
“UNEQUAL DIFFERENTIATION”¹ IN ARMENIA: BETWEEN GLOBAL TRENDS AND REGIONAL OBSTACLES

ARTUR MKRTICHYAN

Global Trends

World society which is characterized as a guiding idea and macro-organization of the nowadays communication procedure² is still not fully acknowledged by the majority of population, since “the picture of the World society that is perceived by its members marked as a high degree of limited structure. This limitation of structure refers to unpredictability and when it gets its extreme form, it may result in chaos” in³.

Today the world is threatened by global catastrophes (Fukushima), environmental problems and possible world wars, as well as by tension of terrors and local conflicts. The circulation of regional conflicts take place under the impacts of global strengths. Periodical transmission of local and global tenses may bring negative outcomes to a global level. Regional ambiguity that turned into global, resulted in changes of direction and manifestation of the force-based world politics – which exactly that was proved by the latest events in Iraq, Libya and Syria.

At a current stage the unstable situation has global after-effects, and every local conflict puts the world system at a high risk. Within the continuous evolution of the worldwide global cooperation the way how regional entities succeed in their strategies become more and more dependent on the success of numerous external factors. Hence, newly formed culture was established which, by itself was the culture as a whole synchronized in time and not by partial localization. From now on this culture does not articulate such concepts as center and periphery⁴. The direction of the world system development identifies the increased degree of nonlinear self-organization. Differentiation is one of the ways this development is taking place. The diversity of differentiation hinders to the growth of entropy and to the maintenance of the order. But in globalizing the reality, people can have direct communications with each other without any need of taking into account spatial distance. Hence, our difficulties and problems directly or indirectly affect the world events.

Methodological schemes of observation

The world society integrates various local structures. Functional differences arise only under the circumstances of territorial restrictions, because com-

¹ I introduce the term “unequal differentiation” to designate an unequal rate and degree of differentiation across distinct functional spheres.

² **Stichweh, R.** Zur Theorie der Weltgesellschaft. Soziale Systeme. Zeitschrift für soziologische Theorie, 1995, Heft 1, s.43

³ **Heintz, P.** Die Weltgesellschaft im Spiegel von Ereignissen. Diessenhofen: Rüegger, 1982, s. 11.

⁴ **Wallerstein, I.** The Modern World-System. New York: Academic Press, 1974.

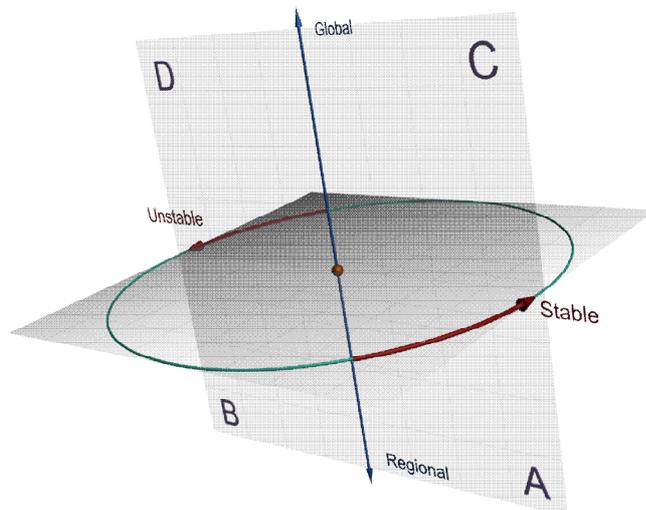
pletely independent functional subsystems of the world society might bring to a total loss of control. When local and global orders are under question, it leads to both latent and open conflicts and social transitions. Communication “as the unity of information, utterance, and understanding”⁵, creates a transformation of situations. The autopoietic communication exists along with spatial differentiation and destabilization of social structures. Therefore, the problem of social instability is one of the most actual issues in social sciences. The establishment and continuous development of the world society produce numerous new problems that should be solved both practically and theoretically. One of those problems which is theoretically referred as the structural instability is characterized by such terms as "entropy", "chaos", "risk", "random", "fluctuation", "bifurcation" and "unsystematic". When the small deviations which are localized are not compensated by opposite responses, they may be strengthened by the system and may define the further development of the world society. The transition of the world society into a new order in fact is a co-evolution of local and global structures, where regional conflicts are of great importance. Today structural complexity of world system chaos and instability can cause permanent risk. In order to observe the processes of regional differentiation within the global context of the world society, methodological schemes are required.

The following points can reveal the synthesis of problems of structural instability and regional differentiation:

- communicative connections may be oriented towards the global processes or regional circumstances,
- communicative connections appear in stable or unstable structures.

These two measurements create the following set of analytical situations presented in the scheme below (see Diagram 1.).

Diagram 1



⁵ Luhmann, N. Social Systems. Stanford, California; Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 147

As it can be observed there are four different optional combinations.

1) Situation AC – regionally and globally stable – this situation takes place in very limited functional and regional spheres.

2) Situation BC – regionally unstable and globally stable – this may refer, for instance, to the isolated areas of conflicts and wars under the condition of global peace.

3) Situation AD – regionally stable and globally unstable – this situation rarely appears in the globalization conditions, but still it has a great importance in some regions where traditional forms of life such as family are concerned.

4) Situation BD – regionally and globally unstable – this is the most typical situation for the world society, because today many functional, local and global connections are not stable.

Chaos brings to either latent or opened social instability. Latent instability means that the system can behave chaotically under certain conditions which become obvious. It occurs after the threads get communicated in case of their different meanings which are incompatible with the existing condition of social system.

Open instability takes place when the incompatibility of thematic meanings of communication causes destruction of the culturally fixed patterns of utterance.

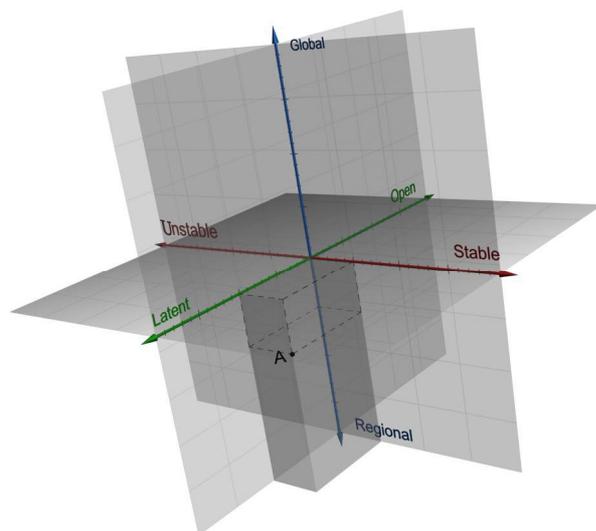
Regional functional differentiation can be observed using different methods. And if we deal with the open instability rather than with disorder, then it can be characterized as an order indicator. Generally, there are 16 situations that include all possible states of social order and social change that can be described. The system that observes different levels of society (from the regional society to the global society) can be in use today and in fact it is a type of communication that enables the transformation of the states into one another.

The situation BD mentioned above (regionally and globally unstable) can be described in the following combinations:

- regional latent vs. open unstable;
- global latent vs. open unstable.

There is a specific complementary relation between latent and open instability: when the integrated latent instability is weaker, the open instability is visible and strengthened (see Diagram 2.).

Diagram 2



The problem can be solved through the further heterogeneity of decision-making bodies, but it will lead to an increase process in a latent instability level. The set of decisions has its certain limits through respective selection of the articulation of communications; since the order is determined by them the possibilities are whether realized or not. But the reality makes changes and may lead to both stability and instability. The possibility of the loss under certain conditions, leads to stability of transitional states and obtains new versions of the order. It remains unpredictable, which version will be updated later, because all possibilities are equal and likely to take place within the chaotic state. These fluctuations may be randomly characterized and might be a source of innovation. This is applicable to both regional and global systems, although the latter have greater degree of inertia. Innovative signals over fluctuations are sent out from one level to other through feedback arrangement where the selection and the decision of the receiver ensure their continuous autopoiesis. The latter results from the constant interaction between chaos and order; the larger is structural part, the latent is instability, and the implementation of external and internal "disturbances" can take place more successfully, as well as the system will maintain its autopoiesis. And contrariwise, the more is latent stability, the more likely is the inability to eliminate open chaos which, in its turn, leads to disintegration of the structural contexts. Only unstable structures may reduce this chaos; and those elements that are chaotic in the system, may guarantee the functioning of the systemic order with a multiplicity of choices. But when the disturbance is above the critical level, they lose their reference state and reach new states, without affecting the completely lost systematic order. The only potential is that the latent and structural instabilities give the system ability to reorganize itself, develop and survive. From this respect, we can observe the principles of existence of social systems. The system can survive only under certain conditions, it is capable of losing its stability and can behave chaotically.

The autopoietic order appears as a match between the communication processes, which always provide system with innovative information and decision-making processes to handle and stabilize certain conditions through fluctuations.

European integration

The general and reciprocal foreignness that comes along with the functional differentiation of the World society was made invisible earlier by the self-descriptions of modern states as nations with common national interests determined by territory⁶. But while losing the previously established bonds between national-territorial states the basis of cultural identity is transformed and exerts a radical influence on the identity of states politics. Structural change in statehood, such as the process of European integration, makes a new point of reference since the concepts shaped by the nation-state do not have any symbolic binding forces. Now it is the World society rather than the nation-

⁶ **Hahn, A.** "Partizipative" Identitäten - Ausgrenzung aus systemtheoretischer Sicht. In: R. Eckert (Hg.), *Wiederkehr des "Volksgeistes"?: Ethnizität, Konflikt und politische Bewältigung*. Opladen: Leske+Budrich, 1998, s. 178.

states that plays the role of primary point of reference for the development of Europe as a “space of communication” spanning across nations. Within the context of European Union the centralization of organizational competences aims at the political and legal homogenization of large spaces. This corresponds to the policy of European expansion.

In order to compensate functional differences and “cure” contentious divergences of interest, European Union tries to come to terms with foreignness in Europe by establishing general rules of play in a broad cultural-political space that includes all of Europe (eastern expansion) as well as non-European states (“new neighbors”).

European integration is aimed at not only changing the procedures of political coordination and legislative practices, but also establishing a common European political culture. The European Union is somehow regarded as the creative director whose promulgated cultural concepts and paradigms are made available together with tangible offers. But since culture is bound up with a common language, the idea of a European culture seems hardly capable to be realized. In order to develop at least common language-games spanning the differentiated national linguistic forms, the possibility of a common civic culture has to be formulated in terms of a culture of institutions. Only by ongoing development and propaganda of the common culture of institutions the modern European states can function as a point of reference for social integration as they previously did.

“Neither war nor peace”

By using the examples of South Caucasus countries, one could illustrate which problems need to be addressed with regarding to the EU. “Neither war nor peace” situation is a sociological diagnosis of the regional situation in South Caucasus. Up to today, the wars in the region have not been over yet, though there has been a long lasting cease-fire. In such conditions, neither has the privatization of production sources led to the establishment of a free, competitive and antimonopoly regime, nor the institutionalization of a democratic form of government eliminated the authoritarian regime. Applying enforcement, brought from the battlefield in solving social problem, results the establishment of a state command system. Therefore, under the conditions of “neither war nor peace”, the mentality is linked with the elimination of instability which causes the formation of an authoritarian system and strengthening the myth of “a strong-arm authority”.

Republic of Armenia is characterized by a chaotic transformation; the various components of the functional sub-systems in Armenia are directed “outwards” and are not synchronized with each other at all in regards to the degree of their development. Hence, various factors hindering Armenia’s Europeanization have to be considered. The basis for the necessary changes in the institutional framing conditions of the state is still missing, and now days Republic of Armenia finds itself in a transformation marked by the lack of

system. This process results in non-synchronicity and deviation at the development level of various sub-systems.

The economy depends on an “input from outside” and as a result the major part of the industrial capacities is at a high risk. Many companies can only subsist because the taxes are not always paid. Thus, one part of the economic activity transforms into the underground (shadow) economy. Privatization seems to be incapable to establish local labor market, and the wage and salary rates are too low to stimulate work activity. External conditions have negative impact as well: the Karabakh conflict and the continual traffic blockade from Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Advanced science, previously oriented towards the Soviet Union’s “global” level of communication, has now ended up without support.

The legal sub-system “copies” Western legal norms without harmoniously integrating in Armenian legal reality. The sub-system of values and legal norms is affected by lack of system, and Armenian citizens often find themselves confronted with a chronic anomie.

Many Armenians are being included in a situation marked with uncertainty and they have a negative attitude or they are indifferent toward the norms and legal rules regulating public life. Disturbed stability of social positions and disintegration of the previous hierarchy led to structural uncertainty of the public system. The loss of collective solidarity and personal identification with the entire community directly brings to increased deviant behavior, which is more vividly reflected in the socio-economic sphere, where personal interest, universal privatization and market relations absolutely removed the old constraints. While the war and the immediate common threat united the nation, the relief of this threat resulted in the intensified social tension in the society. Increased invariant behavior considerably resulted in increased structural and normative uncertainty in the society which causes regular reproduction of anomie⁷. Conditions of anomie are regularly reproduced and include conflict between different personal definitions of communications’ context. Pursuing personal goals oftentimes means non-accomplishment of goals by others.

Strong emphasis on wealth became embedded in Post-Soviet social space. Wealth is considered as the main symbol of success but no significance is attached to the legitimate means of gaining it. This is not surprising because one of the principal guarantees of personal well being, that is the honest work, has been disgraced and decreased its value in our society. Obvious and latent unemployment is the most crucial issue of our life. Low income rates of the majority of population significantly decreases consumer demand thus impeding the establishment of a full-fledged internal market, which, in its turn, hinders the country’s capacities to provide effective production activities and establish new jobs. All of these results in a vicious circle.

⁷ “The structural improbability of full inclusion and “voluntarism” of the functional systems create a disjunction, which resembles anomie” (Stichweh, R. Inklusion und Exklusion in der Weltgesellschaft. – Am Beispiel der Schule und des Erziehungssystems. In: Intention und Funktion, Jens Aderhold / Olaf Kranz (Hg.), Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007, ss. 113-120).

Unequal differentiation

While innovative behavior becomes more and more widespread in Post-Soviet social space, the position of “unequal differentiation” is dominant as well. The lack of legitimate means for achieving goals is united with huge gap between the opportunities of different social groups which result the establishment of non-official structures and mafia clans - they pursue their goals by illegal means thus creating a big misbalance between the formal and shadow economy. The existing official institutions do not ensure that different social groups are given principally equal opportunities to achieve generally acknowledged goals with legal means. Consequently, unofficial groups aimed at attaining such goals bring to in the functional disruption of the social system. The innovative form of the adaptation materializes in the utilization of non-institutionalized forms of attaining wealth and power. It should be noted that the possibilities of such utilization is increasing in parallel with the increasing level of social hierarchy, and they essentially differ from each other by spheres of human activities. Hence, deviants are stubbornly aspiring to access public and state structures which provide such opportunities by all possible and impossible means. Consequently public life becomes more criminalized, the state officials artificially bureaucratize public administration system, instilling and enhancing the previous authoritarian-commanding style of totalitarian management, which impedes transformation of the Post-Soviet social space.

Economic turn down, unsolved war and political tension in the country, instability and threat to existence - these are factors creating massive frustration and disappointment and result in an illicit large-scale emigration. Mass emigration takes place with all the ensuing consequences that affect every sphere of public life. It is obvious that this process have negative impact on the resolution of transformation related issues; it causes disastrous changes within the social structure of the Post-Soviet space and shatters the basis of the economy and the scientific-productive potential of the country. Under the conditions of deep social crisis experienced by our society many of people consider emigration as the only option to get out. Unemployed professionals, public servants, teachers and engineers appeared on the verge of poverty. This is how a “brain-drain” occurs, when the country’s intellectual and scientific resources are poured out. The reputation of creative intellectual occupations is dropped; it does not provide any motivating and rank in labor market. All of these factors result in the loss of qualified specialists of our society; its scientific potential shrinks, the country gradually loses opportunities for scientific-technical progress and social development.

Nowadays Armenia has become a society of great tensions and serious social imbalances. The access to material and immaterial goods in Armenia is contradictory and depends on one’s status. Based on their prestige, people have a claim to certain goods (income, education, etc.) but cannot make good on this claim.⁸ New societal goals are adopted along with the market economy (mainly with financial success), but no adequate means for reaching these goals have

⁸ There is a lack of strong institutions, e.g. independent courts.

been presented *de facto* or legally institutionalized *de jure*.⁹ These tensions neutralize themselves due to the “formless” rules that the Armenians have developed over centuries of dealing with foreign rule. Traditional, culturally established mechanisms of familial affiliation and friendly loyalty are observed in place of the official game rules.

The current Armenian state is a tax state formed on the bases of Soviet system of command: “This system gave absolute priority to the administrative levers above the economic and political ones...”¹⁰. It is under the question if such a tax state that was primarily founded on administrative practices can effectively exercise administrative functions. The existence of authoritarian system in Armenia is also caused by the danger of the war restarting. Consequently, the core of Armenian “society” is a clan system, and there is a complex and intimate relation between the kinship system and more differentiated economic and political systems.

ԱՐԹՈՒՐ ՄԿՐՏԻՉՅԱՆ – «Անհավասար տարրամասնատումը» Հայաստանում. գլոբալ միտումների և տարածաշրջանային արգելքների միջև – Ժամանակակից գլոբալիզացիայի պայմաններում յուրաքանչյուր ոք կարող է հաղորդակցվել մյուսների հետ՝ անկախ հեռավորությունից: Գլոբալ հաղորդակցությունների և ցանցերի գործառնման շնորհիվ արդիական է դառնում այսպես կոչված «անդրազգային» տարածությունների երևույթը, որը ենթադրում է «մեր» և «նրանց» (կամ «ոչ մեր») միջև նոր բաժանարար գծերի առաջացում: Միջմշակութային սահմանների փոքրացման պատճառով տարբեր ազգային մշակույթներ կրողների միջև առկա հակասությունները դառնում են ավելի սուր: Միջմշակութային տարբերությունները և «օտարի» ընկալումները մեղմելու նպատակով Եվրոպական միությունը որդեգրել է մշակութային-քաղաքական տարածության կառավարման ինստիտուցիոնալացման լայն ռազմավարություն, որը ներառում է նաև Արևելյան գործընկերության պետությունները:

Սույն հոդվածում ներկայացված ուսումնասիրությունը ցույց է տալիս, որ փոխակերպվող սոցիալական տարածությունը Հայաստանում հիմնականում անորոշ է և միտված է դեպի անոմիա: Անոմիկ վիճակի հաղթահարումը պետք է կապել ոչ թե նախկին ամբողջատիրական համակարգին վերադառնալու և սոցիալական ճնշման ինստիտուտների վերականգնման, այլ հասարակության տարբեր շերտերի միջև միջանկյալ հաղորդակցական օղակների և ինստիտուտների արագ կառուցման հետ:

АРТУР МКРТИЧЯН – “Неравное различие” в Армении: между глобальными тенденциями и региональными преградами. – В эру глобализации каждый может общаться с другими безотносительно к пространственным измерениям. Глобальные сети и коммуникации создают новые “пост-

⁹ Under the condition of lack of these means, the comprehensive privatization of industry, agriculture, and housing is taking place without any value added.

¹⁰ **Korolev, S.** The administrative command system: the genesis and evolution. In: Quintessenz: the philosophical almanac. W. Mudragej / W. Usanov (Hg.), Moscow: Politizdat, 1990, p. 122 (in Russian)

национальные” и “транснациональные” социальные пространства, в которых возникают новые границы между понятиями “мы” и “они” (“не-мы”), причём в подобных условиях вероятно ещё более острое и конфликтное восприятие “других” в качестве “чужих”.

В целях компенсации подобных дисфункций, возникающих при столкновении культур, Европейский Союз реализует программу создания институциональной культуры на широком пространстве, включающем страны Восточного партнёрства.

В статье анализируется современное переходное состояние социальной жизни в Армении, которое характеризуется неопределённостью и аномичностью. Путём преодоления аномии в армянском обществе следует считать не возврат к тоталитарным институтам и механизмам социальных репрессий, а ускоренное развитие институциональных механизмов коммуникации между различными слоями общества.