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**TITLE:** On the development of spiritual culture  
and cultural studies in Azerbaijan

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**Abstract.** In the process of building a democratic society and a state governed by the rule of law in Azerbaijan, one of the most pressing issues that influence the sustainable social development of the country is the problem of achieving harmony in gender relations. Considering this problem, it is easy to notice that the universal basis for its solution, however, as well as many other social problems, is culture. The level of production and political activity of people, the effectiveness of organization and management, the ecology of man and nature, the culture of peace, the protection of human rights, the progress of social and international relations depend on the level of development of the spiritual culture of society.

**Keywords:** culture, spiritual culture, Azerbaijan, development

Culturology, the science of creative human life, plays an irreplaceable ideological and methodological role in the development of spiritual and material culture as an integral system. As a result of long-term development, today culturology *has become a universal scientific, theoretical and methodological basis* for solving complex systemic problems. It allows, ahead of social reality, to formulate new historical tasks for the solution of which objective conditions have matured. Based on the analysis of the historical experience of the development of world culture and civilization, *culturology* forms a system of values reflecting the vital interests of the people. It creates the prerequisites for the correct definition of strategic goals and objectives, setting priorities for state building. Due to this, the development of Azerbaijani society and the state should be based on *culturological methodology* and systemic research principles, the totality of which makes it possible to form an objective scientific worldview, a holistic vision of the development of man, society and the state in space and time.

**“Cultural studies in Azerbaijan – Fuad Mamedov”**

For the first time in Azerbaijan, systematic cultural studies were launched in 1990 by the Azerbaijan Cultural Association "Simurg", which laid the foundations of cultural studies in the republic. The association was established in April 1990, with the aim of assisting the state in developing spiritual culture and modernizing Azerbaijani society, based on cultural studies and creative application in the republic of progressive experience in the development of world culture and civilization.

In order to promote the development of cultural studies, education and enlightenment in Azerbaijan, the Association developed the project of the International University of World Culture for the first time, organized the permanent Baku Cultural Studies Seminar "Culture and Society", the Public School of Cultural Studies, founded the Society of Cultural Studies of Azerbaijan (under which the Society of Young Cultural Studies also operates) and the International Forum of Culture of Civil Society. In the interests of developing national cultural studies, AKA "Simurg" organized a number of special cultural studies seminars for young people, developed a concept of industrial practice for students-cultural studies. The Association also prepared for the first time a list of cultural studies specialties and applied to the Higher Attestation Commission of Azerbaijan with a petition to create a Council for the Defense of Dissertations in Cultural Studies, which has been successfully functioning at the Azerbaijan University of Culture and Arts for several years.

The Association has published about 100 scientific and educational works, including 8 monographs, books and collections, made dozens of television and radio appearances on the issues of culture and cultural studies, developed concepts and practical proposals for the government aimed at socio-cultural progress in Azerbaijan. Within the framework of the permanent cultural seminar "Culture and Society" regularly held by the Association since 1990, over 200 seminars, conferences, trainings, round tables, focus groups on various topics of the history and theory of national and world culture and civilization have been organized over the years of the republic's independence. Currently, the Association, in cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, is preparing for publication the first issue of the cultural journal "Simurg" dedicated to the issues of the history and theory of national and world culture and civilization.

AKA "Simurg" worthily represents the cultural science of Azerbaijan, promotes the history and achievements of the Azerbaijani national culture at international forums in Russia, the USA, Costa Rica, Thailand, Turkey, Norway, Bulgaria, Hungary, France, Korea and other countries. Books on cultural studies published by the Association are used in the libraries of the UN, the Council of Europe, the US Congress, the Club of Rome, INALCO, as well as in state libraries of Russia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Austria and other countries. The contribution of the Association to the development of domestic and world cultural studies has received high praise from the International Academy of Sciences "Problems of Intellectual Development", the Russian Academy of Pedagogical and Social Sciences, the Russian Institute of Cultural Studies, the American Biographical Institute, and has been awarded the national public prizes "Humai" (2002) and "Intellect" (2006).

For promoting the development and promotion of spiritual culture, science and education, including for their contribution to the development of cultural science and education, progress in medicine, art and journalism, dozens of prominent representatives of national culture and the country's youth have been awarded the National Public Honorary Title "Ambassador of Culture", the international medal "Simurg", honorary and gratitude certificates, certificates "The Most Cultured Family", "For Excellent Studies" and others. For their contribution to the development of a culture of peace and peacekeeping activities, more than 100 of the most authoritative members of the Association, mainly academicians and corresponding members of the National Academy of Sciences, famous professors and specialists, have been awarded the International Honorary Title "Ambassador". for Peace."

In order to promote a correct understanding of culture as a way of life and an integral social system, we have developed a number of cultural approaches and formulas that open up qualitatively new possibilities for more effective and harmonious development of man, society and the state. These are formulas for the effectiveness of culture, socio-cultural progress, management effectiveness, the efficiency and entropy of culture, the universal method of the cultural pyramid and others.

Based on the national interests of Azerbaijan, on the basis of many years of cultural studies of the historical experience of the development of world culture and civilization, we have defined the strategic objectives of socio-cultural policy and developed practical recommendations aimed at the development of Azerbaijani culture, sustainable, competitive and safe development of the republic in the context of globalization and new challenges of the time.

***For the effective development of national culture in the context of building a knowledge society and a globalizing world, it is necessary:***

**Firstly**, at the state level, we must reconsider outdated ideas and stereotypes of the abstract understanding of culture as a “superstructure” over the economy and adopt as the basis for the practical activities of society and the state its scientific understanding as an integral social system, as a creative human activity, its achievements and technologies, and consider spiritual culture as a combination of intellectual and moral culture.

**Secondly**, to continue fundamental reforms of the system and structure of culture, ensuring its viability, increasing the historical mission and social value of elite culture, legal and financial support for the social status of cultural figures, primarily science and education, as strategic social institutions of culture, ensuring the progress of society and the state.

**Thirdly**, to improve the socio-cultural policy, establishing new priorities in it that meet the needs of the time – intellectual, ethical, legal and managerial culture. The effectiveness of these priorities, necessary for the development of human capital and, above all, the intellectual potential of the state, must be ensured by appropriate organizational, legal and financial mechanisms, the development and implementation of special, scientifically based state programs and projects.

**Fourthly**, to ensure state institutionalization of cultural studies as a science and academic discipline in Azerbaijan, to create conditions for specialized training of cultural experts and their productive use in various fields of state building, management and international relations, in accordance with the national interests of the country, constant dialectical changes in world civilization and globalization trends. To ensure constant cultural training and retraining of officials at all levels, their in-depth study of history, theory and practical experience of development of world and domestic culture, as well as systematic cultural education of various segments of the population.

**Fifthly**, to ensure cooperation and partnership of the Ministry of Culture with leading non-governmental organizations possessing high intellectual and professional potential, dealing with such strategic issues as cultural education, research and public awareness. To provide significant funding for these organizations from the state budget, their moral, organizational and technical support from the state.

Our comparative cultural analysis of the historical experience of a number of democratic countries allows us to assert that three main principles should be the basis for the progressive development of Azerbaijan at the present stage: the advanced development of intellectual and moral culture, a healthy national idea and the democratization of national culture. These

principles underlie the historical gains of progressive countries of the world. The correctness of this thesis is also evidenced by our own historical experience, based on the progressive ideas and practical activities of Abbasgulu Aga Bakikhanov, Mirza Kazembek, Mirza Shafi Vazekh, Mirza Fatali Azundov, Hasanbek Zardabi, Ahmed Aga oglu, Alibek Huseynzade, Mammad Amin. Rasulzade and other educators and modernists of Azerbaijan in the 19th - early 20th centuries. This pattern gives grounds to believe that these principles should be laid in the foundation of the new socio-cultural policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, aimed at achieving high dynamics of progressive changes in the development of Azerbaijani society.

In order to scientifically promote the development of national culture, improve the socio-cultural policy of Azerbaijan and ensure effective practical activities aimed at preserving the cultural heritage and modernizing the Azerbaijani society, we have **developed for the first time a universal cultural approach to the systemic analysis of complex problems of human development based on the study of world cultural thought**. We have called it the "***Formula of Creation***" (or the "*Universal Method of the Cultural Pyramid*"). This *universal method* includes **three logical levels of cognition and transformation of culture**, opening up new opportunities for increasing the pace and quality of development of society, the state and humanity, as well as contributing to the improvement of man himself. These hierarchically interconnected levels, including **eight steps**, are consistently defined by us as **the levels of "research", "understanding" and "wisdom and creation"**.

**The first level - "research"** - is based on the analysis of four stages of knowledge - essence, features, history and achievements. To study these stages, a set of seven *cultural research principles is used - quantitative, qualitative, structural, functional, temporal, spatial and comparative*.

**The second level - "understanding"**, involves understanding and assimilation of specific or universal laws of development and technologies of certain areas of human activity or the life of a person, society, state and humanity as a whole.

**The third level - "creation"**, involves the development of new, competitive life technologies, using methods of active cultural genesis, as well as the construction of the future development of culture in space and time.

As a methodological basis of our approach, we have chosen a combination of the three traditional methodological principles mentioned above – the principle of historicism, logic and dialectics. At the same time, along with the methods of deductive, inductive, metaphysical and dialectical logic, we have used for the first time the fuzzy logic of Lotfi Zadeh, which opens up qualitatively new possibilities for cultural studies.

Ascending the steps of such an intellectual pyramid, comprehending its three logical levels of knowledge and transformation, contributes to the formation and improvement of individuals and leaders and, through the achievement of a high spiritual culture, opens the way to effective human life.

Understanding the laws of development and life technologies, discovered through a systematic cultural analysis of the historical experience of the development of world culture and civilization, makes it possible to improve existing and create new, logically more effective cultural models of national development that meet the challenges of the time.

The significance of the universal method of the cultural pyramid is that it can be used for the systemic analysis of the most diverse areas of human activity, for the correct solution of complex

individual, social, state and international problems, the development of modern models and forecasts of human development, state building and management.

It seems to us that the use of the cultural-logical approach we have developed opens up qualitatively new opportunities for the improvement of man and the practical solution of the problems of sustainable development of Azerbaijan in new historical conditions - the conditions of globalization and the transition of world civilization to a knowledge society, as well as for predicting a better future for the country.

Based on the “Formula of Creation”, AKA “ Simurg ” has developed the following practical recommendations aimed at ensuring socio-cultural progress in Azerbaijan:

- ② Conducting the National Decade of Cultural Development.
- ② Adoption of a law aimed at institutionalizing cultural studies as a science and academic discipline in Azerbaijan, as well as establishing new priorities for cultural policy that ensure the accelerated development of intellectual, ethical, legal and managerial culture.
- ② Opening of the International University of World Culture in Baku.
- ② Creation of the State Council for Culture.
- ② Opening of the Institute of Cultural Studies and the Institute of Cultural Management.
- ② Opening of cultural studies departments in universities of Azerbaijan.
- ② Introduction of cultural studies as a compulsory course of study in all universities and cultural studies in secondary schools.
- ② Creation of centers of democratic culture in the regions of Azerbaijan.
- ② Organization of cultural trainings on the culture of democratic governance for officials at all levels.
- ② Financial support for the School of Cultural Studies of the AKA " Simurg " and other projects of the Association from the state budget.
- ② Establishment of stable cooperation and partnership between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Azerbaijan Cultural Association, which has high intellectual potential and experts in the field of cultural studies.
- ② Implementation of joint cultural projects, including summer camps for children and youth, television cultural programs and other innovations.

The implementation of these proposals, overcoming the above-mentioned difficulties and shortcomings requires intense scientific, educational, ideological, and upbringing work by state and non-governmental structures. The effectiveness of this activity will depend on the active educational work of the entire intelligentsia of the republic - scientists and teachers, politicians and administrators, public figures and entrepreneurs, diplomats and journalists, specialists in a wide range of fields and youth, on raising the level of cultural management, coordination, and effective use of all forces and resources of the republic's culture.

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The intelligentsia of Azerbaijan and, first of all, the cultural scientists of the republic, must realize their historical responsibility for searching for ways and models to improve the quality of life, to create a better future for the culture of the Azerbaijani people, society and state. The time has come to create a serious national school of cultural scientists, which should stand in the vanguard of the intelligentsia of Azerbaijan, struggling to achieve progressive changes in the national culture, to ensure sustainable socio-cultural, including economic development, facilitating the transition to a civil society in the political dimension, and an industrial-information society in the historical-cultural dimension. The *development of cultural studies* should receive the status of most favored nation in Azerbaijan from the state.

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