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# GLOBALIZATION AND ANTI-GLOBALIZATION

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## A GLOBALIZATION PROJECT IN PRACTICE? THE EU'S CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN AZERBAIJAN IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

**Shamkhal Abilov**

*Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University,  
Humboldt University of Berlin*

**Beyrak Hajiyev**

*Khazar University*

**Ceyhun Mahmudlu**

*Cornell University*

*This paper argues that, besides being a repercussion of natural or quasi-natural processes, globalization is also the consequence of globalization projects implemented by various actors. By this, the research aims at demystifying globalization to a great extent by bringing it down to the ground and making it traceable. Since the mid-nineteenth century, to gain control of global flows of labor, services, goods, entrepreneurship, and ideas actors under global conditions issued various projects, and implementation of what led to the globalization of convergence and divergence, integration and fragmentation, peace and war. In this respect, the paper studies the EU's cultural and educational policies in Azerbaijan in the framework of the Eastern Partnership programme to find out how cultural globalization unfolds via the EU's (globalization) project? According to the findings, the EU actively uses the agency of culture to do so. In the framework of the fourth platform (contacts between people) of the Eastern Partnership Program, the values and the norms the EU aspires to spread in the world transcend the border and facilitate the re-territorialization of its eastern neighborhood toward the EU.*

**Keywords:** *cultural globalization, globalization project, the EU, Eastern Partnership Programme, Azerbaijan.*

### **Introduction**

Globalization has multiple interpretations. Daniel Citrin and Stanley Fischer, experts in the International Monetary Fund, refer to globalization as the internationalization of capital due to growing economic interdependence and widespread diffusion of technol-

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ogy (Citrin and Fisher 2000: 19). Antony Giddens and David Harvey in sociology elaborate on the term from the angle of time-space compression and increased interconnectedness thanks to massive innovations in transportation and communication technologies (in Jones 2010: 6). The International Labour Research and Information Group, which seeks to generate alternative perspectives to that of neo-liberal capitalism, argue that globalization is a process of restructuring the world economy. This restructuring process is a response to the crisis in the capitalist economic system, which began in the early 1970s. The main purpose of this restructuring is to find new ways for a business to maximize profits. Douglas Kellner from Frankfurt Institute for Social Research claims in his term that globalization is the continuation of imperialism or modernization under a different name.

Each interpretation above describes different dimensions of the multifaceted complex globalization processes. In this regard, this paper aims to approach globalization from a distinct perspective. It argues that globalization is also the repercussion of multiple projects. This conceptualization claims that via their globalization projects actors target to control or re-territorialize global flows of the workforce, goods, entrepreneurs, services, and ideas to maximize their benefit and minimize the threats (Middell 2017: 64). Besides, this approach enables us to study the economic, political, and cultural dimensions of globalization under a single framework. Some scholars, for instance, Doreen Massey claim that the globalization project is an exclusively neo-liberal product.<sup>1</sup> Truettsev argues, ‘monocentric and unipolar world order correlated rather well to the main vector and internal logics of globalization’ (Truettsev 2016: 69). On the other hand, Matthias Middell thinks that there is not only one globalization project directed from the North but also several projects implemented by diverse actors (Middell 2017: 60). As Middell states globalization with its alternatives is a conscious political strategy that aims to deal with the challenge of changing connectedness and mobility in the world (Middell 2014: 39). This means that many actors on a global scale are not just passive takers of the *terms and conditions* proposed in the neo-liberal globalization package but are active makers of globalization through distinct strategies with their own ‘*terms and conditions*.’ In this vein, the *terms and conditions* of IMF and the World Bank are not the same as that of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the priorities of the EU are not the same as that of BRICS. Hollywood, Bollywood, Confucius Institute, Yunis Emre Foundation, British Council, Goethe Institute, and Russkiy Mir Foundation are targeting different and sometimes conflicting ends. For this, each actor mobilizes the resources it possesses to control flows (of goods, service, labor, entrepreneurship, and ideas) that circulate its peripheries or frontiers. There are plenty of big and small globalization projects formed by multiple actors. These projects lead to continuous processes of deterritorializations and reterritorializations that shape different forms of globalization(s) around the world. In most cases, convergence and divergence, integration and fragmentation, peace and war on the global scale are the consequences of these projects. Put differently, globalization is the sum of the consequences of globalization projects.

To examine the above-mentioned argument, the research proposes to analyze the EU's Eastern Partnership Program as a globalization project to observe how cultural globalization unfolds. For that, the cultural and educational activities of the EU in the framework of the Eastern Partnership Program in Azerbaijan will be explored. The idea is to show how the EU contributes to the globalization of European values and culture

via different cultural and educational activities in Azerbaijan. To put it differently, the paper exhibits how the EU participates in the production of a type of globalization that it prefers in its eastern neighborhood via the Eastern Partnership program.

The rest of the article will consist of four main parts. The first part separately elaborates on what is globalization project concept all about. The second part sheds light on the role of cultural policies by multiple actors in cultural globalization. The third part briefly discusses the evolution of using culture in the EU's external action. And the fourth part will zoom in on the cultural and educational activities of the EU in the framework of the Eastern Partnership Program in Azerbaijan to observe globalization projects in practice.

### **Globalization Projects**

The concept of the globalization project is the product of contemporary global studies. It is a lens to analyze how various actors in different parts of the world deal with the structural pre-condition under which they live or to observe how multiple globalizations are produced and controlled via different projects. Besides, it helps to answer the question of whether globalization is a natural process or a project sponsored by certain actors. By this, it helps to demystify globalization to a great extent by bringing it down to the ground and making it traceable.

Different schools of thought support contradicting conceptualizations of globalization. Seemingly, 'globalization debates have invited more controversies than consensus' (Hoyoon 2018: 18). In the case of conceptualizing globalization as a process we end up with theological conclusions, and while interpreting it as a project, conspiracy theories are produced. Matthias Middell's paper titled 'What is Global Studies all about?' written in 2014 might be helpful to solve this problem. There Middell suggests differentiating globalization from the global condition. According to Middell (2014: 105), the global condition is 'a qualitative change in world history which leaves no society around the globe in a state where it is any longer able to disconnect from the integration into global flows without losing a decisive potential for development.' The term 'global condition' is suggested to be used to 'describe a seemingly objective process of increasing connectedness due to growing flows of people, goods, capital, and ideas' (*Ibid.*). According to Middell, globalization occurs, when different actors in various parts of the world interact with the 'global condition.' In this context, globalization is a repercussion of interactions between structure (global condition) and agencies (actors). As there is only one structure (global condition) but many actors in different qualities, from their interactions with that structure distinct forms of globalization(s), are produced. As a result, in different corners of the world distinct versions of globalization(s) are experienced. Taking this into account, Middell suggests using globalization in plural form (2014: 40).

Conceptualizing globalization as a repercussion of interaction between structure and agencies is also helpful to understand what is meant by globalization or local-global continuum. Since globalization(s) are the results of the interaction between agencies and the structure (global condition), there cannot be any action that is merely local or merely global. Every human action is global and local (glocal) at the same time. It is global because it does not happen in a vacuum and it is a reaction to the structural condition (global condition). It is local because every human action at the same time has its quality as it is embedded in and bounded by a space.

In his article 'Portals of Globalization as lieux de mémoire' Middell conceptualizes globalization(s) as repercussions of 'a bundle of projects promoted by multiple actors.' There Middell argues that globalization(s) are 'the products of a vast array of political globalization projects' (promoted by various actors). According to Middell:

These political projects are based on different world views, but what they have in common is that they advance hierarchies of power and interpretation. The various world narratives, upon which these globalization projects are based, claim universal validity, and yet they are profoundly shaped by particularism (Middell 2017: 64).

In other words, He claims globalization is a conscious political strategy to deal with the global condition or global interconnectedness. And 'such strategy never exits alone and is confronted by competing strategies.'

In another work, 'De-territorialization and re-territorialization' Middell argues that territorialization (de/re-territorialization) and globalization are not opposite processes (Middell 2012: 407). Territorialization is a strategy to deal with the global condition. As global condition (global interconnectivity) accelerates the circulation of goods, services, capital, entrepreneurship, labor, and knowledge, to better manage the flows actors in different parts of the world attempt to territorialize (control) them. While, territorializing they form different forms of spatial constellations, such as nation-states, international organizations, and NGOs. As a result, he concludes that globalization is a dialectical process of de-territorialization and re-territorialization. In this vein, the formation of nation-states (re-territorialization) in the late nineteenth century and European integration (de-territorialization) starting from the 1950s are political decisions given by different communities to serve the same purpose – to better manage global flows or to deal with the global condition. In this respect, David Lempert in his work asks a similar question, not about globalization but a similar term – modernization: 'Was "modernist" industrialization the goal and a unique force? Or, was this just a case of classic imperialism, now in the form of a gang attack by multiple countries, to eliminate local identity and open the door to foreign control?' (Lempert 2019: 31) Wallace argues similarly about European integration:

European integration can be seen as a distinct west European effort to contain the consequences of globalization. Rather than be forced to choose between national polity for developing policies and the relative anarchy of the globe, west Europeans invented a form of regional governance with a polity-like feature to extend the state and to broaden the boundary between themselves and the rest of the world (Wallace 1996: 16).

To sum up, globalization projects are territorializing projects to deal with the global condition and consequently to produce and manage globalization in a particular place. Thus, how globalization is experienced in a place is contingent on globalization projects issued by the different actors operating there. Here the term project has a broad context. It can be understood as a strategy, framework, control mechanism, regulatory tool, law, regulations, convention, treaty, or simply, any kind of framework that targets to control or territorialize the flows.

In the same regard, the EU sponsors a lot of small, medium, and big projects within the EU, in its neighborhood, and around the globe. The primary goal of these projects is

territorialization (de/re-territorialization) of certain flows. For instance, the Dublin regulation attempts to control the flow of people, while ERASMUS MUNDUS aims at controlling knowledge production. Along the same vein, the European Structural and Investment Funds Regulations 2014–2020 is a framework to regulate the flow of investments. In the neighborhood, TACIS and INOGATE programs mentioned in the introduction aim to regulate technical aspects of globalization, while TRASECA targets transport. ENP, EaP, EuroMed, and Black Sea cooperation platforms also pursue controlling different flows around the EU. In a similar vein, the EU's bilateral trade agreements signed with the strategic partners and the GSP (Generalized System of Preferences) <sup>2</sup> regulation (No 978/2012) serve to meet the EU's global trade ambitions that the EU failed to achieve within the WTO (World Trade Organization) frameworks. Take another example, the INSTEX (Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges) mechanism which is designed to facilitate trade with Iran and thereby circumvent the U.S.-dominated financial system is another example of reterritorialization (Girardi 2019). Through these projects, the EU influences the course of globalization within the EU, in the neighborhood, and around the globe. In other words, via these projects, the EU participates in the production and at the same time harnessing globalization to better serve the EU's needs.

### **Cultural Globalization**

Cultural globalization is one of the most discussed dimensions of the term together with economic and political globalization. It refers to the transmission of certain ideas, values, and cultural practices around the world. Cultural globalization expands, enhances, and intensifies social relations around the globe (James 2006). We may distinguish two aspects of cultural globalization: objective and subjective. The objective aspect of transfers refers to unplanned (and semi-planned) transfers of values, tastes, and perceptions thanks to technological advancements in communication and transportation (Middell and Naumann 2010: 152). Indeed, global migration of intensified cultural encounters since the mid-nineteenth century under the 'condition of globality' (Geyer and Bright 1995) makes spontaneous transfers possible. The subjective dimension is the transmission of certain values and ideas through concrete planned channels (Steger and James 2013). Put differently, it is a transfer via globalization projects. Confucius Institute, Yunis Emre Foundation, British Council, Goethe Institute, and Russkiy Mir Foundation transfer their cultural practices to win the hearts and minds of the people via cultural projects.

Cultural and educational projects as a tool to win the hearts and minds of the people are not a new phenomenon. Various global actors employed these policies in different periods to attract people to advance control and maximize their ultimate gains from the bilateral relations. There is a vast amount of literature from which comprehensive theoretical and empirical knowledge about cultural policies can be possessed. For example, Goebel studied how in the early twentieth-century French State 'projected an image of France as a cradle of Western Civilization and of scholarly and technological progress which exerted a powerful attraction' (Goebel 2015: 119). Engerman in his article 'The Second World's Third World' discusses the American and USSR rivalry in the Third World countries for influence. He describes how Americanists constantly invoke the Cold War context, showing how education, development, and university research were weapons in the 'battle for the hearts and minds' of the Third World and what kind of counter poli-

cies the USSR employs in response (Engerman 2011: 188). Peter Kragelund and Godfrey Hampway in their work 'The Confucius Institute at the University of Zambia: A New Direction in the Internationalization of African Higher Education?' shed light on the cultural and educational activities of the Confucius Institute to discover China's influence on the re-spatialization of African Space (Kragelund and Hampway 2016). The examples given above intend to show certain ideas and norms not only spread spontaneously across the globe but also are channeled, in most cases, by multiple actors for definite ends.

Indeed, the purpose of the projects is simply to produce a mechanism to control the perceptions of people for various ends. In this context, the meaning of control goes beyond its traditional understanding. It is not controlled by putting physical barriers, but it is rather controlling the hearts and minds of people by inventing and promoting narratives about your identity. Narration becomes successful when it does not stay at an abstract level but when it has a proving material touch as well. Therefore, actors attach cultural activities, films, festivals, songs, conferences, training, literature, advertisement campaigns, and scholarships to their cultural globalization projects. This approach enables us to understand why certain values and norms advance on a global scale, while others disappear; how hybrid norms and practices come into existence; how cultural globalization is produced; how certain values are disseminated; where the cultural transfer and encounters occur; how actors form strategies to influence global flows of ideas; and what kind of actors involved in shaping globalization in separate places. In this context, cultural globalization can be defined as a repercussion of planned and unplanned transfers.

From the perspective of the EU, culture occupies an important place in its value transfer system. In this regard, the EU attaches cultural transfers to different programs it launches in its bilateral relation with its neighboring countries. Post-Soviet space is a very crucial region for the EU; it is not only because of its geographical location but also from the perspective of ideological and political reasons. After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc almost all socialist countries of Eastern Europe, including the former Soviet Baltic states integrated with the EU and became members of this supranational organization. This led to the expansion of the borders of the Union to the East, which in the end required the EU to develop bilateral and multilateral relations with those states, which were especially located in European geography. In this regard, it was developed multifaceted policies covering various fields, including culture.

### **Culture in the EU's External Action**

Although the EU as a global actor is among latecomers who use culture as a soft power in its relations with Third World countries, it has coherent cultural policies as a multicultural entity. After the Lisbon treaty reforms, the EU's institutional and legal competencies in external action were increased (EUR-Lex 2007). According to Communication from the Commission to EU institutions,

culture... lies at the heart of human development and civilization. Culture is what makes people hope and dream, by stimulating our senses and offering new ways of looking at reality. It is what brings people together, by stirring dialogue and arousing passions, in a way that unites rather than divides.<sup>3</sup>

Today cultural policies implemented by the EU have inward and outward dimensions. The inward dimension of cultural policies targets the use of culture as a source of job creation, as a tool to contribute to economic growth in Europe through the cultural and creative sector, to promote inclusive and accessible culture, and to preserve cultural heritage (European Commission 2012: 2). The EU spends a vast amount of money to implement its cultural policies. Worth to mention that, only the ‘Creative Culture’ program has a budget worth 1.46 billion euros.<sup>4</sup>

To stimulate the senses of the people in its external relations and to offer new ways of looking at reality, in 2016 the EU officially declares to put culture at the center of its external action (European Commission 2016b). In the EU, it is believed, that ‘the EU has a unique role to play in promoting its cultural richness and diversity, both within Europe and worldwide’ (Final Communication ... 2007). On the other side, the outward dimension of the EU’s cultural policy aims at:

- Supporting culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development;
- Promoting culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations;
- Reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage (European Commission 2017a).

Putting culture at the heart of the EU’s external relations was the culmination of long preparation processes. In 2007, the Commission proposed a ‘European Agenda for Culture in a globalizing world.’ According to the document, ‘Worldwide, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue have become major challenges for a global order based on peace, mutual understanding, and respect for shared values, such as the protection and promotion of human rights and the protection of languages’ (Final Communication ... 2007). The EU as a multicultural global actor should actively pursue cultural agenda supporting the common good. The Resolution (2010/2161(INI)) on the cultural dimensions of the EU’s external actions, adopted by the European Parliament in May 2011, called for the development of a common EU strategy on culture in the EU external relations. In the resolution, it is mentioned that civil society, democratization, and good governance can be strengthened through effective cultural and educational programs. Besides, those programs can also encourage the development of skills, promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, and provide building blocks for lasting cooperation. In this regard, the EU Parliament demonstrated its support to increase the involvement of third countries in the EU cultural, mobility, youth, education, and training programs and called for access to these programs to be facilitated for (young) people from third countries, such as European neighboring countries (EUR-Lex 2011).

Indeed, the above-mentioned principles draw the main values of the cultural policy of the EU. In comparison, if we look at the agenda of the cultural policies of Russia or China we hardly come across terms like *democratization*, *good governance*, *human rights*, and *fundamental freedoms*. Because each actor promotes and aims to globalize values and practices through cultural and educational policies that serve their best interest in the short and long term.

As we mentioned above, the primary subject of cultural globalization projects is the periphery of actors. In this vein, mentioning European neighboring countries in the resolution is not fortuitous. Eighteen out of eighty EU’s ‘Erasmus+’ joint master

programs in the 2018/2019 period directly related to cultural issues, where students, most frequently from the EU's neighborhood, study through full or partial scholarships.<sup>5</sup>

To draw the contours of a common EU strategy the European Commission created a consortium of cultural institutes and organizations led by the Goethe Institute (Fürjész 2013). Besides the Goethe Institute, the consortium included institutions having a prominent role in cultural activities such as the British Council, Centre for Fine Arts/BOZAR, EUNIC Global, European Cultural Foundation, and Institut Français. The consortium members united their expertise to develop a platform to support the EU's external action in the Third World countries. In March 2016, they launched 'The Cultural Diplomacy Platform' (European Commission 2016a). The purpose of the platform is to assist the EU institutions in the implementation of cultural policies. The EU held a cultural forum in April 2016 in Brussels. In the form Frederica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, informed the audience, 'Tibor [Navracsecs] and I will present to the Council and Parliament next month a strategy for culture in the EU external relations' (Mogherini 2016). On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016, they put forward a proposal to develop the strategy in joint communication. In the end, the Commission called the EU delegations, the member states, cultural institutes, and private stakeholders to unite their efforts to implement the EU's cultural policies.

In the case of the eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU implements cultural policies through the Eastern Partnership Program. The Eastern Partnership program was launched in May 2009. 'It is a joint initiative involving the EU, its Member States, and six partners, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine representing the eastern region of the European Neighbourhood Policy'.<sup>6</sup> The program has four interlinked platforms:

- Good governance.
- Economic integration and growth.
- Energy security and transport.
- Contacts between people.

Eastern Partnership is a globalization project in every sense. The EU aims to reach convergence or standardized quality in its relationship with member states according to each platform. While in the neoliberal globalization project the research primarily elaborates on the economic dimension of globalization, Eastern Partnership includes all parameters of a globalization process (economic, political, and cultural). Each platform of the Eastern Partnership program is a useful reference point to understand different dimensions of globalization. *Good Governance* can be examined to see the political dimension of globalization, while the platform for *economic integration and growth* is the conducive reference point to understand how economic globalization unfolds. *Energy security and transport* platform can be analyzed to understand how convergence, harmonization, and standardization are achieved and how interconnectivity is produced. The 4<sup>th</sup> platform of the project – *contacts between people* can be used to analyze the cultural dimension of globalization. Through cultural projects the norms and ideas, that the EU desires to spread, transcend the borders.

### **The EU's Cultural and Educational Activities in Azerbaijan**

The EU-Azerbaijan relations date to the early 1990s. Before the initiation of the EaP program, the EU had several other projects targeted to control flows in Eastern Europe,



South Caucasus, and Central Asia. In this regard, Azerbaijan played a key role in the commencement of the TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia) Programme in 1993, since the country was located at a strategic crossroads. ‘TRACECA aimed at the development of the transport corridor from Europe, crossing the Black Sea, Caucasus, the Caspian Sea, and reaching the Central Asian countries’.<sup>7</sup> ‘With the support of the TRACECA programme, this initiative has resulted in the International Conference “TRACECA – Restoration of the Historic Silk Route” that was held on September 8, 1998, in Baku (Azerbaijan Republic)’. In 1999, the Azerbaijan government signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU. Partnership and Cooperation Agreement aims:

- To provide an appropriate framework for the political dialogue between the Parties allowing the development of political relations;
- To support the Republic of Azerbaijan's efforts to consolidate its democracy and to develop its economy and to complete the transition into a market economy;
- To promote trade and investment and harmonious economic relations between the Parties and so to foster their sustainable economic development;
- To provide a basis for legislative, economic, social, financial, civil scientific, technological, and cultural cooperation.<sup>8</sup>

In 2004, the EU initiated the European Neighborhood Policy to regulate the dynamics of its relations with eastern neighbors in Europe and southern neighbors in North Africa after the ‘Bing-bang’ enlargement. In 2006, a joint EU-Azerbaijan Action Plan was adopted by the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council in the framework of ENP. Action Plan defined eleven priority areas, including:

- Contributing to a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict;
- Strengthening democracy in the country, including through a fair and transparent electoral process, in line with international requirements;
- Strengthening the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, in compliance with international commitments of Azerbaijan (PCA, CoE, OSCE, and UN);
- Improving the business and investment climate, particularly by strengthening the fight against corruption;
- Improving the functioning of customs;
- Further convergence of economic legislation and administrative practices;
- Enhancement of cooperation in the field of Justice, Freedom, and Security, including in the field of border management;
- Developing of an increasingly close and mutually beneficial relationship, going beyond cooperation;
- Involving a significant measure of economic integration and a deepening of political cooperation.<sup>9</sup>

Although Azerbaijan became a party to the Eastern Partnership program in 2009, it did not sign the Association Agreement with the EU. Instead, in 2013, it offered a new draft framework to negotiate with the EU during the EaP summit in Vilnius, which was dropped by the EU later (Gils 2018). Since then, the parties have been attempting to find a way to agree to replace the outdated PCA. Nowadays, the parties work on a new upgraded treaty framework. In July 2018, the EU and Azerbaijan defined their partnership Priorities. They are the following:

- Strengthening institutions and good governance. This includes the fight against corruption, public administration reform, and capacity building for combating crime and terrorism.
- Economic development and market opportunities. This includes the sustainable diversification of the economy, support for WTO membership, and improving the business and investment environments.
- Connectivity, energy efficiency, environment, and climate action; Building of a successful cooperation on energy connectivity and significant progress made on the Southern Gas Corridor, this includes support for Azerbaijan's ability to operate as a trade, logistics, and transport hub, regulatory assistance, sustainable management of resources.
- Mobility and people-to-people contacts; This includes support for education and human capital and providing more opportunities for EU and Azerbaijani citizens to meet and share experiences.<sup>10</sup>

If one closely analyzes the Partnership Priorities, it becomes clear that they do not differ much from the platforms of the EU EaP. To put it differently, the new Partnership Priorities between the EU and Azerbaijan are an extended and updated version of the EaP goals.

Although it was expected that the EU and Azerbaijan would finally sign a new agreement in 2019 in Brussels during the last EaP summit, the parties failed to do it due to differences mainly in trade and commerce issues, as well as gas price and wording on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

It is worthwhile to mention that the absence of an updated treaty framework was neither an obstacle for the EU to carry out its cultural projects in Azerbaijan nor significantly influenced Azerbaijan's exports to the EU. Thus, the EU and Azerbaijan are not in a hurry to conclude it without solving their differences. Thus, since 2007, the EU Delegation and member states have been implementing in Azerbaijan the cultural policies of the EU through the support of the local youth and interest groups. This policy is mostly implemented within the frame of the Eastern Partnership Program. The EU's cultural policies have been integrated into the framework of this program. The fourth platform of the Eastern Partnership program – ‘*contacts between people*’ – regulates the cultural and educational activities of the EU. Here, the EU targets a selected audience (of students/academics, multipliers/influencers, civil society, and cultural operators/artists).<sup>11</sup> ‘Contacts between people’ explicitly focuses on youth.<sup>12</sup> On the platforms of *good governance, economic integration, and growth* it is hard to say the EU's globalization project is successful in terms of converging Azerbaijan's political and economic system in line with European standards. In European institutions, the Azerbaijan government is famous for an avalanche of gross violations of the human rights and international law principles concerning the EU, lack of transparency in governance, and corruption scandals.<sup>13</sup> The country cannot economically integrate into the EU's single market through DCFTA offered in the Eastern Partnership program without being a member of the WTO (Muravska and Berlin 2014). Thus, from time to time the Azerbaijan government was subject to active criticism by the EU institutions. From the Preparatory Action report in 2014, it is obvious the EU is not satisfied with the situation in the cultural sector in Azerbaijan as well, ‘The regime's tight control over media and cultural life in the country while claiming to be on the road to democracy may have consequences for

the way people in Azerbaijan deal with culture in their external relations' (European Commission 2017b).

What concerns the Azerbaijan government is that human rights and democracy issues are a fundamental part of the EU's cultural policies. According to the Preparatory Action report: 'Any future EU strategy has to continue struggling to make a true and decisive impact on the improvement of fundamental human rights and democracy in the country' (European Commission 2017). The right-based cultural practices by the EU are considered meddling in the internal affairs of Azerbaijan by the government.

Although the space to maneuver in Azerbaijan is very narrow to implement intended cultural policies with all its right-based elements, the EU continues to achieve its goals through public events, festivals, exhibitions, conferences, and other educational and cultural activities. European values, ideas, and practices are transferred to the *selected audience* through *Euro-village* event, *European Film Festival*, *Culture and Creativity* program, *Erasmus Mundus program*, *Center of Excellence in EU Studies*, *Young European Ambassador Initiative*, *'Imagine' Euro Tolerance Festival*, *Euro Bus Tours*, *European Youth Parliament Azerbaijan*, *Sizinavropa.az (your Europe)* webpage. The EU actively works with private stakeholders, civil society actors, NGOs, and the government to implement its cultural policies.

#### *EuroVillage Festival*

Since 2013, the EU annually holds the 'EuroVillage' festival in Azerbaijan. Every year thousands of young Azerbaijani people participate in this event. During the event, every European Union member country sets its tent at an allocated place, where it promotes its cultures, works of literature, foods, and histories along with European values. People have an opportunity to meet ambassadors and other members of diplomatic missions of the EU countries in person, ask them questions, and take a picture with them in a friendly environment. The number of people attending this festival increases year by year. According to the official webpage of the Swedish Embassy in Azerbaijan, about 20,000 people visited the festival in 2015.<sup>14</sup> In 2016, the number even increased to 30,000.<sup>15</sup> During the festival, the EU usually has its separate tent, where members of the delegation promote the EU via brochures, intellectual games, and disseminate memory sticks, cups, stickers, copybooks with the EU labels. *'I love European Union'* sticker is among the most disseminated and most demanded stickers. The EU Delegation to Azerbaijan does not hold this festival only in the capital but in other regions of Azerbaijan. One of the EuroVillage festivals was held in Ganja, which is the second biggest city in Azerbaijan. The last EuroVillage festival in 2017 took place in Sheki. Sheki is a small town located in the northern part of Azerbaijan. According to the Delegation's webpage, about 15,000 people attended this festival.<sup>16</sup> The Delegation holds the festival with the active participation of young volunteers from schools and universities and tries to keep in contact with them through motivating gifts and certificates to cooperate with them again to implement future projects. The young people are active promoters and participants in the event.

#### *European Film Festival*

The European film festival is held annually since 2010. During the festival movies made by European directors are presented in well-known cinemas in Azerbaijan for free. According to the Delegation, the festival serves '...to building and developing the cultural links existing between the European Union countries and Azerbaijan and to contributing to a better understanding of the European values through the European movie industry.'

After the festival, an essay competition is held among people, where they express their feelings and thoughts about the films they watched. The winners of the essay competition are given gifts usually related to the European Union. Every year the author of the best essay is sent to the Berlin Film festival by the Delegation. The topic of the last essay competition was ‘How has IMAGINE and/or the European Film Festival changed my perceptions of cultural diversity and tolerance?’<sup>17</sup>

#### *Center of Excellence in EU Studies*

Center of Excellence in EU Studies is an academic establishment sponsored by the EU Commission at ADA University. The center ‘supports civil service training capacities in Azerbaijan with a focus on the EU affairs’.<sup>18</sup> According to the official webpage of the Centre, ‘It aims to increase general awareness of the EU among the Azerbaijani population.’ Since 2015, the center holds Summer School annually where topics related to EU affairs are lectured and discussed with the active participation of students, junior researchers, and academicians from distinguished European Universities and ADA. The activities of the Center are not limited to university students and civil service personnel of the Azerbaijan government. One of the projects of the Center targeted pupils studying at primary and secondary schools in Baku. In the framework of the project, about 1500 pupils were given information about the European culture, and the EU countries through entertaining games, and lessons.<sup>19</sup> ‘AvropadASAN’ is one of the latest projects of the Center in cooperation with Public Radio of Azerbaijan and ASAN Service. ‘AvropadASAN’ is a radio broadcast streamlined into Public Radio once a week, which serves to a better understanding of Europe.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Young European Ambassador Initiative*

The initiative supported by the EU Commission serves for the active dissemination of European values, practices, information about the EU institutions, and practices via selected young ‘ambassadors’ from the Eastern Partnership countries. Launched in 2016, the initiative is part of the ‘EU neighbors’ project which is a platform for primarily young people to get the latest information about EU affairs (EU NEIGHBOURS). The Platform also spread information about training, seminar, conference, scholarship and other opportunities in Europe implemented through the EU funds. The group in Azerbaijan carries out projects usually supported by the EU delegation. ‘Young Ambassadors’ are also ‘responsible’ for the dissemination of information related to the EU on social media. The group participated in the ‘EuroBus’ tour to the northern region of Azerbaijan in the framework of EuroVillage in 2017 where they met people from schools and intuitions and gave information about the EU and the EU Azerbaijan relations. The External Action Service of the EU Commission, July 2017 organized a visit of the ‘Young European Ambassador’ to Brussels. During the visit besides participating in intensive training programs, they met Federica Mogherini – the head of the EU's External Action Service.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Impact of the EU Cultural Programs**

The EU's active cultural policies have a positive impact on indicators of the EU perception in Azerbaijan. According to the main findings of the latest survey in the framework of the ‘EU NEIGHBOURS east’ project, from March to May 2017:

- Pro-EU feelings have risen in Azerbaijan – 47 % of Azerbaijanis have a positive image of the EU.

- 68 % of Azerbaijanis feel relations with the European Union are good, well ahead of the regional average of 61 %.
- More than half of Azerbaijanis (51 %) trust the EU, compared to the United Nations (35 %), the Eurasian Economic Union (26 %), and NATO (32 %).
- 33 % of Azerbaijanis are aware of the EU's financial support to the country, 65 % of those felt it was effective (compared to a regional average of 53 %) (EU Neighbours 2017).

Young and educated people and the middle class in Azerbaijan accept the values that the EU targets to transfer through its globalization project. The EU with its cultural projects in the framework of the Eastern Partnership program not only affects the perceptions of the people about the European values but as well increased people's inspiration to visit and study in European countries. Today Europe is in the top list of young people in Azerbaijan when it comes to a place to study, work, travel, and live. This group is also demanding force in Azerbaijan for the liberalization of the system and integration into the EU institutions. The EU cultural policies have considerable influence on the cultural activities of the Azerbaijan government.

In the same line, the Azerbaijani government imitates the EU cultural policies to get recognition from the European countries. In this regard, Azerbaijan took an active part in the restoration of some churches and different historical sites in Europe. Through the 'Haydar Aliyev' Foundation with the active participation of the first lady Mehriban Aliyeva, Azerbaijan invested millions of dollars in the Vatican to restore 'the paintings of the cubicle of Susanna and the fossor, the niche of Daniel, the arcosolium of Orpheus, the cubicle of Our Lady with two Magi, and the cubicle of the praying matron' (Vatican Radio 2016) and fortress Trapezitza in Bulgaria (Lebedeva 2015). In this frame, Azerbaijan state oil company SOCAR provides free gas for churches in Georgia. Besides, the year 2016 was declared in Azerbaijan as a year of multi-culturalism and hosted numerous international cultural and sports events which should be considered as a reaction to the EU cultural policies and compensation paid by the government for the criticisms on internal violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms in Azerbaijan.

## **Conclusion**

Along with being a repercussion of natural or quasi-natural processes, globalization is also the consequence of globalization projects implemented by various actors. Since the mid-nineteenth century, actors of globalization processes issue various projects to gain control of global flows of labor, services, goods, entrepreneurship, and ideas, and their implementation leads to globalization of convergence and divergence, integration and fragmentation, peace and war. Via its Eastern Partnership Project (globalization project) the EU as a global soft power tries to re-territorialize Eastern European countries toward a single European market. For this, the EU actively uses the agency of culture in its external activities. According to the findings of the present paper, the framework of the 4<sup>th</sup> platform (contacts between people) of the Eastern Partnership Program helps the EU to spread values and norms in the world. Analyzing the EU cultural and educational activities in Azerbaijan in the framework of the Eastern Partnership program enables us to observe how cultural transfer occurs and cultural globalization unfolds around the world through globalization projects. The EU successfully implements the same policies not only in Azerbaijan but also in every South Caucasus country, in all southern

and east European countries, and in North Africa, repercussions of which legitimize the core argument of the paper – ‘globalization as a bundle of projects promoted by multiple actors.’

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Speech by Doreen Massey at the World Congress of Sociology. 1998. Montréal.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission. Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP). URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/development/generalised-scheme-of-preferences/> (accessed: August 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic, and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Region on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world. Commission of the European Communities, May 10, 2007. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0242&from=EN> (accessed: May 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Supporting Europe’s cultural and creative sectors. CREATIVE EUROPE. URL: [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/about\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/about_en) (accessed: May 2020).

<sup>5</sup> EMJMD Catalogue. EACEA Education, Audio-visual, and Culture Executive Agency. URL: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/library/emjmd-catalogue\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/library/emjmd-catalogue_en) (accessed: May 2020).

<sup>6</sup> The Eastern Partnership Platform 4 ‘Contacts between people. Delegation of the European Union to Azerbaijan, January 15, 2016. URL: [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/azerbaijan/18603/eastern-partnership-platform-4-contacts-between-people-focuses-youth\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/azerbaijan/18603/eastern-partnership-platform-4-contacts-between-people-focuses-youth_en) (accessed: May 2020).

<sup>7</sup> History of TRACECA. URL: <http://www.traceca-org.org/en/traceca/history-of-traceca/> (accessed: May 2020).

<sup>8</sup> Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and Their Member States, of the One Part, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, of the Other Part. URL: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu-az\\_pca\\_full\\_text\\_0.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu-az_pca_full_text_0.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> EU-Azerbaijan Action Plan. European Union External Action. URL: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/au-az\\_action\\_plan\\_azerbaijan.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/au-az_action_plan_azerbaijan.pdf) (accessed: May 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Partnership Priorities between the EU and Azerbaijan reinforce the bilateral agenda. European Union External Action Service, 2018. URL: [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/48244/partnership-priorities-between-eu-and-azerbaijan-reinforce-bilateral-agenda\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/48244/partnership-priorities-between-eu-and-azerbaijan-reinforce-bilateral-agenda_en) (accessed: May 2020).

<sup>11</sup> ANNEX 14 of the Commission Implementing Decision on the 2017 Annual Action program for the Partnership Instrument. URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2017/EN/C-2017-3311-F1-EN-ANNEX-14-PART-1.PDF> (accessed: May 2020)

<sup>12</sup> The Eastern Partnership Platform 4 ‘Contacts between people. Delegation of the European Union to Azerbaijan, January 15, 2016. URL: [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/azerbaijan/18603/eastern-partnership-platform-4-contacts-between-people-focuses-youth\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/azerbaijan/18603/eastern-partnership-platform-4-contacts-between-people-focuses-youth_en) (accessed: May 2020).

<sup>13</sup> Azerbaijan, Motion for resolution. B8-0856/2015, B8-0858/2015, B8-0860/2015, B8-0862/2015, B8-0863/2015, B8-0864/2015 and B8-0865/2015 (2015/2840(RSP). European Parliament, September 10, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Eurovillage Festival – The different flavors of Europe coming to Baku. September 21, 2015. URL: <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:Jf8f9kvUUfwJ:www.swedenabroad.com/en-GB/Embassies/Baku/Current-affairs/News/Eurovillage-Festival---The-different-flavours-of-Europe-coming-to-Baku-sys/+&cd=1&hl=de&ct=clnk&gl=az> (accessed: May 2020).

<sup>15</sup> Eurovillage in Baku. Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Baku, October 11, 2016. URL: [http://baku.mfa.gov.pl/en/p/baku\\_az\\_a\\_en/](http://baku.mfa.gov.pl/en/p/baku_az_a_en/) (accessed: May 2020).

<sup>16</sup> EuroVillage in Sheki. EU Delegation to Azerbaijan, September 11, 2017. URL: [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/azerbaijan/33693/2017-eurovillage-sheki-%C5%9F%C9%99kid%C9%99-avropa-%C5%9F%C9%99h%C9%99rciyi\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/azerbaijan/33693/2017-eurovillage-sheki-%C5%9F%C9%99kid%C9%99-avropa-%C5%9F%C9%99h%C9%99rciyi_en) (accessed: May 2020).

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