

THE CONTESTED GROUND OF A TRANSITION NEODEMOCRACY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GLOBALIZATION

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As neodemocracies, some post-communist countries face formidable and multiple challenges during the transition period. They have to build viable Nation States, the rule of law, efficient and competitive free-market economies and vibrant civil societies. They also have to strengthen democratic institutions and consolidate democracy in order to ensure sustainable human development and a decent life for the people. And they are short of time, both in terms of catching up with advanced democracies and of meeting their commitments and obligations as new members of (primarily) European entities. Widespread poverty and rampant corruption, growing social polarization, an increasing burden of foreign debt, fraudulent elections, flagrant violations of human rights that go unpunished, real danger of regression to authoritarian practices, lack of social justice and of due respect for law and for democratic traditions and practices (including proper separation of powers and a system of checks and balances), an enormous segment of apathetic and alienated citizenry - these are factors (to name but a few) that not merely impede those countries' progress and undermine their development prospects but also call into question the ambitious project of democratization and modernization of post-Soviet states.

External factors, too, are important. One of the most crucial ones is globalization, which definitely cannot be bracketed out from that uneasy equation. The analysis of the impact of globalization, in particular on neodemocracies, is complicated by the fact that consensus on how this phenomenon should be construed and interpreted has yet to be reached. Often seen as the "last grand narrative of the 20th century",¹ globalization attracts much attention from the research community, media, international organizations, NGOs, etc. However, even though it is difficult to find a more fashionable and controversial theme than globalization, V. Kuvaldin rightly points out that "abundance of opinions, approaches and judgments

does not ensure, in and of itself, thorough scrutiny of the issue. Globalization has proved to be a nut too hard for the general public and for scholarly analysis to crack".² The attempts to give clear-cut, unequivocal definitions (beyond mere listing of some features and/or sources, manifestations and consequences) have not so far met with success. Besides, the fact that the concept of globalization is extremely politicized and ideologized is counterproductive. Not infrequently, depending on ideological preferences, globalization is perceived either as a *panacea* for all problems or as the *only and irreversible way* to socioeconomic and political development or else as a *form of neocolonialism and neo-imperialism*.

For fairness' sake, it should be pointed out that sometimes the opinion is voiced that in fact there is nothing new in globalization. Such (sometimes designated as "skeptical")³ views are popular, for instance, among a group of Russian social and political scientists.⁴ Such an approach, however, especially an extravagant interpretation of globalization as an illusion or a socio-political myth, has not gained wide currency.

Since there is no single scenario or strategy, some scholars and politicians tend to speak about several parallel processes of globalization (information, drugs, epidemics, finances, etc.). That view is at least productive in highlighting the fact that the dynamics of individual components of globalization are different.

There is a simplistic, albeit quite popular, view that defines globalization as the formation of a common financial and economic space on the basis of new, primarily computer technologies (M. Deliagin)⁵ or as integration of capital as well as of commodity and services markets (IMF).⁶ Such attempts to reduce globalization to its economic component (or, even worse, to a financial component) disregard crucial political, social and cultural dimensions.

Globalization is an increasing involvement of all nations and countries in the worldwide processes (even though to a different extent and at varying speed); it is a process of rapid erosion of State frontiers for the movement of capital, information, technologies, ideas, etc. (although to a significantly smaller extent for people). Thus, globalization can be seen as a new stage in internationalization and integration. A special role belongs to the information revolution, i.e. to radically new information and

communication technologies. H.-P. Martin and H. Schumann made a very subtle observation that for the first time humanity is united by a common image of reality.⁷

Globalization has increased the dynamism of all processes, enhanced polarization of the world into the "rich" and the "poor", including "info-rich" and "info-poor", and has intensified asymmetry as regards power, influence, civic and political participation, access to resources, etc., thus contributing to greater inequality between countries on a global scale. At the same time it would be short-sighted to disregard the huge positive potential of globalization,⁸ which provides new technical, economic, political, social, cultural and other opportunities.

Therefore, I believe it is more productive and advisable, firstly, not to demonize globalization; secondly, to pay more attention to the idea of French scholars Y. Brunsvick and A. Danzin⁹ that globalization is a sign of the advent of a new civilization and, thirdly, to discuss the formulation of rational and effective strategies of globalization.

Hot debates about globalization have somehow overshadowed the fact that long before the subject became popular up the attention of social and political scientists and of civic movement activists was attracted to *global problems of contemporary civilization*. It is important that those issues were rightly seen as a natural outgrowth of contemporary civilization but by no means as plots or machinations of some individuals, social groups, countries or blocs (even though an ideological aspect figured prominently in the quest for solutions). These problems furnished convincing proof that humanity had for the first time come to have a common destiny and had become a single whole despite state frontiers, military blocs and regional and other dividing groups. The solution of any of these problems (whether environmental, man-made or military-political) is far beyond the capacity of any single State or even of a group of States. They must and can be solved only by united humanity.

For fairness' sake, it should further be stressed that it is not globalization in and of itself that underlies the numerous existing problems (both domestic and international). It is quite another matter that, by creating new conditions for and realities of communication and interaction, globalization highlighted strong as well as weak aspects of various socio-political and economic, axiological, ideological systems, cultures, etc. Not everyone is particularly happy about the situation,

especially those who found themselves (or believe themselves to be) at a disadvantage. However, to put the blame solely on globalization would amount to blaming a physician who has made a correct diagnosis.

A growing number of social and political scientists beg to differ when globalization is declared inevitable and/or when it is put forth as a normative goal for a contemporary society. For example, a group of prominent social and political scientists took issue with those views in their monograph, which characterizes globalization exclusively as a negative phenomenon because of its destructive impact on human society, citing the new profound and large-scale conflicts that it has generated.¹⁰

Efforts are also made to distinguish globalization from quasi-globalizations that simulate globalization. V. Oshero, for example, contends that "globalization as a natural process of the international economic and cultural exchange that has been going on for many centuries should be distinguished from a systematic, conscious and multilateral *policy of active globalism*, which we encounter today."¹¹

For some political philosophers, political scientists and economists this distinction is merely a first step in a full-fledged criticism¹² of globalism, globalization and their movers and shakers as well as advocates (such as, e.g., Thomas Friedman).¹³

The confusion between *phenomenon* and *policy* is far from being a rare occurrence, especially in the case of anti-globalists. They actually have nothing to offer (except a protest) instead of globalization. It is not incidental that comparison with Luddites, who engaged in indiscriminate and irrational destruction of machinery at the onset of the Industrial Revolution, suggests itself. On January 31, 2002, the day the *Davos* Forum opened, the Anti-Globalist Forum was launched in Brazil. The outcome of the latter demonstrated again (as did many other actions and documents) that there is no positive program. It is ironic that anti-globalists should actively use the latest communication and other technologies provided by globalization.

The criticism of globalization has gradually become more systemic and methodical in nature. Prominent Russian philosopher Alexander Zinoviev's book *Global super-society and Russia* is an illustrative example. In his view, globalization marks a beginning of an evolutionary yet radical (societal) transformation, in the course of which the super-society of the "Westernist" kind emerges. The idea of a "global society",

he contends, is in fact an ideologically camouflaged aspiration of the US-led Western society to "conquer the entire planet and to establish its rule over all other nations." Zinoviev believes that a unified humanity is possible but "not as a peaceful coexistence of equal countries and nations but as a structured social whole with a hierarchy of countries and nations." He names that process "Westernization", i.e. imposition of the "social order, economy, political system, ideology, culture and way of life... of Western countries." Thus, for him globalization is another name for Westernization, which is a peculiar form of "colonization, in the result of which a socio-political order of colonial democracy is coerced on a colonized country."¹⁴

French specialist J.-M. Guéhenno¹⁵ points out a prevalence of the view that an apolitical world of globalization can allegedly thrive only under the aegis of the United States as its guarantor. Therefore, globalization is increasingly seen as a synonym for Americanization. Globalization, thus, is a euphemism for a unipolar world, with Washington as its capital.

Neither of those views, however radical, is entirely unfounded. The point is that, as Z. Brzezinski aptly pointed out, due to efforts of the US elites, globalization has become a fashionable ideology of the postindustrial epoch. In his view, this version of globalization has all the features of an ideology: historically it was timely, appealed to key power elites with common interests, included criticism of what needed to be repudiated and contained a promise of a better future. In a word, as a natural doctrine of global hegemony of the US, globalization bridged the main gap in America's new status as the only global superpower by furnishing it with doctrinal legitimacy.¹⁶

It is small wonder, therefore, that a critical stance on globalization is not uncommon in many countries, in particular in Russia and some other CIS countries, where quite a few political scientists identify globalization with Americanization and criticize globalization for promoting a "global open society" and totalitarian practices imposing global unification and universalization with the United States (as the only *hyperpower*) sponsoring and organizing that process.¹⁷

Some of these ideas that reduce the multiplicity of globalization to "*mondialism*" and a "new world disorder" were uncritically adopted in Armenia. Any discourse in Armenia on globalization came, as a rule, to the following formula (which has already become traditional):

*globalization is a camouflaged doctrine for information support for justifying the expansion of the Anglo-Saxon world and for establishing its hegemony over others.*¹⁸ Cultural anthropologist Arusiak Sahakian seconds unreservedly a quite widespread view that globalization is a "cultural genocide" and that "it tends ... to eliminate differences between nations and to bring them and national territories under a single strong fist.The national way of life ... gets the first blow of that fist."¹⁹

However, an understanding is emerging, albeit slowly, that the actual content of globalization should be distinguished from its concrete models and conceptual frameworks. Therefore, "criticism of a selfish American conceptual framework should be undertaken in search of a democratic model of globalization but not from the positions of primitive anti-Americanism or, even worse, of absolutely antiglobalistic political reaction."²⁰

Also encouraging is a realization that the actual tendencies of globalization and of the emerging post-industrial society "generate ... new opportunities for a progressive reconstruction of the world order."²¹

Many serious politicians and experts in the West are aware that the prevalence of the current version of capitalism on a global scale poses an extreme and deadly danger. Under the conditions of "turbo-capitalism" the "corporate International" or "International of big money"²² we enter a historical arena against the background of growing irresponsibility and egoism of transnational companies.

In order to avoid a collapse (as well as a slipping down into totalitarianism or into "hegemonic democracy" as an attempt to keep the situation under control) consistent efforts should be made to move to another type of global civilization. The most important question is "What will this united world look like?" The only answer to challenges of pessimistic scenarios and of the control of the world by the "golden billion" is globalization of true democracy. Only that democracy can put an end to the privileged globalism, which thrives, as A. Panarin put it, "at the expense of *de-modernization* and *primitivization* of the life of the majority".²³

Back in the 1960s the renowned American social philosopher and historian Lewis Mumford warned against the danger of the emergence of a totally organized social system ("*megamachine*") and of a myth of its unsurpassed effectiveness.²⁴ Based on those ideas, over 30 years ago Erich

Fromm envisaged the advent of a technotronic, dehumanized society, which "is not Hobbes' Leviathan, but a Moloch, the all-destructive idol."²⁵ In other words, all these phenomena were predicted; nevertheless, the reality has once again caught humanity unaware.

Therefore, most people would subscribe to the statement in the Millennium Declaration (adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2000) to the effect that "the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people."²⁶ However, despite all the efforts of the UN, there has so far been no tangible progress in that respect, while tension between those who win and those who lose because of globalization is building up and threatens to turn into a direct confrontation. An interesting aspect has been highlighted in a seemingly paradoxical aphorism by influential philosopher Zygmunt Bauman, "*Globalization divides as much as it unites.*"²⁷ Also, alongside "the emerging planetary dimensions of business, finance, trade and information flow, a 'localizing', space-fixing process is set in motion. ... [T]he freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our ... postmodern times." Therefore, being "local" is a "sign of social deprivation and degradation."²⁸

In 1989 F. Fukuyama formulated an idea²⁹ (later to be thoroughly explored in his best-selling book)³⁰ about the "end of history" in the sense that liberal democracy (based, it should be added, on free-market economy) is "an end point of the ideological evolution of humanity" as well as the highest form of government. Euphoria caused by victory in the Cold War and by the downfall of the "socialist" system led him to the conclusion that liberal democracy had won as a predominant (and, in fact, the only) model of socioeconomic and political order. It was contended in earnest that ideological and political evolution has basically come to an end in liberal democracy, at least as regards fundamental principles and institutions. Other forms of socio-political and economic order were seen as temporary aberrations, which will either die out or be transformed into the above-mentioned model. An inference suggests itself that global socio-political evolution will be taking exclusively a unification track.

Fukuyama's forecast, however, does not fit well into the realities of the present-day world, including globalization. Even though humanity is

on the threshold of a new civilization, it is far from clear what principles, values and relations will underlie the planetary civilization.

The ideological models that contest liberal democracy not only still have potential and viability but they also vie for supremacy. A critical in-depth analysis of various aspects of those challenges has been made by Benjamin Barber,³¹ Ernest Gellner,³² Samuel Huntington,³³ Zbigniew Brzezinski³⁴ and many others.³⁵

The competition from the "outside" is only a part of the problem.³⁶ It turns out that when the free market becomes global, it threatens to deal a more shattering blow to democracy and to open society than does a totalitarian ideology. This idea has been examined closely by George Soros,³⁷ who, undoubtedly, is one of the best experts on both the market economy and liberalism. A number of other interesting studies³⁸ have addressed this issue. A. Neklessa speaks about the emergence of a new, "*neodemocratic hierarchy*" and about the replacement of the lost ideal of global citizenship, freedom, equality and brotherhood by the Great Immigration Wall.³⁹ He also writes that "globalization ... does not lead automatically to the evolution of a planetary democracy" and that "under cover of democratic phraseology ... a silhouette of an international oligarchic regime is appearing" and the organically undemocratic essence and the caste nature of a "global universe" are revealed.⁴⁰

H.-P. Martin and H. Schumann see globalization as a trap for democracy since a dictatorship of the proletariat is replaced by a dictatorship of the market, and while politics loses its supremacy over economy, the State is coming apart and the middle class is quitting the historical stage.⁴¹

It may well be the case, though, that many negative traits and consequences of globalization could be accounted for by the fact that globalization is not yet a single, homogenous process. Economic, technological, information, political, cultural, social and other "globalizations" can easily be distinguished, and they have yet to integrate as components of a single process of globalization. Regardless of their interdependence and mutual influence, these processes have so far been unfolding at varying speed and separately. Therefore, while speaking about integration of humanity into a single super- or meta-, or mega-society, we should bear in mind that integration and establishment of global networks and relations in various areas are at different levels. Mass media and

means of communication (that have indeed become global) are unquestionably in the lead, closely followed by information and communication technologies. Financial and market elements of the economic component are the next. In social and political fields the globalization processes advance more slowly, while the dynamic of cultural globalization, spurred by mass culture, is unprecedented.

Thus, in a sense there is a multi-vector model with tensions and strains at junctures and facets. Those tensions and strains, however, stimulate further development and mobilization of the creative potential of humanity.

To better understand the essence of the "conflict" triggered by the varying speeds of the evolution of various components, let us turn to a well-known model of three sectors of a society (State, business and "civil society", or the third sector).

Before our very eyes there emerges an interconnected global economy with a common global market, free flow of capital and, most importantly, TNCs becoming predominant. Besides, the influence of the so-called Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank, IMF, GATT and its offspring WTO) has grown considerably. They now set the rules in the global economy and act as players and referees and as strict "schoolteachers" who initiate post-communist neodemocracies almost like first-grade students into the serious world of economic *Realpolitik*. The existing economic world order, which rouses so much censure for good reasons, has come about due to their efforts. A. Zinoviev brings to the attention of the post-communist countries the fact that "globalization of economy allows the Western world to exploit the entire planet through methods that in their form look like economic, ... but in fact are not such."⁴²

Some political scientists, on the other hand, believe that "the worst blow to globalization was dealt not by demonstrators or by some obstinate persons who insisted on their own, non-Western, non-American model of development ... but by those who adhered strictly to all the recommendations of the [WB, IMF, etc. – V.O.] experts and who ... tried to squeeze their very different cultural, political and economic traditions into the Procrustean bed of neoliberalism."⁴³

Globalization enhances financial liberalization, opens up existing markets and creates new markets, ensures free flow of capitals, direct investments, offers unprecedented opportunities for free trade, etc.

Depending on the arrangements, those processes can be beneficial or otherwise, both for an individual country and for humanity as a whole. In principle, in most cases objections are raised not against globalization as such but against injustices, inequality and other socially significant and sensitive shortcomings.

Political "unification" is progressing very slowly. It would be premature to speak about a "World Government". The events of the past few years have demonstrated that hopes pinned on the UN are illusory. This once quite respected international (and so far the only genuinely global) organization managed to discredit itself and can hardly serve as a prototype or a model for a body of political and economic governance of a planetary, global society (or, more precisely, meta-society). The global society (or, rather, community) loses much because of the absence of effective institutionalized forms of global governance since only such entities would be in a position to subdue and to restrain TNCs and to bring to reason those who, euphoric from the illusions of the emergence of a truly unipolar world, are in a hurry to impose their views, values and ways.

*Thus, there are grounds to believe that humanity will benefit from the establishment of effective supranational bodies of governance, provided, of course, that those bodies will not share the fate of the UN, which has become a hostage and a tool for manipulation in the hands of a group of States.*⁴⁴

The situation, however, is worse in the third sector – the sphere of voluntary association of free citizens for public good, for containing and balancing the actions and influence of politically and economically dominant entities. The emergence of a global civil society is an unlikely prospect even for the relatively distant future since civic movements are of quite a limited nature and are far from true consolidation in terms of their goals, objectives, membership and orientations. Despite the clichéd incantations that in a contemporary postindustrial liberal-democratic society horizontal ties come to the fore and push aside the vertical, hierarchical power structure and asymmetric relations of domination and submission, in reality vertical-hierarchical relations both within and between societies not only do not disappear but are quite enthusiastically reproduced in an emerging global society, which has its own "winners" and "losers."

It would probably be unfair to suspect "civil society" (or, rather, that part of it, which is designated as civic movements) in advanced postindustrial countries of deliberate participation in neocolonial and neo-imperialistic policies. One cannot help, however, criticizing them for inadequate actions and focus. Noisy street protests and mass disturbances that abound in acts of vandalism committed by some "opponents of globalization" (e.g. in Seattle, Washington, Prague, Davos or Genoa) are counter-productive for more reasons than one. They damage the prospect of the creation of a global civil society, diminish the possibility of an adequate understanding of globalization and of using its positive potential, disorient the general public and channel its energy into an obvious deadlock or turn it entirely away from civic activism. Anyway, these strategies by no means impede the emergence of new, more subtle and camouflaged form of neocolonialism (which is designated as globalism), overexploitation, violence and oppression with the observance of all subtleties of quasi-egalitarian etiquette and of rhetoric of political correctness.

The development, nature and consequences of globalization will to a large extent depend on consolidation of the third sector and on its leadership potential. That is all the more important since what George Soros called a "global open society" has yet to materialize.

Thus, a principal task is to orient the strategies and policies of globalization towards positive societal goals, including sustainable development and environmental protection, and more equitable distribution of the advantages provided by globalization. The idea that the main focus is still on the expansion of market, while enthusiasm concerning a social goal is lacking, was stressed time and again at the Millennium Summit.

There is also another argument in defense of globalization. One might put a rhetorical question about what should be preferred to globalization. Are autarky, isolationism, regionalism and localism, particularly as a fundamentalist reaction to globalization preferable? Before passing judgment it would be appropriate to understand the ideologies hidden behind the "acceptance" or "refusal" of globalization as well as to calculate the costs (especially the opportunity costs) to be incurred in selecting a given option in societal development.

Globalization has highlighted a number of essential flaws and negative aspects of contemporary world society and of modern civilization in general, but not many of them have been brought about by globalization.

It should be stressed that the interests of each nation dictate urgently the necessity of *transformation from passive objects into active actors of globalization*. Globalization is an objective process that puts societal evolution in high gear and generates new opportunities. It is necessary to make use of new technological, communication, political, economic and other opportunities *for becoming an agent for social action* and a partner, even if a junior partner at first.

To be viable, any society has to be anchored in shared cultural, ideological, political and other values, ideas, norms and views. If globalization is indeed giving rise to a new, genuinely global civilization, the question arises as to what ideology, philosophy and value system should be placed at its foundation.

Some experts believe that the following four key ideas make up the ideological foundation of globalization: 1. Human rights assume paramount importance; 2. Democracy is stronger than tyranny; 3. Market is more effective than command economy and 4. Openness is better than isolation.⁴⁵ It can be argued whether those or other values and ideas are basic and unifying or not, what matters is that "for the first time in history the absolute majority of those living on the Earth gradually develops a common understanding of the basic principles of the organization of societal life."⁴⁶

The idea that globalization should serve the interests of people and not merely increased profits was unequivocally formulated in the 1999 UNDP *Global Human Development Report*. The Report stressed that globalization should be based on the human rights ethic, equity, inclusion, security, sustainability and development.⁴⁷

Jagdish Bhagwati makes a strong case for globalization showing that it is a very, if not the most, powerful source for social good in today's world.⁴⁸

Much concern is caused by cultural globalization. The first wave of globalization carries a huge charge of homogenization of cultures, first of all through ideological, value and world-outlook attitudes and ideas.

In her report about Armenia's integration into the globalization processes, Amalia Saribekian underscored the controversial nature of the

globalization of culture, "On the one hand, it enriches people's knowledge and contributes to the formation of a global mentality, allows communicating to new lifestyles, to re-consider values. On the other hand, it seems to contribute to a process, which will inevitably turn culture into goods or services, and in that process national diversity, values, peculiarities and traditions would be lost."⁴⁹

Similar concern and anxiety are shared by many scholars and politicians in various countries. The existing asymmetry in the relations between the developed and developing (including transition) countries has led to a certain cultural expansionism. The problem, however, is more complex than that. Particular concern is aroused not by the abundance of "Western" culture but rather by the lack of genuine culture, instead of which an aggressive, zombying pseudo-culture is dumped into Third World countries. It corrupts its user (regardless of geographical location), profanes and commodifies genuine culture and destroys the existing local cultures that have so far failed to exhibit immunity against the "aggressor."

Domination of mass-(or pop-)culture is so comprehensive and constant and has touched such deep layers of national mentalities and cultures of the recipient countries that it has already brought about the 'secondary genesis' of mass-culture in those countries, i.e. the emergence of mass-culture on the cultural basis of those countries. And that ends up not only in the ousting but also in deformation and internal disintegration of national cultures.

These processes arouse justified anxiety and concern and the desire to counteract there. But how? Withdrawal into one's closed cultural identity, self-isolation and total refusal of contacts are hardly possible, rational or effective. The initiative of the Dialogue among Civilizations seems to be a more productive alternative. Its enormous positive potential can provide a foundation for well-targeted, efficient and balanced strategies that will allow achieving "globalization with a human face."⁵⁰

The Dialogue asserts multiculturalism and cultural diversity as natural and priority norms for the emerging global civilization; at the same time they provide an opportunity for acquiring multiple identities.

By enhancing the interaction between cultures and intensifying cultural contacts, globalization enhances, undoubtedly, tensions and conflicts between cultures. The question of choice becomes more acute. It is not incidental that there has been an on-going debate in Armenia on

whether Armenian culture and the Armenian nation belong to the West (Europe) or the East (Asia) and which values are kindred and which are hardly acceptable to the Armenian mentality and will therefore be rejected by Armenian culture, which will not be able or willing to integrate them. The overwhelming majority of present-day Armenian society seem to share a view that the origins and essence of Armenian culture are Western (European) and for that reason they also support the political course towards integration into Europe.

In terms of balanced interaction of cultures, "cultural hybridization"⁵¹ is of certain interest as it allows avoiding the extremes of undermining cultural uniqueness and of leaving cultures of small nations on the sidelines of the evolving global society, of pushing them into self-isolationism, etc. It is, in a sense, a "middle" course, which promotes openness, exchanges and partnerships, thus empowering actors and enabling them to have more leverage and say.

The Dialogue among Civilizations will obviously lead to a situation in which neoliberalism will no longer claim to have the status of the only philosophical and ideological foundation and justification of globalization (and will not be seen as such) but will be complemented by other conceptual and axiological models and frameworks.

Sustainable social development requires a transition to a new paradigm of social organization, the necessity of which has significantly grown as a result of globalization. The social component of sustainable development is based on certain principles. And even though this paradigm has not yet emerged in its final form, the principal features of a new society are basically clear. Economically advanced Western democracies have, in many parameters, come closest to that paradigm. Therefore, their experience and models deserve close attention, provided it is realized that they cannot serve as blueprints. It should be stressed that the paradigm that secures sustainable development, including human and social sustainable development, is not the present-day Western society writ large. The flaws of the consumer society, unreasonable social and national egoism, neocolonialist and neo-imperialist aspirations and practices have brought forth opposition, resistance and the idea of a search for a "third way".

At the same time, many social, economic and political models and elements of Western democracies can and should be used by those societies that deliberate seriously about their future and that have come to

realize the fact that the achievement of a decent future is predicated on sustainable social development.

It would be a gross overstatement to say that decision-makers, governmental structures, politicians and the political class as a whole are aware of that fact and have come to accept it. The situation in the third sector is, with rare exceptions, not better, let alone the society at large, whose entire energies and attention are focused on the search for survival and adaptation strategies. At the same time, it has become apparent that the model of a "transition period" has been almost exhausted without having brought about the results anticipated, in line with quite simplistic speculative ideas of "transitologists," that held sway in the minds of the Armenian political establishment over the past ten years or so.

The bewilderment is evident and understandable. The model of neoliberal democracy was uncritically accepted (actually more lip-service was paid than action taken in practical terms) and the policy of "structural adjustment" economic reforms was pursued obediently as dictated by the World Bank and IMF. Old ideological dogmas were discarded as were – in the process – many social, moral and cultural values; however, so far the efforts (if any) to create a stable and functional society that provides at least relatively decent living standards for its members have failed.

The situation is not limited only to Armenia. The structural adjustment paradigm ended in unrestrained de-nationalization, in the course of which, as M. Ould-Mey aptly put it, the Nation State is actually deprived of sovereignty through the development policy.⁵²

As indicated above, a number of Western and CIS political and social scientists see more profound processes (and deliberate policies) behind these phenomena. Thus, M. Hardt and A. Negri contend that the diminishing sovereignty of Nation States and their growing incapacity to regulate economic and cultural exchange is, in fact, one of the symptoms of the emerging Empire.⁵³

But prior to (or, rather, instead of) being lured by authoritarianism or even totalitarianism and finally disillusioned with the institutions and practices of democracy, it would not be inappropriate to look behind our "homegrown democracy".

The situation in Armenia is further complicated by the fact that while, on the one hand, it is experiencing a strong impact from the globalization processes, on the other hand, the country is stuck in the transition period. It

should be pointed out that Armenia still lacks openness and stability, the two *sine qua nons* in Ian Bremmer's view, for a successful modern State. If we apply his theory to Armenia, we can see that this country is indeed going through a transitional period of dangerous instability.⁵⁴

The failure of socio-political experiments in Armenia in the past 10-15 years visibly confirms the simple truth: democracy is first of all not power *per se* but participation and involvement of most citizens in the affairs of the State and society, from which they are at present effectively excluded.

There are visible indications of a growing crisis of political participation in Armenia. The State does not encourage citizen participation and does not exercise self-restraint as regards tolerance of civic initiatives. It seems that the ruling elite favors a moderately authoritarian scenario for resolving the crisis. In other words, it is not ready yet to integrate new impulses for political participation and resorts to creating illusionary forms of that participation.⁵⁵ As is the case in some other post-Soviet countries, that scenario leads in Armenia to forms of coercive mobilizational or imitational participation.

Nothing reveals the superficial nature of democratic institutions so obviously as alienation of citizens from decision-making, particularly as regards the decisions that affect their basic interests and prospects. Because of all these factors Armenian society, not having managed to become open, has started again to degenerate into a closed, non-meritocratic society with a progressively stronger and more rigid bureaucratic hierarchy and to lose the prerequisites for the rule of law (because, *inter alia*, of the lack of public control over the functioning of the State apparatus and over all branches of government). Power becomes a closed corporation; a new *nomenklatura* class is emerging, and the formation of new elites is occurring in undemocratic and non-meritocratic ways, thus increasing social polarization and social stratification. It is because of monopolization by these "elites" of political power, State governance, and public policies and because of leaving ordinary citizens on the sidelines of public life that such vital changes as privatization, market reforms in general, conducting free elections, introducing political and ideological pluralism and promoting independent media, etc. are taking place with serious distortions and have yielded results sometimes opposite to the anticipated ones.⁵⁶

These conclusions are strongly supported by the findings of four sociological surveys that our team from the AAWUE Center for Democracy & Peace conducted in 2002-2006 targeting individuals with a university-level education and engaged in civic activism.⁵⁷

In fact, Armenia in the transition period is for the most part imitating democratic reforms and sliding into what Larry Diamond aptly called the "twilight zone." The country demonstrates the two syndromes identified by him, *viz.* "feckless pluralism" and "dominant-power politics". There are good grounds to contend that it is not democracy that is being consolidated in today's Armenia but rather what Philippe C. Schmitter dubbed "democradura"⁵⁸ (i.e. democratization without liberalization).

A so-called "hybrid" regime (one that combines elements of authoritarianism and democracy) has emerged in Armenia in recent years. It is also evidenced by the findings of our surveys. When asked, "What political regime has become consolidated in Armenia?", the single largest percentage of the respondents in 3 surveys (conducted in 2003-2006) indicated the "hybrid" regime (36.0%, 42.5% and 41.9% respectively in March-April 2003, December 2003-January 2004 and November 2005-January 2006).⁵⁹

The elements are in a delicate balance, and it remains to be seen whether political developments will tip the latter in favor of democracy or authoritarianism. The upcoming parliamentary elections (scheduled for May 2007) and presidential elections in 2008 will show almost conclusively the preferences of the Armenian political class. They will be an ultimate test whether Armenia becomes a stable democracy or regresses into authoritarianism.

A democratic transition is brought to a successful completion through the so-called "two-turnover test"⁶⁰ (i.e. a peaceful transfer of power in two consecutive free and fair elections). Post-Soviet Armenia has not so far experienced such a transfer even once.

It is symptomatic that economic liberalization reforms in fact did not lead to the creation of a free-market economy in Armenia, as the following four key elements are missing: equal conditions, absence of monopoly, fair competition and enforceability of contracts. It is a commonplace truth that modern democracy cannot exist without a free-market economy.

But political and economic reforms will not suffice to make democracy (based on a market economy) “work” in Armenia and to push the country towards sustainable social development.

For the transition to democracy to succeed in Armenia, the society needs a democratic political culture. However, this is a challenge also because, as leading Armenian sociologist Gevork Poghosyan pointed out, reforms are superimposed on the cultural “matrix” of society and undergo changes in line with the societal practices, customs and traditions. He believes this to be one of the reasons why a “transition model” of Armenian modernization did not get sufficiently broad public support and failed to attract the required social resources. Poghosyan emphasizes that “what we have as a result of a decade of modernization is a semireformed society that has only partially adapted to or internalized the modernization ideology, i.e. to the extent that the cultural-historical patterns deeply seated in its mentality have allowed it to do so.”⁶¹

Also, a vibrant civil society has to be factored in. It is no exaggeration to say that any strategy of consolidation of democracy, of successful completion of the transition period and of the solution of such important tasks as combating corruption, overcoming nihilism as regards law, developing a democratic legal and political culture and designing consensus-based policy- and decision-making, etc. requires a mature and active civil society.

A viable civil society is a prerequisite and a tool that contributes to the solution of many problems. This conclusion may seem trivial, particularly because an excessive and thoughtless abuse of the concept – in the worst traditions of Communist propaganda – undermined public trust in it and made it much less attractive. But modern history plainly demonstrates that the demise of the States where modernization and democratization attempts failed (the so-called “failed States”) and of the States captured by mafia-style and other criminal entities (“captured States”) was brought about by the absence or disintegration of civil society.

Civil society can ensure policies of social inclusion, thus of active civic and political participation, of reproduction of “social capital”, of overcoming violence (which has become a norm of social and political life) and oppression and suppression of individuals and social groups, including various minorities. By creating societal space for dialogue, social action, cooperation of efforts and the search for consensus, civil

society contributes to the creation of checks and balances and of consensus (consociational) democracy. It also contributes to strengthening the democratic nature of political institutions and leads to the reduction of behind-the-scenes politics and of social and political marginalization.

First of all, the appropriate legislation that would contribute to the evolution of civil society institutions should be enacted so that Armenian citizens can master the difficult art of association and so that self-organization of citizens can occur on a mass scale and take stable forms. Such legislation, however, has not been enacted. Rather, state policies lead to serious distortions. For example, as a result of economic (including tax) pressures, the mass media has not become more independent; on the contrary, it has become more partisan and biased. Politicization, commercialization and ideologization are observed in the third sector (which is the backbone of civil society), thus resulting in the emergence of pseudo-NGOs and in predictable loss of legitimacy by the sector in the eyes of a significant section of the public. Democratic deficit within the third sector also arouses concern.

Unless the present day tendencies are reversed, civil society as such will not become a reality and such a situation is fraught with ruptures in the social fabric, with erosion of solidarity, with growing social atomization and anomie and with adulteration of social capital. Without conscious and targeted support of civil society, the social paradox will become more prominent, i.e. what is functional in terms of an individual strategy of survival and adaptation to social conditions increases societal maladjustment and undermines the foundations of society.

Consistent efforts are required to prove in practice that civil society is not merely an exotic flower not viable in the harsh social and political climate of Armenia.

Only the cooperation of all three sectors can make active citizen participation a reality, bring about consolidation of democracy and the use of the resources of civil society and the conducting of social reforms and of human-centered social policies. Thus, preconditions will be created for a transition to sustainable social development and for the rejection of borrowing unsustainable models of development (including consumption) and of social self-organization.

It is only civil society, particularly global civil society, that can put forth another model of globalization, which is an *alternative* to the

deregulated globalization that tyrannically tramples on the rights of Nation States and local communities and which is radically *restructuring* them.⁶² Therefore, instead of simply joining the swelling ranks of anti-globalists, third sector activists should espouse a more productive strategy; they should discard the imposed views and “negative” theoretical models of globalization and confront them with their own, positive model of globalization. The stress should be on “globalization from below”,⁶³ which is based on the power of solidarity and which mobilizes the potential of civil society. And here crucially important are the “new voices”⁶⁴ of the emerging transnational civil society, first of all of new civic movements, such as the women’s movement and environmental protection movement.

ENDNOTES

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- ³ D. Held, et al. *Global Transformations. Politics, Economics and Culture*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999, pp. 5-7.
- ⁴ A. Utkin contends that the very term “globalization” is but a metaphor (A. Utkin, *Globalizatsia: Protses I Osmislenie* (Globalization: process and its comprehension) Moscow: Logos, 2001, p. 9). A. Panarin, for example, holds the same view as regards technological and economic aspects of globalization (A. Panarin, *Iskushenie Globalizmom* (The enticement of globalism), Moscow: Russian National Fund, 2000, pp. 5-6). V. Inozemtsev urges researchers not to view globalization of a contemporary society as an incontestable fact (V. Inozemtsev, *Raskolotaia Tsvivilizatsia* (Split civilization), Internet version, Moscow, 2000, pp. 346-352).
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- ⁶ Quoted in Utkin, p. 9.
- ⁷ H.-P. Martin and H. Schumann, *Zapadnia Globalizatsii. Ataka Na Prosvetanie I Demokratiiu* (Globalization Trap. An attack on prosperity and democracy), Moscow: Alpina Publishers, 2001, p. 33.
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- ¹⁴ A. Zinoviev, *Globalnoe Sverkhobshestvo I Rosia* (Global super-society and Russia), Minsk, Harvest Publishers, 2000, pp. 68-69, 72, 74, 78; see also pp. 31-36, 28, etc.
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- ¹⁶ Z. Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*, Moscow: International Relations Publishers, 2004, pp. 188-189 (Russian-language edition).
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- ¹⁹ A. Sahakian, "To Chto Obediniaiet, To I Razvediniet: Obshechelovecheskoe I Natsionalnoe. Vzgliad Iznutri I Izvne" (What is uniting is at the same time disuniting: things common to all humanity and things specific to the nation. A look from the inside and from the outside) *Jenshini S Universitetskimi Obrazovaniem* (Women with University Education), Yerevan, March-June 2001. Negative attitude towards globalization is voiced also by Karineh Markarian (K. Markarian, "Globalizatsia – Za I Porotiv" (Globalization: pro et con") *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15.
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ԱՆՑՈՒՄԱՅԻՆ ՆՈՐԺՈՂՈՎՐԴԱՎԱՐՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՎԻՃԱՐԿՈՒՄԸ
ՀԱՄԱՇԽԱՐ ՀԱՅՆԱՑՄԱՆ ՏԵՍԱԴԱՇՏԷՆ
(Ամփոփում)

ՎԼԱԴԻՄԻՐ ՕՍԻՓՈՎ

Հեղինակը կ'անդրադառնայ համայնավարութենէն նորժողովրդավարութեան անցնող երկիրներու անցումային հանգրուանի դիմադրուած բազմապիսի մարտահրաւէրներուն: Ան կը ծանրանայ մանաւանդ՝ թէ ինչպէս կարելի է զոյատեւող, օրէնքի, արդիւնաւէտ եւ մրցունակ շուկայական տնտեսութեամբ եւ քաղաքացիական հասարակութեամբ երկիր-պետութիւն մը կայացնել: Հեղինակը կ'անդրադառնայ նաեւ նման երկրի մը կայացման մէջ արտաքին ազդակներուն, մանաւանդ՝ համաշխարհայնացման ազդեցութեան: Ըստ իրեն հարցը աւելի կը բարդանայ ի տես համաշխարհայնացման շուրջ միատարր տեսակէտի եւ մօտեցումի բացակայութեան, որ հետեւանք է անոր ծայրայեղ քաղաքականացման եւ գաղափարախօսականացման:

Հեղինակը այս ընդհանրական պատկերին կը ջանայ բաղդատել Հայաստանի իրականութիւնը, կ'անդրադառնայ համաշխարհայնացման խնդրով Հայաստանի դիմադրուած մարտահրաւէրներուն, կը նշէ առօրէական մշակոյթի արձանագրած յաջողութիւնները՝ ազգային մշակոյթներու հաշուին:

Հեղինակը սպառած կը նկատէ «անցումային շրջանի» տեսութիւնները առանց որ անոնք ակնկալուած արդիւնքները տուած ըլլան Հայաստանին: Ասոր պատճառը ան կը վերագրէ առանց քննադատական մօտեցումի նորազատական տեսութեան որդեգրումին: Ան կը մատնանշէ նաեւ, որ տնտեսական բարեփոխումներու ծրագիրը որդեգրուեցաւ հնազանդօրէն, այնպէս՝ ինչպէս ան հրամցուեցաւ Միջազգային Հիմնադրամին եւ Համաշխարհային Դրամատան կողմէ:

Ասոնց հետեւանքով, անցեալի բազում գաղափարախօսական ըմբռումներ ինչպէս եւ բազմաթիւ ընկերային, մշակութային եւ բարոյական արժէքներ թաղուեցան՝ առանց նորերու յառաջացման:

Ի յայտ եկան քաղաքական մասնակցութեան սնամէջ, մակերեսային ժողովրդավարական հաստատութիւններ, իշխանութիւնը մտաւ փակ շրջանակի մէջ: Հեղինակը հիւանդագին կը գտնէ այն երեւոյթը, որ Հայաստանի մէջ տնտեսական բարեկարգումները ո՛չ շուկայական ազատ տնտեսութիւն, ո՛չ համապատասխան քաղաքական մշակոյթ, ո՛չ ալ քաղաքացիական հասարակութիւն յառաջացուցին: Հուսկ, Հեղինակը կը բերէ 2003-2006 տարիներու հարցախոյզներու պատասխանները, որոնք կը հաւաստեն իր մտահոգութիւնները:

Հեղինակը այն կարծիքը կը յայտնէ, որ Մայիս 2007ի խորհրդարանական եւ 2008ի նախագահական ընտրութիւնները պիտի յտակացնեն հայ քաղաքական իտալի նախասիրութիւնները դէպի կայուն ժողովրդավարութիւն կամ՝ մենատիրութեան: