

TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

School of Business and Governance

Department of Law

Tural Salamzade

**DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN AZERBAIJAN**

Master's Thesis

Supervisor: Professor Peeter Mürsepp

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I declare I have written the master's theses independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced

Tural Salamzade .....

Student's code: 156458

Student's email address: [salamzade93@gmail.com](mailto:salamzade93@gmail.com)

Supervisor Professor Peeter Mürsepp

The theses conforms to the requirements set for the master's theses

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(signature, date)

Chairman of defence committee

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.....

(Title, name, signature, date)

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## **ABSTRACT**

Since the independence of Azerbaijan in 1991, the South Caucasian country witnessed the times of its democratic recovery. However, the war in Nagorno Karabakh, disagreements inside the government and military revolts caused the resignation of two first governments, thus led to the triggering of the process of democratic transition of the country. In addition to that, in that period there were not established serious relations with the EU. The EU's involvement in democracy development of the country started only after 1996, when PCA was signed. This study has put a purpose to find whether the government of Azerbaijan has been challenging the EU's democracy promotion in the country. The time-period included three cases, where all two variables and rival theories were tested. The studies has found that the government's real efforts to prevent democratic transition of the country started to be noticed after 1993 and it has been going to increase until current period. The causal chain has been completely proved in the last phase, where an inverse relation between IV and DV has been proved and the effect of other two rival theories has been detected due to the government's radical moves towards undemocratic means of governance in the period of the EU's active involvement in democracy promotion of the country. In addition to that, Russia's influence in Azerbaijan and the EU's energy interests played as a helping tool to IV.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, the EU, Russia, democracy development, power preservation, government, opposition parties

## INTRODUCTION

The disintegration of Soviet Empire has strengthened the influence of the European Union as an important European power, which is in capacity to develop internal transition of its neighboring states. The EU's initiative to establish European Neighborhood policy has validated the EU's claim to be called as a transformative post-Westphalian power, which is in capacity to promote internal transition of societies (Dannreuther 2006). Nevertheless, to what extent the EU's democracy promotion was successful, depends on case.

The post-cold war world has seen the rise of semi authoritarian regimes, which had characteristics of both democracies and authoritarian regimes (Olcott). These countries fulfill some of the formal conditions of democracy, though the governments of such regimes ensure their protection from removal from power. Azerbaijan can be considered as such country. Finding its independence in 1991, Azerbaijan tried to find its place in international relations. Azerbaijan's complicated relations with its neighbors had also its effects to the internal and external political directions of the country. The lack of political pluralism, which has especially started to be seen after 1993, has shattered the process of democratization in the country. This factor could not leave without effect the EU's efforts in the democratic development in Azerbaijan. Of course, this effect is challenging and negative. Moreover, the EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan is an additional challenge, which gives to the government of Azerbaijan another advantage in the negotiations with official Brussels. In addition to that, the analyses of the relations cannot ignore other external actors, particularly Russia, which has a ponderable influence in Azerbaijan.

Currently, this topic is particularly actual, as the number of researches and articles increase about the EU's democratization processes in its near abroad. Usually these analyses touch the EU's failures in democratization and take either broad range of countries or usually touch particular programme such as the EU Eastern Partnership or the EU Neighborhood Policy and are directed to define the EU's own problems in the democratic development in other countries. Azerbaijan only recently has popularity in academic researches and analyses

of political scientists, as the country's rich energy resources and its good strategic location made other countries to pay special attention to that country. However, there has been done too little regarding research of democratization processes in Azerbaijan. As the country's government is trying to make this issue as untouchable as possible, there is very limited research of this issue among local political scientists. Internationally this case is analyzed too broadly, usually within the context of another big research.

The purpose of this study is to focus the analyses only in Azerbaijan. This case becomes particularly interesting, as the EU is getting less and less successful in democratic transition in Azerbaijan. The scholars come with different opinions of the reasons of this failure. For some the main challenge is Russia, others seek the problems inside the EU, another one see the problem in the political culture of the country, for remained ones the problem lies in "hypocrisy trap" inside the EU's foreign policy. This paper will not be focused in one of these particular hypotheses, but will try to find the problem by tracing a historical background of the country starting from 1991. For the purpose of the analyses of this study, causal relation will be established between the EU's intentions to develop democracy in Azerbaijan and the will of the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan to preserve its power in the country. The choice of these causal relations should not be seen surprising, as civil societies do not have any influence to the political life of Azerbaijan; hence, the government remains as a main decision maker of the country. This study will aim to prove this causal relation. Therefore, the following research question will be asked:

**Research question: "To what extent has the government of Azerbaijan been challenging the EU democracy promotion in Azerbaijan"?**

In order to answer to this research question cross-case analyses as well as within-case analyses will be conducted. The paper will be divided into three cases, which will play a crucial role in the development of the analyses

## **Motivation**

The aim of this research paper is to analyze a linear inverse (negative) relation between the EU's democratic promotion in Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani government's will to secure its power. Furthermore, the author pursues three main goals, which this paper can play in future. Firstly, it is hoped that it will give some kind of help for the future developments and improvements of academic articles regarding this issue. Secondly, the results of the paper will make a bit clear the picture of the EU-Azerbaijan relations. Final goal is to give the contribution and suggestions on how the EU policy on democratic transition in Azerbaijan can be improved. In spite of the reason that there were written many articles regarding the problems of the EU's policy towards democracy development in Azerbaijan, there has been done too little to investigate the real reasons of this failure. Therefore, this paper is aimed to make the situation a little bit clear.

## **Outline**

The study will have following structure. Firstly, theoretical part of the paper will be discussed by establishing variables. The third chapter will be devoted to the methodology and research design will be established. Following, the case studies will be discussed, which will open door for the analyses of the paper by conducting cross case comparison and within case analyses in the fifth chapter. Finally, recommendations will be given for further research and the conclusion will be made.

## **THEORY**

This case is that one, in which one theory cannot explain the whole picture of the problem. For example, realism will explain well the behavior of Azerbaijani government to preserve its power, though it will not be suitable for the explaining the EU's efforts to develop democracy in Azerbaijan. For this reason, variables will be used to analyze research question. There will be established the link between dependent variable (the EU's efforts to develop democracy in Azerbaijan) and independent variable (the will of Azerbaijani government to preserve its power). This causal relation between DV and ID has linear and inverse or negative relation. The positive changes in independent variable have a negative effect to dependent variable. In order to strengthen this causal relation, two other rival theories were established, which are "Russia's influence in Azerbaijan" (RT1) and "The EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan" (RT2).

### **The EU's efforts to develop democracy in Azerbaijan (DV).**

The dependent variable of this paper is the EU's efforts to develop democracy in Azerbaijan. The aim of this study is to define to what extent the EU was trying to develop democracy in Azerbaijan in all three phases. Moreover, it will be defined in what way the independent variable causes the negative effect to the EU's democracy development in Azerbaijan. This variable can be explained with liberalism that market economy and democratic peace will end the conflicts, and that Western powers have moral duty to spread democracy to the rest part of the world. The collapse of the Soviet Union has left liberalism without any rivals. (Fukuyama 1989). Moreover, as democratic peace theory has been getting popularity in international relations, the Western world has been motivated to spread democracy to other countries by believing that it will ensure more stability for the reason that democracies never go to war with each other.



### **The will of the government of Azerbaijan to preserve its power (ID).**

The first causal variable is not taken by chance, as the government of Azerbaijan is the main decision maker in the country. Here the classical realism theory of Hans Morgenthau works very well, which is considering human nature as a selfish, who pursues its own self-interests. Because of the reason that other civil societies and opposition parties do not have any influence in the political life of Azerbaijan (Gahramanova 2009), the focus will be only to the government.

As starting from its independence in 1991, Azerbaijan has never entered to full democracy. The state, which has the policy of promoting more the government than the state itself, has been having the presidents, who has been always sensitive to the issue of the appearance of potential second candidate, who can challenge them. However, most of the scholars believe that it was not the case with Abulfaz Elchibey. This variable is aimed to establish to what extent the Azerbaijani government's will to preserve power is negligible to the democratic promotion of the EU in the country.

### **Russia's influence in Azerbaijan (RT1).**

The first rival theory is the Russia's influence in Azerbaijan. The case of Russia cannot be ignored while studying domestic or foreign policy of Azerbaijan, as Russia has labelled itself as an important power in Post-Soviet area, which is in capacity to control whole its neighborhood by ensuring that these countries will not integrate to the West. Without any doubt, this variable can be explained very well by offensive realism, which states that country's tactics to gain as much power as possible is a good strategy, as by doing it the country ensures its survival. In case with Russia, Slavic country has all capabilities to do so, as it has strong latent power. The closer location of the European Union and the deep enlargement of NATO to the East force Russia to take measures in order to secure its neighborhood by not allowing Western powers to increase their influence in its neighborhood.

Azerbaijan is one of the complicated countries for Russia, because it manages to keep balanced way between West and Russia, hence managing to play in both fronts (thanks to its

energy resources). Therefore, if one front will demand too much it can easily switch to another front. However, Russia is using other tools to keep Azerbaijan inside its influence, which are unresolved Nagorno Karabakh conflict, big amount of Azerbaijani population in Russia, minorities in Azerbaijan etc. This causal variable will have a purpose to establish the capacity of Russian influence to Azerbaijan.

### **The EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan (RT2).**

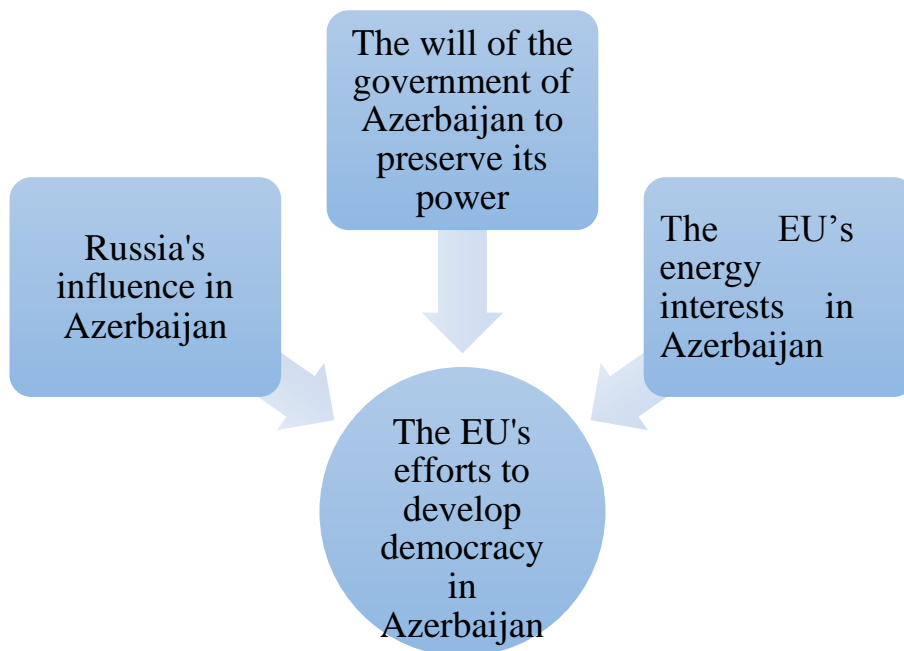
The last variable is explained by defensive realism of Kenneth Waltz, who argues that international system is anarchic, which is urging states to take defensive and moderate policies. The main motive of the states is survival. In relations to the EU, its goal is to get an access to the energy resources of Azerbaijan, therefore to decrease its dependency on Russian energy resources.

Azerbaijan is the energy supplier, which is in the first place in supplying diversifying gas to the EU away from Russia (Chi Kong Chyong & Lavis 2015). By increasing energy supply from Azerbaijan, the EU hopes to decrease a dependency of Eastern Europe on Russian energy resources, which will take from Russia a pressuring tool, which he it could use to challenge the EU. Energy strategy is one of the sensitive issues for the EU, especially for its Eastern European part, as a Russian oil company Gazprom holds more than a third of the EU gas imports (Oliver 2016). The creation of Baku Tbilisi Ceyhan, Baku Tbilisi Erzurum and TANAP pipelines are hoped to decrease this dependency from Russian energy. The EU energy interests in Azerbaijan carry defensive character by cause of decreasing the EU's energy dependency on Russia, consequently giving more political say to the EU towards Russia. The last variable will target to define whether the EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan have a negative effect to the dependent variable.

## Causal mechanism

After getting to know all variables, next step will be devoted to the creation of causal mechanism between variables. For the reason to prove the relation. The model starts with the linear and inverse relations between the EU democracy promotion in Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani government's attempts to preserve its power. In order to strengthen inverse relations between dependent and independent variables, two other rival theories have been established. In sum, this model will define the causal relations between these four variables, which will be done for all three phases.

Table 1



Source (Prepared by the author 2017)

## **Hypothesis**

Evolving from causal mechanisms following hypotheses will be used in order to analyze the study.

*The will of the government of Azerbaijan to preserve its power (IV)*

1) The more the government tries to preserve its power, the less possibility for democratic reforms in the country

*Russia's influence in Azerbaijan*

2) The more the government of Azerbaijan will incline towards Russia; there will be less possibility for the democracy development in the country

*The EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan*

3) The more the EU dependent on Azerbaijani energy resources, the less the government of Azerbaijan will incline to obey.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to answer to the research question, qualitative method will be used, as this issue deals more with words than with numbers. For this study one particular case will be chosen, which is interaction between the EU and Azerbaijan regarding transition of democracy in South Caucasian country. Process tracing and structured focused comparison will be used as helpful tools in order to define factors and to get closer to the solution of the case.

### **2.1 Case study**

The advantage of the selection of this method is the possibility to investigate the issue in depth and within its real life context (Ben Willis 2014). The focus of the study lies in that particular case and it rejects the consideration of other issues, which can distract or make more complicated the analyses of the research question.

This study will be devoted to particular case, which is the process of the EU democracy promotion in Azerbaijan. For the purpose to analyze this study, the paper will be divided into three phases, which will be the total time periods of the paper.

#### *Phases*

- 1) Azerbaijan during Ayaz Mutalibov and Abulfaz Elchibey Administration**
- 2) Azerbaijan during Heydar Aliyev Administration**
- 3) Azerbaijan during Ilham Aliyev Administration**

The division of phases is done according to the governments, which have been holding the power. All these three phases cover the period of the presidency of four presidents, who are

Ayaz Mutalibov and Abulfaz Elchibey in the first phase and Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev in the second and third phases respectively

## **2.2 Process tracing**

Another methodology, which will be used in this study is process tracing. Process tracing was firstly started to be used in cognitive psychology in the late of 1960s. In 1979 Alexander L George, who was the political scientist in Stanford University, tried to make inference about historical explanations by using the evidence from within case studies (Bennett 2012). This methodology is used to examine the causal processes from the independent variable to the dependent variable. Good process tracing needs to have 10 criterias to address, which are the following: 1) cast the net widely for alternative explanation, 2) be equally tough on alternative explanation, 3) make a justifiable decision on when to start, 4) make justifiable decision on when to stop, 5) consider the potential biases of evidentiary sources, 6) take into account whether the case is the most or the least likely for alternative explanation, 7) combine process tracing with case comparisons, 8) be open to inductive insights, 9) use deduction to ask “if the explanation is true, what will be the specific process leading to the outcome?” 10) remember that conclusive process tracing is good, but not all process tracing is conclusive (Bennett 2012). This method will be used to define intervening causal processes, which are causal chain and causal mechanism between an independent variable and dependent variable.

## **2.3 Structured-focused comparison**

Structured focused comparison is especially good for comparison of cases in a structured manner. This methodology is used in order to formulate general questions that show the research objective. These questions are asked in each phase, which help to standardize data collection (Alexander 2004). The usage and structure of this methodology is well described in the book “Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences” written by Alexander I. George and Andrew Bennett. The good part of the structured focused

comparison is that it prevents decision makers from relying only on a single historical analogy.

For this study, structured focused comparison will be combined with four questions asked in all three phases. The questions are the following ones:

- 1) Did the government of Azerbaijan tried to weaken democratic development in Azerbaijan in that period?*
- 2) How was the EU democracy development effective in Azerbaijan in that period?*
- 3) How strong influence did Russia have in Azerbaijan in that period?*
- 4) How were the EU's energy interests strong in Azerbaijan in that period?*

## **2.4 Data collection**

For the analyses of this study, there will be used different articles, academic papers, newspaper articles and websites of governments such as the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, the website of the European Commission etc. Regarding articles of newspapers, there will be used only articles with trustworthy reputation.

## **CASE STUDIES**

The next chapter will discuss case studies, which are three phases. The phases will be described according to variables, and will follow the purpose to answer the questions, which were mentioned in structured focused comparison. This chapter can be considered as a key for the further analyses of the research question, as all of the needed historical developments will be mentioned in this chapter.

### **3.1 The first phase: Azerbaijan during Ayaz Mutalibov and Abulfaz Elchibey Administration**

On November 5 1991, Hasan Hasanov and Etibar Mammadov arrived in Turkey as official representatives of Azerbaijani delegation, who persuaded the purpose to ask for the recognition of Azerbaijan (Bolukbasi 2011). They have even agreed to ignore their political differences, as the independence of Azerbaijan was the most important issue for that period (ibid). Furthermore, Mammadov stated that he withdraws from the idea to demand the resignation of Ayaz Mutalibov for the reason that it will help the unification of government and will save the country's independency. On November 9 1991, Azerbaijan has ensured its acceptance by the first country, Turkey. Ayaz Mutalibov became the first president of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

#### ***The will of the government of Azerbaijan to preserve its power***

The government of newly established country had a purpose to preserve and keep the independence of Azerbaijan. Despite the country was separated from the USSR, which did not



have any political opposition, new government started to face serious pressure from its political competitors, as a result Ayaz Mutalibov had to take into consideration the interests and demands of political opposition of the country. In this case, the government has two options either to oppress the opposition or to choose the cooperative tactics by considering the interests of both political players and to collaborate for the sake of the country. The newly chosen president of Azerbaijan, Ayaz Mutalibov has made the second option. The first concession towards opposition was to divide the places of deputies equally in newly created National Assembly (Milli Maclis), which consisted of 25 pro government members and 25 all opposition deputies (Bolukbasi 2011). Therefore, the country established the multipolar government. The main worries of the country were the recognition of Azerbaijan, the preservation of Nagorno Karabakh and the lift of Russian influence from the country. For that time, it was not easy to define the exact political preferences of Azerbaijani government, as it was busy with solving its external and internal problems, which could damage the independence of the country. However, it cannot be said that the government was moving towards autocracy either. This fact is proven by the differences in the ideologies and beliefs inside the government. For example, Ayaz Mutalibov was politically pro-Russian, though his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Huseynagha Sadyigov was pro-Western, who wished to see Azerbaijan as an integrated country to NATO (Markedonov 2010). Furthermore, the Prime Minister of the country Hasan Hasanov was seeking to improve relations between Popular Front Party and the government of Mutalibov (Goltz 1999). In addition to that, it was believed that Hasan Hasanov and Ayaz Mutalibov did not enjoy good relations with each other, as it was predicted that Hasan Hasanov was angry that Ayaz Mutalibov, and not him, was elected the first secretary of Communist party (ibid). However, it is not easy to define if his tolerance towards opposition groups was coming from his believe to democracy or it was done just because of the reason that he did not enjoy strong influence and had to cooperate with the political opposition of the country for the sake of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, the situation was tense in Nagorno Karabakh, which was forcing pro government and opposition groups to be more cooperative. The importance of this issue was seen in the first resolution adopted by the government of Azerbaijan, which abolished the status of autonomy in Nagorno Karabakh on November 26, and as a response NKAO declared independence on December 9 (Boukhasi 2011). Mostly the Nagorno Karabakh conflict will end the presidency of Ayaz Mutalibov, who will have to resign after it. In spite of the reason that first year of independence, show the

possibility of the cooperation between dominated and opposition political parties, the next months after the escalation of the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh depicted different picture. After the loss of Khojaly on February 1992, which ended with the massacre of more than 200 Azerbaijani civilians (Human Rights Watch 1994), the Popular Front Party started to use these events as a failure of Ayaz Mutalibov and demanded his resignation. Ayaz Mutalibov agreed to resign on March 6 1992, which puts little space for the statement that the government is ready to do anything to stay in power. However, it was not easy even to say that Mutalibov agreed to resign because of his fewer ambitions for power, or because of the recognition that he had less support. Moreover, he had been already weakened after Garakend tragedy of 1991, when the influential people of his command died in helicopter crash in Graakend (Shirinova 2010). The event, which strengthens the idea that Ayaz Mutalibov still was willing to keep his presidency, was the decision to hide the tragedy of Khojaly from public, as after the massacre Azerbaijanis outside of Khojaly were informed that during Khojaly siege by Armenians, Azerbaijan lost only two civilians (Bolukbasi 2011). However, that period did not show serious attacks on free press. On the other hand, the period of Mutaliboc's presidency gave the birth for new independent newspapers such as Turan, Aydinliq, Istiglal, Musavat, 215 KL etc (Grigoryan 2005). As a prove it should be mentioned that the reason for the resignation of Ayaz Mutalibov was the promulgation of the truth about Khojaly events by media. However, the appetite of Ayaz Mutalibov for power started to be noticed after siege of Lachin and Shusha by Armenian troops, as he attempted to return the power, though it was unsuccessful (Musabayev 2005).

On June 7 1992, the country witnessed the first free democratic elections in Azerbaijan, which were won by Abulfaz Elchibey, the member of APF party (Juviler 1998). In spite of the reason that the second president seemed more ambitious for reforms, pro-Western and more liberal, war in Nagorno Karabakh did not allow him to be concentrated in internal issues. Elchibey also did not take serious measures against freedom of speech in order to secure his presidency. The only case was the declaration of state of emergency with the restriction of some freedoms. However, the conflict for power was continuing inside the country, as the guerilla groups intensified fights inside the country (Elchibey 1993). Moreover, remained former communist members were trying to get as much economic power as possible. Despite the increased influence of former communist members were increasing, the government of Elchibey did not take serious measures to diminish their power, which later

led to the destabilization of situation and organized pitch in Ganja by the command of Surat Huseynov. The Elchibey administration took surprised decision by not continuing struggle for power and decided to invite former member of CPSU Heydar Aliyev (Juviler 1998). The election of Heydar Aliyev as a new president of Azerbaijan has ended the governance of Elchibey administration.

### ***The EU's efforts to develop democracy in Azerbaijan***

The first years of Azerbaijan were not remembered with any serious chronological event in EU-Azerbaijan relations. However, this passiveness can be justified for the reason that beginning of 1990s were also the years of the transformation of the European Union. Moreover, it should be mentioned that even the word the European Union did not exist during 1991 period, when Azerbaijan got its independence from the USSR. The Maastricht treaty and Copenhagen criteria defined democracy as a priority of the EU inside its system and in relations with other outside countries. Increase of EU reforms towards freedom of movement, capital, trade and service, has established the new power in Europe, which was developing the capacity to promote the transition of its new neighboring states.

In spite of the reason that the EU and Azerbaijan did not have any official partnership agreement, the EC (later the EU) was the first organisation, which started to provide Azerbaijan with technical assistance under the TACIS program (European Commission), which was mainly directed to political and economic assistance to the country. The implementation of that program by the EU has shown the importance of the development of human capital in the country, which is the basics for democratic development.

To sum up, Azerbaijan and EU had limited relations in the period between 1991 and 1993. However, even in the first stages of relations, the EU has highlighted the importance of economic development and development of human capital, which are crucial for the development of democracy and stability. However, it was limited to technical assistance, as Azerbaijan and official Brussels did not establish any personal partnership plan.

### ***Russia's influence in Azerbaijan***

The collapse of the USSR and the establishment of new independent states has hurt the image of Russia as a country enjoying the status of empire starting from 18<sup>th</sup> century. Although, after the collapse of the USSR, Russia got pro-western politicians, who were in favor of democratisation of the region, they were in dramatic minority (Ismailzade 2006). Russia was not happy with the fact that newly established independent Post Soviet states were in capacity to develop independently economic and political relations with the West (ibid). Russia has paid special attention to Azerbaijan, as it was not willing to see the South Caucasian country to change its directions to the other external power. There were many reasons for that. Firstly, influence over Azerbaijan was important in guaranteeing its security, as the gain of influence over Azerbaijan by Iran and Turkey could weaken Russia's power in the region (Aslanli 2010). Furthermore, the development of relations between the West and Azerbaijan could damage the Russian energy monopoly in the West and would bring Western countries closer to Caspian shores, which was intolerable for Russia (ibid).

However, despite these facts, the beginning of the independence of Azerbaijan show strange policy of Russia towards Azerbaijan. In spite of the fact that the first president of Azerbaijan Ayaz Mutalibov was quite pro-Russian and was trying to normalize relations with its powerful neighbor and proposed Friendship and Cooperation Treaty, Russia refused to establish any diplomatic relation with newly established South Caucasian country (ibid). Moreover, Azerbaijan was not invited to the first meeting of Post-Soviet countries to establish CIS organisation (Bolukbasi 2011). It was invited only after the strong resistance from Ayaz Mutalibov to join CIS, though this treaty was not ratified by the parliament (ibid). Such Russian behavior towards Azerbaijan in its first years of independence could be explained with the fact of strong division in directions towards Russia between Azerbaijan's executive and legislative bodies, where the executive body was supporter of strengthening relations with Russia, whereas its legislative part was supporter of isolation of Azerbaijan from Russia. Furthermore, the event of 20 January (mass demonstrations against Soviet rule in Azerbaijan) was considered by Russia as a show of hatred of Azerbaijanis towards Russian dominance in the South Caucasian country. It was obvious that Russia was not satisfied with the existence of anti-Russian opposition in the country. It was seen from the fact that Russia recognized

Azerbaijan only one year later from the independence of Azerbaijan, in 1992, which happened during the visit of Russian Foreign Minister Kozirev to Baku (Aslanli 2010).

The active Russian presence in conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia depicted the Russian priorities over its neighbors, towards which were used military methods in order to keep them close to Russian influence (Ismailzade 2006). In the beginning of conflict in Nagorno Karabakh, Russia started to provide actively conflicting parties with weapons, therefore official Moscow was guaranteeing its military presence in both countries (ibid).

After the military coup in 1992 and a democratic election of Abulfaz Elchibey as a president of Azerbaijan, the relations between official Moscow and Azerbaijan started to deteriorate (ibid). Official Moscow understood that one of the main reasons for the coup was the orientation of Mutaliboc's foreign policy towards Russia. The presidency of Elchibey was remembered with the decision to withdraw all Russian troops from Azerbaijan (Musabayev 2005), attempts to integrate country to Euro-Atlantic space (Ismailzade 2006) and strengthening of relations with Turkey. As a response, Russia has increased its military support to Armenia; as a result, Azerbaijan lost the whole Nagorno Karabakh plus some of its key strategic towns. However, already before the presidency of Elchibey, Russia show its sympathy towards Armenia. For instance, during the presidency of Ayaz Mutalibov Armenian military forces with the help of Russian 366<sup>th</sup> military infantry captured town Khojaly and murdered more than 200 people (Human Rights Watch 1994).

In spite of the attempts of the new government led by Abulfaz Elchibey to isolate Azerbaijan from Russian influence, official Moscow was keeping its presence by supporting pro-Russian politicians inside Azerbaijan and weaponing Armenia in its war with Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh, and therefore increasing Russian presence in the conflict. On July 1992, Elchibey appointed Surat Huseynov as his official representative in Nagorno Karabakh (De Waal 2003). Huseynov was not hiding his sympathy towards Russia (Saferworld 2009). Moreover, he was getting support from Soviet Airborne Troops (ibid), which would give all its weapons to Huseynov command while leaving Azerbaijan by the decision of Elchibey government to withdraw all Russian troops from Azerbaijan. After the loss of Mardakert by Azerbaijan, Elchibey decided to withdraw Huseynov from his position by blaming him in treasury against country and working for the interests of Russian geopolitics (De Wall 2003). However, perseverance of Huseynov not to leave position led to the revolt in Ganja organized by him, which ended the presidency of Elchibey, who did not manage to cease the revolution

of armed forces led by Surat Huseynov (Khachaurov 1995). This event ends the presidency of Elchibey, and makes as unfulfilled the dreams of Popular Front Party to be integrated towards the West, as after 1993 APF loses any power in the country. Although, the presence of Russian hand in this event looks more hypothesis than a proved fact, it was undoubtable that help, which Huseynov gets from Russian division, plays a crucial role in the termination of APF' government in the country.

### ***The EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan***

The period from 1991 to 1993 was not remembered with any special event concerning relations between the EU and Azerbaijan in energy sector. However, such situation was not surprising, as Azerbaijan was in its early stage to define its natural resources sale's policy. Furthermore, the European Union was in process of transformation, as the Union was acquiring new strategies and member countries.

In spite of the fact that the first years of independence did not face any special events related to the EU-Azerbaijan energy cooperation, it was not secret that the West was highly interested in Azerbaijani oil. The attempts of Ayaz Mutalibov to sign energy contracts with Western companies failed with the coup and Mutalibov's resignation (Minval 2015). During the government of Abulfaz Elchibey, Azerbaijan attempted to bring Western oil companies to the country, though in general there was not any personal plan between the European Union and Azerbaijan. Abulfaz Elchibey as his colleague, ex-president Mutalibov, failed to sign oil contracts with Western oil companies; therefore, the exploitation of oil fields was not properly exploited.

### **3.2 The second phase- Azerbaijan during Heydar Aliyev Administration**

The collapse of the Popular Front Party opened a door for Heydar Aliyev to come to Baku and depict himself as a national leader and saver of the country in 1993 (Guliyev 2012). On June 9, 1993, Elchibey invited Aliyev to Baku to help in crisis resolution of the country, which started after the military coup in Ganja (Cornell 2011). Firstly elected as a speaker of Parliament, Aliyev later becomes the third president of Azerbaijan, who manages to cease the

military revolt organized by Surat Huseynov by giving him a position of prime minister with additional charges of Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior.

***The will of the government of Azerbaijan to preserve its power.***

Coming to power in 1993, Heydar Aliyev managed to sign ceasefire agreement with Armenia over Nagorno Karabakh, which guaranteed the stability not only of the country but also of his power preservation. In his first stages of presidency, one of the main challenges was to destroy militia groups in the country, therefore to return monopoly on violence of power to the state, though it was not secret that Aliyev came to power with the help of military revolt, which put an end to the Popular Front Party's governance in the country (ibid). Instead of the developing democratic transition of the country, political elites again focused their attention to the fight for power. Now president Aliyev faces three main rebels, who were pretending for power: the first one being Surat Huseynov, whose revolt finished the governance of APF, the second one was Aliakram Humbatov, who was organized separatist revolt in Southern Lenkoran province and the third one being Isgandar Javadov, who was calling for the resignation of Heydar Aliyev (ibid). However, in comparison with ex-presidents of Azerbaijan, Aliyev managed to fight military revolt in the country. As a result, Aliakram Humbatov was sentenced to death penalty (later was pardoned and fled to Iran), Surat Huseynov was forced to resign and was banned from political activities in the country, and Rovshan Javadov was killed during fight between OMON fighters commanded by him and military groups of government (ibid). However, this fight cost Azerbaijan the loss of its other strategically important cities such as Agdam, Kalbajar, Zangilan and Qubadli. Resultantly Azerbaijan gets over 700 000 internally displaced people, who were forced to leave from occupied territories by Armenian forces (ibid).

In spite of these losses, Heydar Aliyev was not thinking about resignation and was focused to strengthen his power by putting loyal to him people to the highest positions in the country. The second challenge was to make his status official; therefore, referendum was conducted, which had a purpose to decide the fate of president Elchibey and Aliyev's own one. However, the outcome of referendum was obvious and there was no need for falsification of results by pro Aliyev government, but precedent was needed for the future presidential and

parliamentary elections in the country (ibid). The result of referendum was reverberate verdict of no confidence. The democratic situation, which was enjoyed during Elchibey government, was gradually going down. The first event, which gradually hinting to that, was the presidential elections of 1993. Firstly, the outcome of the elections was obvious, as the other two candidates in the presidential rally were little known figures, who were Karrar Abiyev and businessperson Zakir Taghiyev (Azadliq Radios2013). Secondly, in the first time in the history of Azerbaijan the results of presidential elections show Brezhnevian numbers with 98, 8% votes going to Heydar Aliyev (Cornell 2015).

The third challenge of Heydar Aliyev was the strengthening of presidential power in the country. As a result, referendum was held, which had the main purpose to bestow larger responsibilities upon the president and to change Azerbaijan into presidential country (ibid). New constitution, which was accepted on November 12 1995, devoted separate article 109 with 32 paragraphs defining the responsibilities of the president. With new constitution, the president gets the power to formulate the Security Committee of the country, to decide the dates of the elections to the parliament (Milli Majlis) of the country and to appoint and dismiss prime minister, judges, high prosecutor, cabinet members etc to the country (Azərbaycan Respublikasının Konstitusiyası).

Before the parliamentary elections, in August, mixed majority-proportional electoral system was established and in the same month, most of the political parties were banned from participation in parliamentary elections (International Parliamentary Union 2008). One year before the parliamentary elections, Aliyev's government increased pressure and repressions against other influential political parties, particularly APF (Human Rights Watch 1995). As an example, the raid can be mentioned to the office of Popular Front Party on 28 February 1994 (ibid). Furthermore, the country report of Human Rights watch stated about the fire of 450 workers for their political believes. In addition to that, police detained 100 APF activists blamed in different charges (ibid). 1995 Parliamentary elections show the dramatic victory of YAP (New Azerbaijan Party). New Azerbaijan Party headed by president Heydar Aliyev got 54 seats, whereas the second largest party had only 4 seats, which meant a total control of the legislative body by the executive one (International Parliamentary Union 2008). International observers considered as not free the parliamentary elections of 1995 as well as presidential elections of 1993 (Human Rights Watch 1995).



The third challenge of Heydar Aliyev was to attain international recognition of his presidency. Oil played as a key factor in the normalization of relations with other countries. Famous oil companies were invited to sign the “Contract of the century”, which included the famous oil companies from the USA, Russia, the UK, Turkey, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Japan etc. As a result, Aliyev show his loyalty to both West and Russia (Cornell 2015). The treaty was so important for Aliyev that he even agreed to devote 20% of oil shares to oil companies of other countries, where half of these shares were given to Lukoil (ibid).

Heydar Aliyev was enjoying the reputation of savior of the country, as during his period the economy of the country firstly started to grow up, and the country was free from military revolts and instability, which were common in Mutalibov’s and Elchibey’s administration. Aliyev managed to maneuver with this fact by justifying his actions against freedom of press and other political parties. Heydar Aliyev was trying to urge the West that the final goal of his policy is to change the country to the full democratic state, though it needs long way to go. During one of his speeches in Georgetown University, he mentioned that there should be need long way to pass towards democracy for a young country, as the same way was passed by the USA (ibid). Aliyev’s views on democracy were confusing for most of the people. There was a separation in opinions with some considering him as an authoritarian ruler, whereas others believing that he was moving country towards democracy.

However, the presidential elections of 1998 put an end to these doubts, as it proved that Heydar Aliyev was not willing to see multi polar political situation in the country. The presidential elections, which were held on October 11 1993, were considered as not free and did not meet any international standards, as it was reported in the final reports of the US State Department and OSCE group (CSCE 1998). Aliyev, who was getting pressure from opposition parties and from the West agreed to introduce new law from which in order to win the presidency, candidate needed to have at least two third of votes. This new law gave little hope for opposition parties to prolong the election to the second round, though Aliyev easily manages to exceed the minimum requirement and gets 76.11 of votes, whereas the second candidate Etibar Mmamedov gets only 11.11% of votes (ibid). In spite of the fact that rallies of opposition parties were partly allowed, state officials were highly involved in election processes by controlling TV channels to spread biased information against opposition leaders, intervening on election ballots and sending police against election rallies of the opposition leaders (ibid). Heydar Aliyev’s government was using both soft and hard power to preserve

their place and eliminate any possibility for the strengthening of any other political power except New Azerbaijan Party.

The last challenge for Heydar Aliyev was to put a successor after him, as many of authoritarian rulers would like to do, where in case of Azerbaijan this figure was Ilham Aliyev, who firstly was elected as a vice president of State Oil Company. In years from 1995 to 2003, Ilham Aliyev gets several high positions being as a member of parliament, the head of the Olympic Committee and the first chairman of New Azerbaijan Party (Cornell 2015). The slight moves in positions by Ilham Aliyev was already hinting the name of the next president to the Azerbaijani society.

To sum up, starting from 1993 one ruling party controlled Azerbaijan, where other parties had very marginal say in political life of the country. The parliamentary elections of 2001 ended with a dramatic victory of New Azerbaijan Party having 79 deputies in parliament, whereas the second largest party had only seven deputies (OSCE 2001). Both executive and legislative governments were completely controlled by one ruling party. Despite of frauds in both parliamentary and presidential elections, harassments on free media and political persecution of other political parties, Azerbaijan was considered as partly free country with some respect of freedom of speech and political freedom etc (Freedom House).

### ***The EU's efforts to develop democracy in Azerbaijan***

The first official contract between the EU and Azerbaijan was signed during Heydar Aliyev administration in 1996, which was The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (The Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Economy). This agreement had a broad value, as it included all necessary spheres except military (ibid). The first article clearly stated that the purpose of PCA was to support the country's consolidation efforts to democracy (European Community 1999). Moreover, the PCA stressed the importance of the transition to a market economy, which was indivisible part of democracy development (ibid). In addition to that TACIS program, which was launched in 1992 to provide technical and financial assistance to

Post-Soviet countries, had been still in force. During Heydar Aliyev administration, the main purpose of TACIS was to support the country's economy, infrastructure, legal reforms and development of administrative and legal institutions (Mard 2016), Starting from 1995 Azerbaijani youth gets possibility to benefit from Erasmus TEMPUS program, which have had the aim to increase cooperation in education by providing Azeri youth to study with full scholarships in the EU universities (ibid). In comparison with previous governments, the period of Heydar Aliyev presidency show the noticeable improvement in the EU-Azerbaijan relations, where the cooperation in democracy transition of the country played an important role. Furthermore, the acceptance of Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe, which happened on January 25, 2001 (Council of Europe), has strengthened the EU-Azerbaijan cooperation in democracy promotion. Motivating speeches of Heydar Aliyev were giving hope for the country's true inclinations to democratic values. "Our path is clear...The system of government and style of society we are developing in Azerbaijan is based on Western values, including democratic pluralism, the free market economy and secular republic that respect universal human rights" (Goltz 1999 page 477), the speech, which was made by Heydar Aliyev was stressing the importance of democratic values for the government's policy.

On the other hand, the EU democracy promotion in Azerbaijan collided with the times of undemocratic developments in Azerbaijan. The dramatic increase of presidential power, gradual total control of the country by one ruling party and an increase of pressure on free media were putting a shadow on the EU democracy promotion in the country. The European Union did not have monitoring group in Azerbaijan's presidential elections of 1998, though it was compensated by the representation of Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (Parliamentary Assembly 1998). In spite of the accusation of CEC in falsification of elections by opposition parties, the report of PACE stated; "Progress was clearly made in the organisation of the electoral process, as well as of the election campaign. Considering the lack of experience, the organisation of the voting itself was correctly prepared" (ibid). In the report, which was made from the second meeting between the EU-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, stated that the EU is satisfied with democracy developments in Azerbaijan, and it highly valued political pluralism, which was happening in the country (The European Parliament 2001). Regarding parliamentary elections of 2001, The EU has stressed the dramatic improvements in election processes, which in general were considered as satisfactory (ibid).

In summary, despite increased cooperation in democracy development between the EU and Azerbaijan, official Brussels was reluctant to criticize the gradual increase of the power of the New Azerbaijan Party, which starting from 1993 was almost controlling all political and economic spheres of the country.

### ***Russia's influence in Azerbaijan.***

The collapse of Popular Front Party's government left for Azerbaijan tense relations with Russia. Aspirations for both the moves towards the West and Turkey, Elchibey government gave the country military uprisings and destabilization of economy. Coming to power in 1993, former Communist party member Heydar Aliyev was perfectly familiar with Russian policy priorities towards its neighbors. The first action towards the pacification of Russian policy towards Azerbaijan was the return of Azerbaijan to Commonwealth of Independent States on September 24, 1993 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan). Furthermore, Aliyev gave a permission to Russia to use Gabala radar, which was needed for its anti-missiles defense system (Ismailzade 2006). As a result, Heydar Aliyev got Russian support in signing Nagorno Karabakh ceasefire agreement with Armenia (ibid).

Heydar Aliyev did not also forget about Russia during signing of oil contract in 1994, when famous international oil companies got access to Azerbaijani oil. The contract gave to Russian Lukoil 10% of shares (Sagheb 1994). Being former communist member, Heydar Aliyev was understanding that it could be too risky for Azerbaijan to hold any project with the West without including Russia to that project in its neighborhood. Even after getting 10% of shares, Russia was showing its opposition by conducting criticizing speeches against this contract. We could see the speeches of Russian officials calling for the termination of the contract for the sake of ecology. On the other hand, there were calls to have equal shares, as Russia also had the right for Caspian Sea, and Russian interests had to be taken into consideration (ibid).

However, tense relations between Russia and Azerbaijan were not only over energy resources of Caspian Sea. Another strained point in relations between official Baku and official Moscow was Chechnya (Aslanli 2010, Aliyeva 2013). Russia was suspecting Azerbaijan for its help for Chechen rebels against Russian government in Russian-Chechen

war. Although, there was not any prove of Azerbaijan's military support for Chechen rebels in fight against Russia, Azerbaijan became one of the largest providers of humanitarian aid to Chechen people during the war. Thousands of Chechen refugees found shelter in Azerbaijan (Aliyeva2013). In addition to that, Cultural Center of the Chechen Republic-Ichkeria and the office of the plenipotentiary representative of Chechnya to the Muslim countries, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, opened in Baku (ibid). Russia's response to these aids was to impose economic embargo against Azerbaijan (Musabayov2010). The embargo, which was imposed in 1994, lasted 3 years (Chemyavsky 2012). The position of Russia was clear, which was stating that either Azerbaijan was moving away from its free actions in its foreign policy, which were considered by Russia as pro-Western and anti-Russian, or official Moscow will continue its pressure on Azerbaijan, whether it would be Nagorno Karabakh conflict or impose of different sanctions against the country. Russia had already stated its clear position in relations to Azerbaijan during the speech of Russian ambassador to Azerbaijan in 1994, when it was mentioned that any moves of Azerbaijan against Russia would lead to an internal destabilization of the South Caucasian country (Sagheb 1994).

The changes in Russian-Azerbaijan relations started to be seen during the end of 1990s and 2000, when Vladimir Putin becomes Russian president (Aliyeva 2013). As a result, the first visit by Russian presidents to Azerbaijan was made by Putin on January 9, 2001 (Musabayev 2010). One year later Heydar Aliyev made an official visit to Moscow (ibid). During Putin's administration, Azerbaijan arrested and sent back Chechens suspected in participation in Russian-Chechen war and two countries has established strong economic and military relations (Aliyeva 2013, Musabayev 2010). The beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century brings new stage of Azerbaijan-Russian relations, which becomes more cooperative than rivalry.

### ***The EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan***

Heydar Aliyev, who managed to stop lasting civil war and the war between Armenia over Nagorno Karabakh, directed his attention towards economic development of the country by tempting foreign energy giant companies to invest to the development of Azerbaijani oil industry. The policy of YAP government was concentrated rather on the development of oil and gas industries, with which Azerbaijan was rich, than to implement the diversification of

the country's economy. As a result, the country faces the establishment of energy projects, first of which was the signing of the document for the construction of Baku Tbilisi Ceyhan pipeline between Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia on March 9, 1993 (Turkish Daily News 2006). One year later the country gets the signing of the second important document, "The Contract of the Century". As the country has been becoming one of the largest oil and gas producers in the EU's neighborhood, it started to get special attention from the EU, particularly in energy cooperation. The Contract of the Century has included one of the EU member countries, the UK, which had shares of 19.20% in the contract (17.12%-British Petroleum, 2.08-Ranco) (Sagheb 1994).

In spite of the reason that the UK has already established its interests in Azerbaijani oil, a strong cooperation between the EU as an institution and Azerbaijan in energy sector could be seen only after 1996, as the first official document, regulating relations between the EU member states and the Republic of Azerbaijan, was signed in 1996 and got into force in 1999. Since 1996, Azerbaijan becomes the member country of INOGATE (INOGATE). One of the important projects within the assistance of the EU to the newly established Post-Soviet states, INOGATE gets its legal groundwork with signing oil and gas interstate framework in 1999 in Kyiv (Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs). It should be mentioned that Azerbaijan has been becoming the beneficiary of almost half of its projects (Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, INOGATE).

The ends of 1990s could be considered as the beginning of the EU-Azerbaijan energy cooperation. The establishment of Partnership and Cooperation Agreement gave a legal framework for the start of cooperation between the EU and official Baku, where energy cooperation could not be eliminated.

### **3.3 The third phase: The period of Ilham Aliyev administration**

The death of Heydar Aliyev has put a question about the next possible president of Azerbaijan. For some opposition parties it was a chance to make a comeback and challenge the governance of New Azerbaijan Party. Others were sure that Ilham Aliyev would succeed his father for the next presidential term. However, even inside New Azerbaijan Party there were people, who were questioning Ilham Aliyev's ability to succeed his father as a next

president of Azerbaijan. The question deemed to be closed after the 2003 presidential elections and a confident victory of Ilham Aliyev, who becomes the next president of Azerbaijan.

***The will of the government of Azerbaijan to preserve its power.***

According to the OSCE report, the 15 October 2003 presidential elections did not meet international standards, which were resulted in poor control of election results, severe restrictions on political rallies, usage of violence by police against political activists etc (OSCE 2003). The election results gave Ilham Aliyev nearly 77% of votes, whereas his follower Isa Gambar got only 14 % of votes (YAP 2003, Freedom House 2004). After the 2003 presidential elections, Azerbaijan loses its status as a partly free country, which was enjoyed during Heydar Aliyev administration, and becomes as a not free (Freedom House 2004).

After the revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, opposition parties of Azerbaijan hoped for the international support for the establishment of political pluralism in the country. The 6 November 2005 parliamentary elections were hope for the opposition parties to get at least some portion of say in political life of the country by getting seats in Milli Majlis. However, not many things have changed since the last presidential elections, and these elections did not meet international standards either, though some improvements in election processes were seen (OSCE 2006). The results of elections put an end to the hope for the establishment of some kind of pluralism in the country, as YAP gets 56 seats in parliament. The result should be seen as huge, if we consider that the second largest party Musavat gets only five seats, whereas independent deputies got 40 seats (ibid). Furthermore, the tactics of elimination of potential rivals of the government before the election process were highly used by the government. For example, Rasul Guliyev and Ayaz Mutalibov were threatened to be arrested, if they would return to the country for running in parliamentary elections (ibid).

The government, which was almost ruled by New Azerbaijan Party (both the executive and legislative branches were controlled by NAP), were slightly taking control of media in the country. The members of the National Council for Television and Radio were

appointed directly by the president (Freedom House 2005). Though, it should be mentioned that this Council was responsible only for the control and giving licenses to broadcasting media, whereas newspapers were still keeping its independence (ibid). On the other hand, the government was aware of population's preferences, which were given to broadcasting media over printing one. Despite the opposition newspapers were allowed to be printed, the journalists were facing harassments and regular arrests by the police (ibid).

The 2008 presidential elections ended with a confident victory of Ilham Aliyev with 88.73% of votes, whereas the second candidate Igbal Aghazade received only 2.86% of votes (OSCE 2008). Though, the OSCE report show the positive changes in these elections, the lack of the time which was allocated to other candidates in presidential elections, did not improve.

In spite of the reason that there were seen some improvements in election processes with every new incoming election in the country, the country moved closer to resemble authoritarian states. Musavat party, which was always getting places in parliament, even if the number was marginal, did not manage to do that in the 2010 parliamentary elections, whereas New Azerbaijan Party received 69 seats (OSCE 2011).

The challenge, which was bothering Aliyev's government, was the restriction on the election of the president by which the president could be elected only for two terms (RadioFree Europe RadioLiberty 2008). For that purpose referendum was held, which was abolished this restriction and president could be elected for unlimited terms (Azebyacn Respublikasi Edliye Nazirliyi, RadioFree Europe RadioLiberty 2008). However, the government of Azerbaijan insisted that this amendment will not hurt democracy, as Ali Hasanov, the deputy of Milli Maclis, stated "If the president is elected once, twice, or three times, it's not a democracy issue, but a legislative issue." (ibid). In spite of the reason that the lift of presidential term was the main purpose of amendment, other 41 amendments were proposed as well (Freedom House 2010). Another interesting issue was that the people voted not for the acceptance or rejection of full package, but they had to say yes or no for each proposed amendment, and the rejection of one amendment did not mean the rejection of all.

Despite the promises of the government that these amendments will not hurt democracy in the country, the ranking of democracy index of Azerbaijan shrunk from 6.25 to 6.50 (ibid). The government's pressure on civil societies was continuing, as the number of NGO's were increasing their pressure on the government. In July 2009 the President's administration proposed amendments to the Law on Nongovernmental Organisation (ibid).



With these changes, the NGO's would lose the right to be fully funded by the international foundations, as 50% of funds they would get from local ones. Moreover, these NGO's could operate countrywide only, if they would be operational in at least 59 administrative districts. However, because of the strong opposition from civil societies of the country the law was softened.

In spite of the reason that the people saved their basic rights, as the religion was completely free and there were no interference on social life of people by the government, the people's basic rights to have a say in a political life of the country and to monitor the accountability of the government were dramatically diminished. Show of political programs in broadcasting media was strictly controlled. Private TV channels such as ANS, Lider, Space, ATV, and Khazar were focused on show and entertainment programs, only restricting their political shows with rare criticism of local and municipal governments. Free media faced a strong pressure from the government; as a result international broadcasting radios such as BBC, RadioFree Europe/RadioLiberty and Voice of America were banned from broadcasting.

Another big change towards undemocratic rule was the adoption of Constitutional amendments in 2016 by which the President is being elected for 7 years instead of 5, which was before, the country faces new positions Vice President and First Vice president, which holds the second important position after the president and is appointed directly by him, the president gets the right to depose the parliament at any time, during the sudden death or resignation of the president, his duty is implemented by Vice-President and the age limit of the president and deputies were shrunk to 21 and 18 respectively. (Azərbaycan Prezidenti İlham Aliyev 2016). İlham Aliyev made the announcement of the name of the new Vice-President of the country during the Security Council's meeting, who has become his wife Mehriban Aliyeva (BBC Azerbacanca 2017). The announcement of this decision was not surprising, as even before the announcement of results for most political specialists it was obvious that the first Vice-President will be Mehriban Aliyeva. The announcement of this decision means the total control of the country's political system by one family, as at first time in the history after the Second World War, the world faces the hold of two the most important positions in the country by the couple.

### *The EU's efforts to develop democracy in Azerbaijan*

Despite the fact that the period of Ilham Aliyev's presidency has been remembered with the decline of the level of democracy in the country, these years have been the times of active EU's involvement in democracy promotion in Azerbaijan. Since 2004, Azerbaijan is the member of European Neighborhood Policy (The Republic of Azerbaijan Ministry of Economy). It should be stated that cooperation on strengthening of democracy is the second priority in the document (ibid). Five years later Azerbaijan becomes the member of Eastern Partnership, where there was given high importance to the democracy development, which was placed in the first Platform (European Union External Action 2017).

After the EU demands to make some changes in electoral legislation, Azerbaijani government has agreed to implement some amendments there, though the constitutional amendment of 2009, which removed two-term limit for president, has diminished the value of these changes (Franke 2013). The meetings between the EU and Azerbaijani officials intensify after 2008 (ibid), though it gives contradictory result, as after 2008 Azerbaijan faces both some positive and mostly negative changes in democracy development. For example, starting from 2008 the arrests of political activists in the country started to increase. In most cases, the reaction of the EU to these arrests was critical. For instance, after the arrest of Khadija Ismailova, the investigative journalist, the EU made a criticizing statement; "The arrest of investigative journalist Ms Khadija Ismailova by the Azerbaijan authorities last Friday, and her commitment to pre-trial detention on a charge of 'incitement to suicide', is a step against the freedom of expression, key to any democratic society" (European Union External Action 2014). The responses of Azerbaijani government were the signing of Amnesty acts, during which some of political activists have been being released.

The mass criticism of the democratic situation in Azerbaijan was made by the EU in the European Parliament Resolution of 10 September 2015 on Azerbaijan (European Parliament 2015). The response of the government was harsh, as the government gave criticizing speeches against the EU double standards in its foreign policy. One year later after the resolution, during the visit of the EU Parliament members to Baku, Ilham Aliyev blamed the Resolution in holding fabricated information (Trend News Agency 2016). The government of Azerbaijan made a clear message that it will not accept the EU's interference in its domestic policy, and this interference will lead to the setback in the relations between

them. “The resolution adopted by the European Parliament last year, unfortunately, led to a serious setback in our relations. This caused a big surprise. We in Azerbaijan view this as a very hostile move based incorrect and erroneous information and bias, an attempt to undermine the reputation of our country. Without clarity in this matter, it will be difficult to go ahead and plan our future work. I have a document associated with that. I don’t know if all of you are aware of this – you probably are. However, I would like to mention some of the issues. There are many issues here, but I think some of them are worth nothing”- was stressed by Ilham Aliyev during the visit of European Parliament members to Baku (ibid).

The EU’s attempts to sign Association Agreement with Azerbaijan have become unsuccessful, as an official Baku states its unwillingness to do so, though it does not reject the importance of continuation of talks for that. In 2014, Azerbaijani government officially rejects to sign Association Agreement with the EU, but in exchange it proposes to sign New Strategic Partnership Agreement, which is believed will serve the interests of both parts (Ledger 2016, Aghayeva 2015). The explanation of official Baku to reject Association Agreement was the existence of parts, which do not suit the interests of Azerbaijan (ibid). The chief of the Administration’s foreign relations department of the Azerbaijani presidential administration, Novruz Mammadov stated: “We maintain the independence of our foreign policy because our foreign policy should serve the protection of all the interests of the state, the country, and the people” (ibid).

The official visit of Ilham Aliyev to Brussels in order to start talks about the future new agreement between both parties, which will replace Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1999, was remembered with scandalous event, as the president refused to meet the new president of European Parliament Antonio Tajani. The reason for the refusal was clear, because at the same time the EU Parliament hosted an event on “continued human rights violations in Azerbaijan” (RFL/RFE 2017). Another intriguing part of the event was the invitation of investigative journalist Khadija Ismailova and the director of Meydan TV, Emin Milli, who are remembered with criticism of Ilham Aliyev’s presidency (ibid). Such behavior of European Parliament made clear two things: 1) EU wants to increase cooperation in human rights issues, which could be find place in new agreement. 2) The government of Azerbaijan is not willing to give a say to civil society organizations in political life of Azerbaijan. On the other hand, the president’s meeting with Jean Claude Juncker, the President of EU Commission took place in different atmosphere. Both Aliyev and Juncker

stressed the importance for the EU-Azerbaijan cooperation, and the new document of partnership and cooperation between two parties is being prepared (President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev 2017). However, it is becoming clear that the new document will have more stress on economic and energy cooperation than on democratisation and human rights.

### ***Russia's influence in Azerbaijan.***

Azerbaijani-Russian relations, which were going to improve since the end of 1990s, became even stronger during the presidency of Ilham Aliyev. The accusations of each other have ceased by both Azerbaijani and Russian officials. In spite of the reason that Azerbaijan has still kept the priority to integrate towards the West, there have been seen dramatic positive changes in relations between both countries. As an example of activation of cooperation between official Baku and official Moscow, we can mention the decision of Vladimir Putin to make 2005 as a year of Azerbaijan in Russia (Nureyev 2011). As a response, Ilham Aliyev made 2006 as a year of Russia in Azerbaijan (ibid).

In 2004, countries signed Moscow declaration of friendship, cooperation and mutual security (ibid). It should be mentioned that already one year before the countries signed agreement on military cooperation (ebrus.az). Furthermore, Russia has been improving its importance as the main country, which can have a say in resolution of Nagorno Karabakh conflict. On November 2, 2008, with the initiative of Russian president Dmitry Medvedev, president of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met with the president of the Republic of Armenia Ssrj Sarkisyan to discuss the ways of resolution of Nagorno Karabakh conflict (ibid). The meeting, which finished with the signing of Declaration by which all three parties have agreed to adhere to political resolution of the conflict, show the increased importance of Russian Federation as a key country, which was responsible for the security in the South Caucasus region. Moreover, this document was the first document, which was accepted and signed by both the president of Azerbaijan and Armenia since 1994 (Chernyavsky 2010). In addition to that Russia has increased its military sales to Azerbaijanç which could not leave Armenia without anger, though Armenia has been getting most of the military equipments almost for free (Minasyan 2013).

Another important factor, which had an influence to the gradual incline of Azerbaijani government towards Russia, was the democratic situation of the country. Strating with the presidency of Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan has been getting a lot of critics because of its undemocratic measures against civil societies and oppostion of the country. On the other hand Azerbaijan has Russia, which has been considering South Caucasian country as a democratic state with respect of all rights of citisens. In comparison with OSCE, CIS in its reports shows a positive result during its election observations in Azerbaijan. Moreover, Russia becomes as a main defender of Azerbaijan when it comes to attacks of Western countries against democratic situation in the country.

In spite of a gradual incline of Azerbaijani government towards Russia, official Baku is still trying to keep its neutrality, when it comes to foreign policy. Azerbaijan remains the only Post Soviet country, which is not the member CSTO security bloc, NATO, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Eurasian Economic Union (Ramani). During shut down of Russian aircraft by Turkey, Azerbaijan did not support neither Turkey nor Russia (ibid). On the other hand, it went further to develop Southern Gas corridor to export its gas to Europe, which could threaten Russian energy interests in Europe (ibid). However, in spite of this neutrality, it is still felt the sympathy of Azerbaijani government towards Russia, as official Moscow can be considered as a guarantee of Aliyev's regime in Azerbaijan and the power, which is in capacity to regulate Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Whenever the government gets criticism from the West over human rights issues, it runs to the Russian side. It was during the Baku Eurovision Song Contest and Baku European Games 2016, and it happened during the Mehriban Aliyeva's appointment as a vice president of Azerbaijan, as the only TV channel, which got a chance to take live interview from Mehriban Aliyeva, was the Russian state channel Россия 1 (vesti.ru 2017)

### ***The EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan***

The energy relations have especially started to be improved between the EU and Azerbaijan in the period of Ilham Aliyev's presidency. The EU, which is highly dependent on energy resources, has signed Energy Memorandum with Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan separately between 2005 and 2006 (Youngs 2007). The energy agreement between the EU

and Azerbaijan became especially important after the dispute over gas prices between Ukraine and Russia, which could threaten gas supplies from Ukraine to European countries (RFE/RL 2006). Azerbaijan has given a hope to the EU for the diversification of its energy supplies. The energy relations between official Baku and the EU have strengthened after the Eastern Partnership Initiative and the joint declaration on the Southern Gas Corridor in 2011 (Kochladze 2015).

The largest gas field Shah Deniz (Kochladze 2015) is expected to bring Azerbaijani gas to Europe for the first time (BP 2017). The project, which will require 28 billion \$ (ibid), has already received 110 million \$ loan from European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (Kochladze 2015). Another project, which received investments from European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, is the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, which is expected to get 2 billion EUR in total from EBRD (ibid).

Another important project for the EU is Baku Tbilisi Ceyhan pipeline, which became operational in June 2006 (BP 2017). The project, 55% of which is shared by BP (30%) and AzBTC (25%) (ibid), has received support from EBRD and International Finance Corporation (Kochladze 2015).

EU's current problem is to reduce energy dependency from Russia. The problem has started to be noticed in 2006 and 2009, and was especially noticed during Crimean annexation by Russia. As the political tensions between the EU and Russia has been increasing, the EU is entrapped in search of alternative potential markets, which will decrease this dependency. In spite of the reason that the EU has several partners, from which it can import gas, Azerbaijan is considered as the best country to respond to the EU's interests of the strategy of diversifying gas supply away from Russia (Chyong 2015). It is expected that only Shah Deniz project and Umid gas field will bring 10-bcm gas to Albania, Italy and Greece by 2020 (ibid).

Despite these projects were hoped to decrease the poverty and improve the human rights conditions in the country, neither of them happened. Azerbaijan made significant moves towards authoritarianism starting from 2009, though neither the EU nor the USA consider Azerbaijan as an authoritarian regime. The money, which have been coming from oil revenues, were spent to the reconstruction of capital city and expensive international events such as Baku European Games 2015, Formula 1 etc. However, there were not improvements in welfare of the country.

In spite of the dramatic decline of democratic situation of the country, Azerbaijan is still one of the most reliable energy partners of the EU. During the meeting with the president of Azerbaijan, president of European Council Donald Tusk stated: “Azerbaijan is the EU’s reliable and strategic partner in the energy field, and we want to take this partnership further. One aim of the European energy union is to exclude the possibility of using gas as a threat, according to Tusk. The conflict in Ukraine shows that such threats are still possible. This is why the EU is dedicated to diversifying our supplies. And Azerbaijan is a main partner in this endeavor” (Badalova 2015). During the last meeting of Ilham Aliyev to Brussels, the president of Azerbaijan rejected to meet with the president of European Parliament Antonio Tajani, as at the same time there was planned discussion of Azerbaijani government’s human rights violations in European Parliament. In spite of that, Ilham Aliyev had meetings with the president of European Council Donald Tusk, High Representative of the EU Federica Mogherini and the president of European Commission Jean Claude Juncker, where all of them have stated the high value of cooperation between two parties (Mustafayeva 2017). Moreover, Mogherini stressed the importance of the significance of Southern Gas Corridor for the EU, and the parties should continue cooperation on that project (ibid). The last meeting depicted the EU’s entrapped policy towards Azerbaijan, as in the one hand it criticizes a democratic situation in Azerbaijan, on the other hand the EU is satisfied with its relations with Azerbaijan, as the South Caucasian country plays an important role as a secured energy provider for the EU

## ANALYSES

After presenting all case studies in the fourth chapter, now the next chapter will be devoted to the analyses of case studies with the help of cross-case analyses and within-case analyses. The final part of this chapter will depict the main findings of analyses.

### 4.1. Cross-case analyses

The following table displays the results of cross case analyses, which has been done according to the questions, which has been asked in all three phases (see page 15)

Table 2

Variables	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
<b>The EU's efforts to develop democracy in Azerbaijan</b>	<b>No effect</b> It was limited to technical assistance to the country	<b>Less effective</b> In spite of the increased cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan in democracy promotion, it had a marginal effect on democracy development of the country	<b>Very marginal effect</b> In most cases, the government is trying to prevent the EU's active involvement in democracy promotion in Azerbaijan.
<b>The will of the government of Azerbaijan to preserve its power</b>	Both the government of Mutalibov and Elchibey did not take serious measures in order to diminish democracy and to preserve their power, though there was seen some activation for the struggle for power inside	The democratic situation started to deteriorate, as the government increased its pressure on both free media and other political parties. The ruling party gets almost total control of the state, as other political parties have a	The ruling party gets total control of the state, as other opposition parties lose any power in the country. Freedom House considers Azerbaijan as not free.



	other members of government, and guerilla groups. Democratic situation was moderate.	marginal power in the country. Freedom house considers Azerbaijan as partly free	
<b>Russia's influence in Azerbaijan</b>	The official Moscow had a weak influence towards the government of Azerbaijan, though it was actively supporting guerilla groups inside Azerbaijan, and Armenia in its war in Nagorno Karabakh, in order to prevent pro-Western policies inside Azerbaijan.	Russia had a moderate influence towards the government of Azerbaijan. Tense relations were gradually getting to improve.	Russia is increasing its influence towards the government of Azerbaijan, though official Baku is still keeping neutrality in its foreign policy. The two countries face best relations ever since the independence of both countries after the collapse of the USSR.
<b>The EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan</b>	<b>weak</b>	<b>moderate</b>	<b>strong</b>

Source (Prepared by the author based on questions of structured focused comparison, *see page 14*)

After getting answers to SFC questions, the hypotheses can be analyzed.

#### **IV: The will of the government of Azerbaijan to preserve its power**

*The more the government tries to preserve its power, the less possibility for democratic reforms in the country*

The hypothesis is not supported in phase 1. In spite of the reason that there have been seen some portion of struggle for power inside the government and guerilla groups, in overall it did not hurt the democratic situation in the country. However, it is strongly supported in

phases 2 and 3, as the government's attempts to save their power, change dramatically the democratic situation in the country in a negative way.

### **RT 1: Russia's influence in Azerbaijan**

*The more the government of Azerbaijan will incline towards Russia; there will be less possibility for the democracy development in the country*

This hypothesis is less supported in phase 1, as the relations between the government of Azerbaijan and Russia were tense, though Russia kept marginal influence, because inside the government there were still supporters of pro-Russian policy, who could destabilize situation in the country, which had a preventive effect to the democracy development in the country (Surat Huseynov, Rovshan Javadov, some guerilla groups etc).

Phase 2 is less supported as well. Despite the worsening of democratic situation in the country after the presidency of Heydar Aliyev, Russia's negative effect to the democratic situation in the country is not really seen.

Nevertheless, it is supported in phase 3 in a way that after the presidency of Ilham Aliyev, there have been seen the dramatic improvement in Russian-Azerbaijan relations. Russia became a defender of the authoritarian methods of rule of the government of Azerbaijan against Western criticism.

### **RT 2: The EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan**

*The more the EU dependent on Azerbaijani energy resources, the less the government of Azerbaijan will incline to obey.*

Hypothesis is not confirmed in the first phase because of the reason that there were not any energy cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan in that period. However, it is partly supported in phase 2, as Heydar Aliyev managed to increase importance of Azerbaijan for the

West because of its rich energy resources. As a result, undemocratic developments in Azerbaijan were overlooked by the EU. It is strongly confirmed in last phase to the extent that Azerbaijan could manage to play with its energy policy with the EU, as official Baku could direct the EU's attention more to their energy cooperation than to the cooperation in democracy promotion.

## **4.2 Within-case analyses**

### **Phase 1: Azerbaijan during Ayaz Mutalibov and Abulfaz Elchibey administration**

In the period from 1991 to 1993, the EU and Azerbaijan did not have any serious relations. The only interaction between parties was the assistance of the EU to Azerbaijan through TACIS program.

#### *The will of the government of Azerbaijan to preserve its power*

The first phase does not depict any serious fact hinting to the government's efforts to keep its power by diminishing democratic situation in the country. On the other hand, these years can be considered as a period of democratic revival in the country. It is proven by the fact that during the presidency of Ayaz Mutalibov, the government of Azerbaijan was multipolar consisting of 25 deputies of ruling party and 25 deputies of all other opposition parties. Moreover, his successor Abulfaz Elchibey had a priority to be integrated towards the West with considering membership in North Atlantic Treaty Association. In spite of the reason that the first three years from independence were remembered with tense relations between ruling and opposition parties, it did not have a negative effect on a freedom of speech and other basic rights of the citizens of Azerbaijan. However, the activation for power by guerilla groups and war in Nagorno Karabakh slowed down the process of democratisation in Azerbaijan.

### *Russia's influence in Azerbaijan*

Despite the fact that Russia did not enjoy strong influence to both Mutalibov and Elchibey governments, it was still keeping its eye to the process of political development in the country. Though, in first year of independence of Azerbaijan, official Moscow rejected to establish any diplomatic relations with South Caucasian country, in following years Russia increased its active involvement in both Nagorno Karabakh conflict and by supporting guerilla groups inside Azerbaijan. It is enough to prove with the statement that Ayaz Mutalibov was forced to resign after Khojaly tragedy, in which the strategically important town Khojaly was sieged by Armenian forces with the help of 366<sup>th</sup> Russian division. Although, Abulfaz Elchibey puts a mission to integrate the country towards the West, revolt in Ganja organized by Surat Huseynov makes this mission as unfulfilled. The Russian presence in this revolt can be seen with the support of Surat Huseynov by Russian Airborne Troops, which played a crucial role in supremacy of Huseynov's troops against government ones.

### *The EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan*

In this phase, there was not any event hinting to the EU's energy interest in Azerbaijan. Though, there were some attempts by both Mutalibov and Elchibey's governments to get an attention from Western oil companies, Azerbaijan did not sign any energy contract with them. In addition to that, there were not held any personal talks between the EU and Azerbaijan regarding energy cooperation. Therefore, from the period to 1991 to 1993 seems useless to talk about the EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan

### *Summary*

The EU did not have much effect on democracy development in Azerbaijan in that period. The only case, which shows the EU's involvement in the development in Azerbaijan,

is the official Brussels technical assistance to Azerbaijan through TACIS program. Albeit Mutalibov was former communist member and pro-Russian, he did not take serious measures to diminish the democratic situation in the country. His successor Elchibey changed country's priorities towards integration to the West. As a result, he gets rid of Russian troops and military bases from the country. Though, the activation of guerilla groups and war in Nagorno Karabakh slowed down the process of the creation of stable government and maintenance of the democracy development in the country. Russia was keeping an influence on Azerbaijan by its involvement in Nagorno Karabakh conflict and its indirect support of guerilla groups inside Azerbaijan. It is difficult to talk about the EU energy interests in Azerbaijan, as official Baku and the EU did not establish any talks regarding energy cooperation.

## **Phase 2: Azerbaijan during Heydar Aliyev Administration**

This phase is remarked with the sign of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Azerbaijan, which opened a door for the EU's involvement in democracy development in Azerbaijan. In the first time, the EU started to be actively involved in democracy transition of Azerbaijan. The democracy transition was established as one of the priorities in EU-Azerbaijan relations, as it was stated in the first article of PCA. Moreover, TACIS program was still in force. However, the EU's passiveness to criticize the government's moves towards autocracy were putting shadow to the EU's efforts to develop democracy in Azerbaijan.

*The will of the government of Azerbaijan to preserve its power.*

This phase strongly supports the statement that the government's attempts to increase and preserve its power caused a recession in democracy development in the country. The first evidence showing it, were the presidential elections of 1993, when Heydar Aliyev got 98, 8% of votes, as only two other very little known candidates were allowed to take part in elections. Furthermore, with the constitutional changes of 1995, the parliament (Milli Majlis) lost its influential role over president of Azerbaijan, which it enjoyed before. With these

constitutional changes, the president gets larger responsibilities, which are defined with 32 paragraphs in Article 109. In addition to that, executive government gets control of the legislative one, as the parliamentary elections of 1995 show the dramatic victory of New Azerbaijan Party (YAP) with 54 seats in the parliament. It means almost a total control of the parliament by one ruling party, as the second largest party gets only four seats. The increase of repressions against other political parties and critics of the government show the democratic regression of the country. New Azerbaijan Party further improved its power with 2001 parliamentary elections for the reason that YAP gets 79 seats in parliament.

In spite of Aliyev's talks about his support for democracy development and it just needs long way to pass, his attempts to prepare his son as his successor, oppose his speeches. The events proving it are his appointments of his son to high positions, as Ilham Aliyev becomes vice president of State Oil Company, Member of Parliament, the head of the Olympic Committee and the first Chairman of New Azerbaijan Party.

#### *Russia's influence in Azerbaijan*

In comparison with the first phase, in the second phase, new government led by Heydar Aliyev took less preventive measures against Russia. As an evidence, indicating to that was the decision of the government of Azerbaijan to join CIS. Moreover, Aliyev's permission to Russia to use Gabala Radar for military purposes depicted the improvement in relations between two countries. However, there is no evidence pointing to the Russia's negative influence to the democracy development in Azerbaijan.

On the other hand, the speech made by the ambassador of Russia to Azerbaijan in 1994 show a threatening hint to the Azerbaijani government, whether official Baku will move against Russia. In spite of tense relations regarding Chechnya issue and oil shares in Caspian Sea, the relations become improved at the end of 1990s. In general, this phase shows a moderate incline of the Azerbaijani government towards Russia, though it does not show any negative effect on democracy development in Azerbaijan.

#### *The EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan*

This phase can be considered as a start of energy relations between the EU and Azerbaijan. The special attention of the EU to Azerbaijani oil has found its place in PCA and

INOGATE's projects, where half of its projects were devoted to Azerbaijan. It is difficult to find a relation between the EU energy interests and democracy development in Azerbaijan in this phase, though it is not secret that oil was actively used by the Heydar Aliyev's government to get support from the West.

### *Summary*

Starting from the second phase there is seen a dramatic improvement in the EU-Azerbaijan relations, which did not leave without effect democracy development. Despite the EU increased its role in democratic transition of Azerbaijan, this period collided with the government's move towards autocratic means of governance by increasing pressure against other political parties, opposition groups, free media etc. In addition to that, the EU's reluctance to criticize the government of Azerbaijan put a shadow to its democracy promotion in Azerbaijan. In this phase there is not seen Russian negative influence on democracy development in Azerbaijan, though in comparison with previous governments, this one started to normalize relations with Russia with only opposite cases being tense relations between two countries over the issue of oil exploitations and exports in Caspian Sea and war in Chechnya. The EU's interests in energy resources of Azerbaijan has increased, though it is difficult to say whether it was a barrier for the EU democracy development in Azerbaijan.

### **Phase 3: Azerbaijan during Ilham Aliyev administration**

The final phase depicts the EU's active role in democracy development in Azerbaijan, though the country's democratic situation has shrunk dramatically. The EU's involvement in democracy development of the country has been increasing, as Azerbaijan became members of European Neighborhood Policy and later Eastern Partnership. The importance of strengthening of cooperation on democracy finds its place in documents and action plans signed between Azerbaijan and the EU. In comparison with previous phase, this period shows the increase of the EU's criticism against the government's policies directed to diminish democracy in Azerbaijan. As an example, the EU Parliament's resolution of 2015 can be

mentioned. Furthermore, the EU Parliament takes a critical way towards Azerbaijani government during the visit of Ilham Aliyev to Brussels in 2017 by inviting investigative journalist Khadija Ismailova and director of Meydan TV Emin Milli to the speech on democracy development in Azerbaijan to the EU Parliament in the same day. However, as a response Ilham Aliyev rejects to meet the president of the EU Parliament Antonio Tajani, which depicts the unwillingness of the government to cooperate with the EU on this issue. The government of Azerbaijan persistently rejects to sign Association Agreement with the EU, as it offers alternative agreement, where the interests of both parties will be taken into consideration.

*The will of the government of Azerbaijan to preserve its power.*

New Azerbaijan Party further increases its power starting with the presidency of Ilham Aliyev. In spite of the reason that the second largest party Musavat manages to get five seats in parliamentary elections of 2005, five years later it loses any power in the country with no seats in parliament, whereas YAP gets 69 seats.

The government has been increasing its pressure on NGO's, other political parties, independent investigative journalists etc. As an example, the ban of Ayaz Mutalibov to participate in Parliamentary elections can be mentioned. Furthermore, the government decided to shut down radio stations Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, BBC Radio and American Voice. The direct appointment of the members of the National Council for Radio and Television by president increases the government's influence on the work of radio and TV channels in the country.

Moreover, the president manages to increase its power by conducting referendums, the first of which was in 2009, when the president gets the right to be elected unlimited times. By the last referendum of 2016, the presidential term changes from 5 years to 7, new position of vice-president is created, who becomes the second important person after president and is appointed by him and president gets the right to depose parliament at any time. With the decision of Ilham Aliyev to choose his wife Mehriban Aliyeva as a vice-president, makes



Azerbaijan as the only country in the world, in which the most two important positions of the country are held by couple.

### *Russia's influence in Azerbaijan*

In the last phase, there is a clear normalization of relations between Russia and Azerbaijan. As an example of friendly relations can be mentioned the decisions of both governments to have a year of each other in their country. Furthermore, Russia increases its role as a moderator of the resolution of Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The Declaration of 2008 can be an example of that. In addition to that, an increase of military sales to Azerbaijan shows Russian attempts to look neutral in this conflict by supporting both conflicting parts.

Although, there is a normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Russia, official Baku is still keeping its independency from Russian influence by conducting balanced foreign policy. For example, during the shutdown of Russian military plane by Turkey, Azerbaijan took neutral position by supporting neither of countries. On the other hand, official Baku developed further the Southern Gas corridor project. In addition to that, Azerbaijan is keeping its neutrality by not entering to neither NATO nor CSTO security bloc. However, Russia becomes the supporter of Azerbaijan when it comes to attacks of Western countries to Azerbaijan regarding democracy issues.

In sum, during this phase despite the fact that Azerbaijan keeps its independency in decision-making, Russia gives dependency from it regarding Nagorno Karabakh conflict and as a strong defender of official Baku's behavior related to undemocratic rule.

### *The EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan*

This period shows the increase of the EU's energy interests in Azerbaijan. The worsening of relations between the EU and Russia, forces official Brussels to search for an alternative energy resources, where Azerbaijan is considered as the best country to meet this criteria. The example of funding, which the energy projects in Azerbaijan get from the European Reconstruction and Development Bank, prove this interest. Moreover, the EU does

not show unity in its policy towards Azerbaijan. For example, during the visit of Ilham Aliyev to Brussels despite the fact that he rejected to meet Antonio Tajani, the meeting with High Commissioner to the EU Federica Mogherini took part in a cooperative manner, as the latter one stressed the importance of Southern Gas corridor for the EU.

### *Summary*

The period of the presidency of Ilham Aliyev shows the activation on EU's involvement in democracy development. In spite of this activation, Azerbaijani government led by Ilham Aliyev moves further to resemble authoritarian state, as constitutional amendments of 2009 and 2017 increase the power of president. Azerbaijan becomes the only country in the world, where the couple hold two the most important government positions in the country.

Ilham Aliyev manages to normalize relations with Russia. As an exchange Azerbaijan gets more military sales from Russia and a strong defender when it comes to be defended from criticism regarding democracy issue coming from the West (mainly the EU and the USA). Furthermore, the energy cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan gets stronger, therefore the government gets something, which can be offered to the EU and can cease its accusations of undemocratic means of governance by New Azerbaijan Party

### **4.3 Overall summary, findings regarding variables and recommendations for further research**

The relations between DV and IV were not found in the first phase, as the EU did not establish serious relations with Azerbaijan in that period. The only variable, which could be explained in this phase, was RT1.

However, the EU's involvement in Azerbaijan's democratic transition started to be noticed after 1996, when Azerbaijan moved slightly towards undemocratic means of governance. Starting from this year, Azerbaijan has been increasing its cooperation with the EU over democracy promotion, though there were seen serious challenges, which were coming from the government itself. During Heydar Aliyev's presidency, the opposition

parties started to lose the power in the country and the work of NOG's was under pressure. However, Azerbaijan was still considered as a partly free country. Russia increased slightly its influence over Azerbaijan, as Azerbaijan became the member of CIS, and Russia got concessions over the usage of Gabala Radar. However, Russian influence could not be considered as a negative to the democracy development of Azerbaijan. The second phase also depicts the improvement of RT2, because with the signing of PCA, Azerbaijan established energy cooperation with the EU.

Starting with the presidency of Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan has been getting the status of not free country because of the current government led by YAP has got successfully towards the total control of the state. After the parliament elections of 2010, the most critical party towards the ruling party, Musavat loses any seats in Milli Majlis; therefore, the Parliament of Azerbaijan loses any possible objective control of the executive branch. Furthermore, with constitutional changes of 2009 and 2017, the president of Azerbaijan grants himself with larger responsibilities, which give him a total control of the state. In addition to that Azerbaijan becomes the only country in the world, where the most two important positions are held by the couple due to the president's recent decision to appoint his wife Mehriban Aliyeva as a vice president of Azerbaijan. Due to these developments in the country, the effect of ID to DV is clear, as the EU's efforts in democracy promotion in Azerbaijan can be seen as ineffective. In comparison with the second phase, in this phase as the EU has increased its criticism of undemocratic moves by current government, the state has boosted its opposition to that. As the examples of that we can mention the decisions to close foreign funded radio stations BBC, RFE/RFL and The Voice of America and the visit of Ilham Aliyev to Brussels, where he refused to meet the president of European Parliament Antonio Tajani. The last phase makes valid both rival theories by cause of Russia's normalization of relations with Azerbaijan and the EU's increased interest on Azerbaijani gas.

#### Findings regarding variables

- The first phase does not show relations between IV and DV. Between other two rival theories, only *Russia's influence in Azerbaijan* becomes valid in this period.
- The second phase partly answers to the research question by the reason that starting from this phase there is seen some kind of relations between IV and DV. Regarding

RT1, there is not seen any negative effect of RT1 to democracy development in Azerbaijan.

- The last phase answers to the research question, as it is clearly noticed the negative effect caused by government's attempts to preserve its power on the EU's democracy development in the country. Both rival theories supported as well due to Azerbaijan's increased positive relations with Russia and the EU's growing interest in cooperation with Azerbaijan in energy sector.

The following part provides recommendations for further research

For the development of researches regarding the problems of democracy development in Azerbaijan further small cases can be analyzed as well

- Whether Nagorno Karabakh problem has been having the negative effect on democracy development in Azerbaijan
- Russia's role in military revolts in Azerbaijan during the periods 1992-1995
- The negative effect caused by military revolts to democratic transition of the country
- The role of oil in strengthening of Heydar Aliyev's rule
- The reasons of the decline of main opposition parties, which had enjoyed popularity in early ages of independency of Azerbaijan.
- The weaknesses in the EU's side regarding democracy promotion in Azerbaijan

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to analyze whether there is an inverse relation between the EU's democracy promotion in Azerbaijan and the government's efforts to preserve its power. As a next step research question was provided, which was "To what extent has the government of Azerbaijan been challenging the EU democracy promotion in Azerbaijan?" In order to find an answer to the research question, theoretical part was established, which were variables and hypotheses. There were established negative relations between IV and DV. For the purpose to strengthen the analyses, other two rival theories were provided. The logic of the establishment of variables and rival theories was to define whether other three have a negative effect on DV (see Chart 1). Later variables were tested in all three cases, which held the main information of the research. Analyses was done with the help of cross-case analyses and within-case analyses.

The case studies found that the relations between the EU and Azerbaijan started to develop after 1996, therefore the first phase did not provide any connections between DV and IV. Starting with the second phase, the ruling party started to increase its power by changing constitution, increasing pressure to other political parties and expressing intolerance towards critical speech against government. However, this phase also defines the improvement of relations between the EU and Azerbaijan. This improvement did not leave without effect the cooperation in democracy development. Though, the government was urging the West in its fidelity for western values, these urges were considered as invalid, as the ruling party besides taking almost total control of both executive and legislative branches, also contributed to unfair elections and pressures towards opposition to them parties and people. The last phase completely proves the negative relations between IV and DV. This period faced both the increased influence of the EU in democracy development in Azerbaijan, and the current government's growing usage of undemocratic means of governance. Furthermore, the causal mechanism is somehow completely proved for the reason that both rival theories can be considered valid in this phase.

With this research, the author had a purpose to make its input to the academic researches about the democracy development in Azerbaijan. Currently this topic in its phase of development, as there were not written many articles regarding this topic. The research has shown that there are still cases, which can be analyzed, and their analyses will help to better understand this topic. However, with this research one thing is clear, which is Azerbaijan's slight moves towards authoritarianism, which is not going to change, if pluralism in governance will not be established. Notwithstanding, last constitutional amendments and appointment of Mehriban Aliyeva as a vice president depicted the government's unwillingness to go towards democratic reforms. Therefore, currently the cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan seems not productive.

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