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## INTELLECTUAL LIBERALISM: A THEORETICAL WAY BASED ON THE LEGACY OF TURKIC THOUGHT

**Abstract:** *In the context of growing inequalities, the root cause of legitimacy issues that are created by the crisis of capitalism for liberal democracy are sought in the theoretical structure of this ideology. An imbalance between economic immunity and other values makes material capital the criterion of the social system, generating socialism, which is the opposite of capitalism. This makes social relations a battle between the two paradigms. Reform should follow the basic principles of liberalism, in accordance with the principle of the "perfect human" from the Turkic system of thought. This system is presented as intellectual liberalism. Its fundamental axiom is perfection, which expresses the unity of the intellect and morality. The axioms, characteristics, principles, and supportive subjects of intellectual liberalism are explained.*

**Key words:** Liberal democracy, inequality, capitalism, intellectual liberalism, perfect human

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### Introduction

The complex topics in social sciences are those that challenge theoretical axioms that were first cultivated academically, then politically, and then became an academic taboo. The cultivated theoretical principles in natural sciences can be a subject of controversy based on the vast amount of information gained from experience and the maturation of an important scientific historical stage. It can face serious academic resistance, specially initially. However, the situation in the social sciences is more complicated. This is because the experience requirements and the maturity of historical evolution are insufficient. There are strong interest groups that make these cultivated theoretical principles taboo and defend their viewpoints. Due to the dominant position of these principles, which are accepted as axioms, these interest groups control the scene, turning political philosophy into a battlefield between the same-scale polars of power (capitalism) and opposition (socialism); thus, the phenomena of politics and power exists in their field and within the framework of their rules. Another issue is the stereotypes created

by these taboos in social groups, especially among academic circles, which occur outside the scene and do not belong to the powerful interest groups or the ideology that these stereotypes feed and shape.

The growing inequality associated with the crisis of capitalism and the actualization of socialism have led to the reactivation of political philosophy. Inequality has become a key topic in this sphere. The level of development achieved by capitalism in the second half of the last century, such as a free and just society presented by capitalism, in combination with human (liberal, social, democratic) values, address inequality and social cataclysms 30 years after the collapse of the socialist bloc. This dynamic proves that the threshold of evolution 30 years ago was neither the result of an internal regularity of a linear development of capitalism nor of its ideological supporters (liberal democracies). However, the necessary consensus was achieved in when competing with its opposition (socialism). With the current breakdown of this consensus and the deepening of contradictions, it becomes clear that non-systemic consensus, (i.e., the cosmetic addition of social values to the liberal system

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values or, at best, hybridization) is unsustainable. Restoring this model is unlikely to solve deepening inequality. Inequality is an inherent attribute of capitalism and has an inviolable place in the foundation of liberal democracy. This is not inequality as a law of nature or generated by natural potential, but about unnatural, artificial inequality that arises between classes in societies, classified by capital, and therefore inherited. Most interestingly, socialism also creates a fight between classes who are divided by capital, for the distribution of capital and centralized power over capital. To win this struggle, socialism unhesitatingly clashes with the laws of nature and individual freedoms.

Therefore, in the approach to the current paradigm crisis, this study examines the problem fundamentally and assume that the growing dynamics of inequality are related to the internal structure of liberal democracy. The claim is not to reform the liberal democracy with a theoretical structure and basic principles, which are formed by Western thinkers based on Western culture [5] and historical processes. The motive is a critical scientific approach to liberal democracy, the father of paradigms, which are exported globally and proposed for application in the social system of Azerbaijan, which goes against Azerbaijanis cultural system and is in crisis in its own home region. This approach is aimed at studying the theoretical origins of the paradigmatic crisis for a theoretical solution, rather than a critical discussion of modern liberalism. The aim is to find a modern path based on the progressive normative results achieved by humankind, including Western civilization, and the lessons learned from existing practice, which is rooted in Turkic culture. For this reason, the first part of this study is devoted to a critical discussion of the basic principle and characteristics of the theoretical structure of liberal democracy. However, the second part of the research is devoted to the presentation of a new theoretical structure, which begins with the change in the principle of the system of relations between the basic values of liberal democracy, and accordingly generates changes to its characteristics and supportive subjects. The study proposes a theoretical framework which is adequate to the foundations of modern liberal values, but with reference to the heritage of Turkic thought, worldviews, traditions of statehood, and the cultural system, which are historically developed according to the principle of “insan-i kamil” (in modern Azerbaijani: “kamil insan”, i.e., the “perfect human” who has reached moral and intellectual perfection). The research argues the need to change the principle of economic liberalism, which is fundamental and superior to other values in the theoretical structure of liberal democracy, and to propose its reform. It also contributes to the development of the main attributes of the proposed theoretical structure, by examining the theoretical solution to this problem. The fundamental

axiom of this theoretical system, called intellectual liberalism, is perfection, and the system-building axiom elements are human rights and freedoms, equality, and the rule of law. The relationship between the axiom elements of this theoretical construction are based on three principles of intellectual liberalism: axiom values of equal status, perfection as a criterion and unit of measurement for individual development and social dynamics, and justice and progress. The concept of balance is its system-building characteristic. The creative support subjects of the mechanism of application for the theoretical system are reasoned as follows: an individual who is free because he/she is perfect, an intellectual community, and a perfect society consisting mainly of intellectuals. The study aims to open the theoretical gate for Turks living in a large region (Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and other Turkic republics) to embrace modern liberalism, thereby breaking taboos on the method of globalization of liberal democracy. Its purpose is to contribute to a more fundamental scientific discussion of the current paradigm crisis and the failures of liberal democracy.

### **The crisis of capitalism and the decline of liberal democracy**

The end of the Cold War and the victory of capitalism over socialism opened doors to capitalism and in fact, deepened inequalities in the West. The financial crisis of 2008 has already shown that inequality is not a natural phenomenon that serves the dynamics of developing the capitalist system, but a global problem generated by the social system, who creates interest groups. At the same time, with the opening of the global capitalist circles to the post-socialist space (i.e., new markets) under the ideological banner of liberal democracy, economic liberalization was observed in these regions, which began with urgent reforms. As a result of this process, post-socialist capitalist systems were formed, in which the economic system was ruled by authoritarian regimes and controlled by transnational capitalist circles. Milanovic [23] presents these systems as political capitalism. In these systems, economic inequality became more evident and profound, as other values and norms of Western liberalism (especially political freedoms and the rule of law) were not applied. Therefore, it can be argued that the world has reached a capitalism crisis, with the evolution of capitalism through liberal democracy. Nevertheless, post-socialist systems have not come a long way from the collapse of socialism to the crisis of capitalism, thanks to the single application of inequality that is removed from the liberal framework.

The path for liberal democracy, together with capitalism, has reached an interesting and paradoxical point. Thus, liberal democracy, its core being economic liberalism, initially removed traditional legal barriers (in monarchies and aristocracy) to form

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the leading role of the capitalist class in political decision-making. Thus, it created normative opportunities for reaching consensus with other classes and strata and offered mechanisms that could equalize not only all citizens, but also the minority at the level of rights and freedoms. This ideological system is currently experiencing a crisis greater than capitalism. The problem of inequality, which is the key element that provoked and exacerbated this crisis and made socialism inevitable for large corporations [31], undermines the foundations of liberal democratic systems that have thus far provided theoretical and practical solutions to the problem of inequality at the level of rights and freedoms. Inequality is natural and one of the manifestations of freedom. Therefore, its existence is fair. But inequality is able to violate the boundaries and balances of other freedoms and justice thanks to its feature of action. Inequality is not the root cause of its own dynamism, from the manifestation of freedom to the achievement of the phenomenon that destroys freedom (from thesis to antithesis), and the emerging global results. The elimination of its evil would lead to even greater injustices and a totalitarian system, which, along with all human values, contradict the laws of nature. Should scholars look for reasons for inequalities and the imbalance between liberal values within the fundamental or system-building characteristics [11, p. 38–40] of the liberal system (e.g., in subordination, do they examine the optimal size or absolute position of the elements within the system)? To answer this question, this study focuses on the system-building elements and characteristics that lead to the dynamically increasing dimension of inequality, starting within the liberal system, and their protective actors.

The dominant bloc of basic values in the theoretical system of liberalism is economic liberalism. If the goal of economic liberalism based on freedom of own property is free market and free capital (especially in the era of globalization, when neoliberals, who serve the interests of large corporations, are pursuing a policy of new regions that will provide new and free markets), it must be remembered that inequality is protected in this system and is unequivocally immune in the liberal economic system (i.e., capitalism, which is an economic system, takes its place in the political-ideological system, along with economic liberalism, and the bourgeoisie is the creator and guarantor of this place, which is considered a fundament of liberalism). However, liberal values in other spheres glorify equal freedoms. For this reason, in some countries, political forces representing liberal values and upholding racial, cultural and gender equality are known as the leftists [17] and supporters of “market domination in both thought and practice around the world” [16] are known as neoliberals (e.g., the United States). As the basic element of liberalism and an expression of

capitalism, the principles of free market and economic freedom overcame all obstacles and “market fundamentalism has emerged as the dominant force in national and global economies” [24]. At a result, economic inequality deepened and spread throughout the entire social system. In this dynamism, the free market has turned social inequality into a global problem, first threatening economic freedom (of the middle and lower classes, including their freedom of labor) and then leaking into the framework of economic liberalism, and finally narrowing the boundaries of other liberal values in the upper (liberal) system. Thus, economic liberalism currently eliminates all borders of other liberal values and is losing its internal balance as an instrument of the global hegemony of capitalism, while undermining liberal democracy as an ideological system. Savage [29] argues that the West has been slow to realize how inequality destroys the foundations of liberal democracy, and how economic inequality deepen cultural, social, and political conflicts and call into question the integrity of liberal democratic national states. Unfortunately, Savage’s argument is valid. Thus, the growth of inequality means that the growing injustice, anger, and intolerance imply the growth of radicalism and racism. At the same time, growing inequality implies a growing gap between classes, and the increased economic power of a single class, as well as the growing and uncontrolled political power of this class. Thus, it is the formation of an authoritarian oligarchy. These dynamics are destroying liberal democracy and actualizing the ideals of socialism, which are accompanied by calls for equality by the lower classes and the demands of the upper classes for the socialist order, which contains totalitarian elements for the rule of the angry masses.

### Is it possible to abandon capitalism?

The goal of the liberal system is the free human principle. However, in the bloc of economic freedom, which is the central subsystem of the liberal system, an inviolable fundamental area is free property, which ensures material inequality. Free capital is expressed as free property that is conditioned upon the free market and defined as a basic principle under the auspices of the creative subjects of this system. In this case, since the concept of security is fully related to the security of property [20], human freedom is also conditioned by the freedom of capital and finds its measurement in the subordination of capital. Thus, the theory elevates humans. According to the structure of the theory, humans are associated with capital, and the measure of their freedom varies depending on the amount of capital that they possess. In this case, contrary to claims [16] that capitalism is a condition of democracy, can we say that the main problem of liberal democracy is capitalism? Is it possible today to replace this with socialism and place it in a liberal-

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democratic system? Since a liberal system cannot exist without freedom of property, the absurdity of these claims is obvious [27]. It is demonstrated by the fact that a liberal system cannot exist without freedom of property. However, even if this happens, the essence of the matter will remain the same; that is, human freedom still remains tied to capital, and the state, which controls capital, concentrates control over a citizen through such capital. Thus, societies fleeing from authoritarianism are drawn into totalitarianism. Furthermore, substance is capital under both capitalism and socialism. Both paradigms build their system on the relation to capital, and in both cases, the criterion is capital [22, v. 33, p. 282–283]. In this approach that is based on material capital, capitalism and socialism are expressed by alternating opposites standing at the poles of 0 and 1 on the same plane (between these poles are the United States, Japan, Russia, Germany, Scandinavian countries, China, Cuba, etc.). The historical fundamental role of Confucianism in shaping attitudes towards the family and state institutions is apparent in East Asian systems, and there are different frontier levels for the free market, with different correlations of Confucianism and Legalism [4]. Nevertheless, having achieved its goal of being at the foundation of the system as a criterion, capital acquired as a regulatory power makes Confucianism its servant under the guise of synthesis, with its national philosophy. Neither capitalism nor socialism, which emerged from an approach to capital, are natural phenomena. Instead, they are theoretical devices serving the interests of groups. Thus, it can be deduced that Karl Marx and Adam Smith played equally important roles in the survival of this system, as the greatest figures of the theoretical approach that defends capital as a criterion. The biggest problem facing science and political philosophy today is that scholars do not go beyond a two-century conjuncture, the criterion of which is capital, when looking for ways out of the crisis (and even when looking for a new paradigm).

The above mentioned argument expresses the evolution caused by internal liberal democracy issues in theory. But there is also a historical dialectical aspect to the problem. This includes the laws of formation, survival, and renewal of any theory. Əhmədli explains this in his book, “Theory, Its Types and Functions,” as follows:

Since objects and events of objective reality are in constant change, development, and renewal, in this case, scientific ideas, laws, principles and, therefore, theories, which are their reflection, cannot be in a status of frozen, “petrified” absolute truths. Since they are relative truths that can be assessed situationally, all of them are constantly refined, updated, and subjected to “scientific revision.” This need for dynamism and agility is due to the dynamism and agility of the objective world, the most reality. [11, p. 203]

Therefore, the paradigm of capitalism and the theory of liberalism, which is the philosophical foundation of capitalism and is based on freedom of property, cannot remain absolute truths. The subordination between the basic principles and values of liberalism cannot be eternal and static. Freedom of property (in this case, material property is taken as a basis in the concept of property), which has a superiority in the value system of liberalism, stands on a hierarchical hill, and is perceived as the highest value. This automatically makes material property a criterion for the entire liberal system because of its high and inviolable value status. As a result, capital retained its dominance for nearly three centuries, during which it fathered two paradigms: capitalism and socialism (since the problem of both is material property, this relates to capital and the relationship to capital). The upper class not only completed their theoretical work by making other liberal values as the decorative stones of economic liberalism based on the free market and property inheritance, but also managed to use democracy as a successful tool for centuries to maintain the dominant position of capital within liberal democracy. The historical movement of capitalism today is a result of the transformation of the oligarchy into a widespread structure in the world, a new objective reality created by the natural and moral imperfections of capitalism, and a level of progress achieved by mankind and the world. A prominent and recently acknowledged reality is that capitalism is destroying liberal democracy and the human ideological system. This poses new challenges for science. Unfortunately, the scientific community still associates the reason and fault of this capital trend not with the historical connection of the root principle and basis of liberal democracy (the power element of the bourgeoisie), but with the oligarchic or kleptocratic origins of undemocratic mixed systems and political regimes formed based on capital [23]. However, international support for these regimes (strengthened by globalization) are the power centers of liberal democratic countries. While a change in these regimes is important to prevent the spread of the problem and counter liberal democracies, it does not “cure the disease,” but merely helps to eliminate its complications and derivatives. In authoritarian regimes that ensure economic freedoms, the enrichment of governments with political resources and limiting of political freedoms led to the formation of oligarchies, increasing inequality, and even the led to disappearance of property security. This reverse process has shown the experience that economic freedoms, and in particular the inviolability of property, are the result of political freedoms and do not form the basis of all other freedoms or slavery. Thus, it proves that the existing theoretical framework can only succeed in one regional development dynamic and in a certain historical period, and



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therefore, possesses fundamental issues that does not allow for scientific verification.

In fact, the acceptance and realization of capital as a criterion of the existing socioeconomic system is due to the inaccuracy (or incorrect choice) of the criterion used for determining the authenticity of scientific knowledge (i.e., the credibility of scientific knowledge, a satisfactory measure, must be based not only on logic, but on justice and progressivity). Justice itself expresses balance and is a natural state, a law of nature, and a necessity. In the axiomatic approach, given that capital (as a social criterion) is not a natural phenomenon and has become an axiom that people agreed to [11, p. 213] in the scientific community, it can be argued that capitalism, which has received the status of a paradigm, has a completely subjective origin, and is carried out with a predominance of addressed interests. Despite the scientific nature of other axiomatic elements included in the structure of the paradigm, for the sake of interests, this theoretical device is made (kneaded) based on a subjective criterion, not a scientific one. Over time leads to an increase in entropy (level of disorder) within the social system. Moreover, this element acts as a catalyst for this process serves as a leading criterion in intra-systemic and even extra-systemic relations. This makes it impossible to restore order through reforms in the building without touching the foundation.

Since capitalism is a social paradigm, it cannot be abandoned solely through a new economic model. Despite the effective proposals of several authors [19], it is insufficient to regulate monopolies, markets, and social inequality with the help of certain institutional changes. Instead, it is necessary to have a new political and ideological model. In fact, the demand for any economic model and the need to abandon it is a matter of political origin. It is impossible to transform an economic system with strong political support into an economic system based on a different moral and ethical basis, if this is done with the help of economic proposals alone. This transformation requires absolute political will, public support for that will, and appropriate political mechanisms to implement such political will. Just as socialism attempts to abandon capitalism through its economic model, along with its political and ideological system. However, this model was also based on the stratification and classification of society according to economic criteria; that is, socialism is a theoretical device made with the same non-scientific, subjectively-based capital criteria as capitalism. In socialism, which derives from and is the opposite of liberalism, the initial and even more severe restriction of economic freedom (through the state monopoly on capital) leads to an unjust totalitarian rule. Another reason for the failure was the rigidity and anti-humanism (because any dictatorship is anti-humanistic) of the political and ideological model, as well as the contradiction of this model to the laws of nature and society (the dictatorship of the proletariat,

which is the lowest and most unenlightened class of society). Of course, the economic system also had its drawbacks. Thus, with the models of a modern democratic political system, since the power of the oligarchy and capital are inevitable, either it is impossible to build a welfare state in the full sense of the word, or its stability is unreliable due to the lack of appropriate political support (a strong class must be a permanent guarantor of the political system) after full implementation. This leads to the argument that the abandonment of capitalism and the transition to a new paradigm can only occur by changing the criteria of the social system (or lowering the social status of capital) and introducing a new leading political and ideological model. This means that no new economic model can replace an entire paradigm. Without changing the political model, which is the source of the economic model, and without changing the source of the political model, (i.e., founding will or creative social support of class or community), the path to a new paradigm remains closed. It should be noted that the emergence and application of liberal democracy, with a free market and property inviolability at its core, along with other liberal values being derivatives (in classical liberalism) or principles of support for these core values, formed part of the historical process to strengthen the bourgeoisie. This historical process is also the reason for the formation of the parliament and parliamentarism. In other words, in its historical creation, parliament did not actually apply the principle of the “rule of people,” but fulfilled its mission of representing a wealthy and powerful minority [30]. The source of power for the bourgeoisie (the capitalist class) lies in its capital, construction of the socioeconomic system based on the freedom of capital, and care of the political system for this purpose; therefore, the fact that capital is the core element and the leading criterion of this ideological system for the bourgeoisie contains an axiomatic position for this social class. Considering that the axiomatic position of capital is inevitable for the bourgeoisie as the founders of liberal democracy, their class and academic groups that serve its interests are not expected to make proposals outside of this theoretical system or to reform it. Even if there are proposals to partially reduce this power and protect capitalism from collapsing [18], the relative relinquishment of this power by decisionmakers will be unrealistic. Socialism is incapable of progressive results, not only because it operates within the theoretical framework created by capitalism, but also because it adds basic principles that are contrary to the laws of nature and society. As a result, socialism is doomed to an evolutionary process that will lead to rejection and a return to capitalism as it moves towards a reactionary totalitarian system.

**The free human principle formed by a materialistic criterion of freedom**

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The value of capital and humans are inversely proportional, both in principle and in practice. Therefore, in a society where human labor and human security (i.e., social, political, economic security, rule of law) prevail, the value of capital fades into the background. In practice, we see these examples in Scandinavian countries often, as well as in Denmark. Due to the large and strong middle class and the high level of mass education within the societies of these countries, the middle class also plays a role as the pillar of the political system. The middle class is not interested in unconditional freedom of capital, especially in the inviolability of the free market principle. It thus maintains its position, controlling the balance between economic liberalism and social democracy. The strong position of the middle class serves just order. Although there is inviolability of property in such a society, the element of economic security is limited by other elements of security (i.e., social, political, legal elements). Here the inviolability of property takes place on an equal basis with other elements within the framework of the relative (i.e., limited by the rights of others) inviolability of a person. Its size is regulated by the social balance within the public system. Therefore, in such societies, it is difficult to link neoliberal manipulation (as a reference to the inviolability of property and market freedom) to traditional morality [6], and freedom of property cannot turn into absolute freedom of material capital movement. Therefore, capital cannot be a formal nor informal regulator in the entire system of relations for public life. This implies that the middle class is not only a barrier to the economic power of the upper class, but also a rival political polar. Liberal democracy (a theoretical system in which progressive values are systematized and capital becomes the criterion of the social system due to the superiority of economic freedom with the inviolability of the free market and economic inequality) is the most important ideological weapon of the richest class for achieving noteworthy economic goals (“getting the largest piece of the pie”) and becoming the main subject of political decision-making. With this weapon, the oligarchic class fights the middle class. In such societies who are minorities in the global system, where capital is the criterion, it is difficult for the middle class to maintain their position.

Since the freedom of capital is based on economic liberalism (the fundamental subsystem of liberal democracy), all other rights and freedoms are considered derivatives of economic freedom. At the public level, the economic freedom of citizens are embodied and equated to the freedom of material capital, so that real economic freedom becomes a value inherent to the owners of big capital. In this system, we cannot discuss the economic freedom of those who do not have capital, so they are the economic slaves of the capitalist. Like all other freedoms, political freedoms derive from economic

freedom. Although they are legislated within the legal system, they are a boon that can benefit the wealthy minority with more capital. In such a system, capital is practically the source of all freedom. A human's freedom is adequate to the amount of material capital that he possesses, and a person whose mission is to protect his freedom is burdened with the goal and duty of protecting this capital. Not only does one who has no capital become a slave to the capitalist, but the capitalist also becomes a slave to his own capital. However, material capital is not like intellectual capital, it is easy to lose and fragile. According to the theory of liberalism, a person who loses property is doomed to lose everything, including freedoms and finally, dignity [20]. Therefore, capitalism and socialism, which are paradigms based on economics and material capital, cannot make a human free and worthy, and these paradigms are opposed to each other.

### **The free human is formed according to the criterion of perfection: Human is free because he/she is perfect**

The theory of liberalism is the result of a certain stage in the development of Western thought legacy and political history. It views the freedom and dignity of a human as a dependency on his freedom of property. Conversely, the heritage of Turkic thought sees freedom as a victory over one's own lust. Here, the path to freedom is the path to mental and moral perfection. Although this path was developed theologically and systematically, mainly by medieval Sufi thinkers, it has origins in the pre-Islamic Turkic worldview and has become a broad concept that includes philosophical, theological, and literary currents in Turkic geography. The perfect human was the main aim of all genius thinkers of Azerbaijan's cultural heritage. A perfect human is a person who has overcome selfishness and illiteracy and is systematically trained on the path of cultural and spiritual progress [8]. He/she is free because he/she is perfect, so he/she cannot be unjust. The link between freedom and perfection remains the predominant way of thinking, influencing the entire spectrum of philosophical approaches, from religious to atheistic and even materialistic approaches [10].

Thus, if a perfect human is the golden line between a nation's history and cultural memory, and the basic principle of this concept is victory over one's own selfishness, it is impossible for this nation to build a just society based on a concept with a fundamental element that completely contradicts this principle if they do not undergo cultural and moral degradation. Paradigms such as capitalism, which built on the struggle for material capital because of the industrial revolution and the historical development of the powerful bourgeois class and socialism (which was acquired by capitalism as its antagonistic opposite) could not share a system of cultural and

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spiritual values for this nation. The current practice confirms this philosophy.

In the history of Azerbaijan, the principle of the perfect human even acts as a common dominant criterion that spirals philosophical-theological and socio-political thought systems, with its core of literary, philosophical, religious, and ideological systems, especially those based on an ideal state and a just society. Here, religious movements, as well as philosophical and literary schools were accepted and recognized through the teachings of perfection. The leading value of the religious and ideological systems, which began with Zoroastrianism and continued with the teachings of Islam, such as Hurufism, Sufism, Mashaim, and Ishraqism (these teachings were a means of assimilation of Islam by Azerbaijan's and Turkic culture in general), was the perfect human. This principle became the leading criterion in the writings of writers and scholars, such as Nizami, Nasimi, Bahmanyar, Suhrawardi, Tusi, and later in the works of Akhundov, the harshest critic of the religious tyrannical regime, as well as in the writings of modern enlighteners. Even though the principle of the perfect human is mainly attributed to the head of state, it has become the prism of combating mass illiteracy, especially since the period of Akhundov. In fact, it can be argued that the mentally and spiritually perfect human criterion in Azerbaijan was expressed not only as a common (secular/V.H.) value uniting all religions and sects in the public sphere, but also as Sufism, which unites Muslim Turks in Islam (above the Sharia) at the level of intelligence and freedom. At the heart of all public problems and at the basis of fair governance is the perfect human, and the justice of the head of state depends on how ideologically and morally he is perfect and able to govern. Nizami considered a professionally, spiritually, and culturally perfect human to be the source of a just government, public order, and prosperity [7; 28]. Tusi linked global justice to person's public, moral, and intellectual perfection [25; 36]. Suhrawardi [33] and the Illuminationism (Ishraqi) he discovered states that it is possible to open the door of the supreme mind (the highest goal) at the level of "light" only [38, p. 128–138]; that is, at a moral height. Nasimi [13] and the Hurufism (where he was one of the main figures) equated the perfect human with the embodiment of freedom, truth itself, and the universe [3]. Mirza Fatali Akhundzada [14], who advocated for a democratic and secular state, regarded the perfect human as a prior condition of just order. All these thinkers emphasize the need for a wise head of state and link justice to wisdom and injustice to illiteracy that rules society from top to bottom.

It should be noted that the criterion of the perfect human, which is the golden line in the history of thought in Azerbaijan, was also the leading criterion in the government's culture. Perfection (i.e., cultural and spiritual maturity; being the bearer of a higher

spirit, above the material) and professionalism (as a criterion of order and justice, including the Azerbaijani school of statehood) that has dominated the Turkic management culture, has been active in public administration, bureaucratic systems, and the social order. Thus, there was no power of any social class (e.g., aristocracy, bourgeoisie) in the Turkic states. The criterion was neither land nor capital, but professionalism and moral right. From the Göktürks to the Eldiguzs, from the Ottomans to the Safavids to the Afsharids, this principle always ruled. The principles of "give the job to the owner" [9] and "everyone must earn their name (status/V.H.) through their actions and their morality" (not by inheritance/V.H.), firmly entrenched in the Turkic social thought and at all levels of government practice, were reflected in all sources, from "Kutadgu Bilig" [2] and "Dede Korkut" [12] to "Siyasatnama" [26], vizier of the Great Seljuk Empire Nizam al-Mulk. Thus, professionalism and not nobility was the main factor for gaining a position in management and decision-making [32]. There was no preference for young people who were chosen to train these professionals to be from the noble families. On the contrary, young people who grew up with difficulties, who were intelligent, talented, and courageous, were sought out and trained to fill the most important areas of government. In social life, participation of the mind, experience, and moral truths as leading values, along with an active criterion, are reflected in the institution of eldership (the relationship between elders, youth, and mentor-disciples). In Azerbaijan, an ancient area of Turkic culture and thought, perfection is the leading criterion underlying respect for elders and mentors (one of the cults of Turkic thought), as well as the institution of elders. Perfection is a combination of human qualities, such as knowledge, intelligence, experience, worldviews, respect, and trust in society, as well as spiritual integrity. In other words, perfection, which combines knowledge, experience, and spiritual integrity as a leading element of national thought and culture, has taken a central position in religious, philosophical, and literary heritage, and has a social regulatory character. The institution of elders, a practical reflection of this criterion, was the guarantor of order at all levels of the social system, from every family, village, and tribe to the government.

### **The search for the theoretical path from the perfect human to the perfect society**

Capitalism spawned by the industrial era (which is the historical product of liberalism) creates a historical necessity for a new paradigm, the final stage being the global oligarchy. However, a new paradigm cannot be built on an old hypothesis. Failure to solve fundamental problems (such as the realization of the source of power, fair sustainable dynamics, and social equilibrium), the principles of balance, and the driving

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force of social dynamics, creates more of these problems and requires a new systemic hypothesis that will fundamentally solve them. However, growing inequality and social entropy appear as a sign that the 300-year paradigm is coming to an end, but the revolutionary conditions created by technological and informational development in the field of enlightenment, as well as the mass level of higher education, act as a historical product for the new theoretical paradigm. Based on the hypothesis that knowledge, the cultivator of information, and the technological age cannot have an axiomatic role in this paradigm, it is impossible to respond to the challenges of the time and create sustainable public order. It is interesting to note that the requirements of this historical situation (the dialectical stage of global development) largely corresponds to the ideal of a just order based on the principle of perfection, which is the cult of the Turkic philosophical-ideological-religious heritage, worldview, and culture.

Given the current experience of liberal democracy, and based on the principle of perfection, a theoretical hypothesis of the perfect society can be considered: an ideological system based on intellect and morality, with an equal status for economic, political and social security elements, a balance between values of equality and freedom, and the defining criterion of perfection that governs this balance. This acts as a theoretical device that can prove its scientific nature and sustainability, while being able to respond to the challenges of the time and ensure justice.

Unlike material capital, which has an egoistic [34] nature and thus provides an entropic character to public dynamics, there is a human and public responsibility in the essence of perfection, which is the unity of intellect and morality (these two elements are closely related to each other). There is not a claim that capitalism or socialism are devoid of intellect and morality. Industrialization, which began with the Renaissance, sparked a bourgeois democratic revolution and with the support of the intelligentsia of the time, opened a new era in which the bourgeois class played a leading role. Liberal democracy also contributed to the alliance of the bourgeoisie with the intelligentsia. For this reason, liberal democracy included universal human values, such as human rights and freedoms. This proceeded to form the concept of the rule of law, along with social democratic values. Therefore, it can be deduced that the intellect obeys and serves capital and the intellectual class obeys capitalism, followed by socialism and totalitarianism. Subordination of intelligence for capital means the subordination of morality to material interests and the subordination of public responsibility to individual interests.

### *Fundamental Axiom*

According to the hypothesis brought forward, the axiom underlying the theoretical system is the unity of intelligence and morality. This axiom, with its superiority, becomes the defining criterion of the system. Intellect, the first element of this axiom, is the basis of all public relations. Intelligence here is not equal to an idea, but contains both the idea and interests. Intelligence creates needs in accordance with its limits and capabilities, and interests in accordance with needs. At the same time, it is morality that regulates needs and interests. Thus, the origin of all interests, including material interests, are associated with intelligence and morality and combined in perfection. The means of perfection are training, upbringing, enlightenment, education, experience, and professionalism. The basic unit of perfection in motion is the intellect.

### *System-Building Axiom Elements*

The elements of the theoretical system contain values, such as rights and freedoms, equality, the rule of law. These are the guarantors of economic, political, and social security. These values exist in the theoretical structures of both liberal democracy and social democracy. They are systematized based on various hypotheses and different principles for today's concepts of the rule of law and the welfare state.

### *Principles*

1. One of the main principles in our hypothesis is that none of the system-building elements (values) should be a core element of the system. Placing one value at the core means placing it in a dominant position over other elements. It is a permission to upset the balance between values. Imbalance is the path to disorder.

2. Another principle is that public dynamics are determined by the growth line of perfection, in accordance with the axiomatic requirement of the system. Here the potential and development level of both the individual and society are determined by its perfection. Along with trust and prestige, which are the expression of morality, intelligence, as capital and assets, is a moving and changing indicator (i.e., it indicates the increase or decrease).

3. The theoretical system itself is in accordance with the principles of justice and progress. Thus, unlike choices based on capital, there is no unnatural, artificial (or soft violent) choice of indicator (material capital) that goes beyond human qualities. On the contrary, the choice and dynamics are due to the increasing value of human qualities.

### *System-Building Characteristics*

Balance is a systemic characteristic of a theoretical device that fits the theoretical hypothesis presented above for a perfect society. It is the natural basis of justice, which is a humanitarian factor. Crises are shocks caused by a lack of justice in a political



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organism, and this deficit arises when the law of balance is violated. This balance finds its final expression in the state system of public administration. The polity is an expression of justice, justice is an expression of balance, balance is an expression of a criterion, and a criterion is an expression of intellect and morality. The opposite is contrary to nature and existence; therefore, it is doomed to non-existence. Thus, the opposite cannot exist: a policy that does not express justice, justice that does not represent balance, balance without criteria, and criteria that do not reflect intellect and morality. Thus, the path to justice begins with intelligence and morality and goes through balance.

Balance must be defined as a basic law at all levels of the public system: in politics, the economy, values, and even between values and interests. Balance does not entail an equal distribution in all cases and in every sense of the word. Balance must be a functional division, in which intelligence and morality emerge as an entire phenomenon. Therefore, if the goal is to obtain water (which is a requirement of reason and morality), then the formula for water is  $H_2O$ . However, hydrogen and oxygen having the same number of molecules that are also equal to dehydration.

There must be a balance between the national will (with people as the subject) and the founding will, which expresses the mind of society (where the intellectual community is the subject) at the source of power; between the part and the whole; between mind and spirit; between liberal and socially-oriented ideological principles; between citizen and the state; and between politics and morality.

### *Supportive Subjects in the System*

#### *An Individual Who is Free Because He/She is Perfect*

In general, the concept of the perfect human is a one of individualism. The focus on the individual was perceived as the cornerstone of the Eastern spiritual system and Turkic thought, and in many cases, was seen by its authors as an obstacle to collectivism. Likewise, the individual has been at the center of liberalism (the ideological locomotive of the West) for three centuries. Liberal democracy accepts the free human as a subject of society, and the public system is formed on this principle. It should not be forgotten that a civil society system is based on individual freedom, as explained in Al-Farabi [1] before Western thinkers. Thus, in Turkic social thought, the individual is not an island and does not stand above society, like the sun (Nasimi) in its religious and mystical heritage. On the contrary, the individual is the foundation of society and his perfection (his freedom and hence his happiness) is the goal of society. Therefore, a public system whose goal and subject does not include a free individual cannot be built on Turkic culture. As with the experience of totalitarian socialist system in the

USSR, the alternative system is not digested by Turkic people. Although liberalism corresponds to the Turkic cultural system (with its humanism and individualism), the theoretical system of liberal democracy (with its supremacy of economic immunity to serve the tandem of liberalism through capitalism) leads to a completely different public outcome than the goal (of the perfect human) for Turkic thought heritage. Therefore, according to the requirement of the presented hypothesis, a subject of the system is an individual who is free because he is perfect.

#### *An Intellectual Community or a Perfect Society Where Intellectuals are Plentiful*

Based on the hypothesis presented, it should be noted that the application of the theoretical system in the public system, with its various spheres and completing mechanisms, will require appropriate axiomatic supplements. Əhmədli [11, p. 63] notes that, according to the laws of the theory, "in order for the existing axioms to work effectively, a new axiom can be added to the theoretical system, or one of the axioms can be replaced by a stronger one." Therefore, it is possible to carry out such a theoretical operation in accordance with the laws of theory when applying the intellectual choice to the political system. In the presented system of this study, this axiom must be related to the fact that justice is supported by the actual source of power. The leading subject of power is the strongest stratum of society. In capitalism, the real leading subject of power is a class, stratum, or group that controls most of the capital. Of course, the size of the actual subject of power depends on the distribution of capital. In a monopolistic society, the oligarchic group plays the role of the real subject of power, while in a society with the least monopoly, the coalition of the rich and the middle class becomes the leading subject of political power. Over time, the wealthy class, with its legitimate lobbying groups in the legislature, succeed in passing unjust laws that serve their own interests [18]. Even the left and political forces representing the lower class cannot come into power under capitalism without the consent of the oligarchic group. In socialism, it is also impossible to talk of this progress, since the approach is based on the attitude towards capital, and the motives for decisions are formed based on the approach to capital and the owners of capital. For this reason, in the struggle based on capital and within the framework of the social classification measured by capital (the principle of stratification in society is adequate to material power), capitalism and socialism coexist as two opposites and form part of a symbiotic relationship. By making materiality the source of all public relations, Marx substantiated material interest and capital as the leading criterion of the public system; thus, he provided the greatest support for the

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survival and development of capitalism [21, p. 355-506].

According to a theoretical system based on the principle of perfection, it should be asked: Which stratum or class can be the supportive subject of power? Will this class have the appropriate strength to fulfil this position? In this case, since the criterion is perfection and the unit of expression is intelligence, it must be focused on the stratum to which intelligence most belongs. It should be noted that intelligence has a certain scope, in accordance with the level of development of society, which usually exceeds one class. The bulk of the intelligentsia are within the great middle of the pyramidal society, but at the same time, there is an intellectual base both in the upper and, to some extent, lower stratum. Therefore, it is a community that exists in different proportions for all classes and strata. Since this spread of intellectual units along the pyramid of society does not allow for gaps, such as those that exist between classes in a materialist society, an honest, progressive, and balanced intellectual community prevails. This becomes the guarantor of democracy. Thus, the axiom strengthened in our theoretical system must be related to intellectual selection. Certain derived principles can be adopted to reinforce this axiom. Such derivative principles are necessary for the mobility of the hypothesis in the public system. In the words of Əhmədli [11, p. 221], "inconsistencies arise with the knowledge underlying the theory, which are acquired in previous scientific and practical activities." In overcoming these inconsistencies, the new theory either adopts an additional system-building axiom or applies derivative principles. These derivative principles occur in different models, depending on the traditions of democracy, indicators of political culture, and the level of education of the masses. For example, such a derivative principle can take the form of stage elections based on the criterion of perfection: the mechanism of the initial selection of the intellectual jury (i.e., the selection of candidates for the final stage) can be entrusted to a multimillion or multimillion intellectual jury, formed based on an intellectual unit (depending on the scope of the intellectual community). Another example of a derivative principle is the differentiation of the voter's vote. Mechanisms for differentiating votes and balancing results in decision-making eliminate possible inconsistencies between the basic principle of democracy (i.e., the rule of the people) and the principle of the theoretical system that is proposed (i.e., acceptance of the intellectual community as a supportive and active subject). However, the application of this principle provides powerful impetus to the activation of political culture.

### Intellectual liberalism

In a public system where the criterion of relations is perfection, in contrast to feudalism (where

the basic element and criterion is land ownership) and capitalism (where the basic element and criterion is material capital), human intelligence as its basic and reliable property is the pillar, condition, and dam of all other properties, including freedoms, and is the guarantor of their existence and constancy. The value system that ensures this form of public relations is a liberal system with its own content and mission (individual freedom). This is liberalism. However, since the cumulation of this liberal system is perfection, and its main variable is intelligence, this theoretical system can be seen as intellectual liberalism.

The application of the philosophy and theoretical requirements of intellectual liberalism, as with any ideology, is focused on the problem of state building and power. It should be noted that the democracy that must serve the purpose of intellectual liberalism is neither technocracy nor meritocracy. The concretization of intellectual liberalism does not imply technocracy, which provides for the participation of non-political professionals in government, or meritocracy, which ensures the political legitimacy of the existing capitalist conjuncture through decent persons in government. Intellectual liberalism is a public order from which intelligence, as with all liberal values, is the basic requirement for everyone's security. Thus, it is reachable for everyone and the leading criterion of all public relations, comprised of a valid unit of value. Intellectual liberalism does not intend to use intellectual value only in the formation of the elite or the participation of a professional group in government. It realizes the bottom-up movement (therefore it must be at a mass level) of the intellect as a liberal value. The goal of intellectual liberalism is to improve the quality and responsibility of representatives and, more importantly, of the electorate. This is to achieve a high quality of the phenomenon of power and establish a fair order. In fact, this means that honorable work itself becomes a dominant public criterion over money that can be earned by any act or any mode of inheritance, from labor to fraud. Intelligence is the only value that, unlike land and capital, cannot be acquired without effort (i.e., by inheritance, chance, crime, or corruption). Technocracy does not have intelligence as a criterion. Instead, it is a servant of the dominant criterion (land in feudalism, money in capitalism) and an instrument of the elite (oligarchic group), which thanks to capital has become a powerful subject.

Intellectual liberalism, which is the only ideological path to a perfect society, does not promise freedoms or equality (like religion), but makes humans a source and creator of freedoms and all values. In a society where intelligence can be the leading criterion of the public system, the human who possesses it becomes the source of all types of power; he/she is not an adversary fighting for freedom, but a

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source of freedom itself. This is because a society that possesses high intellectual and cultural levels permanently solves issues with rights and freedoms, and also reaches a position that creates its own rights and freedoms, setting criteria and measures for them.

### Conclusion

This study links the origins of the growing inequality issue that has led to the current paradigm crisis with the criterion of capital. It focuses on the theoretical system of liberal democracy that makes this possible. The root cause of the problem is explained by the fact that the bloc of economic freedoms, within the liberal system has taken a fundamental position, received a special status and superiority in relation to other values.

The study argues that the blocs of economic, political, and social freedom and security, which are axiomatic elements within a progressive theoretical system, must be protected on an equal status. The unity of intelligence and morality should be the regulatory criterion that will control the protection of these freedoms, security blocs, and equality in equal status and ensure the balance between them. A reform

of liberal democracy is proposed, referring to the principle of the perfect human, which is inherent in the heritage of Turkic thought and connects the levels of human freedom with perfection.

If perfection is the fundamental axiom of a theoretical system that leads to perfect society by the perfect human, then intellectualism acts as a measurable, variable, growing unit of perfection. The system-building axiomatic elements are values that are included in the content of liberalism and the conception of the rule of law. The system-building characteristic is balance here. Perfection, which is a fundamental axiom, implements control where the axioms have the same status and the balance between values is protected. The process takes place through mechanisms where intelligence and trust (as a social expression of morality), which are elements of excellence, operate from the bottom-up approach, throughout the public system. The second supportive subject of such a liberal system (the goal of which is individual freedom based on intelligence and morality) is the intellectual community. In essence, this entails intellectual liberalism, the cumulation of which is perfection. Its variable unit is intellect.

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