

Globalization and Armenian Identity. Challenges and Integration (Armenia and Artsakh)

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Abstract

In the present paper an effort is made to analyze the deep roots of the concerns and the past-oriented conservative Armenian attitude towards the spread of globalization. Every aspect of human life is being radically transformed due to global changes. It also helps to spread European and American values, create new values. Among the most significant changes observed as a result of globalization are said to be religious and linguo-cultural identity issues. The study of the mentioned issues is vital in an Armenian context since the people of Armenia and Artsakh, during the past 30 years of independence, have been living in an environment of undeclared war with authoritarian aggressive Azerbaijan.

Key words: *globalization, Armenian (Artsakh) Identity, linguo-culture, patriotism.*

Introduction

'Globalization', led by the motto "*Act locally, think globally*", was derived from the term 'global village' suggested by Marshal McLuhan (1962: 31). Globalization has radically transformed the world in every aspect. But it has especially transformed the world economy which has become increasingly interconnected and interdependent. But it also made the world economy increasingly competitive and more knowledge-based. As the studies show, globalization and education then come to affect one another through mutual goals of preparing young people for successful futures during which their nations will grow increasingly connected. Education is the basis of global

stability, it helps to develop multicultural awareness from an early age, to think independently, to exercise appropriate judgment, to collaborate with others and to arrive at well-balanced conclusions. Globalization produces an increased quantity of scientifically and technically trained persons. Using advanced information and communication technologies, a new system of knowledge, education and learning is developed to aid the teacher and the student in breaking boundaries of space and time. It also helps to spread European and American values, create new values. Some people regard globalization as a fruitful phenomenon, making the world more connected and informed than ever before. They see various advantages of globalization and perceive it as a novel source for rapid development and optimism in the world.

On the other hand, another group of people believe that globalization is a dangerous phenomenon which has changed the world in negative ways. They think globalization has brought undesirable consequences to society, affecting its peace.

Although economy, business, politics and education are seen as the primary engines driving globalization, it would be a mistake to conclude that the implications of globalization will be limited primarily to the commercial and political arena. The most significant impact of globalization is said to be observed on national, religious, linguistic and cultural identity and patriotism.

Our task is to establish the impact of globalization and the directions of its development in independent Armenia and Artsakh, its positive and negative consequences on Armenian national values and identity.

Specificity of Globalization in the Armenian Context

Globalization entered Armenia when the Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliev, whose desire was to return the lands of former Nagorno-Karabagh without ethnic Armenians, declared that Yerevan belongs to Azerbaijan as well, still wishing to negotiate only with Armenia, thus violating the right of self-determination of Artsakh. History repeats itself as the genocidal policy of the Azerbaijani government and the undeclared war show. Ethnic Armenians of Artsakh faced and still face the same atmosphere of Armenophobia, hatred,

atrocities. Democracy was halted, although Armenians would never surrender to Azerbaijan whose heroes have always been praised for killings and cutting heads. Since butchering humans was adopted by Azerbaijan as a shared attitude, value, goal, and practice, the policy handled to solve all kinds of national, industrial, business and other kinds of problems, should be definitely perceived as national culture (Dadrian 1995:123). Azerbaijan's political system is not fit even for Muslims and Jews to live there. The cognitive unit *Armenofobia* characterizes the political bias of Azerbaijan and is fixed in the official report of Artsakh ombudsman of 25.09.2018. Armenofobia does not justify 'demographic engineering' which is a euphemism for the violation of human rights, mass killings, genocide which has been discussed a lot. American politicians and public figures who regularly visit Artsakh know that *peace* and *democracy* are the key concepts to define the unrecognized state of Artsakh which is still in isolation.

To understand the correlation of globalization and identity, we would pass on to the discussion of the concepts *nation* and *ethnicity* defined by Anthony Smith, a British historical sociologist, the first president of the Association for the study of Ethnicity and Nationalism. He defines a *nation* as "a population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for its members". Smith defines *ethnicity* as follows: "units of population with common ancestry, myths and historical memories, elements of shared culture, some link with a historic territory and some measure of solidarity, at least among their elites" (Smith 1995:57).

So, ethnic Armenians living in Armenia and self-determined Artsakh share the same identity and culture although appeared to be separated by almost half a century.

Globalization and Global Issues

The spread of globalization on the global territory is accompanied by the spread of Global English, advanced technologies, the Internet, global culture, values, media, psychology, mentality to enhance cooperation in global education,

banking, economy, business from one political power or source. Globalization can be viewed as a vital step towards both a more stable world and better lives for people in it. The forces of globalization impact the youth, families, and cultural systems worldwide. All social systems are, as some third world investigators mention, “contaminated by the need to borrow values, morals, skills, and competencies from the next regions or nations. “However, according to third world country investigators human lives are increasingly being challenged and integrated into larger global networks of relationships (Narh & Oppong 2011).

The process of globalization and its attendant consequences may lead to the transformation of the notion of cultural identity. It will lead to a breakdown in social interaction within a local context, it will have a significant impact on the sense of cultural identity and belongingness. This is because globalization is speeding up social and cultural processes so that time and space are no longer constrain on human activities. Most people in the world now develop a bicultural identity, in which part of their identity is rooted in their local culture while another part stems from an awareness of their relation to the global culture. Furthermore, there is pervasiveness of identity confusion as local cultures change in response to globalization. In African countries with weak identity features some young people can even find themselves at home in neither the local culture nor the global culture (Narh & Oppong 2011). Anyhow, this type of negative influences, we do hope, will not be observed in Armenian reality because Armenian people, Artsakh including, as history shows, have strong identity features, deeply rooted feeling of belongingness to a nation whose mission from ancient times has been enriching the world treasury of arts and scientific inventions.

Armenians as one of the two earliest nations with a specific mission are mentioned by Albert Pike, an American author, poet, orator, jurist and the founder of the Scottish Freemasonry, who writes in his book *Morals and Dogma* that the two nations - the Cretans and the Armenians were known to be the first to have the gods. The mention of the fact already speaks about their ancient culture, and Pike’s specific respect:

The ancient astrologers divided the twelve signs of the Zodiac into six male and six female, and assigned them to six male and six female Gods. Heaven and Earth, or Ouranos and Ghe, were among the most ancient nations, the first and most ancient Divinities. We find them in the Phoenician history of Sanchoniathon, and in the Grecian Genealogy of the Gods given by Hesiod. Everywhere they marry, and by their union produce the later Gods. "In the beginning." says Apollodorus, "Ouranos or the Heavens was Lord of all the Universe: he took to wife Ghe or the earth, and had by her many children." They were the first Gods of the Cretans, and under other names, of the Armenians, as we learn from Berosus, and of Panchaia, an island South of Arabia, as we learn from Euhemerus (Pike 1871:391).

Our investigation shows that in the era of globalization changes of form and content of national identity and linguo-culture cannot be negatively charged unless the nation shows low national awareness and feeling of belonging. *The* engulfing hands of globalization reach language and communication since globalization offers stable and unlimited opportunities to the youth.

As far as American and European values, gender identity are concerned, they have become part of Armenian public discourse today. Many peoples of the world have become bicultural and have obtained a new European identity which is highlighted within the context of international communication while cooperating in various fields, attending conferences, political and business meetings, international exhibitions...

In contrast to the third world researchers' standpoint, as we can learn from Scottish media and other national publications, the Scottish are quite proud of their three outstanding identities: Scottish, English, European all together determining their wish not to encourage BREXIT. And armed with all these three identities they struggle for a referendum. So, Scotland has already been member of the global village, and the Scottishness has not been swept away because of the strong national identity.

Global identity in this respect will add to the national identity and give a kind of security and freedom of creation to Armenians.

International examinations like TOEFL, IELTS, C1 C2 and many others open the doors of world famous universities where young people of Armenia hurry in search of prestigious education which will later pay off. The Armenian youth, who are actually at least bilingual and trilingual, are persistent in reaching their goals hoping to find well-paid jobs if not in Armenia, then somewhere else. Studying and knowing languages, particularly English, provides young people with tools which will help them to advance in science, technologies, business, healthcare, military sphere, politics because integrity and cooperation are the main issues today. To get the desirable education and later the job of one's dream are the challenges that motivate every Armenian student.

The process of integration to the global village may have its local specific biases within the Armenian context. Various age groups may interpret global values a bit differently since living in a country with 96 percent of ethnic Armenians changes the situation. As has already been mentioned, ethnic identity is maintained in the global village, while national identity begins to fade because global cosmopolitan identity takes the upper hand. Armenians are past-oriented people and they do wish to promote the integration into the global world, but the image of West Armenia will always haunt them and Armenian national values will not fade. Due to historically bound circumstances for decades Artsakh used another global language - the Russian one, but no one can declare today that the limited chances when the Azerbaijani government carried out its policy of Armenophobia, Artsakh did not change its national values, culture and language, traditions and religion. Learning global languages, having the best possible global education and research opportunities will affect the Armenian language skills because young people will not have the time to use it as often as the global language of their education, but they will never cease considering the Armenian language to be the most valued one. Armenians will overcome this challenge since they do have specific love for languages and sciences in general if they stay in prospering Armenia. It is not a secret that Armenians have always been remarkable with their abilities and desire for gaining knowledge, learning and

teaching languages, inventing engineering equipment for easing human life. So, globalization presents a very good chance for Armenian youth to fulfill the cherished desire of Armenian parents to see their children with the best possible education. The second best chance for Armenian youth is that they are supposed to come back to Armenia and use their skills and knowledge to the benefit of Armenia. Better life, due to globalization, may give Armenians a new opportunity to have more than three children. Armenians everywhere stick to their national customs, family traditions, use Armenian as their mother tongue. As the reality shows, today there are many mixed marriages with other races, nationalities and even religious groups. Marriage and family values have changed since people have become more practical and want to live a better life. Armenian students successfully participate in various educational programs. Obtaining their degrees they return, find better jobs but this is not the end. The second part of their tasks - spreading global values - begins. Among these values, the new family model parent1 and parent 2 and transgender values in the context of human rights have appeared as today's discourse; Armenian cuisine is not preferable any more because the youth prefer now to eat fast food in cafes; they are free to make their choice of a girlfriend and boyfriend; they do not want to live with their parent's family since they earn money and are more independent. But for all the existing problems one major challenge is that Armenians still have to learn their human rights properly. This is an urgent problem. A lot of misfortunes can be avoided if people begin to pursue their rights. Developing a new cultural global identity does not mean to forget about modesty and family obligations. In one word, now young people educated abroad share the global language, behavior, values, culture, have managed to develop TOLERANCE towards others, but whatever happens tolerance does not mean forgetting about the 1915 Genocide of Armenians, Baku, Gandzak, Sumgait, Getashen, Maragha massacres which actually are the continuation of the 1915 Armenian Genocide (Lapshin 2019). What is important, in all the cases mentioned above Armenians were annihilated on the land of their ancestors.

Whatever education Armenians get, they are also generally expected to care for their parents in old age, and to show a high level of respect to them. The African global model will not be a challenge to Armenians who succeed in the fast-paced world of high technology, who become bicultural but do not betray their identity rooted in Armenian traditions. Anyhow, the less practical identity will fade within the course of time.

Religious identity which is part of the cultural one takes rather a long time to undergo changes or transformation, and actually the person never forgets about it. The collective memory does not permit to. Circumstances permitting, the person will openly show to be the carrier of the long-forgotten religious culture of their ancestors. Christian Armenians lived with Muslims in Artsakh for rather a long time and never changed their beliefs. In the former USSR people did not go to church, but, still, did not alter their beliefs.

Participation in various exchange and educational programs successfully helps to overcome the culture shock and adopt global values. These people easily find well-paid jobs, devote themselves totally to the new environment and become willing to rise to the challenges. Armenians, as history confirms, are very capable and easily find the ways needed for blossoming. Globalization is one. It promotes common values and experiences encouraging the identification with the global community. People may adapt to cosmopolitanism and view themselves as global beings, or world citizens. Some third world researchers say that world citizens affected by their new global identity do not experience the feeling of patriotism which suggests that the increase of globalization is associated with less loyalty and less willingness to fight for one's own country (Croucher 2004), although this is not a common phenomenon. They say patriotism manifests itself when one nation exhibits preferences for local goods that are of equal quality to the imports because buying them assists the nation's economy and domestic employment. Observations establish that within the context of globalization the weak cultures are no longer very distinctive, and are losing their value to unite.

Still another challenging survey concerning patriotism indicates that globalization reduces people's identification with their nation, others have

reached the opposite conclusion. The relationship between globalization and national identity, as Ariely Gal defines, is puzzling. Using various data concerning migration, cultural and national identity, social behavior and attitudes, Ariely Gal analyses these relations across sixty-three countries. Employing a multilevel approach, the investigation focuses on how a country's level of globalization is related to its public perceptions towards different dimensions of national identity. The results suggest that a country's level of globalization is not related to national identification or nationalism but it is related negatively to patriotism, the willingness to fight for the country and ethnic conceptions of membership in the nation (Ariely 2012:461-482).

The third world investigators think that the notion of patriotism changes because becoming a member of the global village, as they think, people care less about their local identity. We do not think that the foreign researchers' findings can and should always have the same interpretation in all national contexts since national identities and their strength differ. Although the notion of patriotism may be transformed from generation to generation, no Armenian will ever think about being less patriotic, or forget about their responsibilities concerning joining the army to defend the borders of Armenia and Artsakh. In reality, even if some avoid their responsibility to serve in the national army, still others come to Armenia from the Diaspora and do their job with emphasized national dignity and pride. An examination of alternative explanations indicates that globalization does not have a distinct negative impact on national identity if it is not on the verge of extinction. Anyhow, history shows that the social-political changes in Armenia and Artsakh never affected the Armenian soldier on the front-line. The reality is that Armenian military forces due to the global changes and advanced technologies are becoming even stronger today gaining much more respect from the nation.

We can conclude that national and local issues greatly matter and weak identities and languages will be lost in the ocean of the global consciousness of the world viewed as a single place, while the strong ones will maintain and become carriers of several identities, cultures and values, although for maintaining stability much work and effort is needed. We have attempted to

present the set of components that make the notion of identity in general and national identity in particular. Among the components we can mention national demeanor, mentality, psychology, education, lifestyle, values, heroes, culture, symbols, clothes and jewelry with national ornaments, music, sports and games, cuisine, army, ethnic identity, linguistic identity. Armenian identity is closely connected with Armenian churches and cross stones. Language does not only express identities but also constructs them. There is the opinion that bilingualism and in some cases multilingualism can both promote socio-economic opportunity and combat culture death and marginalization (Evans 2014).

Conclusion

Language and identity are so closely interwoven, that words themselves are inscribed with ideological meanings. Words and language constitute meanings within discourses, discourses and identities vary in power. The powerful ones reproduce more powerful meanings, colonize other discourses and marginalize or silence the least powerful languages and cultures. Language and culture death occur in extreme cases of marginalization. Linguistic identity is very powerful because it serves as a basis for cultural identity and national values. To succeed in the era of globalization global citizens should know their human rights and how to handle these rights, to maintain the national collective memory and to smoothly add new identities to the Armenian one, since patriotism will be gone with the loss of the national identity and the feeling of belonging.

Armenians, having survived the Babylonians, have much more chances to succeed in all the spheres than any other nation. We need to make a better use of this integration.

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**Համահարթեցումը և հայ ինքնությունը.
մարտահրավերներ և ինտեգրում (Հայաստան և Արցախ)**

Չողվածում քննարկվում են համահարթեցման դրական և բացասական ազդեցությունների մասնավոր դրսևորումները Հայաստան-Արցախ տիրույթում: Քննարկումները բերում են այն համոզման, որ ուժեղ ազգային հոգեկերտվածք և ինքնություն ունեցող ազգերը համահարթեցմանը արձագանքում են այլ կերպ քան թույլ արտահայտված ազգային ինքնությունները:

Սովետական շրջանի օրինակով կարելի է մեկնաբանել, որ նախկին ռուսական և ադրբեջանական ինքնությունները հայ ինքնության վրա ամենևին չեն ազդել այնպես, որ հայը մոռանա իր մայրենին, կամ նրա մոտ թուլանան հայրենասիրական մղումները, փոխվեն կրոնական հավատալիքները: Ավելին, համահարթեցումը հայ ինքնության համար ստեղծում է նպաստավոր պայմաններ՝ կրթական հնարավորությունների բարելավման, բարձր վարձատրվող աշխատանքի համար, իսկ կենսամակարդակի բարձրացումը ընձեռում է բազմազավակ ընտանիքի հնարավորություն: Համահարթեցումը նպաստում է նաև աննախադեպ բարեփոխումների բանակաշինության բնագավառում: Կարևորվում են մարդու իրավունքների քաջ գիտակցումը, համաշխարհային գործընթացներին ինտեգրումը, կոլեկտիվ հիշողության պահպանումը, մայրենի լեզվի ու ազգային արժեքների նկատմամբ յուրահատուկ մոտեցումը՝ նոր գլոբալ ինքնության և արժեքների որդեգրման համատեքստում:

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