

# Subcultures in Azerbaijan: 1980-2010

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This article describes the forms in which the subculture phenomenon manifested itself and developed, or *failed* to develop, in Azerbaijan from the 1980s to the 2010s, first when it was part of the USSR, and then during its independence. The *informal associations* that existed in Soviet Azerbaijan in 1980-1991, and three examples of subcultures that existed in independent Azerbaijan in the period from 1991 to the 2010s – *clubbing*, *hip hop* and *emo* – are discussed. I would like to note that the foundations of the clubbing and hip hop subcultures, which began to develop and gain mass appeal during independence, were laid in the Soviet times. Here I describe how and under what conditions all these subcultures were created, their brief history and development, and then I compare them with subcultures in Western countries.

## ***Informal associations in Soviet Azerbaijan***

The 1980s, especially the second half, were characterized by the relatively uncensored and overt spread in the USSR, including Soviet Azerbaijan, of Western subcultures and certain cultural elements, along with related types of music, dance, and other arts. This was a result of the socio-political relaxation that preceded Gorbachev's rule, his *Perestroika* (Reconstruction) and *Glasnost* (Openness) reforms, a partial reduction of censorship, a significant removal of restrictions on the flow of information, and the imitation of democracy in the Soviets.<sup>[1]</sup> Thus, in the 1980s, information about the lifestyle of young people in the United States, Canada, and Europe as well as their taste in music, dance and fashion trends was openly published<sup>[2]</sup> in Soviet media, some examples of foreign music were played<sup>[3]</sup> on radio stations, and

foreign movies were aired on television. In fact, some foreign movies were aired on television earlier, during Khrushchev's Thaw, but other movies were banned because they ran counter to Soviet ideology. In the second half of the 1980s, most of foreign movies, both classic and new, were aired on Soviet television without hindrance.

In almost all republics of the USSR, including Azerbaijan, subcultural social groups emerged made up of Western-oriented, creative teenagers and young people, completely different from official Communist Youth organizations, Pioneer movements, and other groups conforming to the Soviet ideological line. These new groups could even operate openly, officially registered as *public associations*. However, at that time in the USSR there was still a certain amount of censorship, Communist Party ideological restrictions, and the total surveillance of the KGB especially over Soviet youth, and therefore there were still restrictions and shortages of information. For this reason, these public associations, known as Informal Youth Associations (*Неформальные объединения молодёжи*) or informals (*неформалы*) for short, acted as prototypes, alternatives, and imitations of Western subcultures. These informal associations, which manifested a mixture of Western subcultural values, were also called *nefors* (*нефоры*) or *nifers* (*ниферы*), etc. In fact, the Soviet youth in informal associations were imitating Western youth, and the associations themselves imitated Western subcultures. Towards the end of the decade, the number of associations grew, including various music ensembles and groups, dance groups, troupes, artists, directors, photographers, etc. In the major cities of the USSR, including Baku, they organized for young people various disco shows, concerts, exhibitions, etc. close to the Western style, and completely different from Soviet forms of entertainment.<sup>[4]</sup>

However, this does not at all mean that informals operated comfortably and freely, without any pressure. The USSR's

police agencies and local party organizations surveilled the associations, especially those that modeled themselves after young people in the United States and Europe, sometimes issuing them warnings presenting them as hooligans, vagrants, and parasites. Young people who simply attended discotheques and disco shows organized by informals in Baku were branded as immoral and depraved, in conflict with Soviet values. However, compared to previous decades, the social and cultural conditions were nevertheless much more satisfactory thanks to the easing of restrictions, and Soviet youth eagerly joined such innovative associations in order to operate independently, outside the narrow strictures of Soviet ideology.

The informal associations that formed in the 1980s in the USSR, including Azerbaijan, were officially registered in the second half of the decade, but continued to be called informal associations amongst the public and officially by the government. The term *informal* was coined in 1985 by Russian writer and journalist Yuri Shchekochikhin, who was born in Ganja, Azerbaijan. The term originally referred to hippies and rockers, and only later applied to the new public associations and groups.<sup>[5]</sup> In short, Soviet informals acted as a local Soviet model of Western subcultures and as a kind of alternative to them. In the 1980s, the *Baku Art Center* (BAC) was one of the most important venues for Azerbaijani informal activities. Founded in 1988, the center brought together representatives of various arts – artists, photographers, art critics, theater directors, writers, and musicians.<sup>[6]</sup> Before moving on to examples of informal organizations engaged in art and cultural affairs, I would like to point out that some informal associations were also created to stimulate socio-political processes. In 1988, the *Young Baku Academics Club* was founded by journalist Zardusht Alizadeh among others, counting among its members academics and public figures.<sup>[7]</sup> The association's members, including academics, as well as public

and political figures – the intellectual class of the time – gathered often in various apartments in Baku to discuss Azerbaijan's social and political problems.<sup>[8]</sup> The following year, this association played a major role in the establishment of the People's Movement, which restored the independence of Azerbaijan. However, in this article I will focus on the activities of informals that involve subcultural elements.

The first informal organization officially registered in Azerbaijan was *Jangi (War)*.<sup>[9]</sup> In this experimental public association, there were various art collectives, groups, and amateur clubs organized by young teachers and students. *Jangi* also included the legendary *OZAN* mugham-rock group, the *Arzu* folk ensemble led by Abbasgulu Najafzadeh, the *Sevinj* national dance ensemble, the *Ojag* student club, the *Gara Vazir* chess club, the *Ayna* photo studio, the Meskhetian Turks' *Umid* ensemble, the *Davam* folk-singing group, and the *Hogga* group of illusionists led by Tofiq Isgandarli.<sup>[10]</sup> One of the young people involved in the association was the National Hero of Azerbaijan, journalist Chingiz Mustafayev,<sup>[11]</sup> who also organized discotheques and disco shows in Baku in the 1980s and worked at the discotheques as a DJ. There was also a breakdance group in *Jangi* led by Mustafayev. The *Jangi* Experimental Public Association, created by composer Rasim Muzaffarli, gathered in a cinema/concert hall of the same name located on a university campus. Union members also rehearsed in the hall. The legendary Soviet rock band *Aquarium* took part in one of the concerts organized at the hall in 1987.<sup>[12]</sup> In the early 1980s, a few years before *Jangi* was founded, Muzaffarli and Mustafayev hosted a music entertainment program called *Ekspromt* on Azerbaijan State Television (AZTV). The new format of this creative and dynamic program was very different from traditional Soviet programs. The presenters' on-air behavior, manners, and rhetoric were free, and the topics they discussed were different from Soviet programs. Azerbaijani rock bands

and ensembles made appearances, and the hosts held entertaining competitions on air. At the end of the program, the performers put on a disco show organized by Mustafayev. Through this program, the youth of that time became familiar with Mustafayev as a disco-show organizer, as well as the rock band *Ozan*.<sup>[13]</sup>

One of the first informal art groups founded in Baku in 1989 was *Tasdig*.<sup>[14]</sup> At the time of its inception, the members of the art group wrote a manifesto, *Spiritual Freedom*, and some time later a second manifesto, *Transformation, or New Art*. *Tasdig* implemented unprecedented projects for their time in Baku, organizing exhibitions, and doing creative work in the field of graphics and design. The association was founded by four students studying at the University of Arts at that time – Amirbey Narimanbeyov, Teymur Daimi, Samir Gafarov, and Elmar Amiraghov. They decided to create the association in 1985 while studying at the Azim Azimzadeh Art School. According to its members, the idea to found the association was inspired by the political relaxation of Glasnost.<sup>[15]</sup> This informal association lasted only a few years and ceased to exist in 1992.

When comparing informal associations in the USSR with Western subcultures, it should first be noted that, due to the censorship in the USSR, the scarcity of information, the inaccessibility of foreign music and periodicals, etc., youth culture was monotonous, stale, and gray. From the late 1970s to 1991, instances of the social grouping of young people characterized by their relative visibility and diversity were generally expressed in a phenomenon called *the System* (*Система*), which included elements of counterculture and demonstrative carnival.<sup>[16]</sup> *The System* was the general name given to subcultural groups of young people who were considered unconventional in the USSR, inclined toward pro-Western values, dismissive of Soviet ideology and values, and

considering themselves more modern. Although *the System* included several subcultures, in fact it was dominated by two countercultures – *punk* and *hippie*. Of these countercultures in Soviet Azerbaijan, the hippies were scarce and scattered, the vast majority of them living in Baku and a few in Sumgayit.<sup>[17]</sup> There are no sources about the existence of hippies in other cities and settlements in Azerbaijan, or of any punks in Soviet Azerbaijan at all.

One of the differences between *the System* and Western subcultures was the apoliticality of Soviet countercultures and their indifference to Soviet ideological values. With few exceptions, these countercultures did not protest openly or en masse against Soviet values. On the contrary, Soviet countercultures were characterized by alienation and loneliness, creating friendships only with other individuals who understood them. Because they denied the values of the older generation, avoided participating in Soviet public events, and showed disrespect for them, their actions were considered shameful, depraved, and severely criticized in this regard. It was because of these features that they were considered close to the counterculture. One of the peculiarities of this group was that it attracted creative people, especially painters, whose work differed from artistic models which followed the traditional Soviet ideological line, creating avant-garde, extreme art. As for the informal associations in Soviet Azerbaijan, they differed from Western subcultures in that none of them were based on a single type of subculture. These associations were composed of a mixture of several subcultural elements and existed in a hybrid form. For example, the Jangi union described above had several subcultural features and was not based on a single subculture. *The System* phenomenon, which existed in the USSR and consisted of several subcultural patterns, began to disintegrate in the early 1990s. Several independent subcultures (punk, hip hop, metalheads, bikers, etc.) emerged from the fragmented *System*. This occurred, however, only in the larger cities of the USSR,

not in Azerbaijan.

### **Clubbing Subculture (Discotheques, Raves, and DJing)**

One of the most significant phenomena in the cultural life of Soviet youth since the mid-1970s was the genre of disco music, the discotheques where disco dancing was performed collectively, and disco fashion. The disco movement, which began in the United States and Europe in the early 1970s, began to spread to the USSR in the middle of the decade, first in the Baltic republics – Latvia, then Lithuania and Estonia, then in Russia, Ukraine and other republics, and in Azerbaijan in the late 1970s.<sup>[18]</sup> The first inter-republican disco festival/competition in the history of the USSR was held in 1976 in Riga, the capital of Latvia.

Towards the end of the 1970s, as in Western countries, disco fashion, associated with the disco music genre, came into style among young people in the USSR. Soviet youth who preferred disco fashion usually imitated Western music groups which were then in vogue, such as Ottawan, the Bee Gees, Arabesque, ABBA, Boney M, Modern Talking, etc., trying to dress like them, style their hair the same way, and wear the same accessories and jewelry. Disco fashion, preferred for its democraticness, sometimes contained a striking luster and eroticism, which conflicted with the conservatism of the older generation and of Soviet propaganda, and was therefore criticized harshly by the Soviet government. The transformation of the disco genre into a subcultural factor in the USSR began in the late 1970s, and this was reflected in the general tastes and interests of Soviet youth who regularly attended disco dance nights and made it their way of life, as well as in the behavior associated with disco, the style of speech, and the specific lexicon that they used when interacting with one another. When the disco movement became a trend, several Soviet rock groups (*Noroc*, *VIA Plamy*, *Zemlyane*, etc.) attempted to the demands of Soviet youth by adding pop and disco music to their repertoire, and in the



1980s, new groups were founded (*Rok-Ostrova*, *Laskovyi May*, *Miraj*, *A-Studio*, etc.) which performed disco, Euro disco, and pop. Local pop and disco music were popular in Soviet discotheques by the 1980s. From my youth in the 1980s, and from several witnesses of Soviet discotheques with whom I spoke, I learned that when the film *Disco Dancer*, starring the Indian actor Mithun Chakraborty, was screened and became famous in the USSR, it caused discotheques to become even more popular.<sup>[19]</sup>

As for the emergence of the first discotheques and disco shows in Azerbaijan, it should be noted that this process began a few years later, in the late 1970s, and in the first half of the 1980s it began to gain popularity and mass appeal. In the second half of the 1980s, discotheques were organized not only in Baku, but also in Houses of Culture in the suburbs of Baku, as well as in other cities of Azerbaijan, especially in sanatoriums and resorts. However, when talking about disco dancing, disco fashion, and discotheques in Azerbaijan in the late 1970s and early 1980s, we must focus exclusively on the capital, Baku. It should be noted that, although the youth of Soviet Azerbaijan had a great affinity for discotheques and in some sense preferred disco fashion, unlike other republics of the USSR, the disco movement in Azerbaijan never became a subcultural phenomenon. Even in the years of independence in the first decade of the 21st century, although there were scattered proponents of clubbing or rave subcultures, mass subcultures failed to form. The reasons for this will be explained in detail at the end of this section. However, it should be noted that since discotheques and dance clubs existed and a number of young people took part in dancing events in Azerbaijan both in the Soviet era and during independence, I believe it is expedient to write a short history of clubbing and to analyze it as a phenomenon.<sup>[20]</sup>

I received some information about the establishment of the first discos in Azerbaijan from Elman Ibadullayev, a student



at the Medical Institute in the 1970s, one of the organizers of the first discotheques, and one of the first DJs in Azerbaijan. Elman Ibadullayev, now an Australian citizen, worked as an amateur DJ under the stage name *Elman-Meloman* in the early 1980s. Based on his recollections and those of several other people, as well as some information published in the press, the first discotheques in Azerbaijan were established in 1978. An article published in the March 14, 2007 issue of the newspaper *Azerbaijanskije Izvestia* states that one of the first discotheques was organized by students of the Polytechnic Institute (now Azerbaijan Technical University) in the cafeteria.<sup>[21]</sup> The article notes that foreign students studying at the Polytechnic Institute played a crucial role in organizing the event. The most modern equipment of the day was brought by the foreign students, and at the same time they played a role in compiling the playlist.

It is interesting to note that the first discos in Azerbaijan (Baku) were organized in 1978 and 1979 by students in various facilities of the institutions of higher education where they studied – dormitories, assembly halls, cafeterias, etc. In the early 1980s, there were even unofficial competitions for *the best discotheque* among the institutes in Baku.<sup>[22]</sup> The Institute of Medicine, the Institute of Petroleum and the Polytechnic Institute were the most active in organizing discotheques. The Medical University students were considered to be the most active in this respect, their discotheques took place inside the institute, in an area near the student dormitory, and in the Palace of Culture of Medical Workers (*ДК Медработников*). It was at that Palace of Culture that Chingiz Mustafayev formed his own breakdancing group in the early 1980s, and the group rehearsed there as well. One of Azerbaijan's first DJs, Mustafayev also studied at the Medical Institute in 1977-1983 and played a major role in organizing the first disco nights in Baku.

In Azerbaijan, beginning in the 1980s, there were discotheques

in several villages and settlements around Baku. According to my information, there was a discotheque at that time in the newly built settlement Ahmadli. In addition, there were discotheques in the houses of culture in Amirjan and Sabunchu, as well as in the club of the former Lieutenant Schmidt Factory (where the Heydar Aliyev Center is currently located). In those years, a famous discotheque was organized in the disco club of the old Absheron Hotel, where music was performed by a DJ named *Vladik*. Such discotheques were not held all the time, but only on certain days of the week or on certain holidays and anniversaries. At that time, DJs bought records and mixtapes from the famous store *Melody* in Baku, and equipment unavailable in Baku was brought from Moscow or Leningrad (St. Petersburg). Soviet DJs' equipment usually consisted of stationary electrophones such as *Akkord*, *Noktyurn*, *Rossiia-321*, *Ariia*, *Volna*, etc. (about 500-600 rubles); amplifiers such as *Elektron*, *Pioneer A-9*, *Rostov-Don 101*, etc. (about 200-250 rubles); and loudspeakers such as *KINAP*, *Vega*, *Ilga*, etc. (about 300 rubles for a pair). In the 1980s, DJs used different models of *TDS* headphones (*TDS 3*, *TDS 5*, *TDS 7*, *TDS 15*, etc.).

The first discotheque to open in Baku in the first half of the 1980s was in the old Moscow Hotel opposite the Milli Majlis (where the Flame Towers now stand). DJ *Sasha Levinski* performed at that discotheque, which was called (in English) *Shine of the Disco*. Since Levinski himself was a fan of reggae, he often featured reggae music. The name of the discotheque was taken from Bob Marley's song *Sun is Shining*. Considered to be the most elite disco venue of its time in Baku, *Shine of the Disco* differed from other discotheques in a number of ways – in terms of its musical repertoire, its state-of-the-art lighting system, and its excellent service. In addition, the dance floor there was larger and more comfortable for dancing. During the Soviet era, restaurants closed earlier than in Western countries, and discotheques usually worked until 10 o'clock at night, and no later than 12

o'clock, but nevertheless *Shine of the Disco* can be considered the first dance club in Soviet Azerbaijan's clubbing history.<sup>[23]</sup>

From his student years, Chingiz Mustafayev was prone to experimentation and innovation. In the early 1980s, he established an ultra-modern disco band and the first disco studio in Azerbaijan at the old *Yuri Gagarin Pioneer Palace*.<sup>[24]</sup> In fact, most of the pioneer camps in Absheron were also regularly used as discotheques. In the 1980s, there were a total of 16 pioneer camps in Absheron, the most popular of which were *Lastochka* and *Garangush* in Mardakan, *Chaika* and *Yunyi Geolog* in Bilgah, *Yuri Gagarin* in Shuvalan, etc. Only the oldest students (9th and 10th graders) were allowed to attend the discotheques there.

Due to the socio-political events in Azerbaijan in the first half of the 1990s, the development of discotheques and clubs was delayed. The wartime conditions at that time, the difficult situation in the socio-political sphere, and the unfavorable economic situation were not conducive for frequent discotheques. Also, due to a lack of quality equipment, Baku rarely hosted club-type musical and entertainment events, which were mostly organized in traditional Soviet style and with Soviet-era equipment. As an example, one could point to the discotheques organized by *Namig Mammadov*, one of the first DJs of Azerbaijan at the time of independence, at the *Youth Palace*.<sup>[25]</sup>

Beginning in the second half of the 1990s, things began to accelerate.<sup>[26]</sup> New discotheques and nightclubs were opened in Baku. At that time, the discotheques and clubs operating in Baku were *Bermuda*, *Relax*, *S Club*, *Tunnel*, and *106fm*. There was also a discotheque called *Vatan* that shared a building with a cinema of the same name on Nizami Street, and a little further down there was a discotheque called the *Eighth Miracle*. The

most famous club was *Skylife*.<sup>[27]</sup> For the first time in Azerbaijan, DJ REM started organizing electronic music evenings at *Skylife* under the name *House@106 fm*, and in this regard, we can begin the history of indoor raves in Azerbaijan with this event.<sup>[28]</sup> *Skylife* was founded in March 1996 by two young DJs, Namig Mammadov and Riad Aliyev, who studied at the Aviation Academy. They named the club in honor of the academy. Although there were other clubs in Baku at that time, *Skylife* was the largest in terms of the dance floor area. Up to 800 people could dance there at the same time.<sup>[29]</sup> Admission to the club was free for girls and 10,000 manat for boys. The club's founders first worked at the *Sailors' Club* near the Sahil metro station, and a few years later they moved the club to the second floor of what is now the *Nizami Cinema*.

In 2000, two Azerbaijani DJs known as REM (Ramil Ashrafov) and NEMO (Mansur Ahmadov) organized the national electronic music festival, *SYMBIOS*, for the first time. Held by their organization *TRIBAL PROMO GROUP*, the festival took place at the *Tunnel* nightclub near the 5-star *Grand Hotel Europe* on Tbilisi Avenue. Both Azerbaijani and Russian DJs performed.<sup>[30]</sup> *Liquid Surfase*, an open-air concert in 2003 featuring DJ Vanya Nosikov from St. Petersburg, was one of the most spectacular events in Baku. The following summer, DJ REM and DJ NEMO organized an open-air concert in Baku called *SandStorm*, which was considered the largest open-air event in Azerbaijan up to that time. DJ Daruda from Finland and DJ Mixa Voron from St. Petersburg performed there.<sup>[31]</sup>

As part of the proclaimed "Year of Youth" in 2007, the Azerbaijani Ministry of Youth and Sports proposed organizing discotheques with DJs in 54 cities and regions. Despite the fact that only two weeks were given for preparation and the lack of discotheque traditions in some regions, the DJs managed to hold quality events in almost all other cities and regions. In the regions, the discotheque which drew the

biggest crowd was in Agjabadi, where about 700 people attended the event.<sup>[32]</sup> The Russian DJ Dlee (Aleksei Tagantsev), who died on July 12, 2007, came to Baku in the late 1990s and introduced both technological and artistic innovations to local DJs, making a significant contribution to the development of the Azerbaijani DJing industry. After DJ Dlee's death, DJ Shock (Vagif Rasulov), a veteran Azerbaijani DJ and a close friend of DJ Dlee, spoke about the role he had played. I would like to point out that 9 days before Dlee's death, he performed with Azerbaijani DJs Shock, Twist, and Pancho at a party in Baku.<sup>[33]</sup>

In Azerbaijan, the role of women in DJing is negligible. As in all other subcultures, there are only a few female DJs. The first female DJ in Azerbaijan was Anastasiia Tolstova, known as *Stasy*.<sup>[34]</sup> In February 2020, an event was organized in Azerbaijan to support women interested in electronic music and involved in DJing. Organized by the British Consulate in Azerbaijan, YARAT, Sektoreight and ASAN Radio, both British and Azerbaijani female DJs, including DIHAJ (Diana Hajiyeva) and Inherroom (Nazrin Mammadova), took part in the British electronic music show *Selector Live: Women. Sounds*.<sup>[35]</sup>

Although Soviet disco was similar to Western disco as a subculture, there were of course differences between them. While Western disco was also part of show business, popular music, and the fashion industry that influenced standards of leisure and consumption, Soviet disco displayed only trivial elements of these cultural industries. In addition, for Soviet youth, who were completely isolated from the most popular Western pop music of the time and could only listen to "edifying," censored pop music supported and widely promoted in the media by the Soviet government, at best pop or rock music from socialist bloc countries was played in discotheques.<sup>[36]</sup> During the Soviet period, the phenomenon of clubbing in Soviet Azerbaijan differed from other Soviet

republics, especially the Baltics and countries such as Russia and Ukraine, where the majority of the population is Slavic. Due to the local mentality and the dominant position of Muslim values in society, discotheques and clubs where the younger generation spent their leisure time were not welcomed in Azerbaijan during the Soviet era. Even after Azerbaijan gained independence, the negative attitude towards young people who frequent dance clubs has not changed, with a few exceptions. Both in the Soviet era and during the independence period, nightclubs and dance floors have been viewed as foreign to national values, and even immoral places. Due to the predominance of patriarchal values in Azerbaijan, young women in particular have always faced obstacles and problems in this regard. Even in the capital Baku, the fact that young women go to discotheques and nightclubs on certain days of the week to spend their free time has been met with protests both in their families and in society, which has often led to public condemnation. Therefore, both young men and women have been often forced to go to clubs secretly from family members. That is why, unlike clubs in European countries, admission for young women to clubs in Azerbaijan has been free, taking into account the difficulties they face to go to clubs.

One of the differences is that, unlike Western countries or even countries considered more similar to Azerbaijan such as Russia and Turkey, the number of real participants in the rave subculture is extremely small and scattered. In Azerbaijan, raves have not been established as a subculture, ravers are only temporary participants in the subculture for the duration of rave events. This fact has been confirmed by people who regularly take part in raves and clubs. They themselves admitted that even if the people around them perceived them as ravers because of their active participation in raves, in fact, they did not consider themselves a part of that subculture. In this regard, there is no rave or clubbing subculture in Azerbaijan except for a tiny minority and the DJs themselves.

The vast majority of young people in Azerbaijan who like dance entertainment do not fully understand the concept of raves. A rave is a dance event in which *electronic dance music* (EDM) is performed live in nightclubs or outdoors. Unlike discotheques, where mostly teenagers gather and which usually have a lighter pop and disco music repertoire, raves are larger events that sometimes bring together thousands of people, not only teenagers but also older people, and are associated exclusively with electronic music. However, in some cases in Azerbaijan, pop, hip hop, rock, reggae, and alternative music can be heard at some events billed as raves. Of course, this does not apply to all cases, and there are professionals in Azerbaijan who know the difference.

Another difference between Azerbaijani and European clubs is that in Azerbaijan, all clubs usually have the same faces and the same music. One of the reasons for this is that due to the high prices in clubs in Azerbaijan, only people who are well off can attend them. While in European societies people from all walks of life go to clubs, in Azerbaijan it is sometimes inaccessible to the middle class, so a certain number of the same people are in most clubs. This opinion was expressed by one of the most influential DJs in Azerbaijan, REM, in an interview 10 years ago.<sup>[37]</sup> Although ten years have passed since then, the situation has remained the same in many nightclubs in Baku. DJ REM has proposed creating clubs for the middle class in Azerbaijan to eliminate this problem, and several of my interviewees supported this idea.

The lack of any platform for the art of DJing in Azerbaijan is one of the issues that hinders development in this field. Usually in the West, specialist journals are published in this field, radio and television programs on DJing are organized, so that the art form is always on the agenda at the center of discussion. In addition, in Britain, for example, every year there are rankings of the five or ten best clubs and DJs, which leads to competition in the field of clubbing. These



factors create conditions for the development of the art. In Azerbaijan, the lack of these factors causes the DJing industry to blindly maintain its existence.

### **Hip hop subculture (rap, breakdance, and graffiti)**<sup>[38]</sup>

Three branches of the hip hop subculture (rap, breakdancing, and DJing) emerged in Azerbaijan in the second half of the 1980s (Soviet period), but the formation of an entire subculture dates to the second half of the 1990s (independence period). In the first half of the 1980s, only the DJing branch of this subculture existed in amateur form in discotheques mainly in the capital Baku. The democratic atmosphere, political relaxation, and partial elimination of censorship brought to the USSR by Gorbachev's *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* policies since the mid-1980s created favorable conditions for the spread of these branches of the hip hop subculture in Soviet Azerbaijan. Art forms such as rap, breakdancing, and DJing were performed both in informal associations and by independent individuals at various concerts and discotheques, as well as in some films, televised performances, music videos, and television programs. For example, the 1980s TV movie *Laughter Sanatorium* (*Gülüş sanatoriyası*, 1989),<sup>[39]</sup> the music video for the Ozan mugham-rock group's *Who Are You Robot?* (*Kimsən sən robot?*, 1987),<sup>[40]</sup> and the feature film *Contact* (*Əlaqə*, 1989)<sup>[41]</sup> feature certain elements of breakdance, and the TV movie *The Man with Green Glasses* (*Yaşıl eynəkli adam*, 1987)<sup>[42]</sup> used both breakdance and rap-like rhythmic recitation. In the latter film, the breakdance was performed not by actors, but by breakdancers (B-Boys)<sup>[43]</sup> active at that time.<sup>[44]</sup>

The first raps in Azerbaijan were performed by several young amateurs, both individually and in groups, beginning in the mid-1980s. The first examples of rap were performed mainly at discotheques and disco shows, accompanied by instrumental

versions of foreign songs and music by composers such as Rasim Muzaffarli, Javanshir Guliyev, etc., as well as rock groups. Only one recording of the raps performed in the 1980s by Chingiz Mustafayev, set to the music of Rasim Muzaffarli, has survived to this day.<sup>[45]</sup> Unfortunately, the rap pieces performed by other amateurs and groups at that time have not survived since they were not recorded.

In the second half of the 1980s, breakdancing was one of the most popular branches of hip hop subculture among young people in Azerbaijan. As mentioned above, in the *Jangi* informal association, the breakdance group led by Chingiz Mustafayev performed at various discotheques organized by themselves or by other organizers. In general, the biggest impetus for the emergence of hip hop subcultures in Soviet Azerbaijan were discotheques in the 1980s, and discotheques played an important role in the creation and dissemination of rap, DJing, and breakdancing.

In the 1980s, hip hop, which had not yet developed as a subculture, had no fan clubs, no public, and no tradition or school associated with these art forms. In the 1980s, DJs, rappers, and breakdancers performed as amateurs, often having other professions and dedicating only certain days of the week, mostly weekends or evenings after work, to these art forms. The development of rap, breakdancing, and DJing as a profession, as well as the emergence of their audience began in the early 1990s as a result of the activities of several Russian-speaking groups and the legendary rapper, “the father of Azerbaijani rap,” Anar Naghilbaz.<sup>[46]</sup> At that time, young people appeared who were not amateurs, but masters of the subtleties of these art forms, constantly engaged in them, and even turning them into a way of life. There were also elements of subculture in the loose clothing worn by rappers and breakdancers, in their lifestyle, behavior, speech, and in the emergence of dedicated groups.

In the early 1990s, almost all of the bands that worked in parallel with Anar Naghilbaz both danced and rapped, and therefore I call them rap/breakdance groups. The groups *Rap Road* and *Texas* began to operate as a professional rap/breakdance group in the late 1980s, but their active phase began in the early 1990s. Other rap/breakdance groups emerged at the same time, such as *Play-off*, *Pharaohs pray*, *New Men*, and later *Khalita* and *Savash*.<sup>[47]</sup> These groups sometimes performed simply as breakdancers, and sometimes danced while rapping. I would like to note that in the 1990s, Anar Naghilbaz had a small theater called *Janli klip (Live Clip)*, which consisted of dancers and actors, and while he was rapping, the group of dancers and actors performed miniature plays on stage matching the text and plot of Naghilbaz's raps. At the time, most of the abovementioned groups named themselves and rapped in Russian and English. Anar Naghilbaz's rap performances in the Azerbaijani language, as well as the lyrics of his raps were considered close to the metrical system of traditional Azerbaijani poetry. In addition, Naghilbaz's activity, unlike the above-mentioned rap/breakdance groups, was closer to nativism. Naghilbaz gave expression in his raps to the problems in the political and social life of Azerbaijan in the first half of the 1990s, and he was the first performer in Azerbaijan to raise the country's political problems in raps. Towards the end of the 1990s, almost all of these rap/breakdance groups, with the exception of *Savash*, ceased to exist, and in 1999-2000, Naghilbaz was accompanied by a new generation of rappers (Elshad Khose and Dayirman). In 2000-2001, three names dominated Azerbaijani rap – Anar Naghilbaz, Elshad Khose and Dayirman. AIDS,<sup>[48]</sup> or AIS,<sup>[49]</sup> founded by Nagilbaz in 2000, is considered the first official rap label and production center in the history of Azerbaijani rap, and almost all Azerbaijani rappers were united under this label. A few years later, Dayirman and Elshad Khose created the *Gafiya-Mafiya* label, occasionally collaborating with Naghilbaz. The beef between

the late rapper Huseyn Darya and *Gafiya-Mafiya* in 2003 brought Azerbaijani rap to the peak of its popularity throughout the country. In 2004, in the midst of this beef, the first mainstream battle in the history of Azerbaijani rap – the TV contest *I Exist Too (Mən də varam)* – began to gain popularity. Basically, thanks to the rappers who took part in this TV contest, with the rapper Uran as a model, for the first time in Azerbaijani rap, the genre of freestyle became known to a wide audience. Based on the beef between Gafiya-Mafiya and Huseyn Darya, the popularity of the freestyle genre thanks to the TV contest *I Exist Too*, and the influx of young people and teenagers into rap music, I call the period 2002-2005 the *Golden Age of Azerbaijani Rap*.

Until 2010, there were three main stages in the popularization of national rap – Anar Naghilbaz's activity in the 1990s, the period of the beef between Gafiya-Mafiya and Huseyn Darya, and the TV project *I Exist Too* with Uran. In 2008, the recognition and popularization of the HOST Alliance was a major event in the history of Azerbaijani rap. As a result of the activities of HOST, rap music gained more mass appeal and became one of the most listened to music genres, and the fourth major stage in the history of Azerbaijani rap, which played a major role in the popularization of this genre, is the work of HOST. [\[50\]](#)

The second wave of breakdancing began in the mid-1990s. During this period, breakdancing, as one of the branches of hip hop subculture, became a way of life for performers, they became real participants in this subculture, and elements of subculture were clearly visible in their codes of speech and behavior. It should be noted that the first breakdance school in Azerbaijan was opened in 1998 at the House of Officers on the initiative of Orkhan Gasimov. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the most active breakdance groups operating in Azerbaijan were *League-X*, *Street Jam*, *B-Project*, *MontinStyle*, etc. In 2001, the first breakdancing competition was held in Azerbaijan with the participation of the above-mentioned

groups. Although breakdancing, rap and DJing have developed in parallel since 2002, rap music has become more popular than the others. One of the reasons for the development of the branches of hip hop subculture in Azerbaijan, as elsewhere in the world, was the holding of festivals and championships. Breakdancing and rap battles began to be organized for the first time in the early 2000s. In 2001, Naghilbaz organized the first rap festival in Azerbaijan, and in 2002, for the first time, a breakdance championship was held with the participation of a total of 10 teams from Khirdalan, Sumgayit, and Ganja. In 2003, freestyle was performed before an audience for the first time in a rap battle organized by "Oder Production" on the stage of the old Sattarkhan House of Culture. The third breakdancing championship was held that same year. In general, 2001-2006 can be considered the first extremely productive period for hip hop in Azerbaijan in terms of its popularization and the collective inclination of young people towards this subculture.

The art of graffiti was the last branch of hip hop subculture to emerge in Azerbaijan. The first examples of this street art, which is considered illegal in Azerbaijan, as elsewhere in the world, began to appear in Baku in the early 2000s.<sup>[51]</sup> The area where 28 Mall is currently located in Baku was once fenced with concrete slabs. The paintings on these stone fences and on the wall near the Khatai metro station are considered the first examples of graffiti in Azerbaijan. At that time, the most active artists were those known as *Makhor*, *Fike*, *Scone*, and *Ersh*. In 2004-2005, a second wave of graffiti began in Azerbaijan, and this wave was due to the creation of a team called AZE-RIFF by the artists *Azeriff* and *Stuffy-kid*.<sup>[52]</sup> In September 2006, at the initiative of the British Consulate in Azerbaijan, skateboard and graffiti shows were organized under the name *Touch The Sky*. As part of these events, British graffiti artists conducted several days of training for local artists.<sup>[53]</sup> A few years later, several

groups in Baku took the initiative to gather all the graffiti writers into one movement, and the movement called *Find Yourself* was born. 2009-2010 can be characterized as the most successful and productive period for graffiti, as well as a period of persecution and pressure. At that time, local writers participated in the festivals *We Are Against AIDS* and the *Day of Physical Culture and Sports*, and after that they began to receive offers from various clubs and institutions. But at the same time, graffiti writers began to be persecuted by the police, and a lot of elaborate paintings on many walls of the streets of Baku were removed. In 2010, several writers and photographers united under the name *Urban Art (Azerbaijan)*, and this association continues to this day.

In the 1980s, almost all young people involved in rap, breakdancing, and DJing were amateurs, and in the early years of independence, the vast majority of them had already ceased their activities. In this regard, although the first wave of hip hop appeared in Azerbaijan in that decade, the first wave of professional rap music and, in the person of Anar Naghilbaz, of breakdance appeared in the first years of independence, in the mid-1990s. Compared to the United States and European countries, where hip hop was formed, this subculture emerged in Azerbaijan with some delay. The main reason for this was that Azerbaijan was part of a closed empire, the USSR, and the middle-aged and older generations, and even the young generation, long accustomed to works of art censored by the USSR, could not understand or accept for a long time such foreign art forms as rap, DJing, and breakdance. Prior to Huseyn Darya's activity, rap music was not accepted at all in the regions of Azerbaijan or by the older generation. Thanks to Darya, who for the first time used national rhythms, meykhana, and bahri-tavil style in his raps, rap was accepted and understood even if it was not loved by everyone.

The fact that one person could perform several branches of hip hop in Azerbaijan until the mid-1990s (a single person might

rap, breakdance, and DJ) was very similar to the hip hop scene in the United States in the early 1970s. In the United States, the creators of this subculture – DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, Grandmaster Flash, and others – could DJ and MC (rap's original form), and some of them either danced themselves or had groups of boys and girls breakdance. Something similar occurred in Azerbaijan from the 1980s to the mid-1990s.

In Azerbaijan, hip hop is similar to the meykhana and metalhead subcultures, and differs from other subcultures in that some of these subcultures have a spirit of protest and aggravate social and political problems through their art. Although the above-mentioned examples of subcultures do not create large protests in Azerbaijan, their opposition to the current system, as well as social and political events can be reconciled with the counterculture. In Azerbaijan, participants in these three subcultures were arrested at various times in various years for their views and were subjected to various pressures. On February 27, 2013, a rapper known as Dado (Said Aliyev) was arrested for 10 days for criticizing the State Traffic Police in rap lyrics.<sup>[54]</sup> At the time, several human rights activists expressed concern about the issue. On April 13, 2019, a rapper known as Ruzgar was sentenced to 30 days in prison for inciting drug abuse in one of his raps.<sup>[55]</sup> A meykhana performer named Vugar Sada was arrested for 30 days on the same charges a few days before Ruzgar, i.e. on charges of drug propaganda in a meykhana that he performed.<sup>[56]</sup> On December 26 of that year, a rapper known as Paster was arrested. In fact, the reason for his arrest was officially that he had disrupted public peace and order while under the influence of drugs and failed to comply with a lawful request of the police. However, an opinion was widespread amongst the public that he had been arrested for a statement in one of the raps he performed.<sup>[57]</sup> A few years before this incident, one of Paster's politically motivated



raps was removed from YouTube.

Anar Naghilbaz, who collaborated with the *Art for Democracy*<sup>[58]</sup> project in Azerbaijan in 2012, also performed several raps on social issues in 2013-2014<sup>[59]</sup> and was subjected to pressure several times. One of the reasons for the pressure was that he supported Ilgar Mammadov, a political prisoner at the time, the chairman of the REAL movement, and that he had participated in Mammadov's trial several times. In 2014, he reportedly joined the opposition REAL movement, and since then it has been reported that there has been pressure on both his ex-MP father and himself.<sup>[60]</sup> However, I should point out that hip hop is one of the subcultures in Azerbaijan that retains its originality and does not play the role of imitator, a feature that hip hop shares with the emo subculture. At the same time, these two subcultures created a big wave in Azerbaijan and spread to almost all cities and regions of the country. If the majority in Azerbaijan is not familiar with other examples of subcultures, everyone is aware of emo and hip hop, at least superficially.

## **Emo subculture**

Since the mid-2000s, *emo* subculture has been widespread not only in the capital Baku, but also in several other cities in Azerbaijan. The number of members of this subculture, which is particularly prevalent among teenagers, has been growing every year since the mid-2000s, and since the early 2010s, emo subculture has become a major wave in Azerbaijan. Emos in Azerbaijan brought with them a great wave of fashions and trends, and their trend had an impact on other subcultures. This can be seen in the example of several rappers who were active in the 2010s.<sup>[61]</sup> Sometimes non-subcultural teenagers were attracted by emos' behaviors, their hair and clothing styles, especially in Baku, where seemingly massive numbers of teenagers tried to look like emos. Nothing distinguished the real emos from those who imitated them except the sad,

depressed appearance of the former and the characteristic slang and expressions peculiar to emos. At a time when emos were spreading in Azerbaijan, the popularity of the internet and social networks played a very important role in the popularization of this subculture. Through chats, websites, and social networks, teenagers who were attracted to this subculture found it easy and quick to communicate with each other and share information, and thus, after a certain period of time, they came together as a group. The main reason for the spread of this subculture in other regions and cities of Azerbaijan was Internet resources. Since the mid-2010s, the emo subculture in Azerbaijan, as in almost all parts of the world, has become obsolete and is disappearing, and today there are almost no members of this subculture in Azerbaijan. Based on my personal observations and notes from various periods, as well as media reports on emos and short interviews given to me by former members of this subculture, I date the beginning of the history of the emo subculture in Azerbaijan to 2004-2005, and I consider it acceptable to refer to 2014-2015 as the date of its decline.

In terms of mass appeal, in Azerbaijan emo subculture was ahead of almost all other types of subcultures, with a few exceptions. Perhaps this is why the Institute of Linguistics' *Dictionary of New Words and New Meanings* only includes emo from among all the subcultures: *EMO* [Eng. *emo*; from the word *emotional*] *A subculture specific to young people based on the musical style of the same name. Expression of emotion, resistance to injustice, sensitivity, and depression are the main features of emo.* <sup>[62]</sup>

As mentioned above, emo created a new wave of fashion trends for teenagers and young people. Although there were a large number of people who borrowed the emo clothing and hairstyles without becoming participants in the subculture, there was also an influx of teenagers into this subculture. In fact, in addition to the acceleration of the internet and the flow of

information, there were also social problems in Azerbaijan at the root of this. In the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, there were drastic changes in the way teenagers thought and in their views on life. These teenagers were more inclined to live freely, to dress as they wished, to have fun, and to spend most of the day with their friends or loved ones. However, parents and relatively older members of the public, who had previously lived in a different paradigm, opposed these values, and there was strong public condemnation of the behavior of pro-freedom adolescents. The more liberal the young people were, the more their parents tried to dissuade them. As a result, sharp differences emerged between parents and children, the older generation and adolescents. In this regard, the intergenerational conflict of that period can be compared with the American anthropologist Margaret Mead's study of the mutual influences between generations in the areas of family types and social development as described in the first article. Mead attributed the conflicts in Western society in the 1960s to the period of scientific and technological progress and the active development of the social sphere.<sup>[63]</sup> Mead said that in the intergenerational conflict, the development of society was determined by the younger generation, and they rarely referred to the experiences of the older generation.

During the abovementioned period, teenagers became depressed because of the problems they had with their parents, who limited their independence, and they often tried to build relationships with like-minded people. Unable to be free among their families and relatives, fiery teenagers could be free among emos and expressed their frustrations openly. For this reason, in the 2010s, the number of cases of runaways and suicide attempts among teenagers increased, and the number of reports on this issue in the media increased year by year. Some teenagers left their homes in search of adventure, some because they did not get along with their parents, and some in order to live separately with other teenagers who were in

solidarity with them. Another reason was the desire not to live in a family with difficult social conditions. For example, the news about a 15-year-old girl who ran away from home in the Yasamal district of Baku in 2013 had a lot of resonance for the public at that time.<sup>[64]</sup> The mother of the runaway teenager said that her daughter's emo friend came to their house often, and subsequently her daughter's clothes, behavior, and mannerisms changed, and she became more and more like her friend. Shortly after the police found the girl and handed her over to her mother, she ran away from home again.<sup>[65]</sup> The teenager's mother at the time attributed her daughter's running away to difficult social conditions. The mother, whose husband was in prison and who lived in a basement with her three children, said her daughter did what she did because she did not want to come to reconcile herself with their situation, but rather she wanted to live in a comfortable house and study and get a job. The news that another emo girl tried to commit suicide in 2014 also had a lot of resonance in Baku. The 15-year-old girl also ran away from home, and then, at the request of her parents, the police found her and returned her. At that time, the girl tried to commit suicide.<sup>[66]</sup> From 2005 to 2015, dozens of similar incidents occurred one after another.

Everyone probably remembers the amateur video interview with two emo girls a few years ago. During the interview, one of the girls said that they had abandoned optimism and were satisfied being secretive and depressed, and that emos were close to Satanism and drank cat's blood. The emo girl admitted that she had killed a cat, but had not drunk its blood. At the time, the video, which was ridiculed both by the public and on social networks and was an object of ridicule and was not really taken seriously, but some of the things that the girl said about the the colors that emos prefer to wear, emo groups, etc. were partially true and relevant for emos in Azerbaijan.<sup>[67]</sup> When the emo subculture began to emerge in

Azerbaijan, they were mainly between 13-20 years old. Emos over the age of 20 were rare. As noted, although there were emos in other cities in Azerbaijan, the vast majority were in Baku. In Baku, you could usually see emos gathered at any time of the day at Sahil Park and the old Fountain Square in front of McDonald's. Since the genres of music emo preferred were rap and rock, they also gathered at a place called *Rock Club*, where rockers used to gather. At the same time, the alternative subcultural wave created by the HOST rap group had a great impact on the expansion of this subculture. HOST's depressing rap lyrics and especially the novel *A* written in 2007 by Garaga, a member of the HOST Alliance, were very popular among emos. They read the novel with great interest because of the similarity between some of the events in the novel and the emo lifestyle. There were also a lot of emos at HOST concerts and parties. Emos also regularly attended small rock parties. Although there was not much activity on the streets, they were very active in the groups they created on the Internet, discussing various topics. One of the factors that distinguished this subculture from others was their deeper knowledge of subculture, discussions about subcultural traits which further tied them to the subculture they participated in, and the fact that Azerbaijani emos exhibited pure subcultural values and were not imitators.

At that time, the popularization of emo subculture was taking place not only in Azerbaijan, but also in Armenia and Georgia, as well as in Russia, and both societies and governments in those countries expressed concern. In Armenia, the persecution of emos by the police was more severe, as the Armenian police raided schools and persecuted anyone who looked emo.<sup>[68]</sup> These operations were carried out in Armenia not only against emos, but also against goths and hippies. However, since the Gothic subculture was not widespread in Azerbaijan, concern was mainly focused on the emo subculture.

In 2010, schools in Azerbaijan also began to be monitored, and

students who preferred emo clothing and hairstyles were given warnings, and special control was instituted to prevent them from coming to school with that appearance. The subculture wave was so strong that graduation day imposed special restrictions on graduates coming to school in emo and goth styles.<sup>[69]</sup> At one time, the State Committee for Family, Women, and Children's Affairs even advised parents to monitor teenagers, who could join emo groups while using the internet, and thus go astray.<sup>[70]</sup>

This delay is also typical for other subcultures. For example, although emo subculture emerged in the West in the late 1990s, it appeared in Azerbaijan only in the mid-2000s. Among the subcultures that exist in Azerbaijan, the two most popular subcultures are hip hop and emo. However, there is a difference in that the internet and the flow of information played a large role in the popularization of emo subculture, while the role of the Internet in the spread and popularization of hip hop subculture was very small. Emo and hip hop are also examples of subcultures that retain their originality, are not imitations, and do not differ significantly from the emo and hip hop subcultures of the West. However, while rap music, a branch of hip hop, was close to counterculture, emo had no countercultural factor.

## **Conclusion**

This article presents a brief history of the informal public associations (informals) that emerged in Soviet Azerbaijan in the 1980s and lasted until independence, as well as a history and particular characteristics of the clubbing, hip hop and emo subcultures that began to develop and become popular during the Soviet era, how they developed or failed to develop, and how they compare with each other and with examples from foreign countries.

First of all, it should be noted that, in general, while there are various platforms in the West that ensure the development,

popularization, and survival of subcultures, there is no such platform in Azerbaijan. In the United States and Europe, various magazines and literature on subcultures are published, special entertainment programs for young people are broadcast on television and radio, TOP 10 or TOP 5 lists are compiled, and thus the lifestyle of subculture members and subculture arts are at the center of attention of the youth. Unfortunately, in this regard, the situation in Azerbaijan is quite the opposite. Since this phenomenon is not the object of research in Azerbaijan, the vast majority of society is generally unaware of the existence of this phenomenon.

There has always been a chaotic, unstable picture of subcultures in Azerbaijan. In most cases, instead of permanence and staticity in the subcultures of Azerbaijan, we can observe signs of *fluidity*, which was proposed by Mark Kirby in the 1990s. We can see this in almost all subculture members. Typically, in Western countries, a person's subculture is both a way of life and a source of income, as well as an area of entertainment. However, due to the underdevelopment of the subculture phenomenon in Azerbaijan, members become a kind of hobbyist and, say, work five days a week somewhere that is unconnected with the subculture, becoming participants in a fragmentary way only on weekends.

Compared to Western countries, it is rare for women in Azerbaijan to be members of a subculture due to the mentality and values derived from Islam. Thus, almost all subcultures in Azerbaijan are male-centered. In any subculture, the number of women is small. However, there is a subcultural phenomenon in Azerbaijan thanks to the efforts of the members themselves, and teenagers and young people still have an inclination toward this phenomenon, even if it lags far behind Western countries.

[\[1\]](#) Айна Штрале, “Закат цензуры в советской Латвии 1985 – 1990



гг.”, Национальная библиотека Латвии, Terbatas iela 75, LV-1001 Rīga, Latvija, 2006)

[2] <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/9038393>

[3] <http://www.radiojamming.puslapiai.lt/doc/2801.jpg>

[4] Александр Владленович Шубин, “Преданная демократия. Неформалы и Перестройка (1986–1989)”, (Москва, Издательство Европа, 2006)

[5] Александр Владленович Шубин, “Преданная демократия. Неформалы и Перестройка (1986–1989)”, (Москва, Издательство Европа, 2006)

[6] [http://www.cecartslink.org/pdf/2019/Miracle\\_or\\_misunderstanding\\_rus.pdf](http://www.cecartslink.org/pdf/2019/Miracle_or_misunderstanding_rus.pdf)

[7] <https://versus.az/index.php?view=article&id=1394&dil=az>

[8] <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2016/08/12/zardusht-alizade-posle-kraha-sssr-azerbaydzhancy-poteryali-vse>

[9] <https://lent.az/news/251712>

[10] <https://lent.az/news/251712>

[11] <http://www.anspress.com/siyaset/26-02-2011/vahid-mustafayev-cingiz-ve-mubariz-jurnalist-ve-esgerin-sucaeti> və <https://news.milli.az/society/135210.html>

[12] <https://1news.az/news/rasim-muzaffarli-segodnya-ya-uveren-v-to-m-vo-cto-veril-slepo-foto>

[13] [https://azershow.biz/all\\_news/local\\_news/87-ozan-group.html](https://azershow.biz/all_news/local_news/87-ozan-group.html)

[14] İrena Nərimanbəyova “Təsdiq – Bakıda ilk art-qrup,” *Nargis Magazine*, March 23, 2013

[15] İradə Əsədova, “Знаменитая бакинская четверка: история группы «Təsdiq» и ее прорыв в культуре Азербайджана,” *Zerkalo*, January 10, 2019

[16] Н.В. Гришина, «Психология конфликта», (2-ое издание, переработанное и дополненное, ПИТЕР, 2008)

[17] For more information see Riad, Said. “Sovet Azərbaycanında submədəniyyətlər.” *Baku Research Institute*, 2020. <https://bakuresearchinstitute.org/az/subcultures-in-soviet-azerbaijan/>.

[18] <https://academ.info/news/5296>

[19] Babbar Subhash (dir.), *Disco Dance* (India, 1982)

[20] I should point out that compared to other subcultures, there is no information about clubbing or raves in Azerbaijan. A tiny number of online and press resources were used for this section, but the information was obtained primarily from people of different age categories. Since there are no sources about discotheques in the Soviet era, I refer to information provided to me orally by witnesses of that period. To be sure that my information was correct, I added it to the article only after at least two or three other people had confirmed it.

[21] Скрытникова М., “Ди-джей – профессия XXI века – Новое поколение выбирает техно и фанк”, *Азербайджанские известия*, р. 3, March 14, 2007

[22]

[https://www.baku.ru/frmpst-view.php?frmpst\\_id=262984&id=264793&v=1](https://www.baku.ru/frmpst-view.php?frmpst_id=262984&id=264793&v=1)

[23] Ibid.

[24] <https://1news.az/news/20-let-bez-chingiza-mustafaeva>

[25] Скрытникова М., “Ди-джей – профессия XXI века – Новое поколение выбирает техно и фанк”, *Азербайджанские известия*, р. 3, March 14, 2007

[26]

<https://1news.az/news/dj-rem-rabotayu-nad-proektom-v-kotorom-my-remiksuem-azerbaydzhanskiy-narodnyy-fol-klor-foto>

[27]

<https://1news.az/news/istoriya-skylife-kak-poyavilas-pervaya-nastoyaschaya-diskoteka-90-h-v-baku-foto>

[28] <http://clublife.ru/djrem/>

[29]

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=3&v=N1C6NEyZPX8&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=N1C6NEyZPX8&feature=emb_logo)

[30]

<http://clublife.ru/djrem/> və <https://az.sputniknews.ru/culture/20070905/41920037.html>

[31]

<https://kpcast.livejournal.com/>

[32]

<https://az.sputniknews.ru/culture/20070905/41920037.html>

[33]

<https://www.trend.az/life/interesting/1504030.html>

[34]

<http://www.kaspiy.az/news.php?id=99477>

[35]

<https://az.sputniknews.ru/life/20200220/423203817/chetyre-devu>

[shki-didzhei-predstavjat-jelektronnuju-muzyku-v-baku.html](http://shki-didzhei-predstavjat-jelektronnuju-muzyku-v-baku.html)

[36] В. О. Шадрин, “Советские дискотеки и советское государство: неуправляемый объект управления”, Вестник ПНИПУ. Культура. История. Философия. Право = Bulletin of the PNRPU. Culture. History. Philosophy. Law. – 2018

[37]

<https://lnews.az/news/dj-rem-rabotayu-nad-proektom-v-kotorom-my-remiksuem-azerbaydzhanskiy-narodnyy-fol-klor-foto>

[38] In this section, I will provide information on when and how the hip hop subculture that emerged in the United States in the 1970s appeared in Azerbaijan and through what stages it developed, compare it with Western hip hop, and attempt to show similarities and differences between hip hop and other subcultures in Azerbaijan. I would like to note that, as is the case with other subcultures, there is very little academic literature or specific information available about hip hop. Since I have been a participant in this subculture since the late 1990s and have personally participated in certain processes and authored a book on rap music, one branch of the hip hop subculture, I will refer to my own observations, notes I have made over the years, and my book on rap music. In addition, as the section on the rave subculture provides information about Azerbaijani DJs, more space will be allocated to other branches of hip hop in this section.

[39] Alakbar Kazimovski (dir.), “Gülüş sanatoriyası” (musical comedy, 1989)

[40] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cK52NopZ3I0> (This music video was filmed by Sevinj Karimova and Eldar Baghirbeyov, in the role of the robot, performed the breakdance.)

[41] Jahangir Zeynalli (dir.), “Əlaqə” (fantasy, 1989)

[42] Ramiz Hasanoghlu and Tariyel Valiyev (dir.), “Yaşıl eynəkli adam” (1987)

[43] B-Boy – a male breakdance performer. Female breakdance performers were known as B-Girls.

[44]

<https://1news.az/news/breyk-dans-v-azerbaydzhane-skvoz-terniik-zvezdam-foto>

[45] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rt8bg78pTk>

[46] Səid Riad, “İntro: Repin tarixi” (Başla nəşriyyatı, Bakı, 2017)

[47] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPEj-hkiZas>

[48] AIDS (*Anar İmic Düzəltmə Servisi* – “Anar’s Imagemaking Service”) was a rap family and label founded by Naghilbaz in December 2000.

[49] AIS (*Azəri İmic Servis* – “Azeri Image Service”) – In March 2001, Naghilbaz’s label AIDS changed its name to AIS.

[50] Səid Riad, “İntro: Repin tarixi” (Başla nəşriyyatı, Bakı, 2017)

[51]

<https://friday.az/основатель-urban-art-azerbaijan-юнис-крылов-о-граффити/>

[52]

<https://1news.az/news/graffiti-po-azerbaydzhanski-nasha-cel-uk-rasit-mir-foto>

[53] <https://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/society/788352.html>

[54] [https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/dado\\_rep/1614758.html](https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/dado_rep/1614758.html)

[55] <https://lent.az/news/311260>

[56]

<https://apa.az/az/hadise/kazbek-mahnisini-oxuyan-meyxanaci-hebs-edilib-527820>

[57]

<https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/reper-h%C9%99bs-edilib-/5222089.html>

[58]

<https://www.humanrightsclub.net/en/category/art-for-democracy/>

[59] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_uA0Pp50jts](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_uA0Pp50jts)

[60] <https://moderator.az/news/40682.html>

[61] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-v5\\_on0\\_Vk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-v5_on0_Vk)

[62] AMEA, Nəsimi adına Dilçilik İnstitutu, “Yeni sözlər və yeni mənalar lüğəti”, səh. 79 (“Elm və təhsil” nəşriyyatı, BAKI, 2016)

[63] Margaret Mead, “Culture and Commitment” (1970).

[64] <https://minval.az/news/8269> and <https://ru.baku.ws/22404-yasamalskie-policeyskie-ischut-15-let-nyuyu-devochku-emo.html>

[65] <http://www.live.az/index.php?newsid=666>

[66] [https://aze.az/news\\_v\\_baku\\_subkultura\\_111219.html](https://aze.az/news_v_baku_subkultura_111219.html)

[67] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhWXR728g8s>

<sup>[68]</sup> <https://www.trend.az/scaucasus/armenia/1686617.html> və <https://armenianreport.com/pubs/1252/>

<sup>[69]</sup> <https://www.trend.az/life/socium/1755162.html>

<sup>[70]</sup>

<https://apa.az/ru/media/na-inostrannykh-internet-forumakh-azerbajdzhanskie-deti-podvergayutsya-k-nezakonnym-prizyvam-goskomitet-378406>