyev's government remains adept at suppressing opposition and dissent, ensuring the continuity of authoritarian rule.

2.3 Nationalism and National Identity Transition

"From its outset, the conflict over Nagorny Karabakh served as a key impulse to the awakening of national sentiment in Azerbaijan, stimulating ethnic mobilization and drawing wide sectors of the population into the movement for social and political reform" (Musabayov, 2005). Initially, their nationalism promoted the independence of Azerbaijan and encouraged them to pursue freedom. However, this kind of nationalism did not succeed in making them a democratic country. We want to study whether there is any change in their nationalism that leads to a change in development path. Or, their nationalism has not changed, but other factors have a greater influence than

nationalism, which has caused them to twist their direction towards democracy.

The NKAR conflict itself is only partly responsible for the awakening of nationalism, and partly due to the partiality of the Moscow government and the poor performance of the AzCP. Armenians made up the majority of the population in the NKAR. So in February 1988, the NKAR Regional Soviet passed a resolution requesting the transfer of the region from Azerbaijani to Armenian. This demand was perceived by Azerbaijanis as a direct challenge to their territorial integrity and national sovereignty, igniting widespread nationalist sentiment (De Waal, 2004).

When the Azerbaijanis sought judgement from the Soviet government, they found that Gorbachev was more inclined to help Armenia. Because the Moscow kept silence about the Armenian influences. What's more, Gorbachev's inner circle, especially his economic adviser Abel Aganbegian, said that the NKAR ought to belong to Armenia (Cargi, 2018). On the other hand, the AzCP was asking leading scholars and writers to write articles and guide domestic public opinion to give up NKAR. Azerbaijan citizens demanded the communist leader s to defend their land and their "national honor", but was refused. This further aroused their national self-consciousness which had been constantly suppressed during the Soviet era. They felt that Armenia was challenging not only their country's territorial sovereignty but also their culture. The Soviet Union's behavior made them feel that they were not understood by their so-called "allies". They were a lonely ethics in the Soviet Union. These feelings made them begin to reflect on why they were dominated by others and who was the real obstacle and enemy of their freedom. Azerbaijan's national independence consciousness thus erupted (Altstadt, 2017).

However, after independence, Azerbaijanis' nationalism was exploited. The government constantly used the NKAR conflict to divert domestic conflicts. On September 19 2023, the Azerbaijani army launched an offensive against the NKAR region and quickly won. The separatists in NKAR agreed to lay down their arms and negotiate the reintegration of the territory into Azerbaijan. With this winning, Ilham can tighten his power more strictly and won more reputation inside the country (Samadov, 2020).

2.4 Economic Transitions and Their Influence

Although among Azerbaijan's many problems, economic issues are not so prominent. At least their oil and gas resources have brought huge profits to the country. However, this thesis wants to emphasize that economic problems directly led to the fall of Popular Front.

In 1991, newly independent Azerbaijan was poor. Their economy had collapsed with the Soviet Union. Altstadt (2017, p.56) said that "Azerbaijan lost over 60 percent of its

gross domestic product (GDP) in the first year of independence". People expect the Popular Front to bring prosperity because all of the citizens, even Elchibey government, thought that democracy means rapid economic development. However, nobody in the party knew how to formulate and implement appropriate economic policies. They can only hand over economic problems to previous communist officials, and naively believed that these officials can change their thinking and become democratic. To their disappointment, these officials only took the opportunity to embezzle and pursue their own interests. This directly aroused the dissatisfaction of the people, who felt that Popular Front had broken its original promise and failed to live up to their expectations. They accused Popular Front of just wanting to corrupt. Economic collapse was also one of the factors that triggered the civil unrest in Azerbaijan (Herzig, 1999).

After Heydar came to power, international oil prices began to rise gradually. From 1997 to 2004, international oil prices rose fivefold, which brought Azerbaijan a steady stream of wealth. In 2006, the completion of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline led to a significant increase in Azerbaijan's oil exports. The export volume in 2007 was about twice that of 2005, and the oil price also doubled (Guliyev, 2013). These revenues have significantly improved the poverty situation in Azerbaijan and maintained the country's stability. Although Azerbaijani government officials and their families have all reaped huge profits from corruption, few citizens or journalists have stepped in to expose and oppose their actions. After all, the government has enough money to buy off dissidents or imprison or assassinate them through various means. For the people, who is in power or what the state ideology is seems to be of little importance compared to poverty (Cornell, 2011).

However, Azerbaijan also suffers from the common affliction of oil-rich countries known as the Dutch disease. This has led to a significant gap between the rich and the poor, extremely high inflation, and poor infrastructure outside the capital city, Baku. Additionally, other industries, apart from oil, are developing slowly. A substantial portion of the country's GDP growth is driven by government expenditure (Auty, 2001).

Fuad Aliyev, a previous executive director of the Azerbaijan Marketing Society, emphasized in his article "Although centralization of power was helpful in one dimension of reforms, it has impeded others. Further progress is impossible without democratization and institutional development" (Aliyev, 2008). He believed that nominal political stability cannot promote actual political stability, even the succession of power inside a family took place. Because all citizens behave based on their own interests, it's necessary to balance interested groups besides the political group.

2.5 Civil Society Transition

Azerbaijan's transition in civil society has been marked by significant turbulence and repression, reflecting the broader challenges faced by the nation in its journey towards democratization. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Azerbaijan exhibited promising signs of a burgeoning civil society. Numerous non-governmental organizations (Institute for Reporter's Freedom and Safety, Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center, Human Rights House Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Young Lawyers Union), independent media outlets (Yeni Müsavat, Zerkalo, Turan Information Agency), and opposition parties emerged (Popular Front of Azerbaijan, Musavat Party, National Independence Party of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Liberal Party), fostering a spirit of political engagement and activism among the populace. These entities played a crucial role in advocating for democratic reforms, transparency, and human rights, creating a dynamic and hopeful environment for civil society.

However, the political landscape in Azerbaijan began to shift dramatically under the rule of the Aliyev family. The initial optimism gave way to increasing authoritarianism as Heydar Aliyev, and later his son Ilham Aliyev, consolidated power. The government systematically marginalized, co-opted, or outright suppressed opposition groups and independent civil society organizations (Alstadt, 2017). This suppression included harassment, imprisonment, and intimidation of activists, journalists, and political opponents, effectively stifling dissent and curbing the growth of an independent civil society (Guliyev, 2013).

Investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova faced extensive harassment for her work exposing corruption within the Azerbaijani government. In 2012, she received threats, and a sex tape of her, secretly recorded in her home, was released in an attempt to blackmail her into stopping her investigations (Oborne, 2018). Blogger and human rights activist Mehman Huseynov, known for his work exposing corruption, faced constant police harassment. In 2017, he was kidnapped, tortured, and subsequently sentenced to two years in prison on defamation charges (Abbasova, 2019). Human rights activists Leyla Yunus and her husband Arif Yunus were arrested in 2014 on charges of treason, fraud, and tax evasion. Leyla Yunus was the director of the Institute for Peace and Democracy. Both were sentenced to lengthy prison terms, but international pressure eventually led to their release on health grounds (Altstadt, 2021).

The ruling elites even claimed that Ilham had the genes to be president, and that the opposition media and journalists were inclined towards violent revolution. Influenced by the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, and the Arab Spring in 2011, several youth organizations, such as N!DA Civic Movement and OL! Azerbaijan Youth Movement were founded. However, these new organizations are too weak and, like the original opposition parties, rely too much on Western aid (Altstadt, 2017). What's more, they still rely too much on the old opposition parties. Without the formal guidance from the opposition parties, they

cannot build sound strategies.

Before Ilham's third term began in 2013, he was even more frantic in strengthening his control over civil society. The opposition has also shifted from parties like the Popular Front to youth movements. Youth movements and next-generation opposition leaders faced particularly harsh repression. These groups, often seen as the vanguard of democratic change, were targeted to prevent the emergence of a new wave of political activism. The government employed a variety of tactics to suppress these movements, including restrictive laws on freedom of assembly and association, media censorship, and the use of security forces to break up protests and detain activists (Human Rights Watch, 2013). For instance, in 2013, members of the N!DA Civic Movement were arrested and charged with planning violent protests, which many international observers saw as politically motivated.

The government's control over civil society was further tightened through legislative measures that restricted the operations of NGOs and limited their access to foreign funding. These measures were aimed at undermining the financial sustainability of independent organizations and reducing their capacity to operate effectively. Privately, they assassinated journalists, but put the blame on anti-Azerbaijani terrorist organizations, saying that these people did it to split the country. The environment for civil society in Azerbaijan became increasingly hostile, with limited space for free expression and civic engagement (Human Rights Watch, 2013b). Privately, they assassinated journalists, but put the blame on anti-Azerbaijani terrorist organizations, saying that these people did it to split the country. For example, the murder of journalist Elmar Huseynov in 2005 was officially attributed to anti-state forces (Grajewski, 2013), but many suspect government involvement due to his critical reporting on corruption.

Oil revenue gives Azerbaijan government the capital to suppress opposition and makes them not afraid of Western threats. Despite these challenges, pockets of resistance and activism persisted. Some NGOs and activists continued to work under difficult conditions, striving to promote human rights, transparency, and democratic governance. However, their efforts were often overshadowed by the overwhelming power of the state and the pervasive atmosphere of fear and repression (Cornell, 2011).

2.6 External Others Influence on Transition

The countries that have the most influence on Azerbaijan's transformation are Turkey, Russia, the United States, and European countries. These external actors play crucial roles in shaping Azerbaijan's political and economic trajectory, significantly impacting its democratization process. The United States and Europe, close allies, view Azerbaijan as a strategic partner in balancing Russian influence in the region. As a

NATO country, Turkey maintains close relations with the United States and Europe, while also adeptly navigating its relationship with Russia. This geopolitical balancing act by Turkey adds complexity to Azerbaijan's position, influencing its foreign and domestic policies. Russia, with its historical influence and contentious relationship with the West, views Azerbaijan as part of its sphere of influence. This dynamic often results in Azerbaijan being caught between competing interests, affecting its internal democratization efforts and overall political development (Gahramanova, 2009).

Turkey and Azerbaijan have a strong relationship due to shared cultural and linguistic ties dating back to the 19th century. Turkey was the first country to recognize Azerbaijan's independence and has been a significant trading partner. Conversely, the relationship between Russia and Azerbaijan is strained. Russia's support for Armenia on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and the competition for Azerbaijan's oil resources have complicated relations. Azerbaijan has predominantly transferred the development rights of its Caspian Sea oil and gas resources to European and American companies, with support from Turkey and Israel helping to balance Russia's influence (Cornell, 2011).

From a geopolitical perspective, Azerbaijan holds strategic significance for the United States. It is the only country adjacent to both Russia and Iran, capable of facilitating or obstructing illicit trade between the two. Ipek (2009) criticized the Bush administration for being overly focused on the military aspect of the global war on terrorism, arguing that tolerating Central Asian autocratic leaders for the sake of stability would only bolster their dictatorships. Ipek suggested that the United States should develop a longer-term policy considering both the strategic importance of Central Asia and the development of its civil society.

Azerbaijan's attitude towards the United States is ambivalent. On one hand, Azerbaijan enjoys the wealth brought by American investments; on the other hand, it resents the lack of substantial support from the U.S., particularly regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The West's insufficient response to Russia's actions in Georgia and Crimea has fueled concerns that similar support would be lacking for Azerbaijan. The introduction of Section 907, condemning Azerbaijan while ignoring Armenia's actions in Nagorno-Karabakh, further strained relations (Guliyev, 2013).

In 2001, Heydar Aliyev expressed unconditional support for the U.S. in exchange for American backing, which emboldened the Azerbaijani government to conduct fraudulent elections and suppress journalists. In 2014, following the arrest of Radio Liberty reporter Khadija Ismayilova, the U.S. called on the Azerbaijani government to cease such practices. The Azerbaijani response was to accuse the U.S. and EU of meddling and emphasize their strategic importance in addressing the EU energy crisis, warning against interference in their internal affairs (Bashirov, 2019).

Regarding European relations, Azerbaijan's interactions with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are notable. Azerbaijan became an OSCE member in 1992, committing to democratic and human rights principles. Despite inviting OSCE and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to monitor elections, the Azerbaijani government continued election fraud while superficially promising reforms. This dual approach was evident when Azerbaijan joined the Council of Europe (CoE) in 2001, with the CoE hoping to support its democratic development. However, Azerbaijan's electoral fraud and human rights restrictions persisted, disappointing CoE expectations (Gahramanova, 2009).

The transition of civil society in Azerbaijan from the hopeful beginnings of the 1990s to the repressive environment of the 2000s highlights the significant obstacles to democratization in the country. The authoritarian consolidation of power by the Aliyev family, coupled with systematic suppression of opposition and independent civil society, has created a challenging environment for democratic development. The resilience of some activists and organizations, however, underscores the enduring desire for democratic change among segments of the Azerbaijani population. The interplay between internal authoritarianism and external geopolitical interests continues to shape Azerbaijan's political landscape, complicating its path toward true democratization (Guliyev, 2013).

3. Methodology

In exploring the intricate relationship between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan, we employ a mixed-methods approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative analyses. This methodology is carefully designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the penomena under study, drawing insights from a combination of data sources and analytical techniques.

3.1 Research Design

Our research design is centered on two core objectives:

1. To explore how nationalism, as expressed by the government, civil society, and external actors, influences democratic processes in Azerbaijan.
2. To investigate the dynamic interactions between these forms of nationalism and democratic processes.

To achieve these objectives, the study is divided into two main components:

- **Quantitative Analysis:** This involves the examination of trends and correlations between nationalism and democracy using secondary data sources.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** This focuses on a detailed content analysis of government speeches and official documents to understand the nature and impact of government nationalism during the specific time period.

3.2 Explanation for Choosing the Period 2011-2017

The selection of the period 2011-2017 for our qualitative analysis is guided by several strategic considerations:

1. Availability of Data

- **World Values Survey Data:** The 2011-2017 period is primarily chosen due to the availability of the World Values Survey (WVS) data, which provides detailed insights into the public opinion and societal values of Azerbaijan during this timeframe. Conducted periodically, the WVS offers comprehensive datasets for Azerbaijan specifically for the years 2011 and 2017. These datasets are invaluable for analyzing changes in nationalism and its impact on democracy, allowing us to work within a clearly defined period.
- **Relevance of Data:** The WVS captures a broad range of socio-political indicators, making it a crucial source for examining Azerbaijani society's attitudes and perceptions towards nationalism and democracy. Focusing on this period enables us to leverage robust quantitative data, which in turn supports our qualitative analysis by providing context and depth to our findings.

2. Political Context and Stability

- **Single Leadership Period:** The years 2011-2017 coincide entirely with the presidency of Ilham Aliyev, which offer a consistent political backdrop for our analysis. This continuity allows us for an in-depth exploration of government nationalism policies without the confounding effects of leadership changes. The political stability during this period is essential for isolating the variables of interest in our study. What's more, as a country where the president holds most of the power, President Aliyev's nationalism can directly affect the nationalism direction of the government. We can almost ignore the influence of other parts of the government on the overall politics.
- **Economic Stability:** Azerbaijan experienced relative economic stability during these years, largely driven by its oil and gas sectors. This economic steadiness permits an examination of nationalism and democracy without the direct interference of economic crises or significant fluctuations in political power.

3. Key Political Events

- **Government Policies and Reforms:** Between 2011 and 2017, Azerbaijan undertook various political and economic reforms aimed at strengthening national identity and governance. These reforms include initiatives related to national education, language policies, and cultural promotion, all of which contribute to the broader discourse on nationalism. By focusing on this period, we can critically assess these initiatives and their implications for democratic governance.
- **International Relations:** This timeframe is marked by Azerbaijan's navigation of complex international relationships, particularly with Turkey, the EU, and the US. Understanding these interactions is crucial for analyzing how external actors influence Azerbaijan's nationalistic policies and their effects on democratic processes.

4. Comparative Analysis

- **Historical Context:** While our primary focus is on the 2011-2017 period, it is essential to consider Azerbaijan's political transitions within a broader historical context. Thus, our analysis also encompasses earlier periods, such as the post-Soviet transitions and leadership changes from the Popular Front to Heydar Aliyev and subsequently Ilham Aliyev. These transitions offer critical background information that helps contextualize the findings of the 2011-2017 analysis.
- **Dynamic Interactions:** By examining additional historical periods, we can assess the dynamic interactions between nationalism and democracy over time. This approach allows us to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving political landscape in Azerbaijan and offers insights into how past events continue to shape current political dynamics.

5. Significance of the Period in Understanding Democratic Trends

- **Decline in Democracy Scores:** The 2011-2017 period is notable for a significant decline in Azerbaijan's democracy scores, as observed in indices such as Freedom House. By concentrating on this timeframe, we aim to identify the underlying factors contributing to this decline and explore the role of nationalism in shaping democratic trends. This analysis is crucial for understanding the interplay between nationalist policies and democratic indicators during this period.

3.3 Consideration of Other Periods

In addition to the 2011-2017 focus, we incorporate a broader historical analysis to enrich our understanding of Azerbaijan's political landscape:

1. Post-Soviet Transition (1991-1993):

Historical Context: Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan experienced a period of rapid political transition, marked by the emergence of democratic movements and the eventual establishment of authoritarian governance under Heydar Aliyev. Analyzing this period helps contextualize the development of nationalism in Azerbaijan and provides insights into the initial democratization attempts and subsequent regression.

2. Transition from Popular Front to Heydar Aliyev (1993 Onwards):

Political Consolidation: Heydar Aliyev's rise to power signaled a significant shift towards authoritarianism. This period provides valuable insights into how nationalism was employed as a tool for political consolidation and control, offering a foundation for understanding current nationalist policies and their democratic implications.

3. Transition from Heydar to Ilham Aliyev (2003):

Continuity and Change: The transition from Heydar to Ilham Aliyev represents both continuity and change in governance, with a focus on maintaining stability and control. This period is critical for understanding the evolution of nationalism and its impact on democratic processes under Ilham Aliyev's presidency.

Economic Development: Economic policies during this transition, particularly the emphasis on oil and gas, have played a significant role in shaping Azerbaijan's national identity and international relations.

3.4 Quantitative Analysis

Our quantitative analysis draws upon secondary data from the World Values Survey and Freedom House to explore the relationship between nationalism and democracy. The WVS provides critical insights into public opinion on national identity, xenophobia, and democratic values, while Freedom House offers annual democracy scores with detailed assessments of political rights, civil liberties, and the rule of law.

- **Nationalism Indicators:** Measures of civic nationalism and xenophobia from the WVS.

- **Democracy Score:** The overall democracy score from Freedom House, alongside its subcomponents (political rights, civil liberties, and rule of law).

Given the constraints of available data, we employ descriptive statistics to summarize trends over time. While the data limitations prevent us from conducting more advanced statistical analyses like correlation or regression, descriptive statistics enable us to capture broad patterns and shifts within the data, providing valuable insights into the interactions between nationalism and democracy.

Our quantitative analysis spans a broader historical scope to contextualize recent developments within Azerbaijan's longer political history. By doing so, we aim to trace the evolution of nationalism and democracy across various political regimes and transitions, uncovering patterns that have influenced Azerbaijan's democratic trajectory over the decades.

3.5 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative component of our study involves an in-depth content analysis of government speeches and documents from Azerbaijani leaders during the 2011-2017 period. This timeframe allows us to closely examine government nationalism's nature and impact without the interference of leadership changes. By analyzing key sources, such as speeches by President Ilham Aliyev and official government documents, we aim to uncover how nationalism is framed and its intended impact on public perception and democratic institutions.

Content analysis involves systematic coding and categorization of themes within the texts, focusing on identifying references to national identity, exclusionary or inclusive rhetoric, and implications for democratic governance. Thematic analysis identifies recurring themes and patterns, examining how government nationalism is articulated and its effects on the public and democratic processes.

3.6 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

Our mixed-methods approach enhances the study's robustness by combining empirical evidence with in-depth qualitative insights. Quantitative data offers a foundational understanding of trends and correlations, while qualitative analysis provides context and depth, revealing the underlying mechanisms and dynamics at play.

We utilize triangulation to integrate findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses, creating a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan. This approach allows us to validate results

by comparing different data sources and methods, offering a more nuanced interpretation of the interplay between nationalist policies and democratic developments.

A dynamic interaction model is developed to explain the interactions between civil society nationalism, government nationalism, and external influences on democracy, informed by both quantitative trends and qualitative insights.

3.7 Limitations

While the study's primary focus is on the period from 2011 to 2017 for qualitative analysis, driven by the availability of World Values Survey data, we acknowledge the potential insights gained from examining earlier and later periods. The use of secondary data sources, such as the WVS and Freedom House, introduces limitations related to data accuracy and coverage, although these sources are among the most reliable available.

The findings are specific to Azerbaijan and may not be generalizable to other contexts. Comparative studies involving multiple countries could enhance the generalizability of our conclusions, offering a broader perspective on the interactions between nationalism and democracy across different settings.

4. Quantitative Analysis on Azerbaijan Civil Society Nationalism

In this part, we examine the trends in nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan from 2011 to 2017 using data from the World Values Survey (WVS) and the Freedom House Index. The study focuses on the decline in nationalism scores and democracy scores during this period, exploring the potential reasons behind these trends and the complex relationship between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan.

Data for this analysis was obtained from the WVS Wave 6 (Inglehart et al., 2014) and Wave 7 (Evs/ Wvs, 2024). Eight questions from the 2011 survey and seven from the 2017 survey were used to measure nationalism. The surveys were originally conducted in Azerbaijani and Russian, with official translations used for analysis. All the questions we selected can be used directly as measurements of their nationalism.

4.1 2011 WVS Survey

In order to distinguish and express them more easily, we directly use the variable numbers given by WVS, which are V39, V44, V46, V66, V107, V211, V212 and V214.

Nationalism scores were calculated using responses to specific survey questions. Scores ranged from -10 (extreme globalization) to 10 (extreme nationalism). The questions used, along with their corresponding variable numbers, choices, and scores, are detailed below:

Questions to V39 and V 44: Could you please say with which groups' representatives you would not live as a neighbor?
- **V 39 (2011) / V24 (2017)**: Immigrants, foreign workers.
- **V 44**: People who speak other language.
- **Choices**: Mentioned / Not Mentioned
- **Score**: 10 for mentioned, -10 for not mentioned

Question to V46: Do you agree, disagree or neither agree nor disagree with the following statements?
- **V46 (2011) / V80 (2017)**: When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to people of Azerbaijan than immigrants
- **Choices**: Agree / Neither / Disagree
- **Score**: 10 for agree, 0 for neither, -10n for disagree

- **V66 (2011) / V112 (2017)**: Of course, we all hope that there will not be another war. But if it takes place/happens, will you want to fight for your country?
- **Choices**: Yes / No / No answer / Unsure
- **Score**: 10 for yes, -10 for no, 0 for no answer and unsure

Question to V107: "Please tell me, to what degree do you trust to a various category of people? Completely? Somewhat? Not very much? Not at all? (Read and code one answer for each):
- **V107 (2011) / V37 (2017)**: People of another nationality
- **Choices**: Trust Completely / Trust Somewhat / Do not trust very much / Do not trust at all / Don't Know
- **Score**: -10 for trust completely, -5 for trust somewhat, 5 for don't trust very much, 10 for don't trust at all and 0 for don't know.

- **V211 (2011) / V170 (2017)**: How proud are you to be a citizen of Azerbaijan?
- **Choices**: Very Proud / Quite Proud / Not Very Proud / Not at All Proud
- **Score**: 10 for very proud, 5 for quite proud, -5 for not very proud, -10 for not at all proud.

Question to V212 and V214: People have different views about themselves, as well as about their country and the world. Using this card, indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about how you see yourself?
- **V212**: I see myself as a world citizen

- **Choices**: Strongly agree / Rather agree / Rather disagree / Strongly disagree
- **Score**: -10 for strongly agree, -5 for rather agree, 5 for rather disagree, 10 for strongly disagree

- **V214**: I see myself as citizen of the Azerbaijan nation
- **Choices**: Strongly agree / Rather agree / Rather disagree / Strongly disagree
- **Score**: 10 for strongly agree, 5 for rather agree, -5 for rather disagree, -10 for strongly disagree.

We calculate the proportion for each choice of each question, and then times by the score we assign to get the score for each question. The table is shown below. And the total final score for these eight questions is 26.24, average score is 3.28.

V39	Mentioned	Not Mentioned	Total
Number	407	595	1002
Proportion	40.62%	59.38%	100%
Score assigned	10	-10	
Score	4.06	-5.94	-1.88

V44	Mentioned	Not Mentioned	Total
Number	263	739	1002
Proportion	26.25%	73.75%	100.00%
Score assigned	10	-10	
Score	2.62	-7.38	-4.75

V46	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Total
Number	861	123	17	1002
Proportion	85.93%	12.28%	1.70%	100.00%
Score assigned	10	0	-10	
Score	8.59	0.00	-0.17	8.42

V66	Yes	No	No answer	Unsure	Total
Number	636	290	1	75	1002
Proportion	63.47%	28.94%	0.10%	7.49%	100.00%
Score assigned	10	-10	0	0	
Score	6.35	-2.89	0.00	0.00	3.45

V107	Trust Completely	Trust Somewhat	Do not trust very much	Do not trust at all	Don't know	Total
Number	48	222	340	343	48	1002
Proportion	4.79%	22.16%	33.93%	34.23%	4.79%	100.00%
Score assigned	-10	-5	5	10	0	
Score	-0.48	-1.11	1.70	3.42	0.00	3.53

V211	Very Proud	Quite Proud	Not Very Proud	Not at All Proud	Total
Number	724	201	54	23	1002
Proportion	72.26%	20.06%	5.39%	2.30%	100.00%
Score assigned	10	5	-5	-10	
Score	7.23	1.00	-0.27	-0.23	7.73

V212	Strongly agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Number	140	284	305	272	1002
Proportion	13.97%	28.34%	30.44%	27.15%	100.00%
Score assigned	-10	-5	5	10	
Score	-1.40	-1.42	1.52	2.71	1.42

V214	Strongly agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Number	780	174	28	21	1002
Proportion	77.84%	17.37%	2.79%	2.10%	100.00%
Score assigned	10	5	-5	-10	
Score	7.78	0.87	-0.14	-0.21	8.30

Table 1. Eight Questions and Scores about Nationalism in Azerbaijan from WVS in 2011

4.2 2017 WVS Survey

Then we pick up seven questions from World Value Survey (WVS) Wave 7, which was collected in 2017 in Azerbaijan. Because the wave 7 survey was collected by WVS and European Value Survey (EVS) together, the questionnaire was changed a little from Wave 6. Azerbaijan's data was actually collected by EVS.

However, there are still five questions among them remained unchanged. The seven questions are V22, V24, V37, V80, V170 and V184. The V24 (2017) is exactly the same

as V39 (2011), V37 (2017) equals to V107 (2011). Same situation among the V80 (2017) and V46 (2011), V112 (2017) and V66 (2011), V170 (2017) and V211(2011). The different two questions are:

Question to V22: On this list are various groups of people. Could you identify any that you would not like to have as neighbors?
- **V22**: People of a different race
- **Choices**: Mentioned / Not Mentioned / Don't know
- **Score**: 10 for mentioned, -10 for not mentioned, 0 for don't know.

- **V184**: Now we would like to know your opinion about the people from other countries who come to live in Azerbaijan - the immigrants. How would you evaluate the impact of these people on the development of the country?
- **Choices**: Very Good / Quite Good / Neither Good, Nor Bad / Quite Bad / Very Bad / Don't Know
- **Score**: -10 for very good, -5 for quite good, 0 for neither good nor bad, 5 for quite bad, 10 for very bad, and 0 for don't know.

Before calculate the score for 2017, there are some data we need to deal with. This questionnaire is allowed for not answer. So we have to exclude these data directly when calculating the ratio. If these people are neutral, they should choose "do not know" instead of not answering.

V22	Mentioned	Not Mentioned	Don't know	Total
Number	459	1214	123	1796
Proportion	25.56%	67.59%	6.85%	100.00%
Score assigned	10	-10	0	
Score	2.56	-6.76	0.00	-4.20

V24	Mentioned	Not Mentioned	Don't know	Total
Number	533	1150	120	1803
Proportion	29.56%	63.78%	6.66%	100.00%
Score assigned	10	-10	0	
Score	2.96	-6.38	0.00	-3.42

V37	Trust Completely	Trust Somewhat	Do not trust very much	Do not trust at all	Don't know	Total
Number	25	431	576	555	198	1785

Proportion	1.40%	24.15%	32.27%	31.09%	11.09%	100.00%
Score assigned	-10	-5	5	10	0	
Score	-0.14	-1.21	1.61	3.11	0.00	3.38

V80	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know	Total
Number	998	611	111	33	4	58	1815
Proportion	54.99%	33.66%	6.12%	1.82%	0.22%	3.20%	100.00%
Score assigned	10	5	0	-5	-10	0	
Score	5.50	1.68	0.00	-0.09	-0.02	0.00	7.07

V112	Yes	No	DK	Total
Number	1235	391	176	1802
Proportion	68.53%	21.70%	9.77%	100.00%
Score assigned	10	-10	0	
Score	6.85	-2.17	0.00	4.68

V170	Very Proud	Quite Proud	Not Very Proud	Not at All Proud	DK	Total
Number	1182	546	52	3	20	1803
Proportion	65.56%	30.28%	2.88%	0.17%	1.11%	100.00%
Score assigned	10	5	-5	-10	0	
Score	6.56	1.51	-0.14	-0.02	0.00	7.91

V184	Very good	Quite good	Neither good, nor bad	Quite bad	Very bad	DK	Total
Number	115	437	763	199	125	173	1812
Proportion	6.35%	24.12%	42.11%	10.98%	6.90%	9.55%	100.00%
Score assigned	-10	-5	0	5	10	0	
Score	-0.63	-1.21	0.00	0.55	0.69	0.00	-0.60

Table 2. Seven Questions and Scores about Nationalism in Azerbaijan from EVS in 2011

The total final score for these seven questions is 14.81, average score is 2.12. So we can see that the exclusive nationalism in Azerbaijan has dropped significantly between 2011 and 2017. Even the score of the 5 same questions has been dropped from 21.26 to 19.61. Overall, the consistent decrease in nationalism scores suggests a shift in

public sentiment towards more globalized and less nationalistic attitudes. This change might be influenced by various social, economic, and political factors.

For a more detailed analysis, let us look at the 5 same questions:

V39 (2011) and V24 (2017) asked about people's attitude towards foreigners and immigrant as their neighbor. This can reflect the "exclusive" character in nationalism definition. The proportion drops from 40.62% in 2011 to 29.56% in 2017. The notable decrease of over 11% in discomfort towards foreigners and immigrants indicates a reduction in exclusive nationalism. This suggests that Azerbaijanis have become more accepting of cultural diversity and external influences. This shift could be attributed to increased exposure to global cultures through media, migration, or economic exchanges, leading to a more inclusive societal mindset. For instance, the growth of international businesses and the rise in tourism in Azerbaijan have likely contributed to more frequent interactions with foreigners, fostering a more open and accepting attitude (Guliyev, 2013).

V 46 (2011) and V 80 (2017) asked about the priority of giving jobs to local country's citizens. The proportion didn't change a lot if we compare "Agree" in 2011 to total proportion of "Agree Strongly" and "Agree" in 2017 (85.93% - 88.66%) or "Disagree" in 2011 with "Disagree" and "Disagree Strongly" in 2017 (1.7%-2.04%). The slight increase in the proportion of people who agree that jobs should be prioritized for local citizens indicates a persistent protectionist sentiment in employment. However, the small rise in disagreement suggests a slow but emerging acknowledgment of the benefits of a more open labor market. This trend could be influenced by the need for specialized skills that foreign workers might bring, contributing to economic development (Cornell, 2011).

V 66 (2011) and V112(2017) examined people's loyalties to the country. The number of people willing to fight for the country increased by 5%, while the number of people unwilling to fight for the country decreased by 7%. The increase in willingness to fight for the country, coupled with a decrease in unwillingness, highlights a rise in patriotic sentiment. This could be influenced by ongoing regional conflicts or nationalistic propaganda emphasizing the importance of national defense. The Azerbaijani government's focus on national security and defense, particularly in light of recent military engagements, has likely bolstered patriotic sentiments among the populace (De Waal, 2004).

V211 (2011) and V170 (2017) examined people's honor to the country. We found that the proportion of people who are very proud and not at all proud is decreasing, while the proportion in the middle area is increasing. The movement towards moderate pride suggests a more balanced national sentiment. People may be becoming more critical and realistic about their national identity, possibly influenced by political, social,

and economic developments. This moderation could indicate a maturing national consciousness that recognizes both the strengths and weaknesses of the country. The evolving political landscape and economic challenges may have encouraged a more nuanced and critical view of national pride.

V 107 (2011) and V37 (2017) examined people's trust towards other nationality. From the data, the proportion of trust and don't trust both decrease, don't know answer increase. It may also indicate a period of transition where people are re-evaluating their attitudes towards other nationalities amidst changing global dynamics. The influence of global media and the internet may have exposed Azerbaijanis to more diverse perspectives, leading to increased uncertainty and re-evaluation of previously held beliefs (Pearce & Kendzior, 2012).
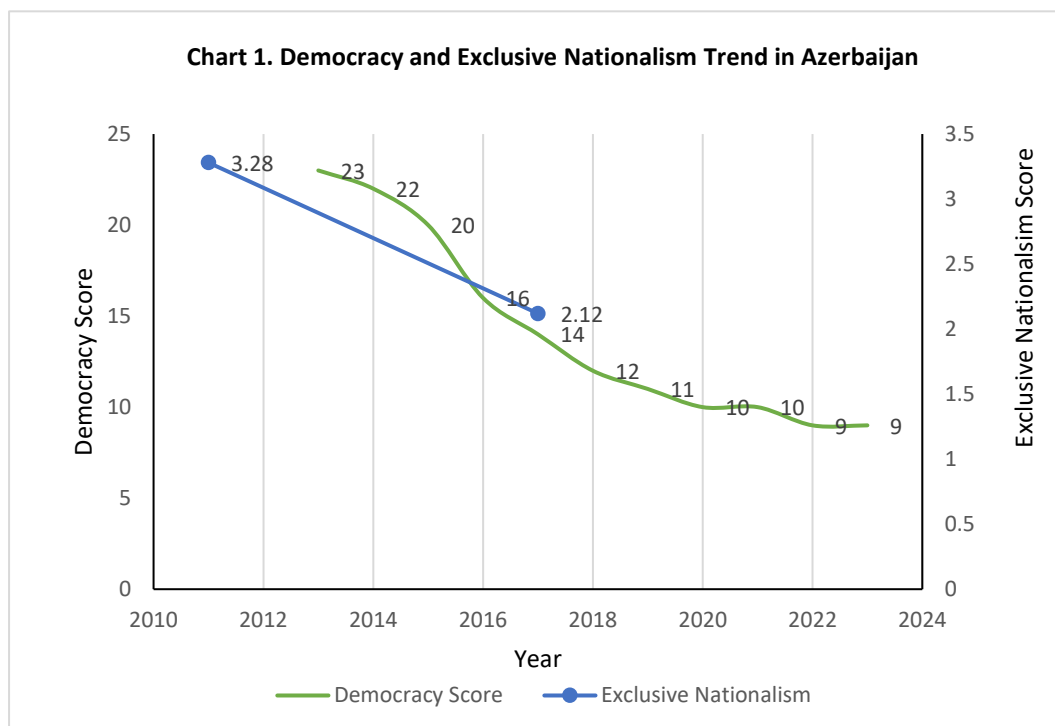
4.3 Democracy Score in Azerbaijan

To measure the influence of nationalism towards democracy, the next main variable we need to find is the democracy in Azerbaijan. We chose to use the democracy score index from Freedom House for several compelling reasons. Firstly, Freedom House is widely recognized as a reputable and authoritative source for assessing the state of political rights and civil liberties worldwide. Its comprehensive methodology, which combines quantitative data and qualitative analysis, ensures a nuanced and reliable evaluation of democratic governance. Secondly, the Freedom House democracy score index provides longitudinal data, allowing us to track changes and trends over time, which is crucial for our analysis of Azerbaijan's democratic trajectory for a long period. Lastly, the index covers various dimensions of democracy, including electoral processes, political pluralism, government functionality, and individual rights, offering a holistic view of the democratic environment in Azerbaijan. This multifaceted approach aligns with our objective to examine the complex interplay between nationalism and democracy.

The data we collected from Freedom House is from 2011 to 2023 in Azerbaijan. However, the data between 2011-2013 is just the ratings, without score. But due to the same Political Rights Rating and Civil Liberties Rating from 2011 to 2013, we can see the score did not change during the period and directly analyze the data from 2013. Freedom House assigned a country two ratings—one for political rights and one for civil liberties, which we can found on the Table 3. The ratings are based on its total scores for the political rights and civil liberties questions. Each rating of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the greatest degree of freedom and 7 the smallest degree of freedom, corresponded to a specific range of total scores (Freedom House, 2024).

Year	Political Rights Rating	Civil Liberties Rating	Electoral Process Score	Political Pluralism and Participation Score	Functioning of Government Score	Political Rights Score	Freedom of Expression and Belief Score	Associational and Organizational Rights	Rule of Law	Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights	Civil Liberties	Total Score
2011	6	5										
2012	6	5										
2013	6	5	1	3	2	6	4	2	4	7	17	23
2014	6	6	1	3	2	6	4	2	4	6	16	22
2015	6	6	1	3	2	6	4	1	3	6	14	20
2016	7	6	1	3	1	5	3	1	2	5	11	16
2017	7	6	1	2	1	4	2	1	2	5	10	14
2018	7	6	1	2	0	3	2	1	1	5	9	12
2019	7	6	0	2	0	2	2	1	1	5	9	11
2020	7	6	0	2	0	2	2	1	0	5	8	10
2021	7	6	0	2	0	2	2	1	0	5	8	10
2022	7	7	0	2	0	2	2	1	0	4	7	9
2023	7	7	0	2	0	2	2	1	0	4	7	9

Table 3. Freedom House Index in Azerbaijan

Chart 1. Democracy and Exclusive Nationalism Trend in Azerbaijan

As we can see from the Table 3, the democracy score for Azerbaijan has be declining all the time from 2013. The key indicators contributing to the decline include political rights, civil liberties and rule of laws. However, when putting the exclusive nationalism trend and democracy together in Chart 1, we would raise the problem. Why the democracy didn't increase when the exclusive nationalism in Azerbaijan was clearly declining? We will talk about that combining with the qualitative analysis in discussion part.

5. Qualitative Analysis on Government Nationalism

Analyzing government nationalism through Ilham Aliyev's speeches is a viable approach because presidential speeches serve as primary sources reflecting the official stance and priorities of the government. These speeches provide unfiltered insights into the leader's rhetoric and messaging, and often outline key policies and governmental actions, offering a clear picture of how nationalism is being promoted through state initiatives (Smith, 2010). By analyzing multiple speeches over time, consistent themes and messages can be identified, helping to understand the ongoing narrative the government is trying to build (Wodak, 2015). Tracking changes in rhetoric over time allows for an analysis of how nationalism evolves in response to internal and external events, thereby highlighting the government's adaptability and strategic shifts (Billig, 1995).

However, the approach has its strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, speeches are designed to influence public perception and foster a sense of national identity. They are a direct tool for the government to communicate with and mobilize the population, and their wide media coverage magnifies their impact and reach, making them significant sources for understanding public discourse on nationalism (Van Dijk, 2008). On the other hand, speeches can be carefully crafted to serve as propaganda, potentially skewing the perception of events and policies to favor the government's agenda (Herman & Chomsky, 1994). The government may selectively emphasize certain aspects of nationalism while downplaying or omitting others, leading to an incomplete picture. Furthermore, while speeches might not always translate into actual policies, the rhetoric of nationalism may not always be reflected in governmental actions or societal outcomes. This disconnect between policy and rhetoric can complicate the analysis (Fairclough, 2000).

Azerbaijan experienced a pronounced wave of nationalism under President Ilham Aliyev. This nationalism was articulated through various speeches and government actions, emphasizing national sovereignty, cultural pride, economic development, and the importance of historical memory. We will examine how the Azerbaijani government under Aliyev promoted nationalism through rhetoric and policy, and whether the nationalism promoted by the government was more exclusive or inclusive. All the following speeches are from Official web-site of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and had already been translated into English version.

To ensure a focused and comprehensive analysis, we selected speeches based on their relevance to core themes of nationalism, their contextual importance, and their impact. Speeches were chosen from the period 2011-2017 to capture the evolution of nationalism under Aliyev's presidency. We prioritized those delivered during significant national events, at international forums, and in response to major national or international occurrences. This selection process provides insight into how rhetoric translated into policy and action.

5.1 Territorial Integrity and Anti-Armenian Sentiment

A cornerstone of Azerbaijani nationalism during this period was the emphasis on national sovereignty and territorial integrity. President Aliyev's speeches frequently highlighted the unresolved conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh. In his 2016 speech at the 13th Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul, Aliyev underscored Azerbaijan's commitment to international law while criticizing Armenia's occupation. He stated, "For more than 20 years, Armenia has occupied almost 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory in violation of international law. As a result of this policy of aggression, more than one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons "(Aliyev, 2016). By portraying Armenia as the aggressor and invoking " Armenophobia," Ilham reinforced a narrative of victimhood and

resilience, galvanizing national unity against a common adversary (Jahanli, 2019). This rhetoric portrays Armenia as inherently hostile and perpetuates a narrative of enduring conflict and opposition.

Similarly, during the opening of the Guba Genocide Memorial in 2013, Ilham drew connections between historical events and ongoing conflicts, underscoring the atrocities committed by Armenians. He stated, "In March and July of 1918, the Armenian gangs committed an act of genocide against the civilian population almost on the entire territory of Azerbaijan. More than 50,000 of our fellow citizens became victims of Armenian fascism in a matter of five months" (Aliyev, 2013). By linking these historical grievances to contemporary issues, Aliyev reinforced a sense of historical victimhood and justified ongoing hostility, instilling exclusive nationalism in citizens.

5.2 Military Readiness and Patriotism

Another prominent aspect of Ilham's nationalism was the emphasis on military strength and readiness. This militaristic nationalism was framed as essential for the liberation of occupied territories and the defense of national sovereignty. In his speech at the military parade on the occasion of the 93rd anniversary of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces in 2011, Aliyev underscored the need for constant military preparedness. He stated, "The military power of our country is growing. We have purchased the most modern weaponry and equipment, created a strong military-industrial base, and ensured the army's highest level of combat readiness. We will continue to strengthen our military capabilities until our lands are liberated" (Aliyev, 2011). This focus on military strength served to instill a sense of patriotism and justice among Azerbaijanis and reinforced animosity towards Armenia.

5.3 Cultural Pride and Religious Identity

While Azerbaijan promoted itself as a center of multiculturalism and religious tolerance, this was often juxtaposed against the portrayal of Armenia as intolerant and aggressive. This narrative reinforced a sense of exclusive national identity by highlighting Azerbaijan's cultural and religious inclusivity in contrast to Armenian hostility. At the Fifth Baku International Humanitarian Forum in 2016, Ilham described Azerbaijan as a model of multiculturalism and tolerance, stating, " Although multiculturalism is a new concept, it has always been present in Azerbaijan. Regardless of the public and political system, Azerbaijan has always been a space of peace, cooperation and mutual understanding, and we cherish this tradition" (Aliyev, 2016a). By positioning Azerbaijan as a model of multiculturalism, he aimed to enhance national pride and promote a positive international image. This theme was further elaborated during the Seventh Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations on April 25, 2016, where Ilham stressed that "today Azerbaijan is a multiethnic, multiconfessional country where representatives of all religions and ethnic groups live

in dignity and peace. This is one of our biggest assets. And we are proud of our history. We are proud of our historical monuments which reflect the creation of representatives of different cultures" (Aliyev, 2016b). This narrative not only fostered internal cohesion by promoting inclusivity but also positioned Azerbaijan as a progressive and tolerant nation on the global stage. This narrative not only fostered internal cohesion by promoting inclusivity but also positioned Azerbaijan as a progressive and tolerant nation internationally, a strategic move to combine national pride with universal values of tolerance and diversity (Kymlicka, 2001).

5.4 Government Actions Towards Nationalism

Beyond rhetoric, the Azerbaijani government undertook various actions to promote nationalism. Nationwide festivities, such as the celebration of Novruz, played a significant role in fostering national identity. In a speech delivered during the 2012 Novruz holiday, Ilham emphasized the importance of national and spiritual values: " The people of Azerbaijan are committed to their national and spiritual values. Our state rests on these values. For twenty years, our attitude towards national values and respect for traditions have made us even stronger" (Aliyev, 2012a). Aliyev's government institutionalized Novruz celebrations, ensuring that the holiday was widely observed and recognized as a symbol of national unity and cultural heritage. This celebration of national holidays helped to embed cultural pride within the broader framework of state nationalism.

The 20th anniversary of the establishment of the "Yeni Azerbaijan Party" in 2012 also provided an opportunity for the government to reflect on its achievements and reinforce national pride. In a speech marking the occasion, Ilham emphasized the importance of his father, Heydar Aliyev, in maintaining Azerbaijan's independence and stability, and negated all the achievements of the previous Popular Front government:

The occupation of Shusha and Lachin in May 1992 was, of course, a great tragedy. But the new government which came to power in mid-1992 put our country in an even more deplorable situation. Due to its incompetence, lack of professionalism and treachery we were about to lose our independence. The negative processes taking place in the country, crisis, economic recession and political instability dealt a major blow to our independence. Under such circumstances, the bright people of our society, intellectuals, people enjoying great respect rallied around great leader Heydar Aliyev and decided to establish the "Yeni Azerbaijan Party (YAP)" (Aliyev, 2012b)*.*

Through this comparison, the Azerbaijani government is constantly discrediting the Popular Front party and the democratic politics it represents in people's minds, implicitly expressing that the opposition is incompetent and untrustworthy and will bring chaos and poverty to the country. All those celebrations of independence served to reinforce the national pride with the state's, especially Aliyev families' achievements.

While Azerbaijan's nationalism during this period included elements of inclusive rhetoric, particularly around multiculturalism and religious tolerance, these themes were predominantly showcased in international speeches. Such displays appeared aimed at enhancing Azerbaijan's image abroad, rather than genuinely promoting inclusivity within the nation. In these international speeches, President Ilham Aliyev often juxtaposed Azerbaijan's multiculturalism against Armenia's alleged intolerance and aggression, reinforcing a narrative of Armenia as the perpetual antagonist.

The focus on territorial disputes, historical victimhood, military strength, and national pride against external threats, particularly Armenia, suggests a nationalism that was more defensive and exclusionary. This exclusionary nationalism was evident in the government's actions and rhetoric that emphasized the importance of maintaining territorial integrity and defending national sovereignty against perceived external threats (Smith, 2009). The commemoration of historical events, the emphasis on military readiness, and the promotion of economic independence all served to foster a cohesive national identity centered around resilience, strength, and a sense of historical justice (Anderson, 2006).

In summary, the nationalism promoted by the Azerbaijani government during Ilham Aliyev in presidency was characterized by a strong emphasis on territorial integrity, historical memory, military strength, cultural pride, and strong political capabilities. While inclusive elements were present, especially in international forums, the predominant themes shown to Azerbaijan citizens were defensive and exclusionary. This reflects the ongoing conflict with Armenia and the broader geopolitical context in which Azerbaijan sought to assert its sovereignty and national identity.

6. Discussions

The intricate relationship between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan reveals a complex interplay of historical, political, and social factors. This discussion aims to dissect this relationship by examining the influence of nationalism on democracy through two primary lenses: civil society and government. To comprehensively understand this relationship, it is crucial to analyze the distinct roles and impacts of these two entities on Azerbaijan's democratic processes.

6.1 Relationship Between Nationalism and Democracy

From our data analysis, it appears that civil society in Azerbaijan has had limited influence on the country's democratization. This is evident in the consistent decline in nationalism and democracy scores over the years. However, this raises an important question: why did civil society manage to influence Azerbaijan's democratization

process successfully during the early 1990s, particularly from 1991 to 1993?

During the initial years of independence, civil society in Azerbaijan played a pivotal role in advocating for democratic reforms and national self-determination. The period saw a surge in civic nationalism, which helped catalyze a brief phase of democratization. This was a time of significant political and economic turmoil, which weakened the government's control and allowed civil society to exert considerable influence. For instance, the Popular Front, a civic nationalist movement, managed to lead the country towards its first democratic elections in 1992, briefly establishing a more open and participatory political system.

However, the subsequent years saw a reversal of these gains. The onset of economic difficulties and the protracted conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (NKAR) eroded public confidence in democratic institutions, paving the way for authoritarianism. The failure of the democratic government to address these crises effectively resulted in a loss of support, enabling Heydar Aliyev to consolidate power in 1993 and establish an authoritarian regime that curtailed civil society's influence.

Qualitative analysis of government nationalism, particularly through presidential speeches and policies, indicates that the government's stance has had a significant impact on Azerbaijan's democratization process. The government's nationalism has oscillated between inclusive and exclusive forms, often leaning towards the latter, which has negatively impacted democratic development.

When government nationalism adopts an exclusionary tone, emphasizing ethnic homogeneity and suppressing minority rights, it tends to correlate with a decline in democratic practices. For instance, President Ilham Aliyev's speeches during the 2011-2017 period frequently emphasized national unity and sovereignty in ways that marginalized dissent and justified stringent control over political and civil liberties. This exclusionary nationalism, coupled with centralized power, has contributed to the erosion of democratic norms and institutions.

On the other hand, inclusive nationalism, which embraces diversity and promotes equal rights for all citizens, could potentially foster democratization. However, in Azerbaijan's case, the predominance of exclusionary nationalist rhetoric has undermined democratic processes. This dynamic suggests that the relationship between civil society and government nationalism is one of dynamic equilibrium. When the state is unstable or weakened, civil society's nationalism can influence democratization. Conversely, in a more stable state, the government's nationalism, particularly that of the president, exerts a stronger influence on the country's democratic trajectory.

This hypothesis is supported by historical examples, such as the situation in 1993. Due

to economic problems and the ongoing NKAR war, public confidence in democracy waned, enabling an authoritarian leader to rise to power. The weakened state apparatus allowed for a brief period where civil society could influence democratic reforms, but as the state stabilized under authoritarian rule, government nationalism took precedence, suppressing democratic movements.

One plausible hypothesis is that the influence of civil society on Azerbaijan's democratization is dynamically balanced by the government's nationalist stance. In periods of instability, the government's control weakens, allowing civil society's nationalism to play a more prominent role in advocating for democracy. Conversely, in more stable times, the government's nationalist agenda dominates, stifling civil society's efforts. This hypothesis is supported by the events of 1993, where economic turmoil and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict eroded public confidence in democracy, paving the way for authoritarian rule under Heydar Aliyev.

Qualitative analysis indicates that the government's nationalist posture significantly impacts Azerbaijan's democratization process. The more exclusionary and xenophobic the government's nationalism, the less democratic the state becomes. This relationship suggests a zero-sum game where government nationalism and democratic progress are inversely related. During periods of political turmoil, such as the early 1990s, the government's weakened control allowed for civil society's nationalist elements to push for democratic reforms. However, as stability returned, the government reasserted its power, promoting a brand of nationalism that emphasized unity and strength over democratic principles. The resurgence of authoritarianism in 1993 exemplifies this dynamic, where economic woes and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict disillusioned the public, enabling a strongman leader to rise to power.

This dynamic balance theory posits that the interplay between civil society and government nationalism is crucial to understanding Azerbaijan's democratic trajectory. When the government is weak, civil society's nationalist aspirations can influence democratization. However, as stability is restored, the government's nationalist agenda prevails, curtailing democratic progress. This pattern is evident in the cyclical nature of Azerbaijan's political landscape.

6.2 Innovations and Contributions of This Thesis

One of the key innovations of this study is its differentiated analysis of nationalism by examining its impact through three distinct entities: civil society, government, and external actors. Traditional studies often treat nationalism as a monolithic entity, making broad generalizations about its relationship with democracy. However, by distinguishing between the nationalism expressed by civil society and that propagated by the government, as well as considering the influence of external actors, this study

provides a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of how nationalism affects democratic processes in Azerbaijan. This approach allows for a clearer identification of the specific mechanisms through which different types of nationalism either support or hinder democratization.

This thesis also innovatively incorporates qualitative analysis of government nationalism by examining speeches and policies of the Azerbaijani government. This method delves deeper into the rhetoric and intentions behind government actions, revealing how exclusionary nationalist rhetoric has been used to consolidate power and suppress democratic movements. By focusing on the qualitative aspects of nationalism, this study captures the subtleties and nuances of political discourse that quantitative methods might overlook. For instance, analyzing President Ilham Aliyev's speeches from 2011 to 2017 highlights how his emphasis on national unity and sovereignty often justified restrictive measures against political opposition and civil liberties.

The integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods represents another significant innovation in this study. The quantitative analysis, primarily based on data from the World Values Survey and Freedom House, provides empirical evidence of trends in nationalism and democracy. This is complemented by qualitative insights from government documents and speeches, which contextualize and deepen the understanding of these trends. This mixed-methods approach mitigates the subjectivity often associated with qualitative research and adds robustness to the findings. By blending these methodologies, the study achieves a more holistic and credible analysis of the relationship between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan.

6.3 Drawbacks

A notable limitation of this study is its focus on the period between 2011 and 2017. This relatively short time frame might not fully capture the long-term trends and fluctuations in nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan. Nationalism and democratic processes are dynamic and can undergo significant changes over extended periods. Future research could benefit from expanding the temporal scope to include earlier periods, such as the immediate post-independence years, as well as more recent developments. This broader perspective would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving relationship between nationalism and democracy.

What's more, the study primarily relies on secondary data sources, such as the World Values Survey and Freedom House reports. While these sources are valuable, they come with inherent limitations regarding coverage, accuracy, and potential biases. For example, the Freedom House democracy scores, although widely used, may not fully capture the complexities of the political situation in Azerbaijan. Additionally, reliance on secondary data limits the ability to tailor the analysis to specific research questions.

Future studies could enhance the reliability and depth of findings by incorporating primary data collection methods, such as surveys, interviews, and field observations.

Another significant drawback is that the data source of civic society is too sole. Although we can collect citizens' social media data or other media content for analysis, it is too time-consuming and resource-intensive. Social media data, while rich and potentially insightful, requires extensive processing and validation to ensure its reliability and relevance, such as Wibowo et al. (2021) did. Moreover, the variability in social media usage across different demographics and regions can introduce additional biases and inconsistencies. Future research could explore more diverse data sources and employ advanced data collection and analysis techniques to overcome these challenges.

The findings of this study are highly specific to Azerbaijan and may not be easily generalizable to other contexts. The unique political, cultural, and historical factors in Azerbaijan shape the relationship between nationalism and democracy in ways that might differ significantly from other countries. While this case study provides valuable insights, it is essential to recognize that the dynamics observed here might not apply universally. Comparative studies involving multiple countries with varying levels of nationalism and democracy could help identify broader patterns and variations, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the conclusions drawn.

Conclusion

The relationship between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan is multifaceted and deeply intertwined with the country's historical, political, and socio-economic context. This thesis has explored this relationship by dissecting the roles of civil society, and government, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis. The findings highlight the dynamic and often cyclical nature of Azerbaijan's political landscape, where moments of democratic potential are frequently overshadowed by authoritarian retrenchment driven by nationalist rhetoric and policies.

Nationalism in Azerbaijan has acted as both a catalyst for and an impediment to democratization. In the early 1990s, nationalist sentiments were pivotal in mobilizing the population against Soviet rule, leading to the establishment of an independent Azerbaijani state. The Azerbaijan Popular Front harnessed these sentiments to advocate for democratic reforms, culminating in the country's first free elections in 1992. However, the initial optimism was short-lived as economic instability, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and internal political strife quickly undermined the fledgling democracy.

The subsequent rise of Heydar Aliyev marked a significant shift towards

authoritarianism. Aliyev's government adeptly used nationalism to consolidate power, portraying opposition groups and democratic movements as threats to national unity and stability. This strategy not only marginalized civil society but also entrenched an exclusionary form of nationalism that prioritized state sovereignty and cultural pride over democratic principles. The cyclical pattern observed in Azerbaijan's political development suggests that while nationalism can galvanize democratic movements, it can equally be manipulated to sustain authoritarian rule.

Civil society in Azerbaijan has faced significant challenges in influencing the country's democratization process. The brief democratic transition in the early 1990s was heavily supported by civil society organizations and movements, which leveraged nationalist sentiments to push for political reforms. However, the collapse of the Soviet economic system and the protracted Nagorno-Karabakh conflict severely weakened these efforts. The inability of the Popular Front to address these crises effectively led to public disillusionment and the eventual rise of authoritarianism.

The dynamic balance theory posited in this thesis suggests that civil society's impact on democratization is contingent upon the political and economic stability of the country. During periods of instability, such as the early 1990s, civil society can exert significant influence. However, as stability returns, the government's nationalist agenda tends to dominate, stifling civil society's efforts. This pattern underscores the importance of a robust and resilient civil society for sustained democratic progress. Yet, in Azerbaijan, civil society has often been too weak or too fragmented to counterbalance the government's authoritarian tendencies effectively.

The Azerbaijani government's nationalist posture has played a crucial role in shaping the country's democratic trajectory. Under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev and later his son Ilham Aliyev, the government has employed a brand of nationalism that emphasizes unity, sovereignty, and cultural pride, often at the expense of democratic values. This exclusionary nationalism has been instrumental in consolidating power, framing dissent as unpatriotic, and legitimizing repressive measures.

Presidential speeches and government actions analyzed in this thesis reveal a consistent pattern of using nationalism to bolster the regime's legitimacy. For instance, rhetoric surrounding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict often portrays Armenia as an existential threat, rallying nationalist sentiment to justify authoritarian policies. Government initiatives that promote cultural pride and historical achievements further reinforce this narrative, creating a sense of national identity that is closely tied to the regime's stability. This approach has effectively marginalized opposition and curtailed democratic freedoms, illustrating how nationalism can be leveraged to entrench authoritarian rule.

What's more, external actors, including international organizations and foreign

governments, have had a complex and often limited impact on Azerbaijan's democratization process. While they possess the potential to influence the Azerbaijani government through diplomatic pressure and economic incentives, their effectiveness is frequently constrained by geopolitical considerations and the government's strategic responses.

The West's strategic interest in Azerbaijan, particularly its oil and gas reserves, has often led to a trade-off between promoting democracy and securing energy supplies. This pragmatic approach has limited the pressure exerted on the Azerbaijani government to implement meaningful democratic reforms. For instance, the European Union's engagement with Azerbaijan has typically focused more on energy cooperation than on human rights and democratic governance. As a result, superficial democratic concessions made by the government during periods of significant international scrutiny are often quickly reversed once external pressure diminishes.

This thesis makes several methodological contributions to the study of nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan. By disaggregating nationalism into three distinct entities—civil society, government, and external actors—it provides a nuanced understanding of how these elements interact and influence the country's political landscape. This approach allows for a more detailed analysis of the specific roles and impacts of each entity, revealing the complex and often contradictory nature of nationalism's relationship with democracy.

The use of presidential speeches to gauge government nationalism is another innovative aspect of this research. This method offers direct insights into the government's stance on nationalism and its implications for democratic governance. By analyzing the rhetoric employed by Ilham Aliyev, the thesis highlights how nationalist discourse is used to consolidate power and justify repressive measures. This qualitative analysis is complemented by quantitative data from surveys and indices, reducing subjectivity and enhancing the robustness of the conclusions drawn.

Despite its contributions, this thesis also acknowledges several limitations. The limited availability of comprehensive data, particularly on the influence of civil society and external actors, constrains the ability to draw definitive conclusions. Qualitative analysis, while insightful, inherently carries some degree of bias. Future research should aim to incorporate more objective measures and longitudinal studies to fully understand the long-term effects of nationalism on democracy in Azerbaijan. This would provide a more comprehensive picture of the evolving relationship between these two critical aspects of the country's political development.

The findings of this thesis have significant policy implications for both domestic and international stakeholders. For domestic policymakers, the importance of fostering a resilient and independent civil society cannot be overstated. Strengthening civil

society organizations and providing them with the resources and space to operate freely is essential for sustained democratic progress. Efforts should also be made to address economic challenges and resolve conflicts like the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, which have historically undermined democratic efforts.

For international actors, a more consistent and principled approach to promoting democracy and human rights in Azerbaijan is necessary. This includes balancing strategic interests with the imperative to support democratic reforms and holding the Azerbaijani government accountable for its human rights record. Sustained diplomatic pressure, coupled with targeted economic incentives, could encourage the government to adopt more meaningful and lasting democratic reforms.

The cyclical nature of Azerbaijan's political development, characterized by alternating periods of democratic potential and authoritarian retrenchment, underscores the need for a holistic and sustained approach to promoting democracy. By adopting a nuanced, multi-faceted analytical framework, this thesis sheds light on the intricate dynamics that shape Azerbaijan's political landscape. Future research should continue to explore these relationships, leveraging more comprehensive data and innovative methodologies to enhance our understanding of nationalism's role in democratization.

In conclusion, while the path to democracy in Azerbaijan remains fraught with challenges, a deeper understanding of the interplay between nationalism and democratic development provides valuable insights for both scholars and policymakers. By addressing the underlying factors that influence this relationship, there is potential to foster a more inclusive and democratic political environment in Azerbaijan, paving the way for a more stable and prosperous future.

Summary

This thesis has advanced our understanding of the complex interplay between nationalism and democracy in Azerbaijan. The findings underscore the importance of considering both civil society and government perspectives when analyzing democratic processes, as well as the need to account for the dynamic nature of these relationships over time. The insights gained from this study contribute to the broader discourse on nationalism and democracy, offering valuable lessons for other countries experiencing similar political dynamics.

Souhrn

Tato práce posunula naše chápání složité souhry mezi nacionalismem a demokracií v Ázerbájdžánu. Zjištění podtrhují důležitost zohlednění perspektivy občanské společnosti i vlády při analýze demokratických procesů a také potřebu zohlednit dynamickou povahu těchto vztahů v čase. Poznatky získané z této studie přispívají k

širšímu diskurzu o nacionalismu a demokracii a nabízejí cenné ponaučení pro další země, které zažívají podobnou politickou dynamiku.

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