

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

**THE ROLE OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
DEMOCRATIC REFORMS IN ARMENIA**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	5
Introduction.....	6
Literature Review.....	11
Research Questions.....	27
Methodology.....	28
Part I. The Phenomenon and Structure of Political Ideology.....	29
The Functions of Political Ideology.....	37
Part II. The Characteristics of Liberalism in Armenia in the Transition Period.....	42
The Role of Conservative Ideology in Democratization of Post-Soviet Armenia.....	51
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	59
References.....	62

Abstract

The purpose of this Master's Essay is to study the ideological contradictions that exist in the transition of Armenian society, and their impact on the democratization processes in Armenia. This essay observes the phenomenon and functions of ideology in general, and analyzes the characteristics and major features of liberal and conservative ideology in the transition period, as well as their impact on the process of transformation of Armenian society after the collapse of the USSR.

The results of this research have scientific, theoretical and practical importance. The main conclusions of this essay make a definite contribution to the study of the formation of modern Armenian political and ideological space, as well as determine the role of political ideology in shaping the features of Armenian society in transition.

Introduction

The status and value of ideology is subject to various changes in the history of contemporary world. This situation is created because of range of factors. A difficult path was passed from totally ideologized public life, monopolization and dogmatization of one theory (for example, socialism) to its full denial, which brought to ideological chaos of the early 1990s. Meanwhile ideology is an integral part of political life of any society. It provides the mass consciousness with the necessary understanding of the current social processes; it provides the socio-political activities with such qualities as the desirability and value certainty.

The decisive rejection of the communist model of the former Soviet Union was followed by attempts to implement free market and liberal democratic reforms. Actually it meant the following: try to impart on the local ground Western institutions and values, without taking into account the specificity of certain society in transition. These processes eventually led to the crisis in these countries, including Armenia. Thick layer of socio-economic and socio-political problems, the issue of preservation of national and cultural identity, the dissociation of a single spiritual space, a gradual loss of historical memory and sense of historical perspective - these are just some of the dangerous symptoms in the systematic development of many transitional societies.

Armenia, like many post-Soviet countries, has yet to define the objectives and ways of its historical development. It faces the task of thinking about its place and importance in the modern world. All these issues require deep and timely responses nowadays. Obviously, the development of these responses is extremely difficult in the context of mass disorientation, long-term lack of stable socio-political consensus.

Today more and more distinctly the need to find an ideological platform for the strategy and tactics of the Armenian modernization can be observed. At the beginning of the new millennium

society felt the need for an evidence-based, integrative, creative ideological paradigm that takes into account international practice that could be adapted to the Armenian realities. Armenian society needs to develop a political strategy that takes into account the peculiarities of the process of modernization and development of the modern Armenian society in transition. It should have the necessary capacity to project the democratic principles created by mankind to the peculiarities of national political life and culture, and define form of political existence of the state and society and entire Armenian nation. In terms of society in transition there is a need for political analysis of the process of formulating ideological determinants of social and political reforms, ensuring their compliance with global and national trends.

An uncertainty in the field of spiritual and moral relations originates in society. This problem requires an immediate search of complex ideas, providing a certain bias in the outlook of people towards national values. Currently the following ideas are actualized in the Armenian society: the idea of maximum account of identity of the Armenian people, the idea of measure, the “golden mean” idea, and the priority of moral, legal and ethical constants of public life.

Special significance in Armenia today is acquired by conservative ideology defined by the idea of nation, religion, strong state and social order, strong family, stability, rule of law while guaranteeing human rights and freedoms. In this regard, there is a need for a thorough and comprehensive investigation of the essence, and the specifics of historical significance of conservative ideology, which for a long time resides on the periphery of the interests of the Armenian political science.

Liberalism itself, as conservatism, cannot act as a universal “panacea” to solve all the problems that the contemporary transitional society is facing. A special kind of ideology should be developed, which would most effectively reflect the balance between the traditions, values and ideals of social groups and all the layers of society. Researchers will have to identify the ideological

settings that to the maximum extent take into the account mood in Armenian society, correspond to the wishes and aspirations of the Armenian people, and allow not only efficiently maintain existing social relations, but also to make their permanent upgrades, to give them civilized and organic character, and to promote national consolidation and social stability.

After the collapse of socialist system, in many states that have chosen the path of democratization of public life an upsurge of nationalism was observed. In Armenia a manifestation of nationalism even preceded the process of democratization. The dominant idea here was the idea of the creation of the state as well as a new national ideology, focused on protecting the fundamental interests of the entire Armenian community. Also there were debates over the definition of basic functions of this new ideology. However, there is no clear understanding of this phenomenon in the scientific literature until now. Sometimes it is identified with nationalism or nationalistic manifestations. Many researchers even try to circumvent this problem, because in some cases its consideration contains political overtones and cannot represent scientific value.

Ideology is a multilevel and multidimensional phenomenon. Its various aspects have been developed in the framework of epistemology, social theory, sociology of knowledge, as well as in the contest of political movements' research and the history of social thought. Depending on the chosen angle different facets of ideological phenomenon were revealed. Hence the contradictory interpretations can be detected in the works of both past and present research. This problem will be studied later more detailed in the chapter called "The Phenomenon, Structure and Functions of Political Ideology".

It should be noted that the problems of interaction of ideology with different forms of social consciousness are insufficiently elaborated in the scientific literature. In terms of the lack of general works on the current topic the researchers have to compare the existing meager statements of various authors who covered topics close to this one. Nevertheless, a lot of valuable information can

be found in the writings of such scholars as Emmet Kennedy, Paul Walton, Yogendra Singh, Richard Nordahl, Michael Moriarty, Philip Converse, John B. Thompson and many others, who along with other problems discussed questions about the place of ideology in the public consciousness. In addition, that there is a range of interesting works of Armenian and Russian researchers affecting this problem.

In general, the scientific work of both Armenian and Russian research of the post-Soviet period more or less intensified in the direction of studying the ideological phenomenon. The rejection in the priority of a Marxist-Leninist methodological principle in evaluating political phenomena allowed to look at ideology from different perspectives and to identify its multifaceted nature. There is a large group which consists of representatives of the Russian scientific thought that are closer to the Armenian research of similar problems inherent to Russian society as well as to many post-Soviet countries. To better understand, then, the Russian experience should be studied carefully.

It should be noted that there was a special scientific interest in Russia in the ideology of conservatism in this period. (Denikin 2000; Shestakov 2003; Lebedev 2004) This is largely due to the request in a society, especially in the ruling circles, to install these ideological currents. However, the conservative theory in its “pure” form could not take root in public life (a similar situation exists in modern Armenia), especially due to the fact that in the 1990s Russian society widely stepped into the market economy and deeply moved in the direction of liberalization of the political life of the country. Many liberal principles that have proved their viability not only in developed countries but also in many former Soviet republics demanded the deepening of democratization processes. During this period, particularly among the young Russian researchers, arose a desire to study the conservative-liberal ideological synthesis, practical application of which

allowed protecting the public from the negative consequences of the policy of “shock therapy”. (Ivancova 2004; Berdin 2004; Tronina 2004)

Taking into the consideration the extent to which this problem was elaborated in the current scientific literature and summing up the above one can conclude that the ideological basis of the socio-political transformations in transitional societies has not been yet considered by political science researchers as a subject of a separate study. However, the mentioned studies also indicate the presence of a scientific, practical and forward-looking basis which helps to conclude that the study of ideological discourse in Armenia, as well as the study of ideological orientation of democratic transformation allows solving an important scientific problem. This has great social significance for Armenian society.

This Master’s Essay consists of an Introduction, Methodology, Literature Review, Part I and Part II, Conclusions and Recommendations. The Literature Review will give an insight to the topic; there will be a general overview and discussion of a large scope of literature relevant to the topic of the research. The primarily literature review provides the necessary ground for developing the hypothesis and the research questions of this project.

In Part I key concepts are presented for analysis of the phenomenon, structure and functions of political ideology and its impact on the process of development of any society. This part provides the author with necessary observations concerning the ideological processes the Armenian nation passed and continue to pass through. In addition it helps to create the essential theoretical framework, which will be appropriate for studying the Armenian reality in order to understand the whole range of the ideological dimensions and transformations in the Armenian transitional society.

Part II studies separately the features of Liberalism in Armenia in the transition period and the role of Conservative ideology in the democratization processes of Post-Soviet Armenia. It observes the problem of ideological discourse in the transition societies, discusses the difficulties in

implementing the democratic reforms, identifies the major contradictions that exist on the level of political ideology in the Armenian society in transition, as well as the distinctive characteristics of the Armenian mentality. These are generated on the peculiarities of history, traditions, religion, and beliefs. This Part discusses the appropriate ideological systems for implementing democratic reforms in Armenia.

Conclusions will be drawn by summing up the main ideas of this Master's Essay and some recommendations will be given on how to continue with further study of ideological discourse in Armenian society.

Literature Review

In general, the study of ideology had been hitherto distinguished by a variety of methods. It is explained by the complexity of the object being studied and by the fact that the researchers considered this phenomenon from different levels and sides.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and formation of the CIS in 1991 should have largely contributed to the coordinated search by many post-Soviet countries of the political strategy that would have projected a developed democratic principles of humanity to the peculiarities of national political life and culture of each nation and would determine the form of political existence of states and societies. Status and importance of ideology in the post-Soviet space is subjected to various changes. A difficult path was passed from total indoctrination of public life, monopoly and dogmatization of "one true theory" to its complete denial and ideological chaos of the early 90-ies of

XX century (Melkonyan 2007). Meanwhile ideology is an integral part of the political life of society. It brings to the mass consciousness its interpretation of the ongoing social processes, gives to the socio-political activities such qualities as the desirability and certainty of value (Girts 1998).

Each historical period is allocated by predominance of one or another ideological system - ideological paradigm that defines the logic flow of the socio-political processes. (Tumanyan 2009) Nowadays many countries still face a challenge to connect to the mainstream of human progress - to enter into the era of post-industrialism. To understand how and with the help of which forces it can be done, we should understand the development of the world as a whole, and the countries' place in the global evolution process (Beck 2001). To get closer to the study of those processes this essay let's first focus on the conception of Modernity. To understand the whole sense of these notions I will introduce a brief history of the concepts' emergence.

Modernity in a broad sense is the name of a historical epoch and world culture. Modernization theory is one of the directions of theories of social and historical development. Modernization is a process of social change towards those types of social, economic and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America from XVI-XVII centuries to the 70th of the XX century and then spread throughout the world. Thus, modernization means a transition from a traditional society to a modern society, from agricultural to industrial (Elsenstadt, 2001). The definition implies that modernization is a process of transformation of all aspects of life. According to political scientists in specific areas of public life modernization means the following tasks:

- 1) **In the economic sphere** - means using technology based on scientific knowledge; industrialization, the development of market, the existence of incentives for creation and innovation. An important feature of economic modernization is the tendency to equalize

incomes among the economic sectors, regions and socio-professional groups (Escobar, 2005).

- 2) **In the social sphere** - specialization of people, public and state institutions by particular activity. This specialization is less influenced by gender, age, social background and more depends on personal qualities of individual, his/her qualification and education;
- 3) **In the political sphere** – the creation of national or federal states, separation of powers, the ability of the state to adapt to the structural changes in the economy, politics and in the social sphere, while maintaining the stability of society; establishment of political democracy;
- 4) **In the field of culture** - literacy, secularization of education, variety of schools and trends in philosophy and science, denominational pluralism, the rationalization of consciousness, spreading of individualism values (Venn, 2006).

The modernization process of western civilization started with the distribution of modernizing ideas, with changes in the public consciousness. The destruction of the old medieval system and creation of a new system of values in the end of the XV-XVI centuries is connected to the major historical events such as the Great Geographical Discoveries, the Renaissance and the Reformation. The great geographical discoveries contributed to the development of science, the formation of a holistic understanding of the world. Culture of the Renaissance turned to the ancient heritage by revived it in philosophy, literature and art. The Reformation continued the process of formation of a new view on the human being. Figures of the Reformation (Luther, Calvin) denied the church's role as a mediator between God and man and strengthened the modernizing ideas. Puritan ethic legitimated business activities and thus contributed to the emergence of capitalism (Brennan, 2004).

The modernization ideas were developed further in the views of leaders of the Enlightenment in the XVII-XVIII centuries. The Enlightenment (in England - John Locke, France -

Denis Diderot, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Voltaire) had to do with the humanistic ideals of the Renaissance. But the enlightenment critique of feudalism was deeper and affected the whole structure of the society and the state. The Enlightenment thinkers started from the theory of natural law, which stated that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator from birth by natural and inalienable rights: the right to life, liberty and property. On the basis of this doctrine, a theory of *the social contract* was developed. According to this theory the State is not a divine institution, but the institution resulting from the agreement concluded between people. This theory gave the people the right to deny the sovereign power of the government which did not protect the natural rights of the citizens (McClelland, 2004).

Changes in public opinion in the 19th century associated with the names of Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, and in the area of culture - with the names of C. Baudelaire and the Impressionists. The leitmotif of this era: a man is a God, that is, elevation, the equality to God of any person from ordinary mortals. So, if a person is a God, he may rationally rebuild the world and human life. And it is not surprisingly, that in the 19th century, the idea of natural rights is superseded by the idea of social rights, social equality, and social justice (Carroll, 2012).

All these ideas of modernization are called “Modernity”. Thus, “Modernity” is the commitment to the European rationalism, the desire to increase material wealth, individualism, the idea of social equality and personal freedom; it is the desire to technical progress, man’s readiness to constant changes in production, way of life and consumption, in the law and moral values; it is a man’s desire to be the initiator of such changes (Elsenstadt, 2001).

Nowadays the modernization processes are typical for countries which are in *the transition period*. There is a special group of papers devoted to the problems of ideological discourse in transitional societies. In this respect should be specified the writings of Samuel Huntington, who tried to determine the status of public relations in the transit countries, and to analyze the

ideological and psychological bases of transformations in these societies. (Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* 1996) (Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. 2003) (Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* 2004) The same objectives were set by Murray Rothbard and Friedrich August von Hayek. However, they approached to the democratic transformations from the positions of liberalism and tried to give them a philosophical assessment.

On the contrary, N. Berdyaev gives the philosophical justification of approval of conservative principles in society. (Berdyaev 2006) At the same time another philosopher Gunter Rohrmoser points out the importance of revival of classical liberalism in its interaction with the indispensable democratic conservatism. Also he speaks about the dangers of unilateral liberalism, which claims the solution to all problems. (G. Rohrmoser 1996) In terms of socio-philosophical generalization of transition period transformations' can be distinguished the works of the Armenian philosopher E. Harutyunyan. The author not only tried to identify the logic of transformational activity, but also noted the specifics inherent to modern Armenian society. Harutyunyan also studied the processes in a transition society in terms of dilemmas that exist in Civil Society. (Harutyunyan, *Society in Transition as a Part of Transformation Process* 2000) (Harutyunyan, *Dilemmas in Civil Society Development During the Transition Period* 2003)

Another Armenian philosopher Herbert Soghomonyan studied socio-cultural aspects of transformation processes; he also highlighted its characteristics and differences. (Soghomonyan 2005) The work of another Armenian researcher, T. Torosian, was dedicated to analysis of the political concepts of post-Soviet transformations, where the author pays particular attention to the theoretical and practical problems of modernization of the Armenian society. (Torosyan 2006) Of great importance for the researchers of Armenian society in transition are the works of sociologist G. Poghosyan, dedicated to the sociological analysis of social transformations. (G. A. Poghosyan,

Armenian Society in Transition 2003) (G. A. Poghosyan, Transforming of Current Armenian Society. Armenian Society in Transition 2009)

However, it should be noted that in general works regarding the ideological basis of socio-political transformations in transitional societies are virtually absent. The existing literature is dedicated only to individual ideological systems, providing the deployment of transformations. The approaches of authors are mostly one-sided. (Dahrendorf, Morality, Revolution and Civil Society. Reflections on the Revolution in Europe. 2005) (Dahrendorf, Modern Social Conflict: An Essay on the Politics of Liberty 1988) (Sorman 1992) (Pshevorskiy 2000) (Popova, Political Identification in Terms of the Transformation of Society 2002) (Remizov 2002)

However, a significant number of articles indirectly related to these topics can be found in Western and Russian scientific literature. In these works the authors present their vision of transformation processes in transitional societies, tending to a particular ideological basis for future change. (Videnkopf, The Time of Synthesis 1989) (Dyoring 2001) (A. A. Galkin 2004) (Wallerstein, After Liberalism 1995) (Wallerstein, The End of the World as We Know it: Social Science for the Twenty-first Century 1999) (Norberto 1997) (Kirk 1978) (Rank 1984) This is an especially large group, which consists of representatives of the Russian scientific thought, which are closer to the Armenian researchers by similar problems inherent to Russian society as well as to many post-Soviet countries. (Frenkin, Western German Conservatives: Who are They? 1990) (Frenkin, Phenomenon of Neoconservatism 1991) (Diligenskiy 2001) (Solonin 2004) (Remizov 2002) (Rahrshmir 2005) (Kravchenko 2006) (Fishman 2007) (Kumskova 2010)

A small group of sources contains materials on one of the most painful issues not only in post-Soviet countries, but also in many countries, which are in the process of democratic transformation. Population of nearly all of these countries has faced the problem of nationalism and the problem of formation of its national ideology in the ideological and political sphere of public

life. The attitude of researchers to these phenomena is ambiguous. There are different opinions and viewpoints on this topic. In this respect, the chrestomathy “Ethnicity and Politics” can be distinguished. It gives a holistic view of the role of ethnicity in different areas and introduces to the reader the most common prevailing approaches to the study of ethno-political and ethno-cultural processes. It contains studies of such renowned authors as E. Gellner, W. Connor, E. Smith, Sun Yat Sen, E. Hobsbawm, S. Panarin, V. Tishkov, and many others. (Prazauskas 2000)

Theoretical problems of nationalism are highlighted in the collection of articles “Nations and Nationalism”, first published in “Verso” a London publisher in 1996. It contains the ideas of Western researchers, such as E. Gellner, J. Habermas, E. Hobsbawm, M. Mann and others about the nature of nationalism, its role in the modern world, and about the most effective types of states that maintain ethnic tolerance, etc. (Nations and Nationalism 2002)

Another work dedicated to specific manifestations of ethno-nationalism in European countries is the work of U. Altermatt, which has a descriptive nature. Although it should be noted that despite the desire to objectively reflect the social and political processes in Europe the author occasionally shows a negative attitude towards nationalism. (Altermatt 2000)

Phenomenon, which is closely associated with nationalism, is the national ideology. It occurs under the condition of existence of “enabling environment” in the form of nationalism development. National ideology itself tells a new impetus to nationalism as a political doctrine and fully directs it.

In Western and Russian political science the concept of “national ideology” is infrequent. But in the Armenian political science this phenomenon becomes a serious object of study. It is dictated by the socio-political situation that prevailed in the Armenian society after deployment of the Artsakh movement and gaining independence. However, in the Armenian literature also there are no general works concerning the formation of a national ideology or the assessment of its role in determining the vectors of socio-political development of the society. Nevertheless, some Armenian

scholars in their writings make an attempt to address the problem of the origin and functioning of Armenian national ideology. (K. Mirumyan, On the Nature of the National Intelligentsia and Its Objectives 1995) (K. Mirumyan, History of Political Science. P. II. Middle Ages. Revival. Reformation. 2005) (Arevshatyan 1973) (Manucharyan 1994) (Khurshudyan 1999) (Mirumyan and Arevshatyan 2007) (Khudinyan 2003) (R. A. Mirumyan 2003) (Margaryan, Issues of Political Development and Modernization 2004) (Margaryan, Political Elite and Issues of Democratic Transition in the Republic of Armenia 2006) (Lalayan 2008) (Stepanyan 2008)

The main feature of the democratization process in Armenia is that it originated as a national liberation movement. In this regard, most of the abovementioned authors founded their ideas on works of famous actors of the Armenian national liberation movement – G. Njdeh and A. Asatryan. (Njdeh, Selected Prison Records 2001) (Njdeh, The Revival of Race 2001) (Njdeh, The Movement of the Spirit of the Race 2003) (Asatryan 2004)

However, the democratic movement engendered in 1988 and proceeding under national flags came into ideological conflict with the “supranational” liberal-libertarian system. (Yengoyan 2006) Many researchers attribute libertarianism to ideological and political conservatism. However it is not the ideological content that taken as a basis of this, but the social content of the ideology. It is unfair to say that libertarianism is the protector of interests and privileges of social groups that leaving the historical arena. In connection with this idea it acquires the alleged “preservation” nature, and thus, conservative content. The basis of this interpretation of libertarianism is not only the substitution of ideological and value factors by social, but also simple incomprehension of the essence of conservative ideology, which in this case equals to reactionism. (Wallerstein 2003; Galkin 2004; Smith 2004) According to the famous explorer of libertarianism David Boaz, this ideological and political movement “can be seen as a political philosophy, that coherently applies the ideas of classical liberalism, bringing liberal arguments to conclusions more tightly limiting the

role of government and protecting the freedom of the individual to a greater extent than any other classical liberals” (Boaz 2009, p. 28-29).

Libertarianism, like communism is a version of the non-religious, non-national super-society, tending to its global management. Both flows have the same idea of the primacy of the supranational institutions of global governance. According to their main idea the world should be run by ideological organization whose purpose is to unify the world under a single model. Philosophy of historical materialism and the Liberal-libertarianism equally refuse the nation be the subject of history. In one theory subject of history is a class, in another - the individual and the nation must wither. (Boaz 2009)

Devaluation of ideas, slogans under which the formation of the Karabakh movement occurred, led some citizens to think about the incorrectness of the chosen path. This path was strewn with slogans national in character, and it has not led to the expected results. The minds of many members of the community began to seek a way out of the current situation in universal values. Some came back to the old idea of strong personality whose mission is to save, and others - to revive of individualist concepts, which ultimately dismiss such universal values as traditional state, nation, national and state ideology, politics, religion, etc. (Ustyan 2007)

The logical continuation of this approach was the first statement of the President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosyan, consequently a national ideology, which he described as a fiction and invented phenomenon. By this statement the former president of RA tried to follow the supporters of the concept of “deideologization” that emerged in 1960s, approaching Armenia as an already settled democratic state, which does not need any ideology. Disassociation from the ideological postulates actually meant disassociation from the previously dominant ideology of socialism and nationalism, as well as from the ideology of a competitor party – Dashnaktsutyun - but not from ideology in general. Thus, simple replacement of previously mentioned ideologies by

the other ideological system, liberalism, occurred. In fact, liberalism, regardless of the intentions of its conductors in Armenia, objectively was putting forward an alternative to the national ideology because the ideology of socialism had been already discredited. However, despite the negative attitude to the national ideology by many leaders of the Armenian National Movement, the statements of the first president played a positive role in fostering research of this phenomenon in Armenia, and also made think about it the other political forces of the country. These forces continue the search of a theoretical framework for the formation of the modern Armenian national ideology. (Yengoyan 2006; Tumanyan 2009; Mirumyan 1995)

Serious slips in the liberal value system were revealed in the process of democratic transformation in Armenia. This caused the necessity of serious adjustment of liberal-libertarian principles. Thus, for example appeal to the values of a free market economy looked less convincing. The idea of the creation of constitutional state required serious motivation. The scholars felt the need of revision of critical attitude towards the state inherent to liberalism, because not only the opposition of civil society to government is in the interest of the public good, but also the systematic and multifaceted cooperation between them. (Levada 1995; Mihranyan 1999)

The other idea of liberalism is also in the crisis today. It turned out that the recognition of morality is purely individual choice. The complete refusal of state to maintain a certain level of morality in society is fraught with many shocks. History has proven also the failure of absolute erection of one of the basic principles of liberalism - the rationalist attitude towards understanding the “good”. (Galbraith 2004) In a situation of economic and global environmental crisis the society should try to separate the apparent benefit from the real. Virtually all “difficult periods” of liberalism coincides exactly with recurrent global socio-political, economic and financial crises. German scientist G. Rohrmoser believes that liberalism in such conditions becomes helpless and it is not able to cope with crises of such scale (Rohrmoser 1996, p. 85).

However, the cause of crisis of liberal principles is not in the fact that they are “wrong” or “disastrous” for the economy and spiritual values of society. The cause namely is the lack of the necessary conditions for the correct, undistorted in fact, application of these principles. Despite the fact that between the business and the other part of society developed a tense situation, there was no question in the country whether or not market economic system and democracy should be implemented in Armenia. It was necessary to find out how the market should be structured in Armenia, how to implement the democratic principles and what the society should receive from it. Thus, the social orientation of public policy became an objective necessity. (Panarin 2000; Tumanyan 2009)

The democratic reforms in Armenia, whose purpose was, in fact, the formation of industrial society, failed the expectations of the vast majority of society. Liberalism has lost its former popularity among Armenian citizens after the reforms, showing that despite all good intentions, transformations which do not take into account the historical specifics of the development of society are fraught with great difficulties and consequences. Nevertheless, it was not a return to the socialist values. The left spectrum of ideologies discredited itself by the end of the Soviet Union existence. Furthermore, the theoretical possibility that the lefts will come to power in Armenia may mean their radicalization and, ultimately, the revival of totalitarianism.

What will be the next ideological paradigm largely depended on the mentality existing in the Armenian society. On the whole the mentality of the Armenian people is focused on liberal values. Due to this and as a result of individual’s creativity in tragic for Armenian statehood situations the people managed to maintain physical existence. However, on the other hand, the problem of preservation of national identity was solved mainly due to the observance of ancient traditions, lifestyles and moral values transmitted from generation to generation, also due to the sense of loyalty to family and friends, the responsibility for own social group, the desire to

subordinate private interests to common and group interests, etc. The historical past of Armenians is rich by the attempts to radically change the destiny of the nation. Therefore, the occasionally slipping in the mentality of Armenians radicalism brings him close to the revolutionary value systems of liberalism and socialism. However, one should take into account the fact that virtually all attempts of Armenians to solve the problem of creation of own state by force had failed for hundreds of years. In the national mentality of Armenians started to dominate the desire to ease their fate within the existing framework of alien domination and not to go ahead against a powerful enemy. This processes threatened to cause even greater hardship for Armenian people. Thus, the historically unique synthesis of two rival ideological systems - conservatism and liberalism can be observed at the level of the national mentality. It should be indicated, that the conservatism is mainly considered through the lances of nationalism theory. (Mihryan 1999; Levada 1995; Mirumyan 1995, Yengoyan 2006)

At the turn of the 1980s - 1990s in the Soviet and post-Soviet science a genuine breakthrough in the study of the phenomenon of nationalism and conservatism was observed. In the post-Soviet academic environment some level of loyal attitude towards it emerged. Many of the problems of modern Armenia are identical to the ones that other states faced at different historical stages. The experience shows, that these problems were able to solve only the conservative governments. In the process of historical development Armenian conservatism possessed valuable nature, but the Soviet era instilled in it some state- socialistic features. All this is closely connected with the present in the national psychology of Armenians - national-patriotism and nationalism.

Nationalism is a set of ideological concepts and political practice, in which the central place is occupied by the interests of the nation. This definition is intentionally abstract. It says nothing about the nature of the nation, and the forms of its political independence. The definition does not include assessment, so that it could be accepted by both an advocate of the doctrine of nationalism,

and its opponent, because the approaches studying nationalism vary from one author to another (Sidorina and Polyannikov 2006). For example, Dudley Seers refers to nationalism as to “a certain type of economic policy”; Anthony Smith defines it as “an ideology of solidarity”, simultaneously for Benedict Anderson nationalism is “a linguistic identity” and “a distinctly industrial principle of social evolution and social organization” for Ernest Gellner (Haas 1986, p. 707). Thus, it can be observed that there is no single approach to the concept of nationalism and it distinguishes by variety of flows, and some of them even contradict to each other.

However, nationalism is both the ideology and policy direction, the fundamental principle of which is the thesis of the nation’s value as the highest form of social cohesion and its primacy in the constituent process. As a political movement, nationalism seeks to uphold the interests of a certain national community in relations with the state. Nationalism preaches loyalty and devotion to the nation, political independence and work for the good of people, the cultural and spiritual growth, the association of national identity for the practical protection of the living conditions of the nation, its territory of residence, economic resources and the spiritual values (Malakhov 2005). It is based on national sentiment, which is akin to patriotism. This ideology seeks to unite the various sectors of society, regardless of the different class interests.

Thus, nationalism is an important ideology in the nation-building process. Nationalism emphasizes differences and individuality of nations. Moreover, nationalism sees the nation as a sociological organism. In the view of the nationalists, the nation brings together the current generation with the past and the future, which motivates people to high level of self-giving to the extent that they are willing to sacrifice themselves to save the nation (Sidorina and Polyannikov 2006). Nationalism is closely linked with conservatism.

In general the doctrine of conservatism includes the idea of a moderate market economy and it is more “sensitive” to the patriotic sentiment, morality, national traditions, culture, and history.

Conservatism is allowing the adaptation of democratic principles to the Armenian reality and takes into account national traditions and customs of the Armenian people. If the orthodox conservatism, which is close by its sense to traditionalism, rejects reformism, then the moderate conservatism permits and encourages the reforms within the existing social order. (Galkin 2004)

Therefore, in the early 2000s there was a practical interest in the problem of political conservatism, based on traditions, continuity, security and stability, which provide the conditions to gradual reforms and the elimination of extreme measures. In programs of many Armenian political parties, which formally were not related to conservatism, one could more and more recently meet common moral and ethical guidelines. These programs pointed out the necessity to strengthen the primary unit of society - the family, to establish moral relations between the members of society, to deepen the faith in the dogmas of the Armenian Apostolic Church, etc (Voter Guide 2007). The role of the Republican Party of Armenia significantly increased. Ideologically this party is the mouthpiece of socially oriented conservatism. Politically, it positions itself as a centrist force of Armenian party system.

The reasons for the revival of conservative consciousness in Armenia are represented as follows. First of all, it is important fact that the conservative spirit is deeply rooted in the millennial history of the Armenian people. Second, any systematic change in culture generates greater resistance. Deep changes in culture take longer than the life of three generations, as it is in Armenia. Third, there is an anthropological theory: there is a certain constant value, which is always conservative. In the very nature of man exists a kind of “conservative core”, as a consequence of which the person resists the attempts to remake it, allowing changes to make their impact only to a certain limit. This limit proved a stumbling block to socialism. And fourth, to the assertion of conservative thinking hugely contribute the political and economic crises, which dramatically reducing the space in which liberalism and its policies have capacity.

However, the activation of conservative tendencies in the Armenian society, especially after the Republican Party of Armenia turned in the ruling party, does not mean the complete victory of conservatism over liberalism. This can be clearly seen by considering the activity of Conservative Party of Armenia guided exclusively by Western conservative values and acting starting from 1991. It does not enjoy significant authority in society. Although, at first glance, positions reflected in its program are all the main provisions of conservative ideology. This party was even in the most radical opposition camp during the 2008 presidential elections in Armenia. This camp set itself the task of cardinal changes in social relations. Naturally, such kind of ideological “demarche” of Conservative Party on the liberal-revolutionary positions is not explained by common underlying ideological principles. On the contrary, it proves its weakness and unpopularity in society, which it sought to overcome by adhering to such authoritarian political figure, which was the first president of Armenia. (Yengoyan 2006)

Some scholars argue that only consideration of conservatism in a broad sense, as a traditional outlook, will have a success in our society. It provides a spiritual and moral component of social life, respect for the traditions and national foundations, brings the social life close to the national consciousness and contributes to the nation’s self-identification. However, this trend is also fraught by danger – by the possibility of dogmatization of national ideas and manifestation of excessive ethnocentrism, rolling into nation egocentrism. In this case, the nation may proceed from the present-day realities, which are formed by global trends. (Videnkopf 1989) In particular, it is about deep social changes in the psychology of Armenians, and about deepening the processes of international integration, which include virtually all spheres of social life. Also it is about involvement of Armenia in the international legal system, the low living standards of the majority of citizens, the negative demographics and, finally, by historical standards. It is about little experience

of state-building. Underestimation of these factors might lead to self-isolation of the Armenian nation.

However, we should not forget that the liberal values for two centuries have proven their worth and effectiveness in building a democratic society. Therefore, the solution of the majority of contemporary issues associated with the implementation of exactly these principles. Depending on the particular historical situation conservative and liberal segments in the general system of social and political life can grow or shrink, to manifest themselves in isolation or convergence by creating a liberal-conservative synthesis. (Galkin 2004) This convergence to the greatest extent reflects the mentality of the modern Armenian society.

First of all liberalism needs the existence of a counterbalance defined as a reasonable and enlightened conservatism, which will correct it with pragmatism and permanently “turned” it to the reality. Liberalism which denies such adjustments brings itself to death, because it denies all the forces and values which it needs to justify sense of its own liberal philosophy. Naturally, there is no alternative to liberal democracy, but liberalism must be kept from “slipping” into anarchism, and should be strengthened with its spiritual and political interaction with conservatism. Political consciousness is starving from the crisis because it is deprived of moral ideas that will legitimize it. Political life needs ideas and credibility. (Aron 1993)

A joint conservative-liberal approach consists in searching the ways and means to identify appropriate forces which will help create mechanisms of implementing precisely liberal goals. The awareness in the necessity in democratic transformations in Armenia will come through the improvement of the welfare of the people and ensuring of their basic needs related to the material component and security. In addition, this approach captures the presence of a stable set of moral and religious values and, based on them, political and economic relations that meet the traditional historical and political forms of existence and development of society. (Videnkopf 1989)

However, neither conservatism nor liberalism separately can act as a universal tool to solve all the problems that facing modern transitional society. As American political scientist Dankwart Rustow states “To come to democracy, it does not require copying the constitutional laws or parliamentary practice of some existing democracy, but the ability to take an honest look at own specific conflicts and the ability to invent or borrow effective mechanisms to resolve them” (Rustow 1970).

The study will address the following research questions:

- 1) What are the political, economic, social, psychological and cultural aspects of ideology?
- 2) Which are the functions of ideology in shaping the human behavior?
- 3) Is ideology only a product of ruling elites?
- 4) Is there a problem of ideological discourse in transition societies?
- 5) What is the importance of ideology in Armenia?
- 6) What is the main feature of democratization process in Armenia?
- 7) Which model of democracy is appropriate for Armenian reality?
- 8) What are the features of ideological developments during the transition period in Armenia?
- 9) Which ideological processes can be observed historically at the level of Armenian national mentality?
- 10) What is the place and role of ideology in the implementation of democratic reforms in Armenia?
- 11) Which are the major ideological contradictions in Armenian society?
- 12) Which political ideology is the most appropriate for implementing the democratic reforms in Armenia?

And the hypothesis of the Master's Essay is the following:

The achievement of democratic reforms in Armenia is made difficult by ideological contradictions in society.

Methodology

The main method used for the elaboration of the Master's Essay is secondary analysis based on the study of various sources. The basic theoretical and epistemological framework of this essay amounted to critically analyzing fundamental works and monographs of the representatives of classical political philosophy, political science and sociology, as well as materials of scientific and practical conferences and discussions on the studied subject.

The current research project includes a qualitative research method. The study can be considered both exploratory and descriptive which aims to find out appropriate theoretical frameworks for study of political ideology, to explore the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in the phenomenon of political ideology, to identify the main features of the ideological discourse in Armenia, to gain insight the characteristics of the Armenian political mentality through the prism of ideological pluralism; and to study the existing in the Armenian society ideological determinants that adequately reflect the socio-political processes and indicate the effective ways of improvement of the life of Armenian society.

Part I. The Phenomenon and Structure of Political Ideology

To understand the whole range of the ideological dimensions and transformations in the Armenian transitional society, first of all we should study carefully the phenomenon of ideology and its structure. Then a great share of attention should be devoted to the study of its functions. This will provide us with necessary observations concerning the ideological processes our nation passed and continue to pass through. In addition it will help us to create the essential theoretical framework, which will be appropriate for studying the Armenian reality.

In various historical periods ideology was interpreted differently. Variety of social phenomena, in terms of which the researchers and ideologues tried to make a picture of the world, formed the existing diversity of meanings imparted by ideology. At some stage, the researchers even tempted to abandon the “inconvenient” term of “ideology” or to relegate this phenomenon to the level of language and brands characters. However, most of those who continue to study this field prefer to refill this term with sense.

The word “ideology” comes from the Ancient Greek and literally means “the doctrine of ideas”. However, until the end of the XVIII century, the concept of “ideology” was not formulated. But this does not mean that there was no ideology, because all societies need the ideology as a state-building concept. (Ripberger, et al. 2012) Some researchers rightly believe that before the era of European Enlightenment the role of the state ideology for centuries was successfully performed by religion. (Seneviratne 1985; Williams 1996; Gates and Steane 2009; Khalilov 2010)

Religion and ideology often coexist, although this is not the same thing. Religion requires direct faith while ideology appeals more to the intellect. Religion responds to global philosophical questions - about the origins of the world and man, about the meaning of life and death; while ideology concentrates on narrow and private areas - politics, public or private life. (Williams 1996)

But each is closely intertwined with the other. Any religion is complemented by ideology when certain aspects of doctrine are considered in relation to specific areas of life, or when more or less reasonable arguments are used in order to lead to a belief and make it convincing. It is difficult to make a person directly believe in dogma; at least some illusion of reality is needed. This factor is caused by psychological aspects of human nature. Therefore religion is complemented by ideology fairly easily, and conversely, ideology has a religious sub base. (Gates and Steane 2009; Khalilov 2010)

The emergence of the concept of “ideology” coincided with the processes of secularization, the transition to an industrial society, or, as classic Marxist terminology stated, the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Intellectually, this is the era of philosophy, but a special kind of philosophy, which is particular to that period. (Strath 2006) Thus, it is important to know what the specific features of that philosophy are and how it emerged.

As we now, one of the pillars of modern Western society is science. One can say that science has become the highest authority that legitimizes and sanctifies both the political system and social order. In other words, science has become a very strong tool. It was in all Western countries where bourgeois revolutions, scientists, philosophers and humanists contributed to the programming of the mass behavior by ideology. In England, for example, Newton and his followers from the new (mechanical) picture of the world deduced the idea of a “natural” (natural) character of the constitution, which had to limit the power of the monarch (“because the sun is subject to the law of gravity”). (Matz 1992, p. 32)

The question of the relationship between ideas and reality, theory and practice in a short time ceased to be a purely academic, was addressed in a scientific environment, and became a matter of practical policy. During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries the philosophers and scientists

drew arguments from science, transforming the various theories into ideological and political weapon. (Ripberger, et al. 2012)

Many researchers and scientists have to come from different interpretations of ideology also because the term “ideology” is a homonym, i.e. the way it sounds and its semantic content are not in one correspondence: in the literature it is used in very different interpretations. This fact causes problems in using the term “ideology”. However, if this term is approached from the formal and etymological standpoint, - ideology is a doctrine of ideas, which is trying to explain how these ideas are communicating, moving from one to the other, and exist by themselves (as “prototypes of things” in which they are embodied as their meanings). Hence we use the term “ideology” in the sense of a guiding idea. (Kennedy 1979)

However, there are other approaches to the etymology of this term. In Greek, “idea” is a thought, and “logos” - a word. Thus, “ideology” means the idea expressed by the word. In this case idea is not a static phenomenon, but a living and active one. (De Crom 2008) Diversity and complexity of the ideological phenomenon leads many researchers to approach this phenomenon from different perspectives. Most productive here, as in many other cases, is an approach that is not formal, but substantial and associated with ideology as a social phenomenon that is in close interaction with other aspects of social life.

The social environment always puts a remarkable imprint on an ideological system. This point of view is shared by many researchers of ideology. They are considered to be supporters of the theory of “social conditioning of ideology”. (Walton 1971; Singh 1986; Nordahl 1985; Moriarty 2012) The founder of this theory is considered to be Karl Marx (1818-1883). His famous statement about the dependence of public consciousness on social being and social conditioning of ideas formed the basis of the views of many well-known representatives of world political thought. (Kennedy 1979)

The founder of Marxism stressed that the illusory perception of life and the creation of illusions by class itself is typical for ideologies. Moreover, “these illusions turn in ideological constructs into a self-sufficient force, with respect to the primary real interests”. (Marx 1955, p.88) For Marx, ideology is a special type of thought process where ideologists as producers and translators of ideologies are not aware that their works are due to very specific class interests. These interests are expressed primarily by socio-economic motivations of this class. (Moriarty 2012) That is why ideologues draw an illusory picture of reality.

However, the German philosopher and sociologist Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) drew very different conclusions from the premises of the Marxist concept of ideology in his monograph “Ideology and Utopia” (1929). He tried to penetrate into the nature of political ideologies, reveal the diversity of their relationship with social groups, with social existence in general and specific historical situations. (Sargent 2008) Mannheim gave one of the most comprehensive analyses of the phenomenon of ideology. Western scholars usually note the similarity of Mannheim’s and Marx’s views on ideology, but at the same time believe that Mannheim went further in uncovering the roots of ideology, linking it with the sociology of knowledge. The basis of Mannheim’s concept consists of two provisions: the knowability of the social process and that the products and forms of thought are generated by the process of historical development, that is due to historical, social, class, and cultural factors. Thus, opposite to Marx, Mannheim believed that social being is not limited to the relations in the sphere of material production, especially to economic determinism. (Kumar 2006; Geoghegan 2004)

Mannheim believed that people in the process of political struggle find unconscious collective motivation that determines the direction of their thinking. In uncompromising political discussions they do not dwell on theoretical arguments rather they see to open the unconscious

motives of ideological beliefs. The collective unconscious of both dominant and oppressed groups, according to K. Mannheim, hides the actual state of society from them. (Kumar 2006)

The ruling class creates a spiritual education by pushing and theoretically justifying its system of ideas and values as the only truth. They called it ideology. Mannheim emphasizes, that the concept of “ideology” is a discovery made during the process of political struggle. According to that discovery, the thinking of the ruling groups is closely linked to a particular situation, so that these groups are simply not able to see a number of facts, which could undermine their confidence in their own domination.

Any ideology, according to Mannheim, is an apology for the existing system, the defender of the status quo. In this phenomenon he sees a stabilizing role of ideologies. Each political and ideological point of view means something more than mere approval or denial of the facts. It is also a complete worldview, which manifests itself in the desire of politicians to influence not only the formation of party views, but also a certain worldview of the masses, in order to form a political unit and a certain relation to the world. (Geoghegan 2004)

In general, the ideas of the theory of “social conditioning of ideology” were of great importance for the further development of the theory of ideology. Often they become the object of serious disputes between known thinkers, were criticized and in many cases laid the basis for new theoretical views of the authors. This fact demonstrates the scientific value of the theory.

The concept of value is at the heart of many views of ideology. In modern scientific literature ideology is often characterized as a system of values and preferences. The views of the authors, who hold this axiological approach, are mostly limited to the following definition of ideology: ideology is a theoretical justification of values of certain social actors; it identifies for them their world of values and meanings attached to the case, which goes beyond individual existence. This approach does not accept the determination of the truth or falsity of ideology. It considers ideology only as a

reflection of reality through the prism of social strata and groups. It should be noted that ideology does not necessarily include true or false knowledge; it can have a probabilistic (predictive, symbolic) character. At its core ideology is “false” not because it deliberately distorts the reality in favor of one or another political interests, but because the values in nature are not merely an adequate reflection of reality. Values, and ideas which express these values, are like a different reality than the one that is given to man in his ordinary senses. In scientific language, this fact is reflected in the definition of a transcendental nature of values in relation to the “objective reality”. According to this view, man can perceive the surrounding reality only through the prism of its ideological and value orientations.

The founder of the value pluralist approach to ideology is the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). In the philosophy of Nietzsche we can observe the ideas about the dependence of the spirit, language, and way of thinking to the caste of hereditary aristocracy or to the caste of plebeian masses. He developed the elite concept of absolute rule of the “upper caste” over the overwhelming majority - “mediocrity”. A cast of nobles (aristocracy) with its inherent strength of will and lust for power subjugates a peaceful or decrepit, enfeebled culture. (Simpson 2007)

Thus, the ideologies, by Friedrich Nietzsche’s conviction, are cultural systems (systems of values) produced by certain segments of society. It is difficult to disagree with such a generalized definition of the content of ideology. In some way the sphere of culture, spiritual life of mankind, which formed the ideology, is primary. Thus, the value systems are not false by themselves - they are merely the result of the reflection of real life in the way of thinking of the society representatives (Warren 1984).

The value approach to the ideology was also discussed in the theory of Max Weber (1864-1920). In his work “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of capitalism”, which became one of his

most famous works, he stressed the features of modern Western capitalism, caused, in his opinion, by Protestantism. Weber tied to Protestantism one of the most specific features of Western European development - rationality, calling it a “capitalist spirit”. The Protestant ethic preached ideas of productive labor, professional debt, private initiative and asceticism in the name of sustainable development of the capitalist economy. This ethical core of Protestant religiosity, according to Weber, was the most appropriate form of development for a highly productive industrial capitalism. It has become a kind of ideological basis for capitalist transformation of Western society (Höpfl 1984).

A valuable approach to ideology was also developed by one of the famous American sociologist, Talcott Parsons (1902-1979). He believed that the values “are nothing else than the representation of the desired type of social system”, and is a form of “collective representations” (Parsons, *The System of Modern Societies* 1998, p. 18-21). The scientist’s such statement reveals that he considers ideology very broadly. The content of ideology by Parsons is all those phenomena and objects surrounding human. He states, that a cognitive content of ideology can be given by all physical objects, persons, groups and cultural objects. Talcott Parsons also notes the large role of ideologies in ensuring stability in society. According to him, they are designed to perform integrative functions and ensure the unity of the whole system. Thus, Parsons understands that people’s beliefs about the nature and society are closely linked to a social system in which a person lives, that is, with the dominant ideology and value system in the society. (Parsons 1968)

A special place is also occupied by the psychological approach, especially among the theories which are going deeper in the essence of ideology and reveal the determinants of its occurrence. Psychological interpretation of the concept of “ideology” is closely linked with the emergence of such scientific area as psychoanalysis, created and developed by Sigmund Freud. He did not leave any delineated theory of ideology, but the doctrine he created can be attributed to those

which traced the desire to expose the hidden motives and ideologically justify human actions. Freud drew attention to the structure of the human psyche and the role of unconscious motives, hidden from the human mind in its behavior. He justified that both political and economic behavior is dependent upon the psychological aspects and determined by them. (Freud 1991)

The successor of the philosophical traditions of psychoanalysis was Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) - Swiss physician, psychologist and philosopher. In his famous work “Metamorphoses and Symbols of the Libido” (1912) Jung connects mental impulses with all manifestations of human vitality, its unconscious desires and aspirations. (Jung 1994)

Although both Freud and Jung did not create a new theory concerning the definition of ideology, however their arguments pushed others to create the psychological concept of ideology. The founder of this concept is considered to be an Italian sociologist and economist Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923). He outlined his theoretical concept in “Treatise on general sociology”, which was published only in 1916 because of war.

According to Pareto, humans are guided not so much by reason but by feeling. Pareto prioritized feelings, believing them to be true driving forces of history. He called the ideologies “the language of feelings” (Pareto 1966, p.37). Ideology, according to Pareto, generates mental factors such as dissatisfaction, feeling of insecurity of individuals, and their desire to see the world not as it actually is. Pareto states, that any theoretical constructs and any ideology are justification of action and are intended to give the logical character to the action by hiding the true motives. According to Pareto, a man who believes in liberalism, fascism, socialism or democracy not less than a man who believes in God, sorcerer, etc., is a toy of its feelings. (Busino 2000)

Thus, Pareto created a new concept of ideology, which considered ideology as a theoretical construct with a false content, designed to mask or justify the emotions and prejudices of people. Pareto sought the origins of ideological phenomena in the psyche of the isolated individual. He was

not interested in real social forces that determine the position of the individual in mass social movements. (Pareto 1966)

In general, analysis of the elements of the psyche of individuals leads researchers to believe in its crucial role in the emergence and functioning of ideologies. Thus, ideologies are created largely not only due to the existing social environment, but also due to the most fundamental and deep layers of the public psyche. (A. Yengoyan, Psychological Approach to Ideology: From Freud to Pareto 2007)

Thus, the author observed the different interpretations of Ideology in the scientific literature: the theory of “social conditioning of ideology” developed by Karl Marx, the concept of value based on the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, the psychological approach identified by Freud, Carl, Gustav Jung and Vilfredo Pareto. The variety of these interpretations proves that ideology is multidimensional and multilevel phenomenon, which is an integral part of political life of any society.

The Functions of Political Ideology

In terms of functions, ideology acts as a “language” that makes possible political communication. This leads to the integration of individuals based on some samples of political behavior at the level of social psychology; and to the formulation of styles and simplified characters which are capable to encourage collective action. That’s why ideology was studied by quantitative empirical research supporters of behavioral approach, who consider ideology as an instrument of political studies.

American political scientist Converse conducted a sociological study using the method of interview which purpose was to compare the nature of belief systems in the framework of the “vertical slice”. The word “ideology” was replaced by term “belief system” in his works. He compared the nature of belief systems of political leaders with the masses’. According to Converse, as we move from ruling elite, declaring a commitment to a particular political party, down, the degree of “conviction” is reduced. By this the scientist tries to draw attention to the problem of inconsistency between the beliefs of the masses and the elite. Thereby Converse called into question the value of ideology as a mean to mobilize participation and legitimize the policy (at least at the mass level). (Converse 1964)

The concept of ideology has been also redesigned in the American anthropologists Clifford Geertz’s article “Ideology as a Cultural System”. The author offers a new view of ideologies as peculiar symbolic matrixes - schematic images of social order, which help to coordinate human behavior. Human behavior is extremely ductile in terms of biological regulators. According to Geertz, the role of ideology extremely increases in modern societies. “Ideology - in his words - makes possible the existence of an autonomous policy, because it provides us with authoritative concepts and meaningful, compelling images through which we can perceive this policy.” (Geertz 1998, p.26) This view on ideology gave rise to new approaches to its study. Additional impulses in the same direction were given by the works in the field of hermeneutics and linguistics.

A special approach to ideology was formulated also by British sociologist John Thompson. According to him, the study of ideology requires, first, the study of how the various symbolic forms - from routine conversations to complex images and texts - design and convey a meaning; secondly, the study of the social context within which these symbolic forms are used; and thirdly, to elucidate the mechanisms through which the meanings serve to establish and strengthen relations of domination. According to Thompson, development of media has significantly expanded the scope of

ideology in modern societies, because they create the opportunities for the transfer of symbolic forms to wider audience. Media does not serve only as the channel through which symbolic forms are propagated, but it “makes possible new forms of social interaction, and therefore serves to the restructuring of social relations” (Thompson 1984, p.225). In general, understanding of ideology proposed by Thompson significantly shifts the focus of researchers from the analysis of philosophical texts, policies and doctrines to the study of a wide range of discourses, with an emphasis on mass communication.

Many researchers working in the field of linguistics and discourse analysis use similar approaches to ideology. For example, the important role of language in relation to ideology was pointed by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who called the language a “social construction of reality” (Kress and Hodge 1979, p.34). According to them, it captures the world, making it more stable and coherent. This picture replaces what we supposedly see: the gap between the real and socially constructed is reduced. Thus, according to the researchers, the language itself becomes an ideological phenomenon, as it has the socially constructed optical effects.

With the advent of new interpretations, in the late twentieth century the study of ideology in fact ceased to be the exclusive domain of political philosophy, the history of ideas and social movements - it has largely moved in discourse analysis and cultural studies. Examples illustrating this tendency can be observed in the works of Jack Balkin, and especially - Teun A. van Dijk. (Balkin 1998; Van Dijk, Ideology. Multidisciplinary Approach. 1998, Van Dijk, Elite Discourse and Racism 1993, Van Dijk, Discourse Semantics and Ideology 1995)

Balkin offers to explore ideology as a tool of understanding, created in human culture. From his point of view, the complex of problems associated with the social nature of thinking, is best described by the term “ideology”, because most of the other terms used for the same purpose (discourse, habitus, tradition, language games, interpretive community and other) are the different

versions of the theory of ideology, reflecting some parts of one system. Ideological effect, according to Balkin, is determined by the social context. (Balkin 1998)

Teun A. van Dijk in a series of papers made an attempt to operationalize the concept of ideology for the needs of critical discourse analysis (Balkin 1998; Van Dijk, *Ideology. Multidisciplinary Approach*. 1998, Van Dijk, *Elite Discourse and Racism* 1993, Van Dijk, *Discourse Semantics and Ideology* 1995). Dutch researcher connects this concept not to the whole space of symbolic forms, but mainly to the fundamental beliefs that compose the basis of social representations of groups. Thus, ideology is structured around the basic categories, which reflect group identity. The general strategy of those ideological discourses is expressed by the following principle: “underscore what characterizes “us” positively and “them” - negatively.” According to van Dijk, ideologies “are mental embodiment of fundamental social, economic and/or cultural purposes and interests of the group. If we use a computer metaphor, we can say that together they constitute the base operating system of group or culture, whereas the corresponding positions belong to special programs running on the basis of this system and performing special socio-cognitive tasks” (Van Dijk, *Elite Discourse and Racism* 1993, p.40).

The abovementioned analysis of ideology research process clearly illustrates the main trends associated with the rethinking of the concept of ideology at the present stage. First of all, this is due to the expansion of its scope of application. In fact, the problem of “false consciousness” has been removed by modern researchers. Thus, symbolic forms through which we express ourselves and understand others are not the opposite of reality. However, they do play a role in the construction of what is real in a society.

Thus, the concept proposed by many contemporary researchers, despite certain one-sidedness, describe better the range of phenomena that occur at the intersection of language, power, public goals and practices. However, on the other hand, many new interpretations of ideology

significantly expand the boundaries of the concepts of this phenomenon, which leads to their erosion. Reconceptualization of ideology, in fact, leads to the substitution of concepts.

Thus, nowadays public production and dissemination of ideology is no longer the exclusive monopoly of the intellectual class. In this process other producers of symbolic forms actively participate also, especially the media. Thereby, ideology is expressed not only in the traditional political texts, but it is everywhere; and therefore we should use different methods of analysis in order to study it. However, the new methods do not cancel the old ones and researchers of ideologies still cannot do without applying complex methods. It should be noted, that symbolic forms by themselves cannot be ideologies. With certain ideological and political “charge”, they only can contribute to the implementation of the basic principles of a particular ideological system in the public consciousness.

Thus, the analysis of the above mentioned approaches to the definition of ideology allows us to make some conclusions. First, despite the fact that many of the concepts try to deny the existence of ideology in general or bind it only to crisis periods of history, they often come into conflict with their basic postulates and prove otherwise. Second, social orientation clearly traced in these concepts; specific social group interests dictate the necessity of “this particular theory”, which often assumes the functions of ideology.

The role of ideology is consistently growing. Its deep penetration in all major areas of human life makes it a necessary and an “eternal” force in society. To understand the phenomenon of ideology, we should highlight the most significant indicators of its “eternity”:

- 1) Its existence as a necessary part of public awareness; thus, it cannot be obsolete or superseded by “psychology of common sense”;

- 2) It express the general views on any given society and its problems, contradictions, programs and objectives;

3) It has an irreplaceable role in self-consciousness of certain public entities: classes, social groups, states, parties, etc.

In general, the second half of the twentieth century was probably the most tumultuous stage in diverse studies of the phenomenon of ideology. Taking into the consideration all the ambiguity of definitions of ideology it should be stated that one statement has no alternative: ideology - is socially constructed ways of reflecting the reality which, in turn, affect the political practice and direct it.

Ideological Orientations of Democratic Reforms in Armenia

The Characteristics of Liberalism in Armenia in the Transition Period: The main feature of democratization process in Armenia is that it originated as a national liberation movement. It was the idea of independence and the dignified existence of a monolithic nation that underpinned the political life of society at the beginning of the Artsakh movement. However, with the country's approach to independence the ideological basis of dismantling the Soviet formation, the promotion of democracy in Armenia became the ideological system of libertarianism which was introduced from outside. This ideological system does not accept any national-conservative "limitations" of liberalism and denies any substantial state intervention in public life. (Yengoyan 2006; Tumanyan 2009)

This explains why the state lost control of many social processes and this led to manifestations of permissiveness, as well as to the imbalance of social relations within the country. The democratic movement, which emerged under the banner of the national liberation struggle, was subsequently "forced" into the Western stencils of a liberal-libertarian ideological system.

Therefore, serious problems concerning liberal values were revealed in the implementation of democratic reforms.

To understand the sense of Armenian liberalism in the transition period let us first study the two major traditions (models) of democracy. It will help us to identify into which category the Armenian liberalism fits. The first one is called the Anglo-Saxon model. It is formulated especially by John Locke. According to him, democracy should exercise and guarantee rights of individual. This is the version of liberal democracy. According to this concept, the state is considered democratic as it not only guarantees the basic rights of the individual, but also maximizes the space of his freedom. Everyone has the right to enjoy these freedoms.

The second tradition belongs to the French school, founded by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who in the contrary to Anglo-Saxon tradition understands democracy not as an implementation and expansion of the rights and freedoms of the individual, but as an act of self-affirmation of the nation. According to this concept, the subject of democracy is not an individual, but the nation, in other words – the collective. It means that the nation has the substantial right to decide its own destiny and build its own democratic way of life. Modern France is a bright example of the implementation of this tradition of democracy. The criterion of democratization in this country is primarily considered the welfare of the nation.

The French model of democracy can be designated as national-collectivist in contrast to Anglo-Saxon, which can be described as liberal-individualistic. Armenia, due to objective and subjective reasons, moved to the national *collectivist model of a democratic society*. The following factors largely contributed to this: the struggle of Armenian people for reunification of liberated of Artsakh with its historical homeland, the pursuit by joint efforts to overcome the consequences of the devastating earthquake of 1988, the economic difficulties of the late 1980 and 1990s., the specificity of the Armenian people mentality, as well as a reverent attitude to the newly created

state. But here lays the contradiction pledged in advance between the liberal-libertarian principles and the national aspirations of the Armenian people, who are, in fact, conservative. These contradictions will be represented hereinafter.

There is a special problem for the post-socialist countries, including Armenia – the failure in introduction of a market economy and democracy at the same time, because the reform of the economic structure of society should be carried out by political decision-making. The idea of a free market as the organizing principle of society is highly associated with liberalism, especially in the XIX century. The free market has emerged as a result of revolutionary changes in the field of public administration. The market economy as a concept presupposes an impolitic market and its independence from the state. However, historically the market arose precisely as a result of certain political decisions.

The problem of establishment of an entrepreneurial class has not been in any of the previous transitions to democracy. As history of democracy shows, it is the market which promotes the development of democracy, but not that democracy promotes the emergence of the market. However, on the other hand, the development of a market society with only a certain degree of competition makes democracy an effective way to harmonize domestic interests and to achieve social peace. German political sociologist Claus Offe formulates this dilemma in the following way: “The legal and representative political system will become adequate and reproducing legitimacy only when it reaches a certain level of autonomous economic development.” (Offe 2003, p. 11)

The problem is compounded by the fact that the political culture of authoritarian egalitarianism shared by most citizens of post-communist countries, including Armenia, implies neither a market economy nor democracy as the objectives of the reforms. According to the German political scientist, a market economy arising in these countries is a sort of “political capitalism”, which is implanted by reformist elite. In contrast to this, the interest of the whole society in

developing effective economic mechanisms is at the core of the Western model. For this purpose, the reform in transition countries can fail to get democratic legitimacy.

Only a developed market economy can generate social and structural conditions for reaching a stable democracy and promoting the public consent. But the liberal market in Armenia has not yet created relatively equal chances for all to access it. Not everyone can enter this market, even though one might be a successful entrepreneur. Other market participants very often create alliances in order to protect themselves by any means from the emergence of new competitors.

If neither democracy nor the market is desired for most people, then, according to Offe, “we are dealing with a “Pandora’s box”, full of paradoxes, under which any “theory” of transition is capitulating” (Offe 2003, p. 15). To make the democratic development a reality, citizens must have an adequate supply of patience and optimism, because they are forced to adapt quickly to the new situation and to wait for the positive results of the reforms for a long time.

The observation of reforms in Armenia shows that there are serious obstacles to market competition. Of course, at first glance, it can be stated that almost after 20 years since the beginning of the reforms Armenia has made great strides. According to the findings of a survey conducted by the International Heritage Foundation in 2014, Armenia was ranked 41th place among 179 countries in the world by the level of its economic freedom, which is very good. (Index of Economic Freedom 2014) According to that indicator, Armenia has left far behind such countries as France, Portugal, Turkey, Poland, Israel, United Arab Emirates, Italy and others.

According to many Armenian researchers, the socio-economic conditions in the post-reform period had prompted an exodus of people from Armenia. According to E. Melkonian, during the post-independence period about one million people left Armenia (Melkonyan 2007, p. 8). According to the results of public opinion polls conducted by Gallup in 2010, 39 percent of respondents in

Armenia want to go to another country for permanent residence (Esipova and Ray 2010). According to this indicator Armenia ranked number one among the CIS countries.

However, one of the main obstacles to the establishment of a truly free market economy is corruption (Trang 1994). The level of free economic relations could be significantly higher if Armenia was not ranked 124th out of 178 countries in 2014 according to its level of corruption (Index of Economic Freedom 2014). Such a level of corruption cannot afford honest citizens to achieve simple material well-being and improve the quality of life only by their hard work. For example, about 55 percent of people surveyed in 2007 believed that the level of corruption in society exceeds that of Soviet times (Guadalupe 2007). The problem of eradication of corruption in society takes on the character of the struggle for national security. It is directly associated with the loss of faith in the fairness of democratic principles by many Armenian citizens.

Conductors of reforms in Armenia, strictly speaking, designed and constructed nothing, because they were thinking that the market and freeholders acting on it would create the necessary prerequisites for the approval of competition and democracy. However, as a result, together with the emerging owners, the state bureaucracy received the same access to the market. It was something that reformers did not even plan. Therefore, this attempt at “shock therapy” was a double mistake: first, Armenia neither socially nor psychologically was ready for such a drastic move to the anarchy of the “free” market. This move caused mainly a speculative and criminal nature in much of the new business. Second, classical liberalism, which Armenian reformers were trying to implement, was already passed this stage in the West, and thus, its introduction in Armenia meant for the country to further lag from the Western states. The direct consequence of liberal “reforms” was the creation of a deep abyss between the five percent of those who suddenly became rich and the 35-40% of citizens, who suddenly descended below the level of subsistence.

A separate theme in the Armenian reality is *a respect for private property*. It is one of the most painful issues for Armenia and many transitional societies. The liberal mind is unthinkable without this element. There is the following provision in Hegel's Philosophy of Right: there should be private property, otherwise there will not be a space for freedom for the individual (Hegel 1990, p. 69). This means that without private property freedom remains an abstraction or phrase. Individual freedom becomes real only by virtue of owning the property. This means that without private property freedom remains an abstraction or phrase. Individual freedom becomes real only by virtue of owning property. This is one of the most important processes for freedom. However, it is important to mention, that you cannot force people to respect, in moral sense, the property which was obtained by crime and in an unworthy way. While the Armenian government does not create really equal opportunities for everyone to achieve success through honest work and entrepreneurial talent in manufacturing, public morality will have contempt for transactions, fraud, and speculation in the non-manufacturing sector.

Another important feature of the liberal value system is the idea of the rule of law. Equality of all before the law, without exception, is the principle of rule of law. The market economy also cannot function properly if the state does not create the legal order. The rule of law, which was born by the French Revolution, is perhaps one of the greatest political achievements in the world history. It is one of the basic principles of democracy. Thereby, the strengthening of statehood based on the rule of law for the post-Soviet societies is crucial. Over time it became clear that it is impossible to build an economically and politically stable country without rule of law. The legal state should determine not only freedom, but also responsibilities. It should provide the protection of life, dignity and security of citizens. However, these rights in Armenia were not fully provided by the state, because the democratization established in Armenia was in fact only a superficial liberalization and delivered a considerable disappointment to citizens. The subsequent years after reforms have shown

that there is no possibility to speak about any provision of individual freedoms without the creation of legal safeguards. In this issue, of course, the current heads of state need to demonstrate such political will. But, through the years of reforms in the Armenia, the state started to serve primarily the interests of its own bureaucracy (public officials and politicians) and the top economic bureaucracy (oligarchs).

At the beginning of reforms instead of the generally accepted “state of law” the concept of a “social state” (“welfare state”) started to be used in official language, which is, in principle, contrary to the liberal understanding of the market. According to Friedrich August von Hayek, an attempt to solve a social problem in terms of the distribution of benefits using the opportunities of the market is doomed to failure. Such an attempt would lead ultimately to strong external interference and to the restriction of freedom, such that in the end the welfare state would destroy the material foundation of most of the market system. (Hayek 1948) Thus, the principle of the “state of law” considers the limitation of government intervention while the principle of “welfare state” considers the extension of such intervention.

It is also important to mention, that the perfect and capable liberal system requires a certain level of maturity of a society. That is why it is so important today to develop in Armenia what is called civil society. Under the civil society, according to a prominent theorist of modern liberalism, the English philosopher of German origin Ralf Dahrendorf, we should understand a multi-faceted public life, which is free and independent from church and state (Dahrendorf, *Modern Social Conflict: An Essay on the Politics of Liberty* 1988).

Society is not only the economy, but also a source of cultural and political initiatives. People must be united with each other in society in order to be able to realize both their personal and public interests. All these prerequisites were absent in Armenia during the reformation period and therefore the creation of a Western liberal system in Armenia is still developing. According to Ralf

Dahrendorf “Civil society does not occur overnight, or during the period when you can write a democratic constitution and lay the foundations of a market economy” (Dahrendorf, *Morality, Revolution and Civil Society. Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*. 2005, p. 67).

Thus, the profound alienation of real society from the state can be observed during the reform period. The state was actually totally focused on its own, purely bureaucratic problems, such as holding power, internal rivalries, massive enrichment through corruption, and maintaining foreign prestige at a “proper” level. Opinion polls showed that many citizens of Armenia, even in early 2006-2007, continued to believe that 49-69 percent of all country’s citizens cannot participate in decision-making and freely express their opinions on many issues (Guadalupe 2007). It illustrates the level of alienation of society from the government.

One of the most important features of current development processes in Armenia is the fact that the Armenian society did not pass through such fundamental spiritual and intellectual revolutions, as the Renaissance, the Reformation or the civil rights movement, which laid the foundations of rationalistic forms of economic activity and formed a modern system of political representation. Some scientists call this kind of society “the society of intermediate civilization”, which “went beyond the traditionalism, but so far has not been able to transcend the boundaries of liberal civilization” (Akhiezer 1993, p. 12). As can be noticed, there is a need in the post-Soviet Armenian society to revise the critical attitude of liberalism towards the state, because the public good is not only exercised through the opposition of civil society to the state, but through their systematic and multifaceted cooperation.

Another position of liberalism is also in a crisis today: the recognition of morality is a purely individual business of man. However, the complete refusal of the state to maintain a certain level of morality in society is fraught with many troubles and turmoil. The principle of liberalism assumes independence of the individual from traditions and norms because active self-determination of the

individual plays a decisive role for liberalism. It is believed that everyone has the right to choose its own values, and, thus, there is no need to obey the general rules. Thereby the probability of disintegration and decay of society is increasing. The ethics of liberalism rest on individualism; that is why it shouldn't be implemented as the only truth.

In this regard, we are often faced with a deep spiritual emptiness of people. According to the Armenian philosopher Herbert Soghomonyan, the reason for this kind of situation in many post-Soviet countries including Armenia lies in the fact that, unlike the West, where mass culture developed after the establishment of democratic institutions, in transitional societies both of these processes were deployed in parallel. The spread of mass culture in the absence of democratic traditions creates a sense of confusion among citizens and thus endangers the ethnic culture by generating its transformation. (Soghomonyan 2005) However, it should be noted that moral traditions tend to hamper the initiative of citizens and to “extinguish” their creative activity.

Accordingly many of the fundamental principles and provisions of liberalism, and, most of all, of its radical version - libertarianism, are in very deep crisis in Armenian society. By the end of the twentieth century the reformers of “first wave” failed to create a strong social platform for reforms in Armenia, and to establish contact with the society. The effectiveness of reforms themselves and their ability to change lives for the better was overvalued. One of the biggest reasons of the liberal reforms' crisis was scientific-theoretical and moral unpreparedness of Armenian society to these reforms in all spheres of life. Therefore, the crisis of liberal principles happened not because they are “wrong” or “disastrous” for the society, but because of the lack of the necessary conditions for their correct and undistorted application. Thus, the formal declaration of the implementation of liberal changes in both political and economic spheres failed to address the basic characteristics of mentality of the Armenian people.

However, liberalism as an ideology, despite numerous crises in its historical development, changed by adapting to the political reality. Basic principles of liberalism, such as individual freedom, the inviolability of human rights, the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, pluralism, civil society, and a free market economy, have become an integral part of a universal political culture. Consequently, the current sophistication in the development of democratic political institutions in Armenia is explained by the fact that the effectiveness of liberal reforms depends on their gradual adaptation to the political realities.

Nevertheless all of these processes affected the ideological shift in the activities of politicians from the libertarian principles to conservative ones.

The Role of Conservative Ideology in Democratization of Post-Soviet Armenia

Political challenges, facing societies in transition, particularly in the post-Soviet countries, are distinguished by their great diversity. Almost all of these countries need to develop a special type of political strategy that would be able to project the democratic principles to the peculiarities of national political life and culture. In addition, this strategy should determine the form of political existence of both state and society. Herewith, it should be borne in mind that there are three possible ways of further development: 1) society will continue to act as a “catch-up” with countries of the West; 2) society will choose its own way of transformation; 3) or the experience of democratic states will be refracted through the prism of national traditions and practices. The first way compels society to copy the structure of democratic institutions of Western countries, and is fraught with failure of democratic reforms, because the ordinary citizens are not able to quickly rebuild their

views on world either politically or psychologically. This is the process that we have analyzed in the previous chapter. The second way is dangerous by separation and isolation from the international community (especially with respect to small and economically weak countries). The third way, despite its longer duration, seems to be more acceptable for the “transition” countries from the society’s point of view. (A. Yengoyan, *Prospects for Conservatism in Armenia* 2008)

The further expansion of the political process in the transition countries requires a corresponding ideological support, without which any serious transformation cannot happen. In this regard, the subject of ideological and political identities in Armenia remains an inexhaustible source of public controversy.

The establishment of conservatism in Armenia at the present stage passed through the following processes, which shaped the features of Armenian conservatism: first of all, in this regard, in the Armenian society a question arises: which of the three main ideological discourses should be employed in Armenia - socialism, liberalism or conservatism? Socialism discredited itself by the end of the Soviet Union. Liberalism also lost its former popularity among Armenian citizens after the reforms of the 1990s, which showed that, despite the good intentions, the transformations which do not take into account the historical specificity of the development of the state are fraught with great difficulties and consequences.

Thus, it seems that the Armenian society decided to accept the “third way” of social development, which takes into account the principles of conservatism, because after being disappointed in liberal reforms, the members of Armenian society started to consider the ideas of conservative ideology as a most appropriate at this stage of development of the Armenian state. Conservatism attracts Armenians for the following reasons: it unites in its doctrine the ideas of moderate-market economy (respect for private property and free enterprise), patriotism, morality, and respect for national traditions, culture and history. These ideas perfectly characterize the

Armenian type of conservatism, because they provide a sufficient ground for the implementation of democratic principles and take into account the reality of the Armenian national traditions and customs. (A. Yengoyan, Political Mentality of Armenian Society in Transition 2009)

The term “conservative” in Latin (*conservatio*) means preservation, conservation, and rescue. This concept is perceived by researchers in several aspects. Thus, for example, A. Solovyev presents it as “dual spiritual phenomenon”: on the one hand, it is a “psychological attitude, a way of thinking ...” on the other – “an appropriate model of behavior in politics and life in general, and special ideological position with its philosophical foundation, associated with certain political activities, parties, unions.” (Solovyev 2001, p. 342-343)

Approximately the same approach to conservatism can be observed in the famous Oxford political dictionary. On the one hand, conservatism is identified with an instinctive defense of the old, is perceived as a unit “to preserve existing institutions” (Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences 1998, p. 105). However, on the other hand, the dictionary focuses on the fact that conservatism “generates the way of thinking...” (Politics: Glossary: Russian-English Dictionary 2001, p. 263)

It is believed that the broadest definition of political conservatism was given by Samuel Huntington, who defined it as “a system of ideas that serves to preserve the existing order, no matter when and where it takes place, and is directed against its destruction”. (Popova, Conservative Values in the Stereotypes of Political Consciousness and Behavior 2004, p. 202) However, such an interpretation of conservatism equates it with a protective ideology that does not recognize any change in social life and, in general, rejects social progress. Thus, it is not relevant to Armenian reality because the Armenian type of conservatism tries to synthesize two processes: the preservation of national identity and modernization. (A. Yengoyan, Prospects for Conservatism in Armenia 2008)

As can be observed, a proper understanding of conservatism is possible only in case of a comprehensive analysis. Researchers cannot consider only certain aspects of this ideology in isolation from the others. Only a holistic vision of conservatism allows us to understand all the subtleties and nuances of this doctrine.

It is interesting to observe how the conservative rhetoric is becoming more and more popular worldwide. In the beginning of the XXI century many countries are ruled by conservative political forces. This observation allows drawing conclusions about the “new wave” of conservatism. However, if we take the example of Armenia, there is no complete Conservative Party. None of the existing parties in Armenia can be fully classified as conservative. However, there are serious grounds for strengthening the social conservative mentality in our country. First, it is promoted by all the flaws and failures of post-reform period, which led to uneven and unfair distribution of property of the Armenian economy. The enrichment of a small part of the population and the impoverishment of a large number of Armenian citizens, as well as cuts in social programs have led many people to lose faith in the oneness of liberal values. (A. Yengoyan, Prospects for Conservatism in Armenia 2008)

Second, the processes of globalization and related to them social changes in society contribute to the revival of conservative views on social development in the world. Globalization partly struck on those branches and links in global production that operated outside the laws of the market economy. As a result, many workers were forced out of the economic sector. Necessity has forced many of them to resort to unconventional methods of earnings, which in some cases were inconsistent with existing moral standards. Especially important for Armenia, this contributed to prolonged separation between family members. Thereby in the case of Armenia patriarchal principles of the private family life were affected.

And, finally, some imperfections that appear in the democratization of the society contribute to the spread of conservatism. These imperfections are accompanied by simple copying of democratic institutions in developed countries. It often fails to take into account the level of development of political culture, the specificity of national psychology, ancient traditions and norms of behavior and other factors. These processes also contribute to the activation of various religious sects, which are detrimental to the credibility of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The latter is one of the most important aspects of the self-identification of the Armenians. Thereby these processes had their unique impact on the formation of Armenian conservatism on the present stage.

Also it should be mentioned, that for the Armenian reality the need for active “protection” of the rights of sexual minorities sounds somewhat unusual, because it considers the family relations from the traditional point of view, where the men and women are the major actors. Thereby it is difficult for most of the Armenians to accept even the idea of existence of sexual minorities in the Armenian society. According to the results of research conducted recently in Armenia only 6.56% of respondents answered that they would support the LGBT people and they should not be blamed for being homosexual, while the attitude of others were strongly negative (Smbatyan 2013). Based on this, many people in Armenia have the impression that democratization does not ensure human rights “in general”, but only social minorities, or it is “driving a wedge” in family ties. Thus, the neglect of national traditions and psychology causes permanent damage to the democratization process and further discredits the ideas of democracy. Ordinary people begin to associate democracy with excessive permissiveness, and start to see in it a threat to the Armenian traditions and values. These processes contribute to the increase in conservative mood among the members of society.

Nowadays in programs of many Armenian political parties, which formally are not conservative, can be observed common moral and ethical guidelines. These guidelines indicate the following ideas: the need to strengthen the primary unit of society - the family; to establish

respectable relationships between the members of society; to deepen the faith in the dogmas of the Armenian Gregorian Church, etc. For example, a program of “Prosperous Armenia” formed in 2004 is aimed at the preservation of national and traditional values such as family, church and statehood (Elections to the National Assembly of RA 2007, p. 21). The most important goal of another party - the Christian Democratic Union of Armenia, is the “establishment and revival of justice and morality in our society in all spheres of public life” (Parliamentary Elections: Armenia in 2003 , p. 121). The Democratic Way party’s program makes an emphasis on strengthening the “millennial traditions of the Armenian people” (Elections to the National Assembly of RA 2007, p. 52). The People’s Party of Armenia, in turn, indicates the need for improvement of “the moral and psychological atmosphere” in society (Parliamentary Elections: Armenia in 2003 , p. 88). The presence of such provisions in the programs of political parties in Armenia is explained by the growing interest of society in the ideas of conservatism. After all, politicians are voicing the ideas that future voters want to hear.

The popularity of conservative ideas in Armenia was multiplied by the errors in the reforms. These processes forced society to think seriously about the future development of the national idea, which will take into consideration public sentiments. Currently, there is a search for the most appropriate forms of conservative ideology for Armenian society. The established traditions, political culture, national priorities are playing a great role in this process.

Armenian society, despite its solid age, even by historical standards, is not distinguished by traditions of statehood. Practically most of the history of the Armenian people is riddled by struggle for survival in very harsh conditions of foreign domination, and by the desire to preserve its national identity. According to the Armenian historian R. Safrastyan, “Armenian conservatism was formed during the Tsarist and Ottoman Empires, and for this reason it pursued the goal of preserving national ideas and at the same time tried not to aggravate relations with the authorities.” (Safrastyan

2007) Therefore, the prevailing features of Armenian conservatism are national, patriarchal and religious, because it was aimed to protect the Armenian identity which based on national traditions, language, beliefs and religion. According to Armenian historians, one of the major reasons that Armenian nation suffered so much during the history is the fact that Armenians always kept their religion and traditions safe and denied to assimilate among the other nations (as it was in case of Persia, Ottoman and Russian Empire). (A. P. Yengoyan 2006) Thus, all three factors have played a crucial role in the formation of national identity of Armenians.

Thus, modern conservatism in the Armenian society is designed to ensure stable development in the frames of national foundations. Furthermore, Armenia faces two very important tasks of the national character - the question of recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the international community and the resolution of the Karabakh problem. These two vector of foreign policy, along with the desire of many people to “return to roots”, give to the Armenian conservatism both a national and a value orientation. Therefore, the departure from traditionalism and nationalism is regarded by Armenians as a weakening in the positions of country in the world.

Currently the Republican Party of Armenia claims to be carrier of the Armenian conservative ideology. Ideologically, this party is the mouthpiece of socially oriented conservatism (it includes ideas about the nation (this term refers to all Armenians in the world, including Diaspora), person, family, property, and state (this term refers to Armenian state). Politically, it positions itself as a centrist force of the Armenian party system. This political position most clearly revealed itself after the 2007 parliamentary elections, when the party got an absolute victory.

As we know, the ideology of the Republican Party is based on the concept of the Armenian public figure Garegin Njdeh, whose ideas greatly influenced the Armenian conservatism. Absolute values for Njdeh are Homeland, Nation, its freedom and independence. He rejected every desire of the individual to meet its material needs to the detriment of national interests. In his concept G.

Njdeh called for the preservation of only national values, which strengthen the national identity of Armenians, preserves the cultural and spiritual “face” of the nation (Njdeh, *The Movement of the Spirit of the Race* 2003, p. 140-175). Egocentrism, according to Njdeh, leads to the transformation of the nation into a simple crowd (Ibid, p. 394). He points out the need for all Armenians to join on the basis of common morality.

Thus, the Republican Party ideologically approaches close to the national-conservative. It is a type of conservatism which concentrates more on the national interest, and has traditional and ethnic views. A huge role in this process was played by a prominent representative of the national liberation movement of the Armenians - A. Navasardyan. Thus, in the party’s program reflected the basic national-conservative idea of national priority over private and individual: “The Republican Party builds its relations on the principle of the priority of national and state interests, which are placed above the individual and group interests.” (Elections to the National Assembly of RA 2007, p. 87). These ideas help to identify the major features of Armenian conservatism.

Thereby, it can be concluded that the ideology of the modern Armenian conservatism relies more on paternalistic tradition and experience from Armenian history, than once again blindly copying Western models. This means that in the Armenian reality conservatism combines the positive features of enlightened nationalism (statism, patriotism, traditionalism, respect for national traditions and culture) and moderate liberalism (law, market economy, freedom of the individual, private property and civil society) by neutralizing the defects and extreme manifestations of both ideologies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The collapse of the USSR was followed by a range of challenges and difficulties that post-Soviet societies had to face. After the dissolution of socialist system Armenia made attempts to implement liberal democratic reforms. Actually it meant the following: try to impart on the local ground Western institutions and values, without taking into account the specificity of certain society in transition. These processes caused an ideological discourse in Armenian society around two political ideologies – liberalism and conservatism.

It has been documented that ideology is multidimensional and multilevel phenomenon which has a huge impact on the formation of any society. For this reason researchers consider this phenomenon from different levels and sides. This generates the great variety of interpretations of ideology in the scientific literature, which includes the theory of “social conditioning of ideology” developed by Karl Marx, the concept of value based on the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, the psychological approach identified by Freud, Carl Gustav Jung and Vilfredo Pareto and many others. All these theories, concepts and approaches illustrate the fact, that ideology is an integral part of political life of any society and requires a special attitude and study.

The analysis of materials showed that the role of ideology is consistently growing. It is deeply penetrated in all major areas of human life. Ideology exists as a necessary part of public awareness and it express the general views on any given society and its problems, contradictions, programs and objectives. Ideology plays an irreplaceable role in self-consciousness of certain public entities: classes, social groups, states, parties, etc. Thus, ideology is socially constructed reflecting the reality which, in turn, affect the political practice and direct it.

Ideology continues to play an important role in shaping the features of societies in transition. In general, an ideological discourse in Armenia marks the transition of society into a new phase of

its development. It is connected, on the one hand, with the necessity to consider local features in the process of deepening of democratic reforms, and on the other hand, with the desire of the ruling political forces to maintain the status quo and their leading positions. However, the achievement of democratic reforms in Armenia is made difficult by ideological contradictions in society. These contradictions are mainly characterized by the tensions between the liberal and conservative ideas.

Many of the fundamental principles and provisions of liberalism, and first of all, of its radical version – libertarianism, are in a quite deep crisis in Armenia. The formal declaration of the implementation of liberal changes in political and economic spheres failed to address the basic characteristics of mentality of the Armenian people. However, the basic principles of liberalism, such as individual freedom, the inviolability of human rights, the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, pluralism, civil society, and a free market economy, have become an integral part of a universal political culture. Consequently, the current sophistication in the development of democratic political institutions in Armenia is explained by the fact that the effectiveness of liberal reforms depends on their gradual adaptation to the political realities.

Nevertheless all of these processes affected the ideological shift in the activities of politicians from the libertarian principles to conservative ones. In spite of the fact that there is no coherent conservative ideology in Armenia, based on certain fundamental political line of the political parties conservatism is regarded by the members of Armenian society as a most appropriate political ideology for implementing democratic reforms in Armenia. This attitude is based on the fact that conservatism, from the one hand, does not exclude the socio-economic and political changes in society and tries to protect them from political extremism and radicalism, and, from the other hand, it takes into account the national traditions and values of the Armenian people. In general, the doctrine of conservatism includes the idea of a moderate market economy and it is more “sensitive” to the patriotic sentiment, morality, national customs, culture and history.

Armenia is not a country with a long statist tradition; therefore it developed a value-type conservatism, which is called national-conservatism. National-conservatism occupies a middle position between the Western-style neo-conservatism (which is actually identical to libertarianism), and reactionary nationalism. At the same time national-conservatism in Armenia combines healthy and useful ideas of liberal doctrine (primarily in the economy) and ideas of enlightened nationalism (in the crucial fields of culture and state-building). Thus, it can be concluded, that in general a change of ideological orientations in Armenia marks the transition of society into a new phase of its development.

The recommendation for the future research is to study the issue of self-identification in the Armenian society. This will lead to a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of ideological pluralism that exists in the Armenia. Also, it will help researchers identify the peculiarities of the process of democratization of the modern Armenian society in transition and provide the basics for developing a political strategy, which will take into account the peculiarities of national political life and culture and be able to define form of political existence of the state and society and entire Armenian nation.

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