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From Developmentalism to Mobilisation

The Case of Georgian Violent Transition

Ph.D. Thesis

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Declaration:

I, Vít Střítecký, hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me, that it is the result of work carried out by me and that all the sources used in this thesis are duly indicated and listed in the bibliographical references.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to conceptualize a link between the phenomenona of developmentalist state and ethnopolitical mobilization while arguing that the study of post-developmental transition should be based on a complex framework involving crucial social, economic, and political processes. The argument begins with the overview of the approaches of the late/post-Soviet transition, which are critically assessed on the basis of their anchoring in the modernization paradigm. The thesis then turns to the formulation of the alternative theoretical explanation based on the sound theoretical observations from the field of historical sociology. The theoretical debate leads to the formulation of the model involving three causal mechanisms connecting the macro and micro levels. Empirically, the thesis argues that Georgian violent mobilization resulted from the processes that were determined by the functioning and decline of the Soviet developmentalist state. While accepting the dynamics of ethnopolitical mobilization it seeks to answer the question which socio-economic processes breed these mobilizations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Two decades have passed since the violent break up of the Soviet Union and the Georgian affairs belong among the most discussed issues in the post-Soviet world. This is mostly due to the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia that used to be labelled as "protracted" or "frozen conflicts", even if neither of the terms has not seem to be adequate already for a long time. Nevertheless, the opening reference to the conflictual autonomies should shift the attention to the violent transition period that gave a hard time to Georgia in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Hence, although it would be appealing to analyse current developments, this thesis will focus on the explanation of the complicated transition, which was accompanied by severe civil war and two ethnopolitical conflicts flaring up in South Ossetia and Ablhazia.

I would rather tend to avoid mentioning the disciplinary cliché that ethnic (ethnopolitical) conflicts are complex multi-causal situations that can safely introduce any theme to social science. Even if this assertion holds true, there seems to be a dominant group of approaches studying ethnic political conflicts, especially in the post-Communist settings. Directly or indirectly, these approaches follow the modernisation paradigm while focusing primarily on the growth of nationalism and ethnic identity and consequent ethnic mobilisation. In addition, they often combine these notions with various agents ranging from institutional settings to elites' skills, or employ diverse conceptualizations of the effects of totalitarianism, so much prevalent during the Cold War.

This thesis seeks to offer an alternative approach. Nevertheless, it does not mean that it would completely overlook the issue of ethnic mobilisation since it is safe to claim that the process of ethnic mobilisation is undeniable part of the conflicts occurring in Georgia.

That said, the thesis argues that the dominant literature addressing the late Soviet period and post-Soviet transitions often offers relevant but rather 'incomplete' picture due to attributing either too much, or even sole, explanatory power to the nationalist or identity features of the violent mobilizations. Although various theoretically well-informed studies provided generally convincing explanations, they often appeared to ignore other social and economic processes that deserve analytical attention.

While formulating the alternative the thesis seeks to conceptualize a link between the two macro-phenomena of the developmentalist state and ethnopolitical mobilisation. The idea is to suggest a theoretically sound framework that would establish explanatory mechanism connecting the functioning and dynamics of the Soviet developmentalist state with ethnopolitical mobilisation, which in many places accompanied its demise. The emphasis put on a broader theoretical background should be underlined as the thesis should on no account provide a 'focused', ethnographic study of a specific spot hidden somewhere between the Black and Caspian Seas and covered by the shadows of the Caucasian range. Quite on the contrary, although the thesis does not endeavour to offer any precise comparative insights, the general idea, indeed ambitious from the disciplinary point of view, is to illustrate a theoretical reasoning that could virtually be applicable in all cases of the post-developmentalist transition.

Hence, this thesis aims at elucidating the causes of the violent mobilisation in Georgia while setting them into a broader theoretical perspective that also essentially outreaches the regional perspective. To be precise, the thesis does not want to challenge the approaches that strongly build on dynamics coming from national or ethnic mobilization. Rather, the idea is to show how political and economic conditions and processes breed ethnopolitcal mobilisations in the post-developmentalist states.

There are several good reasons for why it is appropriate to use Georgia as a case study. Most obviously, the civil war and related conflicts in the autonomies were extremely severe, brought about thousands of casualties and left behind burdens that have not been overcome even in more than two decades after the relative stabilization. However, besides the widely discussed issues of Georgia's ethnic and cultural heterogeneity or her particular institutional design inherited from the Bolshevik period, Georgia has been an extremely interesting object for the students of the specific features of the Soviet political economy and governance. For instance, Georgian society ranked as the most corrupt and kleptocratic society in the Soviet Union. This issue becomes even more interesting when connected with the distinct informal social structures and cultural rules working in Georgian society that range from clan structures to the phenomenon of the thieves-in-law.

Following the above-mentioned introductory notes, the argument will develop as follows. The first chapter of the thesis briefly maps out the most important groups of approaches studying the collapse of the Soviet Union. It will cover the approaches applying a short time perspective underlining the conditions of transition as well as theories focusing on identity politics and the subversive role of institutions. The overview of the relevant approaches should not provide exhaustive disciplinary list but introduce the main analytical accounts.

The second chapter provides the theoretical discussion defining the framework for the empirical analysis. The introduction to the theorization is made the challenge of the widely shared modernisation paradigm linking the ethnic political conflicts with the developments of the modern societies. Most importantly, the modernisation paradigm is criticised for being based on a unilinear progressive perspective that limits its analytical scope. Instead of building on the critique of modernisation, the thesis seeks to put forward a complex causal framework capable of illustrating the thesis that the (ethnic)

violent politics that broke out in the Caucasus should be seen as a desperate reaction to the decay of the Soviet developmentalist state. The concept of developmentalist state was developed by the world-system theorists when addressing the endeavours of the "second tier" Communist states to catch up with the capitalist core. Typically, these states went through a period of massive industrialisation that had tremendous effects on the structure and dynamics of the societies.

These systemic effects need to be observed on the social structure level, where the other brands of historical sociology provide some strong foundations for a study of class dynamics during the periods of large transformation. However, this literature also offers another inspiration consisting in the emphasis put on the issue of the state, or more precisely state breakdown, during the (violent) transitions. The challenge lies in linking the primary sociological observations with the phenomenon of ethnopolitical mobilisation that has been usually studied separately from, or at least independently on, the larger political and economic processes.

While addressing this challenge the thesis will in the next chapter offer a model of causal mechanisms inspired by the macro-micro-macro model.[1] The causal link between the general phenomena of developmentalist state and ethnopolitical mobilisation will be unfolded into three types of mechanisms illustrating the mechanisms between these macro phenomena and two micro issues of class dynamics and state's functioning. The analysis of the micro processes will allow us to grasp the causal link between phenomena coming into interplay during the period of late/post-Soviet transformation.

The following empirical chapter will seek to convincingly illustrate the causal mechanisms. The subsequent parts will trace the environmental mechanism linking the conditions of the developmentalist state with social change, the relational mechanisms

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[1] Coleman, S., James (1990): *Foundations of Social Theory*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 14-21

focusing on the alterations of social actors' interests and behaviour and finally cognitive mechanisms providing explanation of ethnopolitical mobilisation. Reflecting the richness of empirical material that conclusion will summarize the effects of the mechanisms.

2 STUDYING THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

The rapid fall of Communism in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s was accompanied by the rise of several violent conflicts. Almost all of them were connected with the break ups of the former Communist federations of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Particularly the conflicts in the Balkans attracted a wide attention in both political and research communities. This could be hardly surprising given the de-stabilizing role the Balkans played several times in European history. From a disciplinary perspective both the conflicts in the Balkans and those in the post-Soviet area provided several new challenges as well as opportunities for theoretical reflections. Many scholars have tried to understand and explain the conflicts in the post-Soviet area by referring to a wide range of factors. With a certain sense of generalization we could generally divide them into two major categories. The first group includes factors emergent from the transitional processes. The theoretical frameworks belonging to this group dominantly work with the variables connected to the problems of democratization or permanent political crises. The other group, which perhaps constitutes the dominant strand within this area, consists of theories that build on the long-term legacies of the Soviet rule. The issue of the Soviet legacies essentially implies the problems of national and identity differences that were bolstered by the character of the Soviet political and institutional system.

The following part should provide a review of the literature representing the above-mentioned wide theoretical groups. The chapter will first introduce the main theoretical thesis of the approaches and then will focus on the explanation of the destabilization and violence in the former Soviet Union. The aim of this section is not to offer a comprehensive categorization of theories dealing the violent disintegration of the Soviet Union. Rather, the idea rests in mapping the landscape before formulating a theoretical

alternative. It should be also emphasized that the overview includes exclusively literature analyzing the conflicts of the late 1980s and early 1990s era. Although the transformation of the conflictual situations particularly in the Caucasus and Central Asia provided another theoretical challenge and opportunity for the field of conflict studies, these issue stay beyond the scope of this thesis.

2.1 Transitological Perspective

Transitologists have often been sceptical about the prospects of the democratizing process in multi-national states. Hughes and Sasse mention that already the founding father of modern liberal theory, John Stuart Mill, claimed that democracy in an ethnically diverse state is 'next to impossible'.[2] The issue becomes even more difficult when ethnic differences are delimitated by a territorial arrangement. Indeed, although both the role of nationalities/identities as well as institutions will be addressed also separately later in this section, the transitological perspective focusing on the actual process political change essentially involves both of these realms and their mutual relation. Following the sceptical position regarding the democracy in multi-national states there is a strong first-hand claim that the most successful, easiest and fastest transitions in Central and Eastern Europe occurred in the ethnically homogenous countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia).

The scepticism has also been driven by the Latin American experience. As various scholars have shown, a rapid decomposition of a strong state may fundamentally affect societal stability as well as create new challenges for the former oppositional structures or the

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[2] Hughes, James, and Sasse, Gwendolyn (2002): 'Comparing Regional and Ethnic Conflicts in Post-Soviet Transition States', in Hughes, James, and Sasse (eds): *Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in Conflict*, London: Frank Cass, p. 9, quoting Mill's Considerations on Representative Government.

roots of civil societies.[3] The Latin American experience to a large extent preceded the cases in Eastern Europe. Therefore it is not surprising that a methodological question based on potential comparisons of these two sets of cases appeared. Indeed, several scholars have proposed that the cases of the Latin American and East European transitions allow for comparisons.[4] However, at the same time others have argued that the cases are essentially distinctive and hence do not provide room for comparative analyses.[5]

Traditional transitology has naturally rejected any long-term perspective. The process of transition should not be viewed as an inexorable and cumulative trajectory of protests and social unrests that started already decades before the change. At the same time and importantly for this thesis, transitologists do not tend to consider the events as parts of the wider social and/or historical processes. Ekiert has clearly stated that 'despite many similarities, the instances of mass protest and social unrest which have occurred in different state-socialist countries do not necessarily form a single historical pattern or trend.'[6] Hence, from an ontological perspective transitological literature remains dominantly on the lower levels of analyses while rejecting any connections with larger processes, global patterns of development or even world system trajectories. Nevertheless, it does offer some generalizations across the cases or potentially group of cases (e.g. Latin America, Eastern Europe).

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[3] The relevancy of comparisons is recommended, for example, in Schmitter, Philippe C. and Karl, Terry L. (1994): 'The Conceptual Travels of Transitologists and Consolidologists: How Far to the East Should they Attempt to Go?', *Slavic Review*, 53,1. The argument concerning a civil society development is developed in Stepan, Alfred (1985): 'State Power and the Strengths of Civil Society in the Southern Cone of Latin America', in Evans, Peter B., Rueschmeyer, Dietrich, and Skocpol, Theda (eds.): *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 192-227.

[4] Schmitter, Philippe C. and Karl, Terry L. (1994): 'The Conceptual Travels of Transitologists and Consolidologists: How Far to the East Should they Attempt to Go?', *Slavic Review*, 53,1, pp. 173-176.

[5] Bunce, Valery (1995): 'Should Transitologists Be Grounded?', *Slavic Review*, 54/1, pp. 11-127, Bunce, Valery (1995): "Comparing East and South", *Journal of Democracy*, 6,3, pp. 87-100, Terry, Sarah M. (1993): 'Thinking about Post-Communist Transitions: How Different Are They?', *Slavic Review*, 52,2, pp. 333-337.

[6] Ekiert, Grzegor (1991): 'Democratization Processes in East Central Europe: A Theoretical Reconsideration', *British Journal of Political Science*, 21,3, p. 286.

It is also worth noting that the transitological paradigm shifted quite essentially over the last decades. The first views considered the distinctive systems of totalitarianism and democracy and Soviet ideology and the ideology of nationalism in a purely Manichean fashion (Brzezinski). This position was challenged and to a certain extent substituted by the modernization approach, which emphasized the interconnected roles of political and economic modernization. While stressing not the form but the degree of government, Huntington argued that a dynamics of economic modernization had not often been accompanied by a relevant development of political institutions. The inadequateness of these institutions does not appear to be important in stable societies or peaceful periods; however, it becomes the essential problem in situations of social conflicts.[7] Indeed, the turn from ideology towards institutions and their control over political processes successfully left aside an ideological dogma related to the Communist states.

According to the adherents of the modernization theory, democratization resembles a progressive and inevitable process leading to regimes' and states' transformations. The functioning of this linear logic is assured through the economic development and subsequent adaptation of political institutions. As noted earlier the modernists strongly perceived a possible conflictual nature in these transitions. Indeed, a need to emphasize the role of a functional institutional setting for appeasing arising conflicts often provided, in fact, the point of departure for this stream of thinking.

The most recognized approach directly connecting conflicts with democratic transitional periods has recently been developed by Snyder and Mansfield.[8] While attacking the dominant political belief

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[7] Huntington, Samuel P. (1968): *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
[8] Snyder, Jack (2000): *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*. New York: Norton, Mansfield, Edward D., and Snyder, Jack (2002): 'Democratic Transitions, Institutional Strength, and War', *International Organization*, 56, 2, Mansfield, Edward D. and Snyder, Jack (1995a): 'Democratization and the Danger of War', *International Security*, 20, 1, Mansfield, Edward D. and Snyder, Jack (1995b): 'Democratization and War', *Foreign Affairs*, 74 (3).

based on the democratic peace theory that the export of democracy is the best prescription for stabilizing former autocratic or totalitarian states and regions, they have argued that, on the contrary, transitional periods are prone to violence and both intra- as well as inter-state wars. Their analyses further suggest that the belligerent potential is mostly carried by both old and new elites, who mobilize the masses to fulfil their own goals and interests. In other words, 'elites exploit their power in the imperfect institutions of partial democracies to create *faits accomplish*, control political agendas, and shape the content of information media in ways that promote belligerent pressure-group lobbies or upwelling of militancy in the populace as a whole.'[9] The apparent tools for the elite's strategies are provided by nationalism and populism.

Snyder and Mansfield have thus emphasized also the same categories as the adherents of the second group outlined in this overview – nationalism and leadership. However, they approach their agency only under the particular circumstances of the transition period, which implies a natural general uncertainty and a weak institutional structure. Their statistical analysis, although criticized[10], offered a strong theoretical claim, which, in the case of Georgia, had been preceded as well as followed by many empirical observations.[11] It should also be noted that Snyder's theory is prescriptive. It is not just that he essentially attacks the democratic peace theory, but he

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[9] Mansfield and Snyder (1995a): *Democratization and the Danger of War*, p. 7.

[10] See, Wolf, Reinhard, Weede, Erich and Enterline, Andrew, J., (1996) in 'Correspondence'. *International Security*, 20, 4, or Thompson, William R. and Tucker, Richard (1997): 'A Tale of Two Democratic Peace Critiques', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 41, 3.

[11] I am aware of the following studies that offer strong insights (not necessarily only) based on the development in the last years before the break up of violence in Georgia: Aves, Jonathan (1996): 'The Post-Soviet Transcaucasia', in Allison, Roy (1996): *Challenges for the Former Soviet South*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, Aves, Jonathan (1992): 'The Rise and Fall of the Georgian Nationalist Movement, 1987-1991', in Hosking, Geoffrey A. (et al., eds.): *The Road to Post-Communism: Independent Political Movement in the Soviet Union 1985-1991*. London: Pinter, Jones, Stephen (1994): 'Georgia: A Failed Democratic Transition', in Bremmer, Ian and Ray, Taras (eds.): *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Nodia, Ghia (1996): 'Political Turmoil in Georgia and the Ethnic Policies of Zviad Gamsakhurdia', in Coopieters, Bruno (ed.): *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*: Bruxelles: VUP Press.

also tackles possible scenarios of conflict resolution, including power-sharing agreements and asymmetric federative arrangements.[12]

2.2 Nationalism, Identity and Conflict

Various attempts to theorize about and conceptualize nationalism and/or identity politics have accompanied modern interest in the rise of ethnic and national identities in relation to ethnic/ethnopolitical conflicts. Despite the intellectual struggles, most of the scholars have agreed on the deprecation of the primordialist perspective, which stresses a given and unchanging ethnic or cultural nature of nations. For example, according to Wimmer, 'national and ethnic identities are in no way remnants of tradition, which have failed to melt away under the sun of modern republicanism'[13], and Brubaker has even referred to primordialism as to a 'long-dead horse that writers on ethnicity and nationalism continue to flog. No serious scholar today holds the view that is routinely attributed to primordialists in straw-man setups, namely that nations or ethnic groups are primordial, unchanging entities.'[14] It should be noted, however, that the primordial reflection aiming at searching for and re-inventing the roots of ethnic communities has also appeared in the ethnographic and ethnosymbolist research mentioned bellow.[15]

While rejecting the primordialist perspective many scholars have espoused the position of rational choice instrumentalism. For them, the politization of ethnicity is envisaged as an optional strategy that,

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[12] Snyder (2000): *From Voting to Violence*, p. 40.

[13] Wimmer, Andreas (2002). *Nationalist Exclusion and Ethnic Conflict: Shadows of Modernity.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 42.

[14] Brubaker, Rogers (1996): *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.15. Some primordialist views are shared by Neo-romantics. The name apparently implies the inspiration coming from the political romanticism of the 19th century, particularly from the German ideals of humanistic nationalism (Herder) or educating the nation (Fichte). The common grounds can be found in the assumption that ethnicity constitutes a fundamental and eternal component of social life. In general, neo-romanticism covers a long process of developing national awareness, from the medieval to the rise of the nation state.

[15] A nice example dealing with the Caucasus is Suny, Grigor, Ronald (2001): "Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations," Journal of Modern History 71 (2001): 862-96

under certain 'incentive structures', may prove to be prosperous. To put it differently, the group's identity is considered relevant and mainly politically meaningful only in relation to the particular political or economic intentions or goals.[16] Anthony Smith has taken a position in between primordialism and instrumentalism. He has rejected both of the extreme positions: the given objectivity of primordialists and the situational subjectivity of instrumentalists.[17]

Finally, for both functionalists and constructivists, nationalism constitutes an integral part of modern society. They, in general, attribute the success of nationalism to the functional needs of a modernizing society. While Smith has seen modern nations as recent expression of their long-term characteristics (*ethnie*), according to the functionalist Gellner, modern nations have lost and abandoned most of their ties to past traditions.[18] Anderson has famously defined 'nation' as 'an imagined political community – imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.'[19] By using the term *imagined community* for a nation, Anderson sought to express the qualitative difference between old communities that were formed around palpable familiar or tribal ties and modern communities (nations) of fellow-members, who never meet or even hear about each other, yet still they share the image of their joint communion. Gellner was, according to Anderson, correct when claiming that nationalism did not awaken the nations to self-consciousness but invented the nations where they never existed. However, Gellner's invention implies, in Anderson's eyes, fabrication and falsity rather than imagination or creation.[20]

The (post)-Soviet studies literature focusing on the role of nationalism in Soviet break up is immense. However, despite that fact

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[16] Hechter, Michael (2000), *Containing Nationalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press

[17] Smith, Anthony D. (1991), *National Identity*, London: Penguin Books, p. 20.

[18] Cf. Gellner, Ernst (1983), *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

[19] Anderson, Benedict (2003). *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso 2003 (third edition), p. 5.

[20] Anderson's Imagined Communities were first published in 1983 (1st edition, Verso, London), in the same year as the most recognized work by Gellner on the topic: Nations and Nationalism (1st edition, Ithaca, Cornell University Press). Anderson thus refers to Gellner's previous work Thought and Change (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London 1994), p. 6.

that the Soviet Union was an unprecedented case of the state that incorporated more than a hundred diverse nations, while one fifth of them numbered more than a million people, the Cold War era sovietology largely omitted the nationality question and did not pay almost any attention to these issues until the late 1960s.[21] Even the Western analysts had accepted the Soviet elites's discourse regarding the „solution" of national question and creation of homo sovieticus.[22] Supposingly, this point could explain the eruption of studies of national question in the Soviet Union in the 1980s and early 1990s.[23]

The general line of argument claimed that the national question fully re-appeared in a context of Gorbachev's reforms that underlined the process that had started with the concessions during the Khrushchev's period and became bolstered by Brezhnev's national cadres policy. As Lieven and McGarry put it, 'for those interested in maintaining control over the nationalities, perestroika and glasnost came to represent a nightmare.'[24] In the second half of the 1980s the situation in the Soviet Union gradually reached the stages of political mobilization. This process also culminated in the creation of socio-political movements that were crucially built on the national foundations. The national question became a fundamental part of the

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[21] The critics have found several reasons for this fact, including a state-centric view of the Soviet society reflecting the framework of the totalitarian model, exaggeration of the ideological factor, or a prevailing orientation on Russia and Russians. The limits of sovietology were also naturally given by a close connection to the political agenda of the Western foreign policy. See Gleason, Gregory (1992): 'The "National Factor" and the Logic of Sovietology', in: Motyl, A. J. (ed.), *The Post-Soviet Nations – Perspective on the Demise of the USSR*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 2-25.

[22] Warshofsky-Lapidus, Gail (1984): 'Ethnonationalism and Political Stability: The Soviet Case', *World Politics*, Vol.36, No.4, (Jul., 1984), p.555.

[23] The list that is by no way exhausting may include: Connor, Walker (1984): *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory*, Princeton University Press; Conquest, Robert (1986): *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution; Goldman, Phillip, Lapidus, Gail and Zaslavsky, Victor (eds.), *From Union to Commonwealth: Nationalism and Speratism in the Soviet Republics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Hajda, Lubomyr and Beissinger, Mark (eds.), *The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Security*, Boulder: Westview; Motyl, Alexandr (1992): *The Post-Soviet Nations: Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR*, New York: Columbia University Press; Simon, Gerhard (1991): *Nations and Politics toward Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, Boulder, Westview; Suny, Ronald G. (1993): *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, Stanford: Stanford University Press; Walker, Lee (1996): 'Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Post-Soviet Transition', in: Drobizheva, Leokadia, Gottemoeller, Rose, Kelleher-Mac Ardle, Catherin, Walker, Lee (eds.), *Ethnic Conflict in the Post Soviet World: Case Studies and Analyses*, New York: M.E. Sharpe

[24] Lieven, Dominic, McGarry, John (1997): 'Ethnic Conflict in the Soviet Union', in: McGarry, John, O'Leary, Brendan (eds.), *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation*, pp. 70-71.

Soviet political struggle over the future and form of the Soviet federal system. As Lapidus has explained, the intentions of this political struggle transformed the national rights into states' rights and hence increasingly engaged republic elites as major political protagonists. Within this power framework, republic leaders sought to gain absolute political and economic control over the republics, which progressively led to the proclamations of sovereignty.[25]

2.3 Institutions and Conflict

The emphasis put on institutional setting is apparent already in the above-mentioned group of transitological literature. Scholars studying transitions inevitably focus on the role the institutions play in the critical period of the regime change. A specific performance of institutional factors during transitions is, however, apparently time-limited. The analysis of an institutional framework's functioning can reflect a longer perspective. The crucial questions may be how varied institutional contexts shape and constrain the actions of actors, who aim at either preserving or challenging the current state. As Bunce, in a classical work of this stream, has noted, '[t]he irony of the collapse of socialism, then, was that the very institutions that had defined these systems and that were, presumably, to defend them as well, ended up functioning over time to subvert both the regime and the state.'[26]

Given the multinational and ethnofederalist character of the Soviet state, the logic would suggest that the visible central organs should at least partially reflect the ethnic complexity of the entire population and the local power-structures should reflect the national situation in the surrounding area. In particular, one would expect that the raison d'être of the autonomous unit rested upon the fact that

[25] Lapidus, Gail (1992): 'The impact of perestroika on the national question', in: Goldman, Lapidus, and Zaslavsky (eds.), *From Commonwealth to Union*, pp. 45-46.
[26] Bunce, Valery (1999): *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 2.

these units were administrated by the titular nationalities. However, the central organs, with the exception of Brezhnev's period, remained almost for the entire Soviet era dominantly reserved for Slavs, mostly Russians. The situation in the administrative units changed even if the Soviet leadership managed to maintain representatives in all of the republics. The most efficient strategy was hidden in what became termed 'the exchange of cadres', aiming at developing the inter-republican exchange of workers and cadres, but it proved to be 'an essentially one-way supply of key personnel from Moscow.'[27] The other strategy was based on appointing local representatives to positions of a great visibility but little power. Typically, for example, the position of the first secretary was assigned to indigenous cadres, but that of the more powerful second secretary, often responsible for the monitoring of the cadre policy in the unit, went to a non-indigene, usually Russian. To make the control process as effective as possible, the second secretaries were almost periodically changed so that they could not develop local ties and relations.

Moreover, Roeder has convincingly showed that both formal and informal political rules, the "constitution of Bolshevism", which at one point helped to stabilize the Soviet regime, later essentially contributed to its breakdown.[28] He has especially argued that the Soviet institutional setting disabled the needed reforms when paradoxically tying the hands of the reformers. Roeder's major focus was on the structures of leadership. After Stalin's and, as has been already mentioned, particularly during Brezhnev's period, the positions of ethnic minorities' leaders were strengthened. Nevertheless, the system of reciprocal accountability created a strong dependency of the local leaders on the 'selectorate', party leaders and high profile democrats responsible for selecting leaders.

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[27] Connor, Walker (1992), 'Soviet Policies Toward the Non-Russian Peoples in Theoretic and Historic Perspective: What Gorbachev Inherited', in: Motyl (1992), *The Post-Soviet Nations*, p. 3.
[28] Roeder, Phillip G. (1993), *Red Sunset: The Failure of the Soviet Union*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

On the other hand Lenin's strategy already included a preferential treatment of representatives of local nationalities. The strategy developed a special quota system for local cadres with regard to access to higher education and placement into the top administrative posts. The number of locals in the units' administrations also increased after Stalin's death. Moreover, Brezhnev, while creating his obedient regional power base, promoted the indigenization of grateful local leaders. Although the real power-institutions were under the control of the centre, the encouragement of minority representatives to apply for executive positions led to the creation of the section of educated and experienced local elites that later became 'key actors in the playing of the ethnic card as part of their own power-accumulating or profit-maximizing agenda.'[29]

Quite similarly, when observing the regional separatism in Russia, Treisman has more explicitly concluded that local leaders within the Russian Federation often tended to stress the distinct local identities to increase their bargaining power with the centre, although this strategy was but a smokescreen for the real attempts to strengthen their control over political and mainly economic institutions.[30] A similar argument emphasizing rather a justification of the exceptional position within the bargaining process was developed by Solnick. [31]

The federal structure of the Soviet state apparently played a role in the retention and development of the minorities' national identities and demands. The Soviet system of "institutionalized multinationality"[32] established nationality as an essential social

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[29] Hughes, James, and Sasse, Gwendolyn (2001), *Comparing Regional and Ethnic Conflicts in Post-Soviet Transition States: An Institutional Approach*, paper presented at ECPR Joint Sessions, Grenoble, April 2001, p. 14.

[30] Treisman, Daniel (1996): 'The Politics of Intergovernmental Transfers in Post-Soviet Russia', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 26, No. 2 and Treisman, Daniel (1997), 'Russia's Ethnic Revival: The Separatist Activism of Regional Leaders in a Postcommunist Order', *World Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 2.

[31] Solnick, Steven (1995): 'Federal Bargaining in Russia', *East European Constitutional Review*, Vol. 4, No. 4. For a critique of these views, see Gorenburg, Dmitry (1999), 'Regional Separatism in Russia: Ethnic Mobilisation or Power Grab?', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 2.

[32] Cf. Brubaker, Rogers (1996), *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

category which took a very different form from the categories of statehood and citizenship. The institutionalization rested on two modes. The first concerned the territorial and administrative division; the other was connected with the classification of persons. The former principle of ethnoterritorial federalism divided the state territory into a four-level set of units with various degrees of political autonomy. This division was guided by the constitution, even if in reality the most powerful tools remained in the hands of the Party apparatus. Nevertheless, the significance of this partition was not based on the fictional constitutional guarantees but rather on the provision of a durable institutional framework which could serve as a platform for the consolidation of the national elite and as a support for various political, cultural, language or educational concessions and protections. While the former principle created the system of national jurisdictions, the latter divided the peoples of the Soviet state into exhaustive and often exclusive national groups. They were hidden under the term "nationality" (*natsional'nost'*), which appeared as a statistical category providing Communists with important strategic information. Nationality was, on one hand, only ascriptive and de facto an obligatory legal aspect. However, it could, on the other hand, fundamentally influence one's life regarding the miscellaneous Soviet quota qualifying systems. As Brubaker concludes, 'it was thus through an irony of history…that nationalities became and remained a basic institutional building block of the avowedly internationalist, supra-nationalist, and anti-nationalist Soviet state, with the land partitioned into a set of bounded national territories…and citizenry divided into a set of legally codified nationalities.'[33] Hence, the Soviet system, through the institutionalization of nationality within the ethnofederal framework, created powerfully conflicting expectations of

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[33] Brubaker, Rogers (1996), *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 32.

belonging,[34] which became both an incentive and a tool for the leaders of the emancipating processes.

Cornell has performed a detailed study to investigate whether territorial autonomy was a contributing factor to the violent conflicts which have broken out in the South Caucasus.[35] The three countries of this region – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia - harboured nine compactly settled minorities[36] but experienced only three major violent conflicts (Mountainous Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia). Besides autonomy, he proposed nine other conflictual factors derived from the theoretical literature (cultural differences, national conception, past conflict and myth, rough terrain, relative demography, existence of ethnic kin, economic viability, radical leadership, and external support) and contrasted them with the three violent and six peaceful cases. According to his results, the highest correlation appeared in the factor of territorial autonomy as the wars occurred in the former Soviet autonomies (the former Soviet Autonomous Republics of Karabakh and Abkhazia and the Soviet Autonomous Region South Ossetia). The only remaining autonomy in the South Caucasus, Ajaria, has stayed peaceful[37], just like all the remaining formerly non-autonomous minorities.[38]

It was even more ironical that it was exactly the structure that according to Bolshevik ideologues should have dissolved the effete national sentiments. The original formula 'nationalist in form, socialist in content' expressed its essential characteristic. It encompassed the notion of two divisions – national and political. The

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[34] Brubaker (1996), p. 54.
[35] Cornell, Svante (2001), *Autonomy and Conflict: Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia*, PhD dissertation, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University.
[36] These were the Armenians in Mountainous Karabakh, the Lezgins and Talysh in Azerbaijan, the Azeris in Armenia, the Armenians from Javakhetia, the Azeris from Kvemo Kartli, and the Ajars, Abkhaz and Ossetians in Georgia.
[37] For an explanation, see Cornell (2001), *Autonomy and Conflict*, pp. 214-224, or Cornell, Svante (2002): *Small Nations and Great Powers*, London: RoutledgeCurzon.
[38] The other factors found highly relevant, though not as much as autonomy, include national conception, past conflicts and myths, rough terrain, economic viability, radical leadership, and external support.

socialist content was totally in the hands of the Party. However, its structure was parallel to the state structure, and its organizational boundaries were drawn similarly to the territorial administrative division. As a result, the Party and the republic administration functionally blend while serving as a powerful platform for the articulation of the ethnic elites' demands. Consequentially, the situation, in which ethnic and political as well as economic structures converged, dramatically strengthened each group's perception of competitive power and similarly motivated self-promoting behaviour. In other words, 'the convergence of ethnic and administrative boundaries resulted in politization of ethnicity and in the emergence of nationalism.'[39] Moreover, the centralized structure of the Soviet Union did not create space for any alternative mechanisms that would provide a more functional aggregation of interests. In fact, this process began with the Stalinization of the Soviet political system, when the factual sovereignty of the national and autonomous republics was reduced to what Terry has called an 'affirmative action empire'.[40] It practically meant the offer of elite ranks for those who were willing to keep the rules of the game and cultural, educational and language concessions as long as the socialist content was not endangered.

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[39] Rakowska-Harmstone (1986), *Minority Nationalism Today*, p. 239.
[40] Cf. Terry, Martin (2001), *The Affirmative Action Empire- Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The Modernisation Paradigm

The thesis argues that the wave of violence that blew over the Soviet southern periphery in the late 1980s and early 1990s was not solely caused by the awakening of the hidden, but deeply rooted, ethnic identities. Nor do I believe that the primary cause should be seen in the actions of the skilful entrepreneurs, who managed to mobilize the people on the grounds of identity politics in the conditions of fragile transformation that some of the above-mentioned observers still tend to call democratization. That being said, the thesis is not arguing that these processes did not occur or that they were absolutely irrelevant. Rather, it argues that they should be viewed as responsive to the conditions corresponding with larger structural processes. In other words, I accept that the analyses focusing on ethnic and national mobilizations and their principal agents, and on the unstable periods leading up to the end of the Soviet Union that were necessarily concisely overviewed in the first chapter have provided some relevant ideas. But I would at the same time assert that they offer only a "second image" explanation of the processes that leave the analysis incomplete. The crucial idea of this thesis is to illustrate in what situation determined by the structural conditions the identity politics worked.

The wave of ethnic political violence in the 1960s that hit both relatively developed and industrialized as well as developing countries found the theories of conflict studiers unable to account for the persistence of these conflicts. Much of the subsequent theoretical endeavour evolved within the discipline confines of the modernization (and development) paradigms. In the early stages the progressive reasoning of the modernisation paradigm appeared to put forward an argument that the wave of ethnic (political) conflicts is directly related with the emergence of "modern" societies. However, this position clearly came up as unsustainable against the rich empirical

reality of the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, the dominant stream of literature began to focus on the conflictual potential of the growing interethnic social and economic activities. The process of modernisation became understood as a sufficient condition for the emergence of ethnic political conflict, while the analytical focus was placed on the economic and social changes preceding the conflicts and on the agency provided by skilful leadership exploiting the social and economic shifts.

3.1.1 Modernisation and the decline of ethnic identities

The former understanding of modernisation was largely based on the conceptualisation of the relation between ethnicity and politics developed by Marx and Durkheim, who both attempted at placing ethnic identities into a larger framework of social and economic transformation paradigmatically understood as modernisation. As noted earlier, classical Marxism viewed (ethnic) nationalism (as well as religion) as consciousness belonging to the superstructure developed and controlled by the dominant economic and political classes.[41] More precisely, as a false consciousness, ethnicity served the dominant classes to legitimize their rule through binding together and stabilizing diverse classes with different economic statuses. In Marx's understanding the process of modernisation would lead to the ultimate victory of proletariat bringing about the elimination of all manifestations of all class dominations including the ethnic consciousness. In other words, modernisation in Marx's understanding accounted for both evolving the instrumental tie between ethnicity and politics at one stage and destroying the relation at the final stage.

Durkheim structured his theory along the terms of mechanically integrated society and organically integrated society. The former is integrated on the basis of collective primordial identifications that constantly allow reproducing the society via traditional symbolic

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[41] Marx's understanding can be best derived from his critique of Feuerbach, Bauer, Stirner. See, Marx, Karl and Engles, Fridrich (2011), *The German Ideology*, Martino Fine Books (orig. 1947, introduction by Roy Pascal)

manifestations or rituals. The latter society seeks its cohesiveness in the mutual dependence structured by the division of labour. [42] The crucial role is not attributed to the primordial symbols but to the economic and social roles divided among the societies' members. This process is driven by the conditions of modernisation and accompanied by the crises connected with vanishing of ethnic identifications. [43]

In one way or another both Marx and Durkheim's understanding of ethnic political conflicts implied a clash of stubborn primordial identities and their decline under the modernisation process. The Durkheimian explanation of the shift between the two types of societies also led to a development of the strain theory suggesting that individuals might tend to lean towards their anachronistic ethnic identities during the periods of greater changes; even if their relevancy disappears with the ongoing re-integration of the society. [44] Nevertheless, ethnic political conflicts did not disappear after in due time but on the contrary were generally gaining intensity. Following this empirical evidence the modernisation paradigm became reformulated. Most importantly and contrary to the expectations of Marx and Durkheim, modernisation was no further understood as suppressing ethnic divisions in a long run but on the contrary invigorate them. Due to the various developmental routes the previously isolated ethnic groups reached a stadium, in which they were forced to strive for the same political and economic niches. From this perspective modernisation has a clear conflictual potential. This paradigmatic shift opened room for various non-primordialist approaches to national and ethnic identities mentioned in the first chapter.

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[42] Durkheim, Émile, The Division of Labor in Society, New York: The Free Press, 1997, pp. 126-149
[43] Merton, K., Robert (1934), Durkheim's Division of Labor in Society, *American journal of Sociology*, Vol. 40, Issue 3, pp. 319-328
[44] Smelser, J., Neil (1952), *Theory of Collective Behavior*, The Free Press, pp. 50-55

3.1.2 *Modernisation and Ethnic (Political) Conflict*

Deutsch was among the first scholars attempting at formulating the conflictual modernization perspective to ethnic conflict. More specifically, he has mentioned the process of social mobilization that concerns large numbers of people in areas which undergo modernization.[45] Such social mobilization is not identical with the process of modernization, but it is its substantial consequence and as such, it circularly becomes its significant cause. His definition emphasizes the notion of change, since social mobilization is 'the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded and broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behaviour'[46].

According to Deutsch the process of social mobilization brought about several changes and developments in the economic and political-administrative areas. It created new politically relevant strata of people that must have been taken into account in politics. These could typically have been trade union members or, for example, the new class of farmers. Furthermore, the new environment of the densely populated suburbs required more individualist or selfish behaviour, which might dramatically shift human needs and feelings. It also created new demands on the governmental administration, which was consequentially supposed to develop and increase. The increasing numbers of the mobilized population and the greater expression of their needs for political decisions and governmental services led to increased political participation.[47] Moreover, social mobilization often shifted the parochial or international orientations of the traditional cultures towards local national units.

Deutsch's emphasis put on mobilisation inspired also scholars generally distancing from the modernisation paradigm. That said,

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[45] Deutsch, Karl, 'Social Mobilization and Political Development', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LV, No. 3, September 1961, pp. 493-514.
[46] Deutsch (1961), 'Social Mobilization and Political Development', p. 494.
[47] Ibid., pp. 489-499.

Tilly has emphasized a condition of needful resources which can only be accessed through affiliation with an organized group. This process also essentially involves the issue of mobilization, which is necessary for providing resources and capacity to the contenders. The mobilization and acquisition of resources naturally determine any conceivable success. However, the stress put on the process of gaining the resources implies that the government and other contending groups possessing necessary resources may attempt to repress the developing collective action when increasing the costs. Indeed, Tilly has not endeavoured to observe violence specifically, as he has believed that violent actions are only by-products of a common competition over power following particular interests and goals. For Tilly, it is one of the forms of collective actions. Violence 'grows out of actions which are not intrinsically violent, and which are basically similar to a much larger number of collective actions occurring without violence in the same periods and settings.'[48] Revolutions as well as collective violence hence tend to flow directly out of central political processes.

As the above mentioned very brief exposition of approaches to the study of nationalism has drawn out, the entire process of the social mobilization and its effects is obviously connected with the formation of the modern national state. The increasing social mobility unavoidably caused clashes among culturally or ethnically different groups. The entire process gained further significance since, as Deutsch has put it, 'ethnic conflict is analogous to a race between rates of social mobilization and rates of assimilation.'[49] The hidden potential of the processes of modernization rests on the fact that social mobilization is much faster than cultural assimilation.

Accordingly, modernity has brought about several benefits that were not spread equally among ethnic groups. According to adherents

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[48] Tilly, Charles (1978), *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Addison Wesley Publishing Company, p. 177.

[49] Horowitz, Donald (1985), *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkley: University of California, p. 100.

of the modernization approach, conflicts or tensions often arise due to the uneven distribution of economic sources or various cultural and educational opportunities. The situation produces two divergent effects. The process of modernization makes for the homogenization of goals and values, while the elites of the groups endeavour to mobilize their members and stress the ethnic or cultural otherness. This trend has been observed by Melson and Wolpe, who have formulated two consequences of social mobilization. First, a new framework of modernized economy and polity requires a new system of rewards and paths to rewards in all spheres of society. Consequentially, people's aspirations toward and expectations of goods, recognition or power grow rapidly. In effect, however, the just mentioned triad of rewards has a general relevance. Or, in other words, people's desires significantly converge. 'Men enter into conflict not because they are different but because they are essentially the same. It is by making men "more alike", in the sense of possessing the same wants, that modernization tends to promote conflict.'[50] Second, social mobilization generates also an increasing demand for scarce resources that cannot be covered by their supply. The reality of "modern scarcity" makes competitors perceive the conflicts as zero-sum games. No matter how accurate this perception actually is, it naturally leads to the increasing competitiveness. According to Melson and Wolpe, these two points define the backdrop of a conflict in modernized culturally plural societies.[51]

3.1.3   *Modernisation challenged*

While thinking broadly about the concept of modernisation, Wallerstein has not hesitated to define a common ground of the liberal and Marxist paradigms, which were dominant and strictly diverging since the 19th century. Although both liberals and Marxists use different expressions and categories to capture the development, they

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[50] Melson, Robert, and Wolpe, Howard (1970), 'Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4, Dec., p. 1114.
[51] Ibid, pp. 1114-1115.

both view it as a unilinear progressive process.[52] Indeed, having in mind the traditional graphic expressions, the unilinearity is apparent regardless of whether we follow a growing line (liberals) or cycles connected into a spiral (Marxists). While bringing up different labels, emphasizing different contexts, and determining different driving forces, both approaches obviously operate with developmental stages, being the noticeable steps in the process of a distinctly understood progression. Quite logically, as the evolutionary tracks are different, the ultimate aims of both paradigms constitute direct contra-positions – liberal society and Communism. Burawoy has concisely put it in the following dialectical assertion: 'Marxism-Leninism and capitalism ideology are both expressions of modernization theory – they both assume that history's conclusion is already contained in its origin.'[53]

Indeed, considering the great variety of approaches that are generally based upon observations of the development of national identities and institutional framework, we could still observe a common feature lying beyond their actual definition. From a more general perspective, all of these approaches build upon the notion of modernization and its recently recalled and emphasized dark prophesies.[54] The effects of the processes of modernization are, within this perspective, causally linked to the revolutions and, more specifically, to ethnic violence.

Rostow came in the 1950s with the idea that the development of the society from the traditional to the modern could be categorized into several stages, in which the political, economic, and social changes occur simultaneously.[55] One of the crucial moments within the modernization paradigm then became the debate between

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[52] Wallerstein, Immanuel (1991), *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth Century Paradigms*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
[53] Burawoy, Michael (1992), 'The End of Sovietology and the Renaissance of Modernization Theory', *Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 21, No. 6, p. 784.
[54] The most recognized work could be considered to be Huntington, Samuel P. (1996): *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Schuster.
[55] Rostow, Walt (1971), *Politics and the Stages of Growth*, London: Cambridge University Press. It should be noted that his reasoning was influenced or at least informed by the Soviet case. Cf. Rostow, Walt (1953): *The Dynamics of Soviet Society*, New York: W.W. Norton.

economists and political scientists as to whether the developing political systems are direct implications of economic and social changes or whether they tend to develop rather independently. For example, Shils has strongly defended the second thesis while claiming that the formation of a political system has its own dynamics and regularities.[56] Huntington arrived at a moderate view in between both positions after consistently analysing these views when reflecting the events of the 1950s and 1960s.[57] He has argued that the violence frequently occurring in this period 'was in large part the product of rapid social change [under modernization, author's note] and the rapid mobilization of new groups into politics, coupled with the slow development of political institutions.'[58] Huntington's perspective on modernization and collective violence has deserved credit for two main reasons. First, Huntigton withstood the temptation to switch to psychologizing factors[59] and instead of focusing on the factors supporting and leading to peoples' discontent, he has turned his attention to the inherently political processes framing the acts of claims laid on the state and the state's response to them. This contention has created a fertile soil for further elaboration. Secondly, Huntington has originally touched upon a larger structural level while introducing an explanatory triad of rapid social change, mobilization, and political institutionalism. Based on these categories he found an explanation of the prevalence of cases of collective violence or even revolutions in the poorer but not the poorest states. This is quite noticeable while considering that the richer countries are eventually the faster changing ones.[60]

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[56] Shils, Edward (1982), *The Constitution of Society*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.

[57] Although his well-known *Clash of Civilization* generally confirms this reasoning, the crucial referential book in this context is Huntington, Samuel (1996), *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press (1st edition 1968).

[58] Huntington (1996), *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 4.

[59] The study of the aggregate psychological approach focusing directly on people's motivations to engage in any form of (political) violence should start with Gurr, Ted R. (1970): *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. A more recent relevant study is Petersen,, Roger D. (2002): *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

[60] Ibid., pp. 45-55

Huntington's "strucutralist moment" appeared to be rather exceptional[61] since as Tilly has argued, the relation between structural change and political violence has disappeared from the theory on the background of the dominating relation between rapid mobilization and level of institutionalization.[62] In Huntington's theory, modernization has become a cause of mobilization (not immediately conflict), though this link has remained under-specified in terms of agents and/or processes. Tilly has further noted that this theoretical vagueness has contrasted with classical Marxism as 'Marx, by contrast, told us exactly what kind of groups we could expect to emerge as significant political actors out of the development of industrial capitalism.'[63]

Roughly at the same time as Huntington, Barrington Moore, operating in the field of historical sociology, formulated three major historical routes bypassing the epochs of the pre-industrial and modern world. His account strongly suggested the complexity of the processes getting beyond the unilinear modernization paradigm. While building on the classical Marxist assertion that a class-conflict is the driving force of any social change (see below), Moore, instead of focusing on the property system of capitalist industry, attempted to explain the political roles played by the peasantry and the landed upper classes. The first route, covering the transformations in England, France and America, could be labeled as 'bourgeois revolution' as it was leading to the victorious combination of capitalism and democracy. According to Moore, all three of its fundamental social changes, the English and American Civil Wars and the French Revolution, included the development of an economically

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[61] Another strong exception is Olzak and Tsutsui's research testing quantitavely an explanation of ethnic mobilization at the world system. According to their results peripheral countries that have more ties to international governmental organisations experience significantly less ethnic violence than countries lacking these ties. Similarly, the former type of countries displays higher degree of non-violent protests. See, Olzak, Susan and Tsutsui Kyoteru (1998), Status in the World System and Ethnic Mobilization, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 42, No. 6, pp. 691-720

[62] Cf. Tilly, Charles (1973), 'Does Modernization Breed Revolution', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 431-34.

[63] Ibid., p. 431.

independent group, which challenged the historical burdens to flourishing capitalism. Although it has widely been accepted that traders and manufacturers essentially drove the dynamics of these revolutions, according to Moore both of the classes in focus played distinctly important roles in all three countries.[64]

While the first route successfully ended in a capitalist economy working within democratic political conditions, the second route also started with the capitalist transformation but resulted in the fascist totalitarian regimes of Germany and Japan. As the bourgeois class was substantially weaker in these countries, the revolution could only be imposed from above. Barrington Moore has shown that the interests of weak commercial and industrial classes aiming at creating conditions for modern industrial capitalism were for a certain period backed by the dominant traditional ruling classes, which were recruited mostly from the land. The support of the mighty ruling classes essentially spurred the development; yet the short-time quasi-democratic regimes quickly shifted towards fascism with the growing reactionary abortive tendencies of the traditional gentry.[65]

Finally and most notably in the context of this thesis, the third route was paved by the Communist strategies exemplified in the Russian and Chinese cases. Contrary to the previous route, traditional agrarian bureaucracy never provided any support for modern industrialization. This situation unavoidably led to the marginalization of the urban classes that became the winners in the first case and were influential in the second one, as well as to the preservation of the huge peasantry. Essentially, this class provided the crucial revolutionary potential which converged with the Communist ideological promises and directed the countries away from both democracy and capitalism.[66]

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[64] Moore, Barrington, Jr. (1966), *Social Origins of Dictatorships and Democracy: Lord and Peasants in the Making of the Modern World*, Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 3-158.
[65] Barrington Moore has deeply dealt only with Japan. See Barrington Moore (1966), pp. 228-313.
[66] Moore has again deeply investigated only the Chinese case. Moore (1966), pp. 162-227.

3.2   Defining the Alternative

After introducing the modernisation paradigm and reflecting its limited scope the theoretical discussion will continue by suggesting an alternative framework filling up the gaps in the above-outlined incomplete picture. To begin with I would recall Burawoy's dark vision about the future of post-Communist transitions leading at best to a 'merchant' or 'feudal capitalism', which is informed by the modernization theory that 'conspires in obscuring the ever-widening gap between ideology and reality [and] fosters a false optimism about the future that could lead to a tragedy even greater than the one we associate with Marxism-Leninsm'[67], this thesis contradicts the ideas of the adherents of modernization that are more specifically linked with ethnic violence.

That said, through discovering a set of causal mechanisms this thesis attempts at showing that the violent ethnic politics, which broke out in the Caucasus, should be seen as a desperate reaction to the decay of the Soviet developmental state. Indeed, the Soviet regime provided for a long time a relatively successful alternative to the development within the capitalist core, which to a great extent managed at least to draw out the impression that it was succeeding in progressing and improving the social and economic conditions when catching up with the Western core. Although a comparison with other parts of the world has not been the topic of this thesis and would certainly go too far beyond its scope, it should be noted that this perspective connects the (post)-Soviet conflicts with many other conflict cases in the Balkans or even beyond the European borders that erupted in the formerly developmental states, which began to suffer from the falling state structures within the newly capitalized conditions. As Derlugian has fittingly noted, '[m]ore specifically, these conflicts are fought over the gravely serious issues of who will

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[67] Burawoy, Michael (1992): 'The End of Sovietology and the Renaissance of Modernization Theory', *Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 21, No. 6, p. 784.

profit, who will bear the costs, and who will support whom in the new system of capitalist property rights.'[68]

The Soviet developmental state created structural conditions for proletarian democratization that arguably surmounted those that formerly existed in the current core capitalist states during their democratic transformations in the late 19th century. Quite similarly, analogous conditions were created in many other revolutionary industrializing states that were not necessarily governed by the Marxist ideology. Most of these states were prolific proletarianizers in terms of performing deep transformations seeking to reproduce rapidly the industries together with corresponding educational, managerial, and social institutions functioning in the core capitalist countries. The only, albeit fundamental, adjustment lay in the absence of capitalist bourgeoisie, whose traditional role was supplemented by a state bureaucratic executive.[69] Even in the autocratic societies these conditions of the proletarian democratisation cannot be fully dismissed as they apparently imply a potential for democratization that could be instead of violent escalation viewed as natural primary choice of a substantial part of a society.

Moreover, the dynamics of rapid industrialization that created an inevitable need for educational and social reforms, which brought up a fundamental class transformation that established a fertile soil for democratic tendencies, did not naturally reach its peak in the 1980s. The challenge for the totalitarian regime with its omnipotent bureaucratic elite was returning almost regularly during the periods of de-stabilization. In this vein, Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein argued that the decay of the socialist and nationalist developmental states that became symbolized by the year ''1989'' was caused by their past successful efforts in generating a rich spectrum of educated specialists, whose activities were related to the modernized

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[68] Derlugian, Giorgi, M., (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
[69] Ibid., p. 74.

production processes, and who gradually became essential and dominant groups within the respective societies. Specifically in the Soviet Union, but, indeed, not only there, during the 1960s, the activities of these groups somewhat naturally began to move towards demands and claims for democratic reforms that clashed with totalitarian or autocratic bureaucratic ties. As the first revolts, again symbolized by the year "1968", became successfully and often drastically suppressed by the strong states' regimes, their power multiplied twenty years later. More specifically, Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein try to explain through this logic why the responsible intellectual elites in these states so strongly turned to the neoliberal monetarist dogmas that offered radical and fast transformations, which became known as "shock therapies" and which very often brought "all shock and no therapy".[70] These strategies provided the 'solutions' that were clearly the most distant from the stiff socioeconomic systems of the socialist or otherwise revolutionary states.[71] Pushing their major argumentation a bit further when directly thinking of the reality of post-Communist transformations, one could also easily observed how progressive technocratic, meaning less ideologically committed, leaders were very fast and effective in privatizing the state assets and connecting them with the capitalist flows.

From a wider perspective, the trajectories of the democratic transformations in the formerly developmental states only rarely led to stable democratic regimes that managed to peacefully pacify the discontents that were almost inevitably brought by the painful social and economic transformations. More often the situation ended up in the formation of a quasi-democratic regime that formally embodied some fundamental democratic institutions such as electoral procedures

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[70] Burawoy, Michael (1992): 'The End of Sovietology and the Renaissance of Modernization Theory', *Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 21, No. 6, p. 784. Cf. also Wallerstein, Immanuel (1997): *Geopolitics and Geoculture*, pp. 65-83.

[71] Arrighi, Giovanni, Hopkins, Terrence K., Wallerstein, Immanuel (2001): '1989: The Continuation of 1968', in Katsiaficas, George (ed.), *After the Fall: 1989 and the Future of Freedom*, New York: Routledge. For a similar argument, see Wallerstein, Immanuel (2002): 'New revolts against the system', *New Left Review*, No. 18, November/December.

but failed to meet the standards of a regime that would provide 'a broadly equitable access to the flow of power and goods, give equal voice to all, and ensure the self-management rights of work, residential, and cultural communities... [it means, historically,] a predominantly proletarian agenda of democratization in Western states.'[72]

In the most critical cases, which are the focus of this thesis, the situation ended up in the violent conflicts that came to be particularly severe in the areas that suffered from the state breakdowns. Under these conditions these areas were almost automatically disqualified from any attempts to launch an efficient process of democratization. Moreover, the decay of the developmentalist state that originally promoted the evolvement and advancement of various social strata (proletarians ranging from manual workers to educated specialists) caused serious challenges and pressures on this dominant social class that included solely claim-makers oriented towards the state. The new situation became apparently difficult for these groups and often verged on a very existential threat. Moreover, as I have already mentioned several times, whereas only a few post-developmental states managed to take a track of successful democratization and state reconstruction supported by the interest of the 'Western' capitalist investment, those that happen to be the focus of this study experienced the dismantlement and disappearance of state structures and institutions. Hence, the state breakdown not only challenged the social dependency on its services but also critically created an empty space in power execution and state management. Not surprisingly, this room was often quickly fulfilled by the decentralized informal processes organized by various patronage networks or criminal groups.[73] While studying these processes, Robert Hislope has fittingly

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[72] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 74.
[73] Although it deals with slightly different processes in the different context of the functioning state, Vadim Volkov's original work has been extremely inspiring for me. Cf. Volkov, Vadim (2002): *Violent Entrepreneurs: The Use of Force in the Making of Russian Capitalism*, Cornell University Press.

labeled such situations as 'organized crime in disorganized states.'[74] To summarize and conclude the previous lines, the thesis will illustrate that with the fall of the erstwhile developmental states and the breakdown of central governance, these, most typically peripheral, areas became extremely prone to 'lateral struggles among locally embedded contenders...commonly viewed as ethnic conflicts.'[75]

I would like to stress again that I do not deny the particular strengths and dynamics of the processes of ethnic mobilization. Indeed, this thesis tries to link them with the above-mentioned circumstances providing essential conditions for their specific post-Soviet Caucasian course. Former leaders and *nomenklatura* cadres faced interesting new opportunities in the processes of privatization of enterprises as well as political positions. Those, who for various reasons, ranging from a lack of understanding to simply bad luck, did not succeed in catching the right wind, could still resort to other means involving massive mobilization and violent strategies. The tradition of informal networks and ethnic solidarity strengthened during the uneasy history while the tradition of the Caucasian violent ethos apparently served their purposes. Moreover, specifically in the peripheral areas like Caucasus, the breakdown of a developmental state providing economic, social and basic human securities caused great fears and discontent, particularly among the groups that could aptly be mobilized in a violent manner. While bringing in all the perspectives mentioned above, Derlugian argued that there are few alternatives to ethnic solidarities in situations where 'the possibilities for democratization are being massively eroded, state institutions collapse, state-created industrial assets and bureaucracies, which embedded the existence of proletarian groups, turned into a liability

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[74] Hislope, Robert (2002): 'Organized Crime in a Disorganized State', *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 49, No. 3.

[75] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 75.

in the face of global markets and structural unemployment now verges on permanent lumpenization.'[76]

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4 METHODOLOGY

The crucial challenge of this part certainly lies in a way in which the hypothetical explanation can be addressed in a theorized fashion and empirically illustrated through a sound methodology. The previous lines dealing with the critique of the perspective of modernization and suggesting some empirically-oriented explanation already shifted the attention to the broad literature of historical sociology and its rich spectrum of casual factors. When examining the body of historical sociology literature the main task is quite apparent – the crucial issue is to search for causal factors that could illustrate systemic pressures and at the same time approximate the analytical level to a small spot in the former Soviet South. Generally speaking the following larger categories appear to be suitable to fulfill the task. Firstly, the world system analysis literature provides a useful structural perspective focusing on the essential group of the semi-peripheral "Second World" of communist states. These states used various totalitarian and/or revolutionary strategies to overcome underdevelopment and approximate to the Western core. However, these developmentalist regimes based on strong centralization and strict control over society differed fundamentally from the capitalist states of the system core while critically lacking the skilful "bourgeoisie" and (hence) having ineffective management and governance strucutres.

Secondly, while studying social transformations (violent or peaceful) historical sociologists managed to turn the attention towards the problem of the power of the state. As also noted earlier in this thesis, the extent of collective violence's range and impact is unavoidably dependent on the capacity, organization, and relative power of the governmental forces. I will try to emphasize that 'bringing the state back in'[77] is a crucial step in providing room for a

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[77] This statement hints at this classical work: Evans, Peter B., Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.) (1985), *Bringing the States Back In*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

more complex understanding of ethnic political conflicts, particularly on the eve of the upcoming structural change.

Thirdly, there is Goldstone's famous remark about 'states making wars making states making wars…' in reflection of Tilly's ideas about states' formation.[78] This thesis will leave aside the ground of the debate concerning a powerful hypothesis for the study of the origins and development of the modern national state. Nevertheless, understood from the current perspective the argument also implies a strong role of militarisation in terms of developing capable armed forces in situations of (often alleged) acute threat perception often leading to the growing internal integrity or less problematic subordination of potentially oppositional actors. This point will be recalled later in this thesis when assessing the Soviet Union's rapid military industrialization that had a tremendous impact on the functioning, organization and character of the Soviet society.

Finally, it will be necessary to introduce appropriate agents that would translate the structural constraints into processes observable on the empirical ground of the small Caucasian spot. Quite naturally for the general meta-theoretical grounds of this thesis the concept of class will be introduced to observe social processes and dynamics. Nevertheless, the role of the class perspective will be twofold. Besides the manifestation of structural constraints it will also provide a bridge between the historical sociology-inspired theories of larger process and transformations and direct expressions of ethnopolitical mobilization that resulted from the situation.

4.1 Causal Mechanisms

From a methodological perspective the critique targeting the evolutionary paradigms outlined above points to another relevant

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[78] Goldstone, Jack (1991), 'States Making Wars Making States Making Wars…', *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 20, No. 2, review of Tilly's Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1990. Cf. Tilly, Charles (1985): 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime', in Evans, Peter B., Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 169-191.

moment lying in static and politically conservative approach of progressivism.[79] After criticising a misreading of social changes occurring in the 19th century Tilly has formulated eight "pernicious postulates" concerning this tendency:

(1) Society is a thing apart; the world as a whole divides onto distinct societies, each having its more less autonomous culture, government, economy and solidarity. (2) Social behaviour results from individual mental events, whic are conditioned by life in society. Explanations of social behaviour therefore concern the impact of society on individual minds. (3) Social change is a coherent general phenomenon, explicable en bloc. (4) The main processes of large-scale social change take distinct societies through a succession of standard stages, each more advanced than the previous stage. (5) Differentiation forms the dominant, inevitable logic of large-scale change; differentiation leads to advancement. (6) The state of social order depends on the balance between processes of differentiation and processes of integration or control; rapid or excessive differentiation produces disorder. (7) A wide variety of disapproved behaviour – including madness, murder, drunkenness, crime, suicide, and rebellion – results from the strain produced by excessively rapid social change. (8) Illegitimate and legitimate forms of ethnic conflict, coercion, and expropriation stem from essentially different processes: processes of change and disorder on one side, and processes of integration and control on the other. [80]

For Tilly, there are two ways to overcome the postulates. The indirect approach rests in fixing accounts of change to historically grounded generalizations. These generalisations are by no way universal but attached to specific eras or areas of the world offering specific causes and involving variations within the time-space determinations. That said, we could distinguish four analytical levels upon which structures and processes operate. Specific features of an era related rises and falls of empires and successive modes of production operate at the world-historical level. On the world-systemic level it is possible to observe the connections and variations among interdependent social structures. Finally, there are macrohistorical and microhistorical level upon which we could trace

[79] Patterson, Orlando (2004): "Culture and Continuity: causal processes in socio-cultural persistence", in Friedland, Roger and Mohr, John, *Matters of Culture: Cultural Sociology in Practise*, Cambridge University Press, p. 71

[80] Tilly, Charles (1984): Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons, Russel Sage Foundation, pp. 11-12

down, and build our narrative of, the relations between larger structural processes and social groups or even individuals.[81] The crucial reason for this expose lies in a legitimate endeavour to define a causal mechanism connecting the macro-level with the events observable at the microhistorical level.

4.1.1 Explaining Causal Mechanism

Before turning to the specific issue of causal mechanisms the thesis intends to address some meta-issues related to my argument. To begin with this research framework is built on the opposition to the so-called Humean conception of causation and related empiricist tradition of modern philosophy. According to Humean understanding[82] causality in social world is inherently connected with the regular patterns (or shortly regularities). These regular causal patterns are observable and the causal relations regularity-deterministic. Finally, the causes are understood as "moving" causes in terms of being efficient to "push or pull" the action.[83] Although Humean model has been largely accepted in the discipline, especially among the IR positivist theorists, it has some limitations that are relevant for this research. Most importantly, strictly empiricist understanding of causality can only hardly be reconciled with the historical, qualitative, discoursive or interpretative research. Further, the causal set-up offered by this framework clearly favours objectivist research. Finally, the emphasis put on observable deterministic regular relations appear to be irreconcilable with the "unobservable" causes, such as ideas.[84]

Kulki rightly argues that "ontological questions (what constitutes a cause and causation? Are causes ontologically real, and

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[81] Ibid., p. 60-61

[82] This thesis will not engage in a discussion over the correctness of the dominant reading of Humaen empirical philosophy. For what follows is the "traditional" understanding. For critical evaluation see, Kurki, Milja (2008), Causation in International Relations: Reclaiming Causal Analysis, Cambridge University Press, chapter 1, pp. 23-60

[83] Kurki, Milja (2008), Causation in International Relations: Reclaiming Causal Analysis, Cambridge University Press, p.6

[84] Ibid., p. 7

how? Are there different types of causes and what are their causal powers?) are, in fact fundamental to understanding causation and its role in science, natural as well as social."[85] In this regard the re-evaluation of the Humean causality came from the camp of scientific realists.[86] In a nutshell scientific realists argue that there exist causal relationships between social phenomena and that causal explanation is the crucial form of social explanation. However, these relationships are not constituted by regularities. Instead, and still in line with their primary position that the world exist independently on our attempts to (theoretically) grasp it, they maintain that causal relationships are constituted by the causal power of ontological entities, such as events, conditions, or structures. Therefore, causal analysis should not focus on regularities but rather on the roles and causal effects of objects being part of the processes or events observed. [87] In other words, "the essence of causal analysis is the elucidation of the processes that generate the objects, events, and actions we seek to explain".[88]

The orientation on mechanism has been one of the social science's reflective responses to the dominant tradition of correlational (or multivariate) analysis. The apparent critical point targets a limited grasp of causal process as resulting from correlation. Indeed, the idea is to provide an explanation of the regular conjunctions, successions, and regularities.[89] It should be also noted that the explanatory potential of correlational analysis decreases when analyzing the phenomena from the macro-level, where any potential generalizations suffer from the small-N problem. Although the quantitative research attempted at providing some answers to this

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[85] Ibid. pp. 10-11
[86] Bhaskar, Roy (2008), A Realist Theory of Science (with a new introduction), orig. published in 1978, New York: Routledge
[87] Ibid., pp. 48-50
[88] Ekström, Mats (1992), Causal Explanation of Social Action: The Constribution of Max Weber and of Critical Realism to a Generative View of Causal Explanation in the Social Sciences, *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 35, Issue 2, p. 115
[89] Pawson, Ray (2000), Middle-range realism. *Archive Européennes de Sociologie* XLI (2), pp. 283-324; Mahoney, James (2001), Beyond Correlational Analysis: Recent Innovations in Theory and Method, Sociological Forum, 16 (3), pp. 575-593

problem while using pooled time-series cross-section analysis[90] or the fuzzy set theory,[91] it could not still tackle the crucial problem connected with the shallow understanding of causal explanation.

Generally speaking causal mechanisms do not look for statistical relationships among variables but seek to explain given social phenomenon by reconstructing the processes through which it is generated. This general definition provides a common ground to the literature studying mechanisms. Hedström and Svedberg as well as Elster have contrasted the mechanisms to social laws while arguing that they constitute a middle ground between description and social law.[92] The critical reference to "laws" refers to the deductive covering-law model of causal explanation that is built on the deterministic quality of general statements about co-variations. In this sense laws are causal factors, and not processes, that raise again the point about shallow explanations.[93] This discussion apparently concerns the issue of a position of theory in a mechanism. This thesis accepts Stinchcombe's point that mechanisms are „bits of theory about entities at a different level (e.g., individuals) than the main entities being theorized about (e.g., groups) which serve to make the higher level theory more supple, more accurate, or more general."[94]

Making the term mechanism further ontologically clear the thesis understands mechanism as a recurrent process that implies at least some generality.[95] Hedström and Svedberg similarly to Elster[96] reject idiosyncratic nature of social mechanisms but still clearly distinguish it from the deterministic covering-law model. In this sense

[90] Beck, Nathaniel, Katz, Jonathan (1995), "What to Do (and not to Do) with Time-Series Cross-Section Data", *American Political Science Review*, 89, pp. 634-647
[91] Ragin, Charles (2000), *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*, Chicago: Chicago University Press
[92] Hedström, Peter, Svedberg, Richard (1996), "Social Mechanisms", *Acta Sociologica*, 39, 3, pp. 282-284; Elster, Jon (1998), "A plea for mechanisms", In Hedström, Peter, Svedberg, Richard (eds), *Social Mechanism: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 281-285, Lester, Jon (1989), Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 6-8
[93] Hedström, Peter, Svedberg, Richard (1996), "Social Mechanisms", *Acta Sociologica*, 39, 3, pp. 286
[94] Stinchcombe, L., Arthur (1991), "The Conditions of Fruitfulness of Theorizing about Mechanisms in Social Science", *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 21, p. 367
[95] Hedström and Svedberg (1996), Social Mechanisms, p. 289
[96] Elster (1998), A plea for mechanisms, p. 285-6

mechanisms are casual chains showing how a certain outcome follows from a set of initial conditions. This processual understanding also implies that an effect should not stand too close to a cause, hence offering enough room for intermediate steps defining the mechanism. Finally, some of the authors disputed the issue of observability of causal mechanism. Most strikingly for Mahoney causal mechanisms are unobservables, they constitute "posited relations or processes that the research imagines to exist".[97] Nevertheless, this position is quite unique among the theorists of causal mechanisms. The most common ground, accepted in this thesis, views causal mechanisms as traceable theoretical constructs.[98]

As the theoretical account of the thesis touches a macro-level, it is essential to clarify the level of reality the mechanism statement refers to. From this perspective the thesis has embraced the position of methodological individualism necessitating the level of human agency (individual or group) in identifying governing regularities or processes.[99] It should be noted that individualism does not necessarily imply only a single human being but it apparently covers also whatever social groups still staying in a distance from the macro perspective. Indeed, the explanation of macro phenomena requires a causal regression to the lower level since the system properties are caused by the behaviour of system elements. Returning to the primary thesis the relation between the two macro phenomena of developmentalist state and ethnopolitical mobilisation cannot be explained without coming down to the level of human agency.

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4.1.2   Defining Causal Mechanisms

The following part will introduce a pattern of causal mechanism followed by its actual identification. This mechanism should connect

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[97] Mahoney, James (2001), "Beyond Correlational Analysis: Recent Innovations in Theory and Method", *Sociological Forum*, 16, 3, pp. 575-593
[98] Hedström and Svedberg (1996), Social Mechanisms, p. 290
[99] Hedström and Svedberg (1996), Social Mechanisms, p. 299

the general macro-level phenomena of dynamics of the developmentalist state and ethnopolitical mobilisations through the specific chain of episodes observed on the micro-level when providing an intelligible explanation of the mobilisation and violent instability that swept through Georgia in the dark period of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The above mentioned methodological individualism can be illustrated by the macro-micro-macro model:

Figure 1[100]
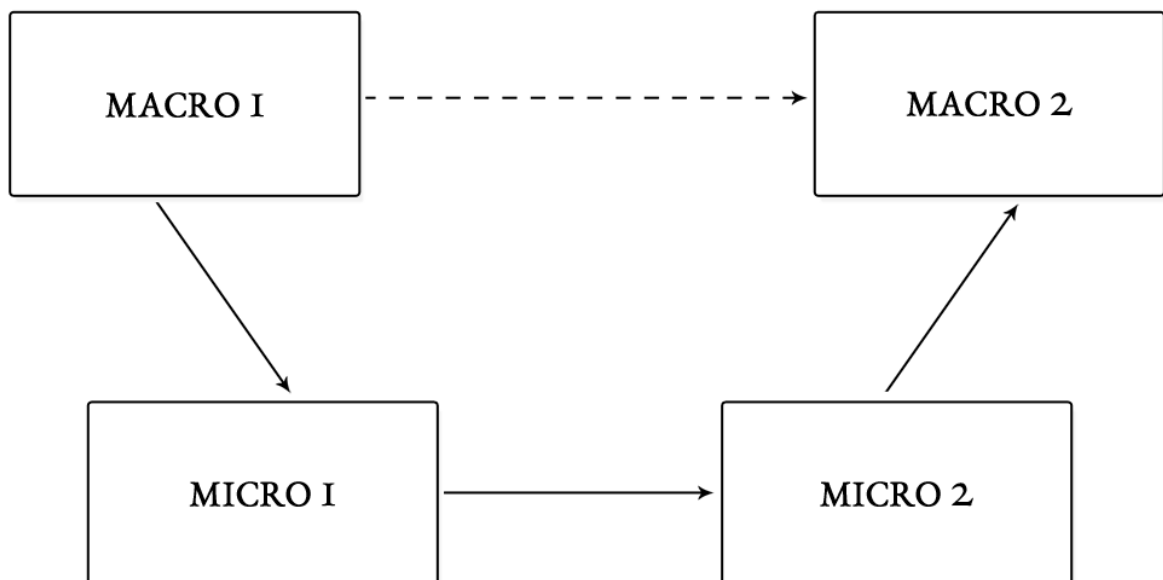
The simple model clearly shows how the individual/group reaction or motivated behaviour (MICRO 1/2) are determined by the structural phenomenon (MACRO 1) and translate the originally structural influence to the latter (MACRO 2) phenomenon. The crucial lies making the model more sophisticated and hence analytically more

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[100] Hedström and Svedberg (1996), *Social Mechanisms*, p. 22

valuable lies in the idea that connection of all peaks of the figure offer different types of mechanisms – macro-micro, micro-micro, micro-macro. Still on the abstract level the macro-micro mechanisms account for the creation of action situation (f.e. situation of contention), micro-micro mechanisms generate actions, and micro-macro mechanisms shape macro-phenomena. Hedström and Svedberg has termed these mechanisms as situational, individual action, and transformational[101], however the model of mechanisms applied here will be enriched by the study of contentious politics by Tilly and his associates.[102]

McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly offer a definiton of *mechanisms, processes, and episodes.* In a general context of contentious politics mechanisms are "a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations"; processes are "regular sequences of such mechanisms that produce similar (generally more complex and contingent) transformations of those elements; and episodes are defined as "continuous streams of contention including collective claim making that bears on other parties' interests."[103] The mechanisms can be further distinguished among environmental, relational, and cognitive mechanisms. Environmental mechanisms "mean externally generated influences on conditions affecting social life"[104]; relational mechanisms are understood as altering "connections among people groups and interpersonal networks"[105]; and finally cognitive mechanisms "operate through alterations of individual and collective perceptions".[106]

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[101] Hedström and Svedberg (1996), Social Mechanisms, pp. 296-298
[102] Tilly, Charles (2001), Mechanisms in Political Processes, *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, pp. 21-41; McAdam, Doug, Tarrow, Sidney, and Tilly, Charles (2001), *Dynamics of Contention*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univeristy Press.
[103] McAdam et al. (2001), Dynamics of Contention, p. 24
[104] Ibid, p. 25
[105] Ibid, p. 26
[106] Ibid, p. 27

Broadening the above mention explanation of processes McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly point out that they resemble frequently recurring causal chains, sequences, and combinations of mechanisms. More specifically, the road to mobilisation that is in focus of this thesis involves (and starts with) environmental mechanisms broadly labeled as social change involving the mechanism such as attribution of opportunity and threat, social appropriation, framing of the dispute, or arraying of innovative forms of collective action but develops also into the stage where another set of cognitive and relational mechanisms labeled as political identity formation applies including identity shift or polarisation mechanisms.[107] Finally, causal mechanisms (and more generally processes) are to be located within episodes that are basically similar to methodologically often used cases.

Figure 2

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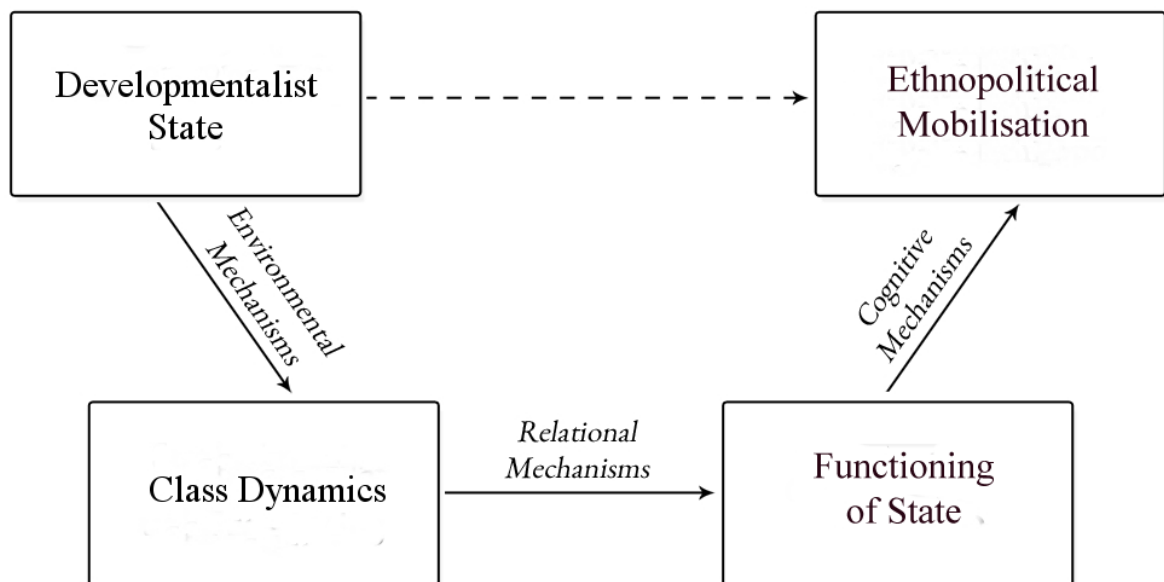
[107] Ibid., p. 28

The figure 2 shows the concrete adaptation of the macro-micro-macro model involving both the macro as well as micro level phenomena. Hedström and Svedberg's originally proposed situational, individual, and transformational mechanisms are substituted by the mechanisms suggested by McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly. As outlined above the environmental mechanisms are meant to capture externally generated influences that affect conditions molding social life or, put it more comprehensively, they resemble social change mechanisms. The relational mechanisms account for changing interactions among people, groups, and networks, which will be termed class dynamics mechanisms here. Finally, cognitive mechanisms depict the processes of changing individual and collective perceptions, which refer to identity mobilisation mechanisms.

4.1.2.1   *Developmentalist State*

This thesis seeks to capture the relation of the macro-phenomenon of developmentalist state to ethnopolitical mobilisation. The former phenomenon was consistently conceptualized by the world-system theorists.[108] They argued that structural economic and political inequalities have accounted for interstate conflicts that together with 'worldwide competition for profits, plus the constant attempts to mould a world labour force that would be available, efficient but not too costly, plus the increasing attentiveness to the diverging quality of world welfare have added up to a tumultuous world-system, driven by constant violence and rebelliousness.'[109] The challenged world-system was held together by the processes based on strengthening of the state structures and by the control over the structures of knowledge legitimising its current form.

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[108] Wallerstein, Immanuel (2005) *World System Analysis: An Introduction.* New York: Duke University; Wallerstein, Immanuel (1997): *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Hopkins, Terence K. and Immanuel Wallerstein et al., *The Age of Transitions: Trajectory of the World System 1945-2025*, London: Zed Books

[109] Hopkins, Terence K. and Wallerstein, Immanuel (1996): 'The World System: Is There a Crisis?', in Hopkins, Terence K. and Immanuel Wallerstein et al., *The Age of Transitions: Trajectory of the World System 1945-2025*, London: Zed Books, p. 6.

The strengthening of the state structures included the internal monopolization of means of violence, the ability to command resources (taxation), or the capacity to provide services (security, infrastructure, human welfare). Moreover, the governments also sought to install and keep a certain level of social cohesion, which was often purposively driven by nationalism. Indeed, 'to the degree that the requirements of the structuring of the world labour force have led to widely differing modes of labour remuneration *within* states boundaries, there has always been pressure to define the 'nation' as including only one part of the workforce, commonly defined by racial or ethnic criteria. And to the degree that these requirements have led to widely differing modes of labour remuneration *among* states, this pattern has commonly needed the justification of racism.'[110] Although nationalism was often utilized by anti-systemic movements, from the longer perspective, it has rather played a stabilizing role in the modern world-system.

For Wallerstein, the structure of knowledge has been defined by the victory of Newtonian science universalism, which has been reflected in the dominant liberal ideology constituting the world-system geo-culture.[111] Its major element rested in the belief in teleology of progress claiming that the spread of liberal reformism would lead to the overall expansion of human welfare and virtual elimination of violence. Forming a dominant culture of knowledge this ideology of progress managed to hide intensive structural tensions underlying the economic and political inequalities.

The above-mentioned ideas developed by world-system theorists outlined some essential processes providing useful bridge for my focus on the most visible representative of the specific class of the semi-peripheral Second World Communist states. Their significance rests in the fact that they constituted strong cases of the developmentalist regimes that tried to overcome underdevelopment

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[110] Ibid., p. 7.
[111] Wallerstein, Immanuel (1997): *Geopolitics and Geoculture*, pp. 158-198.

and catch up with the Western core. While attempting at achieving this goal they applied revolutionary and often totalitarian strategies based on a formation of strong state, whose functioning and management were clearly at odds with the prevailing (liberal) systemic ideas.

It is interesting that these cases have gained only very little attention from the students of development and the developing states in particular. However, as suggested earlier, there have been theoretical accounts in the field focusing on economic and social development and transformation that devoted substantial attention to the issues of power and functioning of states. Although this research will be bring recalled later, I would at this point mention at least Rueschemeyer and Lange's volume[112] acknowledging crucial position of the state in social and economic transformation. They have specifically stressed three major state's functions.

The first one has followed the Smith-Weberian tradition, according to which the state provides institutions necessary for the smooth functioning of economic activities. 'The institutional infrastructure around contract, property, tort law and incorporation allows the exchange of goods and services as well as the accumulation, lending, and investing of capital to proceed with a reasonable degree of ease, security, and predictability.'[113] The second function concerns the socioeconomic development, where states act in two seemingly contradictory ways. On one hand, they allow for breaking down the obstacles to the market, as already Weber clearly recognized and described. On the other hand, the state structures at some point moderate the negative impact of market operations on social life. Finally, the states can function as crucial stimulators of economic growth, which has often been a case of capitalist

[112] Lange, Matthew and Rueschemeyer, Dietrich (2005): 'States and Development', in Lange, Mathew and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds.): *States and Development: Historical Antecedents of Stagnation and Advance*, New York: Palgrave: Macmillan

[113] Lange, Matthew and Rueschemeyer, Dietrich (2005): 'States and Development', in Lange, Mathew and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds.): *States and Development: Historical Antecedents of Stagnation and Advance*, New York: Palgrave: Macmillan, p. 3.

development latecomers. Although the circumstances around this issue have remained one of the main disciplinary controversies, it is, according to Rueschemeyer and Lange, apparent that 'states have intervened in the mobilization of capital when individual firms were not able to meet the capital needs of advanced technology, and they have developed a variety of other proactive policies seeking to advance economic growth that departed from a pure market model of development.'[114]

Although cautiously mentioning Russia, the analysis of their volume has remained locked in the evaluation of the (quasi-)capitalist development or transformations. In a similar vein, Atul Kohli has done a comparative analysis of the state-directed development in the global periphery. Nevertheless, he has not overcome a limited perspective when bringing forth precise empirical observations for the originally Huntingtonian idea that 'the creation of effective states within the developing world has generally preceded the emergence of industrializing economies'.[115] Nevertheless, what is clearly inspiring about Kohli's book with regard to my argument is his well-established focus on the role of the state in promoting rapid industrialization in the case of Korea and somewhat arguably in Brazilian and Indian cases.

The developmentalist literature has generally strongly focused on the region of East Asia. Particularly the cases of Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and, from a slightly different view also of China, have naturally been considered as strong cases of successful transformations guided by the rapid industrialization and economic development. Taking this perspective and comparing the Japanese transformation with the Korean or, indeed, Chinese one, Chalmers Johnson has observed that these states saw economic development as

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[114] Ibid., p. 4. It is, indeed, interesting that just a line above this quote the authors mention Russia (!) in this regard apart from the cases of Germany and South Korea. I will argue later that the context is correct, though the cited explanation obviously does not apply.

[115] Kohli, Atul (2004): *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 2.

the means to combat Western imperialism and ensure national survival when overcoming war preparations, war fighting, or painful post-war reconstruction.[116] Nevertheless, according to Johnson, it was a different type of imperialism, diverging from the colonial or neocolonial one. 'It was a new system of empire begun with Wilson and consummated by Roosevelt and Acheson. Its very breadth – its nonterritoriality, its universalism, and its open systems,...- made for a style of hegemony that was more open than previous imperialisms to competition from below. Indeed, we may eventually conclude that this was its undoing.'[117] In the words of world system analysis, 'the core power pursues an imperialism of free trade, and rising powers use strong states, protectionist barriers, or a period of withdrawal of self-reliant development (the Stalinist or socialist option) as means to compete within the world system'.[118]

The combination of the former colonial experience, difficult war times, and a new imperial pressure created specific conditions for different versions of revolutionary nationalism that became manifested in East Asia[119] in totalitarian communist regimes in China and North Korea as well as in capitalist developmental states in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. More specifically, it was the detailed analysis of the peasant nationalism and its role in the Communist radical revolution in China that led Johnson to recognize the role of ideology in the revolutionary capitalist transformations that occurred in Japan, South Korea, or Taiwan. Similarly to Skocpol's conclusions based on large historical sociological obervations, he found that the

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[116] See, Woo-Cumings (1999): 'Chalmers Johnson and the Politics of Nationalism and Development', in Woo-Cumings, Meredith, *The Developmental State*, p. 6.

[117] Cumings, Bruce (1984): 'The Origins and Development of the Northeast Asian Political Economy: The Industrial Sectors, Product Cycles and Political Consequences', *International Organization*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 6-7.

[118] Cumings, Bruce (1984): 'The Origins and Development of the Northeast Asian Political Economy: The Industrial Sectors, Product Cycles and Political Consequences', *International Organization*, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 5.

[119] The security context brings East Asia close to late-developing European states and differentiates this region from other often studied cases in Latin America. Quite obviously, this is not the only difference (again, we may recall some similarities with the transitological literature). See, for example, Ben Ross Schneider's chapter dealing with bureaucracy in the context of a developmental state: Schneider, Ross, Ben (1999): 'The *Dessarollista* State in Brazil and Mexico' in: Woo-Cumings, Meredith, *The Developmental State*, pp. 276-306.

victory of the Chinese Communists should be perceived in terms of the great nationalist mobilization of a unified and politicized class of peasants that, under the supervision of the Communist Party, followed the Japanese invasion of the northern and eastern parts of China.

The literature focusing on the issue of the developmental state has also been inspiring in other regards. As suggested earlier, several students of macro-development recognize the notion of nationalism. Albert Hirschman has already in the 1950s held that development is essentially connected with the determination and organization of nation. 'If we were to think in terms of a "binding agent" for development are we simply not saying that development depends on the ability and determination of a nation and its citizens to organize themselves for development?'[120] Indeed, as the tradition of historical sociology has taught us, there are apparently good reasons for why we should not view the dynamics of national and ethnic mobilisations independently from the larger processes of social and economic changes.

4.1.2.2   *Class Dynamics*

The divergent notion of class apparently needs some further theoretical clarification. Despite the noteworthy debates between the proponents of Marxist ideas and the followers and continuators of Weber about the nature and functioning of classes,[121] this thesis will utilize the understanding of class determined by the need to encompass basic stratification of the Soviet society. The concetualization here will reflect two criteria. The first is the economic criterion of household income establishing 'structural position regarding the flow of power and goods, which translate into

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[120] Hirschman, Albert O. (1958): *The Strategy of Economic Development*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 8, quoted in Woo-Cumings, Meredith (1999): 'Chalmers Johnson and the Politics of Nationalism and Development', in Woo-Cumings, Meredith *The Developmental State*, Cornell University Press, pp. 6-7.
[121] Cf. Wright, Erik Olin (1997): *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 28-32; and Burris, Val (1987): 'The Neo-Marxist Synthesis of Marx and Weber on Class', in Wiley, Norbert (ed.): *The Marx-Weber Debate*, Newbury Park: Sage Publications, pp. 67-90, available at http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~vburris/marxweb.pdf

sets of social strategies and dispositions typical to each class.' [122] The second criterion generally corresponds with the notion of 'social capital' potentially further dividing classes into factions. In this vein, Wallerstein defined social capital in the following way:

"capital describes the ways in which people store accumulated successes. These could be a matter of economic gains, which are the 'capitalist capital' proper, political positions and support bases; administrative capital vested in office promotions and special kinds of bureaucratic insider knowledge; symbolic intellectual prestige, diplomas, access to high culture practices, and professional positions; the traditional symbolic notions of family honour, kinship, patronage connections, the workers' occupational capital, expressed through their work skills, shopfloor rights, and solidarity; or the social capital of marginal groups populations vested in their resilience, resourcefulness, the possession of valuable friends, and the skills they use to avoid brushes with law." [123]

Following this definition the thesis will structure the issue of class dynamics along the lines of three classes – the *nomenklatura*, the proletarians, and the sub-proletarians – which allow us to observe the crucial processes of the Soviet socieconomic functioning and development. The *nomenklatura* cadres were the top administrators occupying key positions, ranging from the political representatives through the top managers to the top bureaucrats and heads of security forces, whose appointment was fully under the control of the Party's Central Committee. Although a certain hierarchy was established among the cadres, the highest political background generally made the positions of *nomenklatura* particularly powerful within the Soviet system.

Apparently, compare to other two segments of the Soviet society the *nomenklatura* has been the most common object of studies as it represented Soviet state-control system. From a more general perspective Ivan and Szonja Szelenyi have done a substantial research of the post-Communist transformations, focusing particularly on elites and on how their destiny was connected with the transformation.

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[122] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 130.
[123] Wallerstein's informal oral definition, mentioned in Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 130-131.

While delivering the first results of their comparative research, they have shown that neither the elite reproduction theory, which suggests that the old *nomenklatura* managed to transform its former capital into a new form and survived the transition at the top of the class structure, nor the elite circulation theory, which claims that the top of the class hierarchy has changed on the basis of new principles, provides definite and exhaustive answers on the positions of elites during and after the transformation.[124] This conclusion apparently created a need for a more comprehensive theoretical approach.

Building on Szelenyi's former research on post-Communist transformation Eyal, Szelenyi, and Townsley[125] have tried to develop a conceptual framework, which would be appropriate for studying the dynamics of social structure in rapidly changing societies. More specifically, they have focused on transformations of Central European societies, claiming that they provide specific cases of transition to 'capitalism without capitalists'. Recalling the open answers regarding the role and destiny of the former Communist elite, they have managed to show how principal agents 'tried to stay "on course" in the face of massive changes' and 'reoriented their world-views to make sense of, and conform to, rapidly changing social logic.'[126]

As anticipated earlier, their conceptualization has been based on Bourdieu's notions of social space, capital and habitus. Observing the long trajectories of societies' development in Central Europe, they have distinguished among three different spaces – pre-Communist, Communist, and post-Communist – in which different forms of capital played different roles in shaping social structures. Whereas the top spheres of a traditional capitalist society are dominantly determined

[124] Szelenyi, Ivan and Szelenyi Szonja (1995): 'Circulation or Reproduction of Elites during the Postcommunist Transformation of Eastern Europe: Introduction', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 24, No. 5, pp. 615-638.
[125] Eyal, Gil, Szelenyi, Ivan, and Eleanor Townsley (1998): *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists: Class Formation and Elite Struggles in Post-Communist Central Europe*, New York and London: Verso.
[126] Ibid., p. 17.

by economic capital, in state-socialist societies the crucial role was attributed to political capital, which is defined as social capital 'institutionalized through the practises of the Communist Party'.[127] However, the changing trajectories of social development have suggested that a success understood in terms of surviving in a position or even improving it was conditioned by the possession of more than one capital and by the ability to convert resources when the logic of the system changed. According to Eyal, Szelenyi, and Townsley, the dominant form of capital in post-Communist societies in Central Europe has been cultural capital, as the political was devalued and the economic could not exist. From a more empirical perspective, the cultural capital was possessed especially by the technocrats and managers, who often held senior positions in Communist administrations, and by former intellectual dissidents.[128]

Apparently, the role of cultural capital during the period of Georgian late/post-Soviet transformation reveals great potential for identifying the social change mechanism. Nevertheless, the Bourdieu-inspired framework establishes also a notion of habitus. Eyal, Szelenyi, and Townsley have pointed out that Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus fits into the structuralist perspective as it overcomes the objectivism of rational choice theories but also considers structural interventions that limit a purely subjective interpretation of behaviour.[129] More specifically, while inspired by Bourdieu they have offered their own definition of habitus, which is understood as 'knowledge of the "rules of the game" which allows diverse actors in different sorts of relationships to navigate the rapidly changing social spaces they confront.'[130]

The proletarians were by far the most numerous class, whose members were wage-dependent on the state. In fact the dependency on the state, which united many different people, ranging from

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[127] Ibid., Table 1.1, p. 23.
[128] See, Ibid., pp. 17-40.
[129] Ibid., pp. 41-43.
[130] Ibid., p. 17.

university-educated specialists to manual workers with only an elementary education, overcomes the ideologically-informed view that identifies only workers with the proletarian. I will try to show below that the proletarian class was the main product of the developmentalist industrialization that naturally involved manual workers as well as educated specialists. Moreover, it should be noted that the omnipresent functioning of the Soviet state accounted for a great homogenization that was not only manifested in relatively comparable wages but entered virtually all spheres of life, including accommodation, entertainment, and further education.[131]

The final class category of the sub-proletariat has originally been developed by Derlugian.[132] He has drawn the distinction between proletarians and sub-proletarians on the basis of the source of household income. Whereas the above-mentioned proletarians were fully dependent on the provisions of the state, sub-proletarians, though they might irregularly work or receive some rents, gained their resources through unofficial work ranging from backyard agriculture and moonlighting at odd jobs to various criminal activities. It could be argued that most of these people were victims of the rapid industrialization and the crushing of traditional peasantry.

Quite interestingly, a large group of Georgian sub-proletarians typically functioned as 'smugglers' of subtropical agricultural products. It should be noted that this common merchant activity received the shape of smuggling only due to the Soviet state restrictions on travel. These restrictions made the interregional 'unofficial' trade a risky but relatively lucrative business that might imply additional costs connected with bribes and corruption. However, as I have already mentioned, many sub-proletarians also had a criminal background generally resulting from their voluntary sponging. It is relatively easily conceivable that a worker's career in a

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[131] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 142.

[132] I am not aware of any study using this term that would use it as having particularly Soviet connotations, though the term is quite similar to 'lumpenproletariat' or 'underclass'. Cf. Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 150.

distant factory or building construction was not necessarily attractive for an ordinary Caucasian.

4.1.2.3   *State Functioning*

Until the mid-1960s, the study of revolution was dominated by the Marxist social-centred class-conflict paradigm developed already by Marx and Engels.[133] The clear logic of this paradigm was based on the clash between the ruling privileged class and the restrained rising class inherently growing out of structural contradictions of the unfolding system. The situation remained relatively stable until the latter class was able to burst in and assume control over the structures aiming at preserving the current power settings. The revolutionary transfer of power then anticipates a period of fundamental social change understood in terms of alteration of the previous mode of production and the transfer of the leading role as well as power to the formerly revolutionary class, which sets up new conditions for the development of society.

This originally Marxist scheme got beyond traditional Marxist explanations. Classical Marxist theory clearly defined all major actors that entered into the eventually revolutionary process. The crucial peaks of the triangle have been attributed to the owners of the means of production, exploited proletarian labour force, and challenging owners of the means of production. However, the centrality of the class view has also been apparent in various non-Marxist approaches. Indeed, modern Western revolutions have often been associated with the rise of the bourgeoisie or the gentry and their results were often labelled as 'bourgeois' or 'middle-class' democracies.[134]

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[133] Marx's thought on revolutions later developed into various strands ranging from the technological determinists (Bukharin) and political strategists (Lenin) to Western neo-Marxists (Horkheimer, Lukacs, Gramsci) or even structuralists (Althusser). Cf. Skocpol, Theda (1979), *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 6-9.

[134] Cf. Collins, Randall (1999), *Macrohistory: Essays in Sociology of the Long Run*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 19-21.

It was quite striking how the Marxism-inspired stream of thinking about social transformation left out the problem of and the role attributed to the 'state', given the amount of attention it devoted to the formation and development of the modern national states. The belated discussion between the neo-Marxists started in the mid-1960s, essentially dealing with the capitalist state. The debates were focusing on the role of states in the transitions from feudalism to capitalism, on the means of their socioeconomic engagement in both the advanced capitalist economies and dependent countries within the world capitalist system.[135] Other discussions concerned the understanding of the socioeconomic functions wielded by the capitalist state that can be seen as an instrument of class rule, objective guarantor of production relations or economic accumulation, or as an arena for political class struggles.'[136]

Nevertheless, as Skocpol has noted, at the theoretical level virtually all neo-Marxist accounts were not able to overcome the society-centred anchoring of their major assumptions. Indeed, in the end, for most of the approaches states remained fundamentally shaped by classes or class struggles and their crucial function was understood in terms of preserving and expanding modes of production. Poulantzas has, for example, concluded that 'the relations of production delimit the given field of the State, it has a role of its own in the formation of these same relations. The way in which the state is bound up with the relations of productions constitutes its primary relation with social classes and the class struggle.'[137]

The analytical concept of 'state autonomy' has usually been perceived in clearly 'Weberian' terms. The state has been understood as an organization projecting control over a certain territory and

[135] Cf. Jessop, Bob (1982): *The Capitalist State: Marxist Theories and Methods*, New York: New York University Press; Miliband, Ralph (1983): 'State Power and Class Interests', *New Left Review*, no. 138.

[136] Skocpol, Theda (1985): 'Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research', in Evans, Peter B., Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 5.

[137] Poulantzas, Nicos (2000): *State, Power, Socialism*, new edition, London: Verso, p. 25.

people, which can promote and assert goals that do not have to necessarily follow from the demands and concerns of groups, classes or society. Hence, states become important actors, which deserve deeper attention only when they are formulating or promoting those independent goals.[138] This perspective has certainly been analytically promising, though rather only scratching the surface. When developing Weber's conception, Stepan was right to argue that the state is much more than only 'the government'. 'It is the continuous administrative, legal, bureaucratic and coercive systems that attempt not only to structure the relationship between civil society and public authority in a polity but also to structure many crucial relationships within civil society a well.'[139]

In a similar vein, Skocpol has asserted that states also 'give rise to various conceptions of the meaning and methods of ''politics'' itself, conceptions that influence the behaviour of all groups and classes in national societies.'[140] Moreover, structures and activities of states essentially shape collective actions, which aim at promoting groups' political interests or demands or mobilize the support sought by political leaders.[141] It is then apparent that the relation between the 'classness' of politics and state structures is strongly determining. The process of the development of class demands and interests, as well as their overlap with national politics, also depends strongly on features like political culture, forms of collective action, or possibilities for raising and resolving collective societal or class issues. Therefore even if we accept the inevitability of class tensions, the political expression of their interests and conflicts can reasonably be analysed only on the background of their capacities to achieve organization, representation, and, indeed, consciousness. All these capacities are naturally dependent on the structure and activities of states.[142]

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[138] Cf. Skocpol (1985), *Bringing the State Back In*, p. 9.
[139] As quoted in Skocpol (1985), *Bringing the State Back In*, p. 7.
[140] Ibid., p. 22.
[141] Ibid., p. 22.
[142] Ibid., p. 25.

The causal mechanisms' model suggested in this thesis imply that the events accompanying the fall of Communism and the Soviet Union in particular should not be viewed in isolation. The historical processes of the 'Great Transformation' have brought numerous smaller or greater socioeconomic changes. However, in the period nearly approaching the end of the last century, the Soviet Union (and the Communist block) has experienced an extraordinarily significant change. The situation has purely resembled what Skocpol called 'social revolution', defined as 'rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structure; …accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below.'[143]

The distinctiveness of social revolutions with regard to other conflicts or transformative processes lies in a combination of two coincidences – the coincidence of societal structural change with class upheaval and the coincidence of political and social transformation.[144] Indeed, other, possibly violent, conflicts or processes either do not bring about structural changes on a political and social level (rebellions) or affect usually only one of these spheres (political revolutions or larger gradual processes such as industrialization). The uniqueness of social revolutions rests in a combination of simultaneous changes in social as well as political structures that act in mutually reinforcing fashion. Moreveor, these changes are characterized by intense sociopolitical conflicts in which class struggles play a key role.[145]

Skocpol's well-elaborated analysis of social revolutions in France, Russia and China has been based on three main general analytical strategies. Most importantly, as this part of this thesis should clarify, Skocpol has argued that state organizations, and particularly their crucial administrative and coercive capacities, should receive a front rank when analysing and explaining social

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[143] Skocpol, Theda (1979): *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 4.
[144] Ibid., p. 4.
[145] Skocpol (1979), p. 5.

revolutions. The very outset of social revolutions is conditioned by a breakdown of the state's administrative and coercive powers. Consequentially, the transformation process is to a large extent realized through conflicts over the re-establishing of and control over these administrative and coercive capabilities.[146]

Secondly, Skocpol has suggested paying attention also to the international or geopolitical context. Apart from the rather obvious assertion that geopolitical conditions or international tensions to a certain extent determine the intra-state situation, this analytical strategy also interestingly considers the relevance of transnational cultural influence.[147] Although Skocpol has mainly stressed the timing within the phases of world history as well as the ideological influence stemming from an understanding of current revolutionary movements, I will show later that a particular grasping of notions such as 'liberalization' or 'westernization' played a significant role during the Soviet transformation.

Finally, Skocpol has offered a structural and 'non-voluntarist' approach to revolutions. She has accepted the view of the 'voluntarists' to the extent that individuals or groups affiliate with the revolutionary process and willingly and purposively join the revolutionary contestation. Nevertheless, she has, at the same time, asserted that 'no single group, or organization, or individual creates a revolutionary crisis, or shapes revolutionary outcomes, through purposive action.'[148] Therefore psychological approaches focusing on people's behaviour within massive social movements, purely rationalist accounts concentrating on intentions and interests of individuals, groups, or, indeed, classes, or propositions referring to ideologically driven activities and effects of vanguard revolutionary leadership can provide only a partial picture.

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[146] Skocpol, Theda (1997): 'Explaining Social Revolutions: First and Further Thoughts', in: Skocpol, Theda (ed.): *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 7-8.
[147] Skocpol (1997), *Explaining Social Revolutions*, p. 8.
[148] Ibid., p. 8.

4.1.2.4   *Ethnopolitical mobilisation*

The thesis seeks to connect the phenomenon of ethnopolitcal mobilisation with the macro-issue of developmentalist state through observing the causal chains of mechanisms descending on the micro-level. It should be stressed again that the author does not deny the power and implications of the national and ethnic mobilizations but seeks to challenge the broadly modernist view that these processes occurred as the results of the newly discovered hatreds released during the modern periods that were skillfully transformed by ambitious agents. Indeed, it has been shown in the first chapter that the research on the late/post-Soviet ethnic transformation, often including ethnopolitical mobilisation is manifold[149] but mostly driven by one dominating paradigm.

According to Horowitz, ethnic mobilisation is far more likely to turn violent than other conflicts based on ideological or political cleavages.[150] Although even today the politicization of ethnicity in the former Soviet Union is not substantial (measured by ethnically defined political parties or other relevant political actors), during the Communist era, and especially during its certain periods, the allocation of political and economic benefits was structured along ethnic lines.[151] The strength of ethnic identity has also been often tied to formulation of political boundaries and functioning of political institutions. The research has discovered dozens of cases of ethnic groups that appeared only in the context of colonisation,[152] while, as

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[149] Given my previous research on ethnopolitical conflict I would add to the necessarily fairly limited list the following "canonical" works. Collier, Paul, Hoeffler, Anke (2002), *Greed and Grievance in Civil War*, World Bank, DECRG; Fearon, James D., Laitin, D., David (2003), "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War", *American
Political Science Review* 97(1), pp.75–90; David A. Lake, A., David, Rothchild, Donald (eds) (1998), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Gurr, R., Ted (1970), *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Horowitz, L., Donald (1985), *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* , Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; Suny, G., Ronald (1993), *The Revenge of the Past*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press
[150] Horowitz, Donald (1985), *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, pp. 3-10
[151] Slezkine, Yuri (1994): "The USSR as a Communal Appartment or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism", *Slavic Review*, 53, 2, pp. 414-452
[152] Horowitz, Donald (1985), *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkley: University of California, pp. 3-95; Rotschild, Donald and Olunsorola, A., Victor (eds.) (1983): *State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*, Boulder, Co, Westview Press

mentioned earlier, many authors have stressed the role of Soviet ethnofederalism in the violent break up.[153]

That said, the thesis links the post-Soviet mobilizations with the decay of the Soviet developmentalist state, whose fall left several social groups in an essentially insecure situation. In other words the occurrence of strong identity politics is seen as responsive to the struggles in political and economic vacuum, in which ethnic identities were often mobilized to challenge the developing political and economic power structures.

4.1.2.5   *Environmental mechanism of social change*

The illustration of social change mechanism will be based on the introduced research dealing with the developmentalist states. The theoretical insights anticipated several effects on the social environment. Most importantly there is the above-mentioned tendency among the developmentalist states to the capitalist core approximation through massive (military) industrialization. This process can be "measured" via industrial dynamics expressed in production of the secondary sector. Additionally, the level of urbanisation that is logically linked with this dynamics could the substance for the explanatory mechanism.

The mechanism should further capture the shifts in classes' interests, openness understood here as reflection of the socio-economic situation, or inter-classes penetration. At same time it will be essential to observe the functioning of the classes in terms of delivering their principal functions (namely quality labour and quality

[153] Cornell, Svante (2001), *Autonomy and Conflict: Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia*, PhD dissertation, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University; Suny, Ronald G. (1993): *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, Stanford University Press; Bunce, Valery (1999): *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Hughes, James, and Sasse, Gwendolyn (2001), *Comparing Regional and Ethnic Conflicts in Post-Soviet Transition States: An Institutional Approach*, paper presented at ECPR Joint Sessions, Grenoble, April 2001

management). All these characteristics would illustrate the quality of social changes and

Indeed, the analysis of the changing social structure that resulted from the rapid industrialization and reflected particular policies of the Soviet developmentalist state's leadership cannot be avoided when dealing with the ethnopolitical mobilisations of the late Soviet and post-Soviet period. The structure of the society expressed in class terms offers room for mechanisms identifying the trajectories of the development of collective interests, social cleavages and political projects that were originally oriented toward and pushed forward by certain social groups. The clear differentiation among the classes and particular groups within these classes should provide some answers to why the radical political projects prevailed over the endeavours to develop civil society and create conditions for 'democratization'.

4.1.2.6   *Relational mechanism of class dynamics*

The observation of this mechanism will be built on the conclusions developed by Eyal, Szelenyi, and Townsley introduced above that a success during the transformation period understood in terms of keeping or enhancing position was conditioned by the possession of more than one form of capital and by the ability to convert flexibly the resources attached to the respective forms of capital. From this perspective the crucial form of capital appeared to be cultural capital due to the discredited nature of political capital and general lack of economic capital throughout the society. It follows logically that the strongest groups in possession of cultural capitals were former technocratic professionals from the nomenklatura or higher proletariat and dissidents capitalizing on the distance from the former political capital.[154]

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[154] See, Ibid., pp. 17-40.

The concepts of cultural capital and habitus are importnant in a way in which they could be connected with the strategies of mobilization along national/ethnopolitical lines. According to Eyal, Szelenyi, and Townsley, '[i]n the post-communist transitions…those who are well endowed with cultural capital may be able to convert their former political capital into informal social networks, which can then be usefully deployed to take advantage of new market opportunities.'[155] This could be highly relevant for the space of Central European transitions studied by the authors. My point related to this thesis's argument would be that in the post-Soviet area, the capital converted into informal social networks could also be used for the mobilizations (of easily mobilized groups) led by either extremely ambitious or unsuccessful elites.

The relations within the late Soviet social structure had several impacts on the collapse of the empire. From the *nomenklatura* perspective '[t]he collapse of the Soviet Union was primarily the unintended result of bureaucratic fragmentation caused by the defensive and opportunistic actions of various bureaucratic executives who began to appropriate state assets.'[156] Naturally, those involved in the territorial sector tried to 'privatize' their political or administrative positions, whereas top managers focused on the enterprises. In general, the late/post-Soviet privatization was an unprecedented process of radical marketization in conditions dominantly defined by legal vacuum, corruption, bribery, patronage, and even violent coercion.[157] These conditions apparently caused the process of liberalization to degenerate to a brutal power grab. Stark has interestingly described post-Communist transitions „transitions as going from 'plan' to 'clan'".[158] If the situation was generally bad in the Soviet Union, it was catastrophic in the Caucasus. Moreover, although

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[155] Ibid., p. 8.
[156] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 139.
[157] For bitterly fascinating stories see, Volkov (2002): *Violent Entrepreneurs*.
[158] David Stark observed primarily Central European transitions but his metaphor would indeed get other dimension in post-Soviet world (and Georgia in particular). See, Stark, David (1990): 'Privatization in Hungary: From Plan to Market of from Plan to Clan?', *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 351-92

the position within the *nomenklatura* was clearly advantageous, it did not automatically provide success. No matter whether it was the lack of intelligence, forethought or even bad luck, the above-mentioned processes also created a group of 'discontented' but still potentially powerful figures that might, while using various means, strive for reshuffling the outcomes. Indeed, one of the strategies would be to destabilize the situation and thus create conditions for other revolutionary takeovers.

Turning to proletarians although the dependence on the state and the effects of the policies of homogenization established a delusion of sameness, the needs and ambitions of workers and educated specialists obviously differed. The 'lower' proletariat constituted a conservative status group that could be relatively satisfied with its socioeconomic conditions. Most of the benefits they were provided with were bonded with their particular working place. Indeed, the 'lower' proletarians generally constituted a conservative anti-reformist group which often genuinely supported the authoritarian tendencies.[159] On the other hand, the proletarian intelligentsia was arguably more ambitious in pursuing its careers towards achieving a higher-class status, which became specifically important during the Khrushchev era and then in a different way during the perestroika. It should also be noted that the Soviet system commonly awarded mainly engineers and technical specialists, as they were in reality the leading figures of industrialization.[160]

Furthermore, the proletarian intelligentsia was certainly receptive to all cultural and social attempts that shaped the shadows of the 'civic society' that briefly stated generated tendencies towards bourgeois nationalism. Finally, particularly after the ideological apprehension, some of the specialists could become frustrated because

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[159] For example, the popularity of Stalin in Georgia has been based in this social group as the intelligentsia, as my numberless discussions at the Tbilisi State University revealed, has at least been dubious in its judgments.

[160] Cf. Hoffmann, Erik P. and Laird, Robin F. (1985): *Technocratic Socialism: The Soviet Union in the Advanced Industrial Era*, Durham: Duke University Press.

of their homogenized social status. That said, Derlugian has interestingly noted that it was particularly corruption in a wider sense that served not only as the way to acquire further sources of income but also to fulfill one's need for social stature.[161] 'The university-educated proletarian specialists did not merely seek an opportunity to earn extra money and gain access to scarce goods. They sought to translate certain kinds of occupational capital into the consumption and symbolic display associated with the prestigious imagery of Western middle classes.'[162] The previous part dealing with *nomenklatura* suggested that the collapse of the Soviet state was principally caused by the activities of opportunistic *nomenklatura* cadres. In case of the proletarians the crucial analytical interest concerns their dependency on the state. As the above-mentioned process of "privatizations" was distant to most of the educated specialists and virtually to all 'lower' proletarians, the entire class generally remained the one most affected by the retreat (collapse) of the state, which had so far been a principal social security provider. The state of threat could fundamentally buttress the tendencies to bourgeois nationalism as well as consequently radical the entire class.

Finally, the distinction between proletarians and sub-proletarians lying in a notion of state-dependency appears to be crucial. The diverse class of proletarians was solidified by their relation to the state. Although the state bureaucratic structures were often obstructing and complicating their lives, the state still remained a crucial source of their economic resources and often also an important non-working life organizer. On the contrary, many of the sub-proletarians lived relatively independently of the state. In other words, the state structures often represented an enemy or chaser, or in other instances, a subject of extortion. The sub-proletarians could hardly rebel against a strong state. However, they could be relatively easily mobilized in the chaotic conditions of collapsing states.

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[161] I will mention below that corruption was nearly a synonym for the functioning of everyday life in Georgia.

[162] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 147.

The issue of dependency has again underlined the role of the state (especially of its breakdown) and its relation to violent mobilisation. As part of the relational mechanism the functioning and effectiveness of the state institutions will be observed. Additionally, reflecting several theoretical points made previously, it will also be important to pay attention to the informal structures, which often substituted the 'state' structure in Georgia. It has already been mentioned that corruption processes eroded even the potentially functioning sectors. In the overly corrupted Soviet Union the level of corruption was distributed unequally. Apart from corruption often governing the state management there were also many "traditional" social structures that substituted the state even in the areas of its crucial powers. Although the central governments controlled the entire administration, the historically settled indigenous structures and rules of patronage and kinships arguably survived below the surface. Moreover, these indigenous practices and patterns could the implementation and effectiveness of central policies, and similarly, these practices and patterns to a certain extent mitigated and shadowed the changes and twists in the policies of Moscow. Indeed, any deep study of the central policies and concepts does not, in fact, say much about their impacts on social developments in the peripheries.

4.1.2.7   *Cognitive mechanism of identity mobilisation*

The grasp of the final mechanism will be also linked with the notion of cultural capital discussed above. Following the special role attributed to the possession of cultural capitals, the individuals endowed with this form of capital were able to convert other capital disposals into various social networks, through which they managed to profit in a difficult transition period. This process included both types of crucial actors. On one hand, there were successful individuals, who managed to gain political or economic profit during

the chaotic transformational period. On the other hand, Georgian transition left several powerful entrepreneurs dissatisfied with the outcome. These figures could use their potential to reverse the development even at a cost mobilisation on ethnic grounds. Indeed, this understanding appears to be close to the instrumentalist position outlined in the first chapter, however it needs to be situated into the larger framework.

Hence, the issue here is to trace the cultural capital of leading figures of the period of transition, who skillfully managed to use nationalism to organize a backup from various social groups to challenge other power contenders or to secure their political positions. The mobilisation was performed by along the lines of traditional identity politics. The crucial elements lied in reinforcing the cultural and linguistic differences while recalling also past myths and historical reinterpretations. Hence, the empirical part will focus on the social and economic conditions in Georgia leading to ethnopolitical mobilisation in Georgia and Abkhazia but will also turn to the third autonomy of Ajaria, where power struggles could not stimulate ethnic mobilisation and where specific political economic conditions secured the positions of the former nomenklatura as well as proletariat.

5 GEORGIA: FROM DEVELOPMENTALIST TRANSFORMATION TO WARS

The empirical part of the thesis will illustrate the model of causal mechanisms connecting both macro and micro levels. It will show that the violent transition resulted from specific social, political and economic developments, which reflected larger structural processes. Therefore, the thesis seeks to challenge the view that the ethnopolitical mobilisation was merely a reaction on a release from rules and institutions that had for a long time suppressed national and ethnic identities. Rather, it seeks to connect the mobilisation with the issue of breakdown of the Soviet developmentalist state whose development and functioning resulted in substantial social and economic shifts that had divergent impacts on virtually all segments of Georgian society.

5.1 Mechanisms of social changes in Georgia

Virtually all Soviet societies were afflicted by the effects of industrialization and urbanization that resulted from the structural pressures of the world economic system. In the majority of cases, these processes were accompanied by the state-directed attack on the peasantry, which became the most natural source of labourers for the desperately needed and rapidly growing urban working class. Consequentially, the share of the agricultural sector in the economic performance of various Soviet regions declined. Georgian agricultural sector was restored and modernized after the instability and resistant consciousness following the Russian conquest had passed. The strong agricultural orientation of Georgian territory was evidently natural as this mostly Pontic country enjoyed a mild subtropical climate that supports agricultural production.

Before World War I, the industrialization of Georgia was marginal. Yet, the massive mostly military oriented industrialization

happening under Stalin's leadership fundamentally affected this country. Between 1928 and 1940, the Georgian industrial performance grew almost seven times (670 percent). From the perspective of the entire USSR, this indicator was clearly above-average. Moreover, although this industrial dynamics obviously had to slow down, it still kept a growing tendency while reaching 240 percent between 1940 and 1958 and 157 percent in the period of 1958 – 1965. According to different measures before World War I, the industrial production accounted for roughly 13 percent of the entire economic production, whereas in 1970, only construction, transportation, and communication segments reached a 53 percent share.[163]

The figures showing the level of urbanization also had ascending tendencies. Whereas before the First World War, roughly 666,000 lived in towns and cities, the number of urbanites reached 2,241,000 six decades later. Expressed in different figures, the share of the citizens living in towns and cities increased from one quarter before the Revolution to more than half in the late 1970s. However, it should be noted that both the dynamics and the absolute numbers rested far behind the Soviet average. In 1979, the all-Soviet level of urbanization reached about 62 percent - roughly 10 percent more than the level in Georgia. Quite interestingly, Armenia went through a faster and deeper urbanization as only about one third of all Armenians stayed in the country. The situation with Azerbaijan was comparable with the Georgian one. Moreover, it should also be noted that virtually all members of the Armenian minority in Georgia, with the exception of Armenians living in rural border areas, stayed in Georgian cities, which was the case with the Russian minority as well.[164]

The above-mentioned figures have apparently implied a steady shift from agriculture to industry. In terms of the relative shares among the working populations, the trend is again apparent. On the

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[163] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 296.
[164] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 297.

eve of the Second World War, roughly 19.4 percent of the Georgian working population was engaged in industry, building, and transportation, while 61.9 percent of all Georgians worked in the agricultural sector. Till the end of the sixth decade, the number of Georgian labourers working in the industrial sector rose up to one quarter, and the number of people working on collective farms dropped to roughly half of the working population. Following these statistics, we could observe even greater dynamics in the next two decades. Around 1970, the shares of industrial labourers and farmers became almost the same, reaching 34 and 38 percent respectively. Ten years later, the industry already definitely prevailed over agriculture with 53.5 percent, when agriculture held only 16 percent.[165] Both of the neighbouring Transcaucasian countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan, were exposed to similar processes and went through approximately such like dynamics.

It has been anticipated in theoretical part that the rapid industrialization accompanied by the necessary urbanization created a great demand for educated specialists and semi-specialists. Indeed, educational reforms aiming at promoting elementary as well as higher education became important components of Soviet developmentalist strategy. Most importantly, the educational reform enabled Georgians to receive education in their native language to a much larger extent than in Tsarist times. During the *korenizatsiia*, schooling and publishing in Georgian were greatly promoted. Georgians also became overwhelmingly involved in the Soviet institutions. As Cornell has put it, 'it helped the Georgians to "Georgianize" Tbilisi, but also the Ossetians to "Ossetianize", what had not been a primarily Ossetian settlement before.'[166]

The *korenizatsiia* had a significant impact also on minorities. When the primary education was made compulsory in 1930, it was already possible to study in Armenian, Azerbaijani, Abkhaz, Ossetian,

[165] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 297.
[166] Cornell (2002), *Autonomy and Conflict*, p. 144.

and, naturally, Russian in Georgia. Consequentially, the literacy rate increased significantly, and in the early 1930s, nearly the entire population was literate. However, this process was slightly more complicated in autonomies; the case of Ossetians is particularly illustrative. The Ossetians are descendants of the Alans, hence having an Iranian origin. They speak the Iranian language, which is related to, though not fully mutually comprehensible, the Farsi language. In fact, the Ossetian language is, together with Armenian, the only Indo-European language spoken in Georgia. Its difference from the other Iranian languages is also expressed in its use of a Cyrillic-based alphabet with some modifications.[167] Yet, the alphabet changed several times in South Ossetia. Georgian missionary priests in the middle of the 18th century wrote the first book in Ossetian by using the Georgian alphabet. A few decades later, at the beginning of the 19th century, an Ossetian alphabet was created on the basis of the Georgian script, but this attempt was almost immediately followed by an alphabet developed on a Russian Cyrillic basis. After the fall of the First Georgian Republic, the Latin script had prevailed in Ossetia until World War II, when the Georgian alphabet came to be used again. The final turn to Cyrillic occurred in 1954.[168] Indeed, circumstances that are so specific should not be underestimated when dealing with educational changes.

The dynamics of educational promotion that started with the process of *korenizatsiia* and which was fundamentally accelerated by the need for a skilful and educated work force that would be compatible with the requirements of a growing urban environment can also be traced from the figures. The strategies of the developmentalist state based on industrialization and the consequent professionalization of management as well as administration created structural conditions that worked well as incentives for competent

[167] Tsikhelashvili, Ketevan (2001): *The Case Studies of Abkhazia and South Ossetia*, Carnegie Project on Complex Power-Sharing and Self-Determination, European Centre for Minority Issues, pp. 38-39.
[168] Kobaidze, Manana Kock (1999): 'Minority Identity and Minority Maintenance in Georgia', *Working Paper 47*, Department of Linguistics, Lund University, p.10.

people, since education became almost a direct lift to better jobs. The number of people with secondary or higher education clearly confirms this trend as it increased dramatically between 1939 and 1970. Whereas in 1939, only 16.5 percent of people had secondary or higher education, till 1970, this figure grew to 55.4. It is interesting that in both of the border years, Georgia was the country with the most educated people, or to put it more realistically, it had the most efficient educational system, apparently taking advantage of the geographical preconditions. Regarding this statistic, it was only beaten by Latvia in 1939 (17.6 percent) but was ranked first in 1970. The neighbouring and comparatively very similar Armenia was only slightly behind with 12.8 and 51.6 percent while the leading republic of Russia showed 10.9 and 48.9 percent.[169]

In the era of de-Stalinization, the educational reform also transformed to the creation of the stable system of bureaucratic careers, which led to the consolidation on the highest level. Following this process, *nomenklatura* became a new dominant class. It should be emphasized that a professional and mainly competent administration is important for economic development and its translation into the welfare rates. Although the validity of this statement may be a source of controversial debates among economists in the case of capitalist states, it appears to be clear that the quality and competency of the bureaucratic personnel in a developing socialist state is a crucial factor given the role the administration performs.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, the Soviet economy 'flourished' and went through its best period. Although the relevancy of the data provided by the Soviet institutions and the estimates made by various institutions are subjects of immense debates among economists, there has still been a consensus on the exceptionality of this period. These economic 'successes' were also transferred to the increasing level of living standards and consumption and evidently

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[169] Hahn, Jeffrey W. (1978): 'Stability and Change in the Soviet Union', *Polity*, Vol. 10, No. 4, p. 551.

became projected to the overall level of satisfaction of the Soviet citizens.[170]

Nevertheless, it became gradually clear that the economic condition of the state did not allow for saturating the welfare regime, which was a result of the post-Stalinist endeavour to keep social stability. Moreover, the Soviet economy was not able to catch the recent wave of technological modernization introducing the information revolution. The economic performance fell down substantially. The growth rate at the beginning of the 1980s reached only 1.5 percent, and the income per capita did not grow at all, which was also openly conceded by the Soviet elites.[171] This low economic performance also fundamentally affected budgetary policy. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Georgia was among the countries that experienced virtually no investment growth or even decline.[172] The situation of economic crisis defined in terms of inability to create enough resources to saturate the rising expectations opened an unlimited space for severe conflicts over allocations of resources that became the dominant feature of the late Soviet economy and increased the costs of securing the positions.[173] Accordingly, the only meaningful reaction of the Soviet leadership was to find the missing resources abroad.

This analysis has so far focused on the internal processes within the Soviet society and economy in a wider logic of the developmentalist states but the Cold War context should not be completely overlooked.[174] The rapid military industrialization and

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[170] A well commented recent review of the economic performance of the Soviet Union in this period as well as its implication, which is comprehensible even for a non-economist, is provided in Khanin, G. I. (2003): 'The 1950s: The Triumph of the Soviet Economy', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 55, No. 8; for further sources on the Soviet economy, see Ofer, Gur (1987): 'Soviet Economic Growth: 1928 – 1985', *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 25, No. 4.

[171] Cf. Bunce (1983), *The Political Economy of the Brezhnev Era*, p. 130.

[172] Bahry, Donna (1987): *Outside Moscow: Power, Politics, and Budgetary Policy in the Soviet Republics*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 104.

[173] Bunce (1983), *The Political Economy of the Brezhnev Era*, p. 145.

[174] For the convergence geopolitical theory and historical sociology, see Collins, Randall (1999): *Macrohistory: Essays of Sociology of the Long Run*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, particularly chapters I-III.

consequent proletarianization of Stalin's period, conducted by the terrorist structures, approached the stage of wartime economy even before the Second World War. However, the heavy and military industries became major subjects of the post-war developmentalist strategy as there was, in fact, no clear alternative. Having mainly this socioeconomic mission, this track was rather independent on the ideological proclamations about the preparations for a future conflict. I do not even want to touch the immense discussions about the relative power of both poles of the Cold War in the respective decades of Khrushchev's thaw or, say, détente. For my argument, it appears to be enough to mention the rather generally accepted view that the socioeconomic crisis, at least from the 1970s, fundamentally affected Soviet abilities to keep abreast with the USSR's major enemy.

As even the partial return to the processes of the 'golden age' of the Soviet developmentalism secured by the Stalinist terrorist state was not possible, the only viable strategy was grounded in the opposite direction. Recalling the argument from the world system perspective made by Giovanni Arrighi, Terence Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein[175], I would maintain that the social and economic potential of the Soviet developmentalist project became exhausted, and the Soviet Union had to seek its reintegration to the world capitalist economy. Indeed, although this might not have been his primary intention, it was at least the context that determined Gorbachev's 'Westpolitik' and democratization from above. Likewise Andropov, Gorbachev clearly recognized the causes of the economic fall and 'felt that the bureaucratic apparatus must be purged and brought to heel before it could be recast in more rational and responsive organizational forms. His perestroika was essentially a 'velvet' purge...[and] glasnost served the dual purpose of providing propagandistic support in the struggle against the party conservatives

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[175] Cf. Arrighi, Giovanni, Hopkins, Terrence K., Wallerstein, Immanuel (2001): '1989: The Continuation of 1968', in Katsiaficas, George (ed.), *After the Fall: 1989 and the Future of Freedom*, New York: Routledge.

and generating a range of policy advice through open competition among bureaucratically connected intellectuals.'[176]

It has been already suggested that newly promoted national and cultural elites were essentially products of the affirmative action policies that had begun in the 1920s and were restored after the break of the Stalinist terrorist regime. I have also suggested that much more than the defenders of the disappearing national identity attacked by the invisible processes of modernization, they constituted representatives of the awakened, active and even relatively satisfied society. The past traditions, historical myths or folklore were not discovered and evoked solely because of the fear that they would disappear. At the same time they became the manifestation of a developing civil society that was both interested and receptive to such issues. In other words, the relieving of the Stalinist terrorist state bonds and all the subsequent processes mentioned above did not finally create room for the demonstration of discontent with the process of modernization affecting the national identities, but rather started a process of social changes that was similar to the social movements that preceded major Western capitalist revolutions.

As noted Khrushchev's era offered unique conditions for fast moving careers and created relevant opportunities for educated specialists that were not fundamentally burdened by ideological preconditions. Moreover, I have already claimed that the Soviet Union during the late 1950s and 1960s went through the 'most gratified' period of its existence, expressed in the relative satisfaction of the Soviet society with the deliveries of the socialist developmentalist state. From the world system perspective we should perhaps bear in mind that the 1960s experienced arguably the first crisis of capitalism, symbolized by the movement against the War in Vietnam

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[176] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 126. Also, for the role of intellectuals in perestroika, see Shalin, Dmitri N. (1990): 'Sociology for the Glasnost Era: Institutional and Substantive Changes in Recent Soviet Sociology', *Social Forces*, Vol. 68, No. 4; Weinberg, Elizabeth A. (1992): 'Perestroika and Soviet Sociology', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 43, No. 1.

and particularly in Europe by the year '1968'. Indeed, the social changes raised by Khrushchev's thaw ideas of democratization could reach the developing civic society but could not overcome the fundaments of the Communists' political and economic machinery.

The relative success of Krushchev's reforms definitely confirmed the victory of the pragmatist stance over the Stalinist ideological conviction that the way ahead and ahead of the capitalist West led through the permanent revolutionary transformation.[177] However, at some point, the experimental attempts of Khrushchev and Kosygin's government went perhaps too far. The possibility of a large degree of self-management in the economic sphere, the introduction of electoral processes for the mid-ranking bureaucracy and the almost neglected nationalist mobilization had to create a conservative response. Precisely as if they knew the Western debates in the field of historical sociology, conservative forces perhaps rightly foresaw that the situation might have ended up in a revolutionary movement. And in fact the situation in Central Europe in the late 1960s would be another confirmation.

Although the newly established *nomenklatura* by no means believed anymore in the Marxist-Leninst dogmas about the society, it certainly remained fully receptive of its own class interest. The situation of the national *nomenklatura* became dubious. 'In the mid-sixties the *nomenklatura* sought to incorporate themselves into a privileged caste, to protect themselves both from the popular pressures below and from the central government above.'[178] Obviously, in this situation, the social coherency of Khrushchev's society was lost as the reform-oriented interests of the proletarian civic society encompassing workers as well as educated specialists diverged from the orientation of the top class, which began to strive

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[177] Suny, Ronald (1992): 'State, civil society, and ethnic cultural consolidation in the USSR – roots of the national question', in: Goldman, Philip, Gail Lapidus, and Victor Zaslavsky (eds.), *From Union to Commonwealth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 28-30.
[178] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 108.

for more control to secure its own position. Moreover, the strategy of the new leadership even worsened the problems.

All these factors evidently signalized and caused a deep socioeconomic crisis that became even more serious as a competent, capable and functioning leadership was either virtually missing or engaged in corporatist struggles. Hence Brezhnev's conservative regime was not challenged by reformist attempts but by 'responses to the mounting frustrations involved in establishing the corporatist decision processes and implementing policy priorities in keeping with a corporatist system.'[179] In other words, 'the blindness and sclerosis of Soviet bureaucracy was actually the achievement of the *nomenklatura*, and a major condition of Brezhnev era comfort and security.'[180]

The change overturning the socioeconomic situation could hardly come, as both major classes, proletarians and *nomenklatura*, were locked in the rigid processes of the everyday functioning of the Soviet system. Most notably, contrary to Khrushchev's period, which had opened up room for new educated cadres, who had taken the opportunity to create a relatively efficient structure, the amendment coming from above, from the post-Brezhnev *nomenklatura*, was virtually non-realistic. The late Soviet *nomenklatura* was very different from the threatened leaders of the totalitarian Stalinist state as well as from the capable bureaucrats and managers of Khrushchev's period. Derlugian has stressed that an ideological component was crucial for all developmentalist transformation, and hence 'transformational dictatorships had to inspire no less than terrorize...In the late 1960s the USSR no longer met either of these two conditions. The soviet ideology had been gutted, embalmed, and mummified. Moscow was transformed from the commanding centre

[179] Bunce (1983), *The Political Economy of the Brezhnev Era*, p. 132.
[180] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 108.

into the principal nexus of corporatist lobbying and intrabureaucratic bargaining.'[181]

If the *nomenklatura* was locked in clientelist structures and intrabureaucratic struggles, the Soviet proletarians appeared in the mid 1980s to be in a historically unprecedented situation. At least the 'core' industrial areas of the Soviet Union began to suffer from a lack of labour, and the shortage of recruits also bothered the Red Army. This structural condition would normally enhance the power of the entire class, promising an improvement of wages and working conditions. Nevertheless, as noted above, the socioeconomic processes went in quite a different way. Moreover, although the political control and repression were by no means reaching the dimensions of the peak of the totalitarian state, the usual means of protest, such as strikes, were still considered dangerous. When recognizing the low profile of the organized institutional negotiation and bargaining, the only remaining meaningful 'strategy' that survived in the hands of proletarians was lowering the quality and productivity of labour. This often almost anecdotic aspect of the Soviet economy and the conditions of life of the state-dependent proletarians are fittingly expressed by a typical Soviet period joke: *They pretend to pay and we pretend to work.* Indeed, as Derlugian has nicely put it, '[t]he notoriously shoddy quality of Soviet-made goods was in fact the perverted triumph of class struggle under state socialism.'[182]

5.2 Mechanisms of class dynamics

The environment determining social and economic relations was hugely formed by the systemic corruption. The system of the so-called

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[181] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 122.
[182] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 119.

tolkach connected with the fulfillment of major economic goals provides a good example illustrating the extent of corruption within the Soviet society. In the Soviet economy, the goal of the *nomenklatura* red managers was not to create profit but to fulfil the target defined by the *gosplan* (State Planning Committee). Although basically all Soviet economic figures were virtual, it was still either comfortable or sometimes almost inevitable for the red managers to adjust the targets so that they could be accomplished. This could be done, first, through bribes provided to the relevant members of the *gosplan*, who could reduce the targets and, second, through negotiation, led by *tolkach*, with the companies that could increase the input of needed parts or raw materials. Quite naturally, all these processes were observed by the Party officials, who could not forfeit their shares for covering them up.[183] In the southern states, this system very often operated along ethnic structures or other patronage structures.[184] Generally speaking, it has been estimated that in the 1980s, approximately 20 million Soviet citizens were fully operating in the second economy and were producing and trading goods creating a turnover reaching between 200 and 400 billion rubles each year. At the same time, over 80 percent of the Soviet population was dependent on the second economy to satisfy their basic everyday needs and wants.[185]

The first attack on the steady and corrupt administration came with the accession of Andropov. Andropov was very well aware of the roots of the current crisis, which rested mainly in the incapable, corrupt and ineffective administration. Although it is hard to make an analytically complete picture from the very short period when he was in power, his program, reacting to the deep crisis of corruption, had neo-Stalinist overlaps. No matter how realistic it might have

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[183] Stefes, Christoph H. (2006): *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions: Corruption, Collusion and Clientelism*, p. 71.
[184] Simis, Konstantin (1982): *USSR – The Corrupt Society: The Secret World of Soviet Capitalism*, New York: Simon and Schuster, p. 80.
[185] Stefes, Christoph H. (2006): *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions: Corruption, Collusion and Clientelism*, p. 72.

appeared, Andropov intended to organize a massive purge directed at the corrupt officials and to renew the strong central control. Despite the lack of time, it became obvious that Soviet bureaucracy was already securely embedded in the industrial base and hence collectively effectively defended against the central endeavour. Moreover, the return of the despotic decision-making was unacceptable for the proletarians, who, though often annoyed by the bureaucrats, would not exchange the bureaucratic hassling for a 'totalitarianization' of the overall condition. It should also be noted that even Andropov had to recognize some aspects of the corrupt nature of the system. Steffes has shown that his endeavour was not in fact targeted at corruption per se but rather at officials who did not follow the informal rules of the game. 'When an official was charged with corruption, it was often said the real reason he got arrested was that he ''stole out of proportion to his official position.'''[186]

Particular policies of Gorbachev's democratization took the shape of the reform experiments of Khrushchev's era. Most importantly, the mechanisms of competitive elections enhanced by the possibility of open public critique created needful pressure on and an exchange of the *nomenklatura* cadres. And again, as was the case with Khrushchev's era, these processes created opportunities for many educated specialists to reach the enticing positions of the *nomenklatura*. Nevertheless, Gorbachev's reforms did not provide the newly established elites with any tools which could be used to follow the flourishing corruption of the lower rank officials, who certainly skillfully managed to take advantage of this situation and pursued their own material interests. Solnick came up with the close metaphor of a 'bank run' for this topic, as a bank run also results in a complete collapse.[187]

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[186] Stefes, Christoph H. (2006): *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions: Corruption, Collusion and Clientelism*, p. 69.

[187] Steven Solnick as quoted in Stefes, Christoph H. (2006): *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions: Corruption, Collusion and Clientelism*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 74.

Goodwin has suggested four political conditions that enabled a generally peaceful capitulation of the late-Soviet elite. Apart from the recognition of the absence of a physical threat coming from the opponents and the often discussed 'Gorbachev's factor', it was mainly the 'embourgeoisement' of the late-Soviet *nomenklatura* and the understanding among the enlightened *nomenklatura* that their defeat in a competitive election would be a temporary loss.[188] Indeed, as Derlugian has further noted, 'Goodwin's four factors add up to the strategy of negotiating for the elite the least disruptive and collectively profitable transition from one developmentalist project to another, from a state-bound and isolationist economy to market-driven and externally conjugated economic growth.'[189]

Georgian society fully resembled the general Soviet trends mentioned above. Many young educated specialists quite soon abandoned their ideals and became accommodated with the prevailing patterns of social stagnation that became typical for the Brezhnev period. The only dissident alternative remained the unorthodox nationalist groups led by a few elite figures. These nationalist organizations took their contours during the 1956 riots. The most visible group was called Gorgasliani. The name referred to the East Georgian king Vakhtang Gorgasali, who founded Tbilisi in 5th century AD. Two leading exponents of the Georgian Soviet period nationalism, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, then lecturer on American literature and the English Language at the Tbilisi State University, and Merab Kostava, were already members of this group. After the intervention of the KGB, the group was dispersed, but the movement soon became reorganized around the students of Tbilisi Technical University, who opposed the barbaric destruction of some religious architectonical monuments.[190] Moreover, the situation became complicated when Gamsakhurdia learnt about the theft of medieval

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[188] Goodwin, Jeff (2001): *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, mentioned in Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 127.

[189] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 127.

[190] Cornell (2002), *Autonomy and Conflict*, p. 149.

religious treasures from the patriarchate in Tbilisi. The investigation led to the wife of First Secretary Mzhavanadze, but the leaving potentate still managed to break the process. In the mid-1970s, the nationalist movement transformed into a human rights protection group which gained the status of a Helsinki Watch Group after the 1975 Helsinki Accords.[191] Gamsakhurdia, together with his associates Kostava and Tsikolia, wrote numerous articles that shed light on the deportations of Georgian Muslims (Meskhetian Turks) to Central Asia and defended the already arrested followers. These activities could not be settled by Zviad's respected father, and Gamsakhurdia, together with Kostava, got sentenced. It should be stressed that the Georgian nationalist movement was at least until this point an elitist group of young men who often came from 'good' families, and it was almost absolutely geographically limited to Central Tbilisi.

This situation changed for a moment during Brezhnev's constitutional process, held in 1978, when the Soviet government released the plan to remove the paragraph establishing Georgian as the sole state language and substitute it with a clause giving equal status to Russian and other languages in the republic. This idea provoked a huge demonstration of university students that took place on April 14, after which Shevardnadze's government retreated from the public pressure and decided to reject any such changes of the constitution. The circumstances of this ill-advised idea of the central government substantially helped to make the so far dissident movement public in Georgia, though it still did not disperse away from Tbilisi or, in fact, from academic circles.[192]

By this time, both of the main Georgian nationalist figures, Kostava and Gamsakhurdia, were in jail. Their journeys split up in 1979, when Zviad Gamsakhurdia, publicly on TV, 'abjured his past errors' and was pardoned, whereas Kostava refused to do so and

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[191] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 309.
[192] Ibid., p. 309.

remained imprisoned until 1987.[193] Being an icon of the 'true Georgian dissidents' and a possible challenger to Gamsakhurdia's rise to power as the head of the newly established nationalist organization Society of St. Ilia the Righteous, he died under mysterious circumstances in a car accident in 1989.

In the mid-1980s, a spontaneous wave of resistance was raised against the typically Soviet megalomaniacal plans to build a railroad link over the Caucasian range. Especially young students and some of their teachers began to criticize the ecological and cultural costs that were ignored by the plan. Indeed, such a huge project would devastate wide parts of the beautiful Georgian mountains, and moreover, it was considered to be a demolition of a few sacral and archaeological monuments.[194] The project was later shelved, although the influence of the social protests on this decision is debatable, as perhaps even the proponents could perhaps eventually recognize its unrealistic proportions. Nevertheless, the protestors remained unpunished, which could have, in effect, been generally legitimizing for later displays of discontent and critique.

From another perspective, during the last years within the Soviet state, Georgian society went through a cathartic social and cultural process when opening some contentious historical topics. These debates were to a large extent evoked by the famous Georgian film directed by Tengiz Abuladze *Monanieba* (Repentance) that allegorically pictured the repressions of the Stalin era. The film was finished in 1984 and could only be released when Gorbachev's *glasnost'* was fully established, but it still came to be forbidden again after a few screenings.[195] On the other hand, it was enthusiastically

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[193] The official sentence was originally about three years.

[194] Quite a few politicians were involved in the protests as students - among others, for example, Zurab Zhvania, who served as a Speaker of the Parliament at the end of Shevardnadze's second era and became, together with Mikheil Saakashvili and Nino Burdjanadze, a part of the triumvirate leading the Rose Revolution, after which he served as a Prime Minister until his mysterious death in February 2005.

[195] The story surrounding the movie is interesting as it was originally prepared for Georgian national television, which had weaker censorship mechanisms. It should be also noted that Repentance is the

welcomed outside the Soviet bloc and was given an award in Cannes in 1987. The artistic reflection was accompanied by performances of professional historians. In 1988, Vakhtang Gurgenidze, the director of the Georgian State Archive of Literature and Art, publicly stated that the Georgian poet and father of the modern Georgian nation Ilia Chavchavadze was killed in 1907 in a complot organized by the Old Bolshevik Pilipe Makharadze. Gurgenidze was fired immediately, although other Georgian intellectuals protested and Kostava, together with Gamsakhurdia, even sent a letter to Gorbachev asking for his re-appointment.[196]

The topic of the Menshevik era was officially overlooked. Yet, there was a group of progressive historians like Avtandil Menteshashvili, Akaki Surguladze or Ushangi Sidamonidze, who publicly discovered these forbidden topics.[197] The government was reacting by counter-campaigns projecting the societal leaders in a typically Soviet style as intruders, caterpillars or asocial elements. The critical movement gradually displayed tendencies to institutionalize, but this process also discovered essential differences between various oppositional streams. The moderate intellectuals formed the Shota Rustaveli[198] society that officially supported the policies of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*. More nationalist-oriented figures led by Gamsakhurdia and Kostava and followed, for example, by the historians Giorgi Chanturia and Erekle Shengelaia established the Ilia Chavchavadze Society, which operated and unofficially fought against the growing Russification and enhancement of Georgian political and cultural sovereignty. This much more radical group was naturally less coherent. After a few months, Gamsakhurdia was expelled from the Society and, followed by Kostava and Chanturia, he created the Fourth Group. Nevertheless, even their alliance did not

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third part of an open historical trilogy, with The Prayer (1968) and The Tree of Desire (1977) coming before it.

[196] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 320.

[197] Ibid., p. 320.

[198] Shota Rustaveli was a Georgian poet in the 12th and perhaps also the 13th century and the author of The Knight in the Panther's Skin, the greatest classic Georgian national epic secular poem.

last for a long time as Chanturia, supposedly due to personal disputes with Gamsakhurdia[199], left the group and founded the radical National Democratic Party. Suny has concluded that religious, political, and even ecological issues connected with a potent nationalist discourse that exceeded the extended free area of *glasnost'*. 'Yet the intelligentsia, while overwhelmingly nationalist in a broad sense, remained deeply divided in its attitudes toward the existing order and in its commitment to a radical move toward independence.' Indeed, I will attempt to show below what factors became fundamental in the societal shift towards independence and violent mobilization or, in other words, what conditions might have determined these shifts.

The social and political role and power of the nationalist movement should not be overrated, which might be the impression coming from the literature focusing on the national question and nationalism in the Soviet Union. Although stories focusing on leaders and publicly visible figures of the Georgian late 1980s social movements have tended to draw a much different picture while stressing the strengths and gravity of the entire society's national mobilization, a closer look might provide a different perception. I have already mentioned above that a combination of the national awakening and the latitude of the conditions under the reform stream of *perestroika* and *glasnost'* brought about certain dynamic processes that could generally be labeled as the evolution of the civil society. Nevertheless, most of the activities within this development could not attempt in any way to organize a wide and fundamental national mobilization. The main reason of this incapacity rested in the fact that virtually none of the classes or groups within the Georgian society had an incentive to turn against the state, which was still providing social and economic security. This was very much the case of all proletarians, encompassing organized peasants, manual workers and educated specialists dependent on the state's payrolls. Especially the

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[199] Much of my knowledge about Gamsakhurdia comes from my personal debates with Ramaz Kurdadze and Tamar Kiknadze, professors of the Tbilisi State University, which were occurring during my stay at the TSU between January and June 2004.

last subclass of educated specialists became increasingly critical to and frustrated from the steady state bureaucracy and ineffectiveness of basically all economic and social sectors, but it became appeased at the same time by its successes in influencing some of the decisions and by a growing room for political but mainly cultural expressions. The dependency of the *nomenklatura* was somehow natural, though especially the mid-rank *nomeklatura* cadres were also anxious about reforming the processes that opened up room for removals after a public critique or through a competitive election. However, it should be recalled that particularly in the South Caucasus, their positions were empowered by various regionally-based patronage and corruption structures. Finally, the subproletarians were not interfered with by the changes and, even more importantly, were not mobilized under the condition of a still relatively functioning state.

Observing the events occurring foremost in Tbilisi from this perspective, we could conclude that all protests and demonstrations were in fact led by a marginal group of national radicals, who were mostly recruited from the families of Georgian prominents or noblemen.[200] Derlugian has described the typical participants of the nationalist demonstrations as sub-intellectuals (teachers, librarians) from the small towns and unshaven men who left their market places, farms or small trucks.[201] Many of them also had a rustic accent, most often Mengrelian.[202] Indeed, such a perception of the events has also been confirmed by my own experience in Georgia. Virtually all of the people I had a chance to interview in Tbilisi, generally academicians

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[200] Georgian society has retained a spectacular system preserving a 'notion of nobility' that can be distinguished mainly through the family names. In the Soviet period, some of the families managed to translate their old gentry's capital into an influential position in the *nomenklatura* or they were simply respected without a particular position in the apparatus. Aslan Abashidze, who will be mentioned later, could serve as an example of the first group, and Zviad Gamsakhurdia and his father Konstantin (a rightly respected writer) could serve as examples of the second. However, since the 1990s, the relevancy of these 'good families' has been decreasing.

[201] Derlugian has interviewed several distinguished scholars and public figures, including Ghia Nodia and Ketevan Rostiashvili. Cf. Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 198, f. 41.

[202] Mengrelia is a region in Western Georgia lying by the border with Abkhazia. Most of the 'Georgians' living in Abkhazia have also been ethnic Mengrelians. It should also be noted that Gamsakhurdia was a Mengrelian as well. His ethnic affiliation became important after he had been removed from the presidential position.

from the universities and research centers, also mentioned that they did not feel comfortable with these events and did not follow them, as they perceived the leading Georgian nationalists as too radical and extremist. Some of them explicitly pointed out that most of the rallies followed various Georgian fests and holidays and the major motivation for the crowd was to avoid work or make a trip to Tbilisi.[203] It should also be mentioned in this regard that the number of occasions commemorating 'nationally important days' in the Georgian calendar exceeded a few times the average number of festivals celebrated in, say, an average European democratic society.

5.2.1   Functioning of the State

The sovietization of Transcaucasia mirrored many contradictions and discrepancies between the possible applications of Marxist principles and their cynical strategic and purpose-built abandonment. More particularly, as Suny has argued, 'it was the product of conflict between the strategic requirements of Soviet Russia and the aims of local Communists.'[204] Interestingly, local Bolsheviks were also divided between Stalinist hardliners (Orjonikidze serves as a good example) and Leninist moderates, who actually prevailed among Georgian Bolsheviks.

In March 1922, the Federal Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of Transcaucasia was created, although many regional Communists opposed it. In the following months, Stalin created pressures so that all three South Caucasian Republics would join the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic as Autonomous Republics. Georgians were at the time the only South Caucasians opposing this intention. Yet, Stalin's strategy was also opposed by Lenin, and in the controversial atmosphere, the Transcaucasian Federated Soviet Socialist Republic was formed and joined the Soviet Union in December 1922. This institutional design was working until 1936, when the Federation was

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[203] I am indebted mainly to professors Tamar Kiknadze and Ramaz Kurdadze as well as to David Darchiashvili for their kind willingness to share their time with me.
[204] Suny (1988): *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, pp. 209-210.

dismantled and Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia became individual members of the Soviet Union.

Still during the Federal Union, three autonomous units were created on Georgian territory. Abkhazia gained the status of a formally independent Soviet Republic, which was in federation with Georgia, in May 1921. This status was also confirmed by the constitution of 1925, which has often been recalled by Abkhaz nationalists. The constitution of 1931 then incorporated Abkhazia into the Georgian Republic as an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Ajaria, under the particular circumstances, became the ASSR already in June 1921. South Ossetia received the lower status of Autonomous Oblast in April 1922. After the last change of the Abkhaz status in 1931, the administrative arrangement did not change until the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

From the perspective of political economy Stalin's regime was based on the growing heavy industry and military-industrial complex organized and enforced by the centralized terrorist state structure. However, Stalin's chauvinistic terror was incompatible with most of the national minorities' rights developed during 'korenizatsiia'. As a result, the Stalinist educational system produced in particular one sort of educated specialist – engineers competent for the military industry.

In 1931, Lavrentii Beria became the leader of the Communist Party of Georgia, and one year later, he began to head also the Central Party Committee. His career, which reached its peak when Beria attained the post of the head of NKVD in 1938, was very closely connected with the formation of Stalin's personal cult.[205] The veneration of Stalin, who, like Beria, came from Georgia[206], reached an unimaginable level in Georgia. Even after the post-Stalinist and

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[205] For a detailed study on Beria's political career, see, for example, Knight, Amy W. (1993): *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutnant*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[206] It is not well-known, though it may not be so surprising due to his physical appearance, that Iosip Dzhughashvili was a child of a Georgian father and an ethnic Ossetian mother. The town of Gori, the place of his birth that became sadly 'famous' again recently due to the Russo-Georgian war, lies close to the border with Southern Ossetia. Beria was a Mingrelian.

post-Communist processes, Stalin has been still present to an unbelievable degree in today's Georgia, either in the stony form of numerous monuments and statues or in the minds of many Georgians. Interestingly, according to my experience, the opinions of Georgian intelligentsia on Stalin are also seriously ambiguous.

Beria's supervision over the Caucasus lasted until 1951, when Stalin's ire captured him as well. The fall of Beria in 1951 also denoted the fall of his protégés, who were very often not surprisingly Mingrelian. He survived the processes of 1937, but his power assertion was redeemed by the liquidation of thousands Party representatives working on various levels. The leading old figures among Georgian Communists were physically liquidated. The Stalinist strategy completely reversed the policies of the 1920s that were sensitive towards minorities and centralized the power control. Most importantly, many political autonomous rights were rendered and the politics as well as culture became greatly Georgianized and Russified. The suppression of minorities' rights and culture was strongly expressed, when all native language schools were closed.[207]

The period of de-Stalinization announced by Khrushchev's famous speech at the 20th Party Congress in 1956 created room for changes in virtually all areas. The most visible and also the most commonly mentioned changes were connected with the termination of the terror directed on minorities and especially on 'Caucasian quislings'.[208] However, the deconstruction of the terrorist state in fact meant an opportunity for deeper changes in the Soviet system.

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[207] Jones, Stephen (1994): 'Georgia: A Failed Democratic Transition', in Bremmer, Ian, and Ray, Taras, *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994, p. 292.

[208] Some views of the Stalinist policies in the Caucasus can be found in Knight, Amy W. (1993): *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutnant*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Further see, for example, Connor, Walker (1992): 'Soviet Policies Toward the Non-Russian Peoples in Theoretic and Historic Perspective: What Gorbachev Inherited' in: Motyl, Alexander J. (ed.), *The Post-Soviet Nations - Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR*, New York: Columbia University Press or Suny, Ronald (1992): 'State, civil society, and ethnic cultural consolidation in the USSR – roots of the national question', in Goldman, Philip, Gail Warshofsky Lapidus and Victor Zaslavsky (eds.), *From Union to Commonwealth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 27-30.

The dismantling of Stalin's cult brought about harder times for his protégés but also for local bureaucratic cadres that got promoted under Stalin's rule. These people were often demoted or forced to leave their position in the administration. They also became quite typically ostracized and made to move to the rural areas. This process was essentially accelerated by the fact that the Stalinist local elites were frequently terribly undereducated and in fact incapable of standing the reform wind. They usually had only an elementary education and then became trained in the so-called 'Sovtpartshkolas' (local Party schools).

The disintegration of the former terror structures and the riddance of Stalin's cadres followed by the growth of the civil administration that would substitute the former buttress of the absolutely totalitarian state marked a need for new career-oriented educated cadres. Particularly during Khrushchev's period, the careers could develop quite fast, and junior rank administrators had a chance to reach the position of *nomenklatura* in a reasonable amount of time. The acceptance for the civil service and the system of promotion were based on educational credentials and overall abilities. As Derlugian has noted, '[t]he end of terroristic centralization marked the collective victory of Soviet bureaucracy over the arbitrary terror of the previous regime. The post-Stalinist *nomenklatura* was not only significantly larger and better educated, it was also more durable.'[209]

Moreover, the control over the regional companies was transferred from the ministries in Moscow to the institutions in Tbilisi. This move retrieved one of the most painful signs of the Stalinist total control. By 1958, virtually all Georgian enterprises (98 percent) were under the control of the local management. This move essentially enhanced the economic performance of Georgia and enabled it to accumulate some savings and reserves, but according to some figures, Georgian development was still comparatively quite

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[209] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 87.

low. In the seventh decade of the 20th century, the Georgian national income grew by 102 percent, which was the third lowest improvement within the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the average Georgian savings account almost twice exceeded the Soviet average.[210] These indications should be considered also in regard to the data about the educational system that were mentioned above. Indeed, it is interesting how many Georgian educated specialists managed to live without a permanent state-sponsored job. Regarding this, I will later mention that the 'second economy' was one of the distinctive features of Georgia.

The relatively positive atmosphere of Khrushchev's thaw became reflected in various demographic data that should be, like other trends, observed from the future perspective. In Georgia, the number of citizens grew very rapidly after Stalin's death. Between 1959 and 1979, the number of inhabitants increased roughly by one fourth from 4,044,000 to 5,016,000. It should also be noted that this wave of natality reversed the previous trend, according to which the number of ethnic Georgians had relatively declined. It is, indeed, interesting, as for the Georgians, a relatively modest natality rate was typical, particularly in comparison to Muslim people (e.g. Azerbaijanis in Kvemo (Lower) Kartli). Correspondingly, the relative numbers of Armenians and Russians were declining as well. While mentioning the demographic data, particularly one figure made the Georgians really exceptional. The Georgians were by far the most patriotic nation of the Soviet Union. It is not exaggerating to say that almost all Georgians living in the Soviet Union stayed in Georgia. The data of 1970 show that 97 percent of Georgians lived in their homeland (with most of the remaining Georgians living in Russia - 2 percent), and these figures did not change dramatically throughout the Soviet era. The Georgians could not be compared to any other titular nation of the Soviet Union in this respect. Even the number of the relatively recently established Azerbaijanis remained lower when reaching about

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[210] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, pp. 303-304.

85 percent in the 1970s, and the situation with the Armenians was very different, though not so surprising, as only about 60 percent of the Armenians in the Soviet Union stayed in Armenia.[211]

The combination of the social and economic satisfaction with the possibility of political involvement and the promotion of the national language and culture carried out by native educational institutions again renewed in the late 1950s essentially augmented national awareness. It could be argued within the conditions described above that the Georgian society stepped forward to the development of a civil society. The flourishing of the national culture, theatre, or opera was not only enabled by the improvement of the national cultural condition but was also essentially driven by the demand coming from the educated and 'proletarianized' society. Especially in towns and cities, social life became a relevant counterpart of the working endeavour. But the growing national awareness in a reformed society had deeper implications.

Khrushchev's fast reforms and changes triggered some effects that might have challenged the entire nature of the Soviet system. Georgia very soon experienced perhaps the greatest crises of Khrushchev's period. A few weeks after the First Secretary's notorious speech at the 20th Party Congress denouncing the cult of personality of the most 'famous' Georgian countryman, an unofficial demonstration took place to commemorate the three year anniversary of his death. The meeting symbolically gathered at the place where Stalin's monument had formerly stood. The growing daily gatherings started a few days before the official anniversary. The Georgian Party leadership, led by Vasili Mzhavanadze, who had served in the Ukrainian Party apparatus before and was thus clearly Khrushchev's man, decided to permit the official meeting on March 9, 1956. However, this event, led by students and radical intellectuals (one of the protestors was Zviad Gamsakhurdia, then the first president of the

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[211] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 299.

independent Georgia), changed into a nationalist manifestation and spread through the streets of Tbilisi. The reaction of the police and army was very heartless, as they killed dozens and wounded hundreds of people.

The Georgian leadership, supported by the respected rector of the Tbilisi State University Viktor Kupradze, managed to pacify the situation quite quickly and withstood the critique from the bottom as well as from above. The latter critique, coming from the central organs in Moscow, quickly passed away with the smooth down of the situation in Tbilisi. Vasili Mzhavanadze was even awarded for his proven abilities a candidacy into the Central Committee of the CPSU in June 1957.[212] However, what is even more interesting from my perspective is the interpretation of the events. While emphasizing the symbolic role of Stalin for the Georgian national awareness, Suny has claimed that '[b]y 1956 the growing national awareness, coupled with anxiety about the loss of unique ethnicity in the face of modernization, had led to a strong resurgence among young people of a commitment to Georgian identity.'[213] Such an explanation, which has been generally accepted, however, fails to consider the social and economic dynamics that occurred in the entire country. Derlugian has, indeed, been correct in noting that '[n]ationalism enters the Khrushchevian scene almost as an afterthought. Who would seriously contemplate secession from such a strong and dynamic state that had finally begun to deliver on its promises of a better life? Indeed, probably only a few old reactionaries miraculously still surviving from the pre-communist times, and especially daring Bohemians whose dissidence was more an aesthetic stance than politics in any real sense.'[214]

I have already mentioned that Brezhnev decided to build its central power position on the ground of the support coming from the

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[212] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, pp. 302-303.
[213] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 303.
[214] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 97.

regional leaders. The area of the South Caucasus may serve as a good example of this 'unite and conquer' strategy. The former KGB officer Heidar Aliev came to power in Azerbaijan in 1969, three years later, Eduard Shevardnadze became the head of the Georgian Communist Party, and in 1974, Karen Demirjian became the leader of Armenia.[215] Similarly, the Party heads of Ukraine, Moldova, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan belonged to the supporters of the Brezhnev leadership.[216] Indeed, it seems to be apparent that this stronger dependency between the national cadres and the Moscow leadership helped to deepen the disunion between the leaders and the nationally awakened society.

Brezhnev's period is often considered mainly in terms of the situation in the international system. Nevertheless, Bunce has pointed out that under Brezhnev, and likewise during Khrushchev's and Stalin's eras, the policy process was heavily shaped by the fusion between the political and economic realms. Brezhnev inherited a more complex economy, a more demanding society, and an awakened society experiencing unfolding struggles. These factors pushed the Soviet state in a corporativist direction 'towards a mode of interest intermediation that sought to minimize conflict and maximize productivity by incorporating dominant economic and political interests directly into the policy process, while cultivating the support of the mass public through an expanding welfare state.'[217]

In the conditions of corporativist state *nomenklatura* quickly degenerated. The streams of reforms and healthy competitiveness were substituted by the new blossom of *nomenklatura* corporativism, clientelism and corruption, and the circle closed with the growing censorship and massive propaganda, which did not aim at spreading ideological clichés that no one would believe in anymore but rather fully focused on hiding the problems and fudging the reality.

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[215] Suny (1992), *State, civil society, and ethnic cultural consolidation in the USSR – roots of the national question*, p. 30.
[216] Agursky, Mikhail (1986): 'The Prospects of National Bolshevism', in: Conquest, *The Last Empire*, p. 99.
[217] Bunce, Valerie (1983): 'The Political Economy of the Brezhnev Era: The Rise and Fall of Corporatism', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 131.

Brezhnev's period could be viewed as the golden age of corruption that turned the originally totalitarian state into a kleptocratic state. His strategy based on 'stability of cadres' included the reduction of penalties for official crimes, which was a direct signal for officials that corruption would be to a large extent tolerated.[218] With the advancement of Brezhnev's policies, Soviet society got to the stage of the so-called *zastoi* (stagnation).

Although Mzhavanadze gained credit for 'solving' and relatively quickly pacifying the nationalist riots in 1956, his merits were quickly forgotten in the early 1970s when Georgia constantly failed to meet economic targets and became 'famously' known for notorious corruption. In 1972, Georgian industrial production grew only by 0.2 percent, although the plan was for it to grow by 6 percent, and the economic stagnation also struck private incomes. The income of the state-dependent workers even decreased between 1971 and 1972. Moreover, the corruption or simple cheating reached immense dimensions and consequentially undermined both general economic performance and official statistical figures. For example, it has been estimated that in the early 1970s, farmers received three times as much income from their private plots as from the collective farms. Other figures then show that only an incredible two thirds of typical Georgian agricultural products, i.e. subtropical fruits and vegetables, reached the official market. A similar figure for Armenia reached almost 90 percent.[219] Another common practise was selling public offices to those who offered the highest bid. It has been reported that in late 1970s Georgia, the office of a district public prosecutor could cost about 15,000 rubles, the position of a chief of the district militia was worth 50,000 rubles, and the future first secretary of the party's district committee had to pay roughly 200,000 rubles. These figures are tremendous, given the fact that an average month salary in this position was around 300 rubles. What can easily be derived from

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[218] Simis, Konstantin (1977): 'The Machinery of Corruption in the Soviet Union', *Survey*, 22, p. 55.
[219] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 306.

these statistics is that, first, in most of the cases, only formerly well-corrupted people could make enough money to get promoted and, second, that these positions assured additional gains that several times surmounted official salaries.[220] Indeed, many Georgians lived directly through the second economy, which encompassed black marketeering, corruption, omnipresent bribes and cheating.[221] This aspect of Georgian life will be also analysed later.

Mzhavanadze's follower Eduard Shevardnadze received the almost unrealizable task of fighting these problems. Suny has also stressed the power of 'the Caucasian reliance on close familial and personal ties in all aspects of life and the reluctance to betray one's relatives and comrades, [which] led to the impenetrable system of mutual aid, protection, and disregard for those who were not part of the spoils system.'[222] To at least partially accomplish this mission, Shevardnadze obviously needed and gained a substantial back up from Moscow. How difficult this task was could be illustrated on one of the first victims of his endeavour. The corruption heavily entered educational institutions as well. At the very beginning, Shevardnadze's determination impinged upon the rector of the Tbilisi Medical Institute Gelbakhiani, who was bribed in connection with the entering procedures to such an extent that Georgia had the highest number of doctors per ten thousand people of any country in the world.[223]

With the growing nationalist awareness and regionally-based control, it became impossible to unite the opposition against the old Soviet order. As Suny has noted, '...the policies and rhetoric of [Georgian] leaders, the choices and use of potent symbols, would either work to ameliorate these [ethnonational] divisions in a unified struggle for independence and democracy or reinforce and exacerbate

[220] Stefes, Christoph H. (2006): *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions: Corruption, Collusion and Clientelism*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 68.
[221] Mars, Gerald and Altman, Yochanan (1983): 'The Cultural Bases of Soviet Georgia's Second Economy', *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 4.
[222] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 306.
[223] Ibid., p. 307.

the interethnic divisions within the republic.'[224] I will show later that the second possibility became a reality, though it happened under the particular circumstances determining the role of the leaders on all sides. Indeed, as the above-developed theoretical framework has suggested, national mobilization could not be treated separately from the wider socioeconomic conditions.

5.3 Mechanisms of ethnopolical mobilisation

Although I have so far tried to contest the role of the developing nationalist movement, I would like to show now that it quickly gained significance after one particular event that happened at the beginning of April 1989. I am, indeed, not claiming that one particular event changed the history of Georgia and plunged a relatively stable country into a civil war. Rather, I intend to show that the processes surrounding and following the crucial 'revolutionary' demonstration of 9 April 1989 fully discovered the reality of weakness and lack of interest of the centre of the Soviet Union and consequentially the absolute impotence of Georgian institutions, which were paralyzed by the corruption, crime, and patronage networks. Indeed, the events of the spring of 1989 did not cause a collapse of the state but displayed it in its terrible nature. The entire society was confronted with a new reality that determined its future choices. Certainly, it was especially some *nomenklatura* members who could have been better prepared and who maybe even expected the reaction of the centre. Nevertheless, hardly anyone predicted such a rapid collapse, national and ethnic mobilization, and, followingly, the fall of a relatively economically, socially, and even politically developed country.

The tensions gradually intensified in Abkhazia after huge demonstrations in Lykhny, where roughly 30,000 Abkhazians declared the separation of Abkhazia from Georgia. The Supreme Soviet of Georgia, unsurprisingly, condemned the declaration, but the events in

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[224] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 318.

Abkhazia provided renewed impetus for nationalists to organize demonstrations again, mobilizing the aforementioned particular groups. These demonstrations, which gradually also gained an anti-Soviet character, reached their peak on the 9th of April, 1989. At the time, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze were on an official visit to the United Kingdom. Under the circumstances of the ongoing war in Nagorno Karabakh and given the fact that the crowd occupied central Tbilisi while also yelling anti-Russian and anti-Soviet phrases, the Georgian leadership asked the central Moscow authorities for help in suppressing the demonstration. In fact, it still remains unknown on whose direct command the special forces of the Red Army, then recently withdrawn from Afghanistan, were deployed. However, Red Army paratroopers attacked the crowds with sharpened shovels and toxic gas. At least nineteen protestors were killed, and hundreds were injured. Reports indicated that most victims were women.[225] The April 1989 events in Georgia had a strong impact in the entire Soviet Union. In Georgia herself, the party leader Jumbar Patiashvili, who succeeded Shevardnadze after he had been appointed to the all-Soviet government, was substituted by the more efficient former Georgian KGB head Givi Gumbaridze.

However, Gumbaridze was one of those who quickly recognized that Gorbachev and the central leadership in general were not willing to intervene further into the Georgian affairs. The leading Georgian nationalists Gamsakhurdia, Kostava, and Chanturia, who had been arrested in April, were quickly released, and no further repressions were organized against any other nationalists. Georgian official newspapers, though still under the control of the Party, were openly publishing demands for the persecution of the perpetrators of the offences against the Georgian nation who ordered the 9 April massacre and were calling for an independent Georgian government. At the same time, the Georgian political *nomenklatura* went only through some cosmetic changes, and no one was held responsible for

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[225] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 322.

the tragedy. Indeed, it became obvious that Gorbachev's leadership left the country to its own fate. In September 1989, at the plenum of the Central Committee in Moscow, Gumbaridze openly demanded the right to deal independently with all internal affairs, though this notion had perhaps already been a reality. In November, the Georgian Supreme Soviet recalled the constitutionally assured right of a Soviet Socialist Republic to secede from the USSR and approved the right to veto all-Union laws that would go against the interest of the country. Finally, in March 1990, the Supreme Soviet declared the independence of Georgia.[226]

The period from the suppressed demonstration to the independence was only a little bit more than a year. The key question is certainly why the *nomenklatura* did not manage to attain the advantageous status quo or at least to prolong the road to independence, if we do not tend to believe that it above all became 'nationally awakened'. As I have already suggested above, Georgian cadres were taken by an uncomfortable surprise by Gorbachev's unwillingness to back their positions. In such a difficult situation of dismantling the rigid framework and the cut of the external resources supply, the only viable option would be a quick re-establishment of the political, administrative, and economic control. However, the Georgian *nomeklatura* was by no means capable of managing this situation as it functioned during the last decades only through corruption, bribes, patronage networks or even criminal activities. The only possible reaction was to prepare the soil for a 'privatiziation' of posts and assets. Indeed, considering this an immediate collapse of the state was, in fact, unavoidable. A closer look on the developments in Georgia after its independence should confirm this statement.

The collapse of the Georgian state could be nicely illustrated on the inextricable but, indeed, blind roads of the Georgian

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[226] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 323; Jones, Stephen (1994): 'Georgia: A Failed Democratic Transition', p. 294.

democratization. The illustration could start with the death of the widely popular Merab Kostava in a car accident. The popularity of Kostava resulted mainly from the fact that he, unlike Gamsakhurdia, did not abjure his creed and remained in prison in the 1980s. Indeed, many Georgians viewed, perhaps correctly, Gamsakhurdia as an opportunist and Kostava as the true dissident. Indeed, these people still believe that Gamsakhurdia was involved in his killing, as Kostava's popularity would be in the way of his political ambitions. Nevertheless, the illustration should follow this up with something more tangible than speculations.

The struggle for power in Georgia almost immediately reached incredible dimensions. The moderate streams, including the Rustaveli Society, the Popular Front or the Social Democratic Party, decided to follow a strategy of a gradual switch of the system, which was rationalized in their decision to participate in the elections to the National Supreme Soviet scheduled for March 1990. The idea was that a novel multiparty competition would provide the first step to transforming the old style legislative body. Nevertheless, particularly the radical parts of the Popular Front came against any association with the delegitimized Communist regime and urged a solution based on a creation of a new system. The unstable organization of the Popular Front that under the vaguely defined notion of nationalism had served as an umbrella for very diverse groups having different interests and ambitions disintegrated into dozens of organizations and self-styled parties. On the part of the radicals, the strongest parties became the Society for National Justice led by Erekle Shengelaia, the Georgian National Democratic Party led by Chanturia, the Society of St. Ilia the Righteous, and the Republican-Federative Party.[227]

It soon became obvious that the idea of the gradual transformation was not attainable, as a substantial part of the

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[227] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 324. Cf. Slider, Darrell (1997): 'Democratization in Georgia', in Parrott, Bruce and Dawisha, Karen (eds.), *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 161.

opposing stream opposed it and would boycott virtually all moves in this direction. Facing this reality, the moderate forces decided to postpone the election until the fall. However, in the meantime, the radicals organized the first assembly of the National Forum, where roughly 6000 adherents agreed to hold the first founding of the newly established independent Georgian National Congress in September. Although belonging clearly among the radicals, Gamsakhurdia decided to follow the moderates and take part in the Supreme Soviet election. His move appears to be logical in light of the crucial power struggle (and personal hostility) between him and Chanturia, who after the death of Kostava strove for the crucial position in the future leadership. Suny has described the situation before the fall election as 'highly personalized, with many of the more than one hundred distinguished primarily by allegiance to a particular leader. Assassinations and arsons were used as tactics in the increasingly violent rivalry between Gamsakhurdia and Chanturia.'[228]

As a result, Georgia was the first Soviet Republic to introduce free parliamentary election to the Supreme Soviet on a multi-party basis in October 1990. The elections were discriminating in that they allowed only parties operating on the whole territory to participate. Apparently, this regulation essentially excluded virtually all parties representing minorities. The victory went to the Round Table bloc of the National Liberation Movement (sometimes translated as Free Georgia) led by Gamsakhurdia. His bloc beset 155 of the 250 seats available in the Supreme Soviet, whereas the second Communist Party of Georgia received 64 seats.[229] Although Gamsakhurdia formerly supported the moderates in their strategy to transform the Supreme Soviet, he could quickly abandon this alliance as the moderate groups gained only 11 seats. The moderates formed the Democratic Center and became in fact the only opposition, since 'communists would not abandon their habit of voting with the majority' and furthermore

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[228] Ibid., p. 324.
[229] Jones (1994): *Georgia: A Failed Democratic Transition*, p. 297.

'many of the communist deputies soon left their party and joined the ruling coalition.'[230] It was clearly confusing for Georgian voters (as well as for the future analysts) that almost at the same time, on September 30, the radicals organized the elections to the above mentioned Georgian National Congress. These elections were dominated by the National Independence Party led by Erekle Tsereteli (who came in first) and Chanturia's National Democrats (who came in second).[231] These elections did not take place in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and even Mingrelia.[232]

Gamsakhurdia gradually began to dominate the political decision-making and focused predominantly on the agenda of the minority regions. He was elected chairman of the Soviet government and formed the first post-Communist government, led by Tengiz Singua. The new leadership quickly managed to eliminate any minorities' access to economic and political power. The only minority representation in the new Supreme Soviet was in fact through the Communist party.[233] Abkhazians also retained some posts in the Georgian Council of Ministers, the Supreme Soviet Presidium and the Committee for the Supervision of the Constitution, but their factual power was disputable.[234] Also, other provisions called for special treatment of minorities on the basis of prior settlement and history. For example, one of the proposals during the discussion of the new citizenship law suggested by Gamsakhurdia connected eligibility with one's ancestors having lived in Georgia before the annexation in 1801. At the end, it was enough to prove legal permanent residency to get a citizenship. Generally, any ethnic minority's attempt to promote its

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[230] Nodia (1996): 'Political Turmoil in Georgia and the Ethnic Policies of Zviad Gamsakhurdia', in Coppieters, Bruno (ed.): *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, VUB Press, Vrije University, 1996, p. 6.

[231] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 324.

[232] Aves, Jonathan (1996): 'Post-Soviet Transcaucasia', in Allison, Roy (ed.): *Challenges for the Former Soviet South*, London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 169.

[233] Aves, Jonathan (1992): 'The Rise and Fall of the Georgian Nationalist Movement, 1987-1991', in Hosking, Geoffrey A., Aves, Jonathan, and Duncan, Peter J.S. (eds.), *The Road to Post-Communism: Independent Political Movement in the Soviet Union 1985-1991*, London: Pinter Publishers, pp. 170-172.

[234] Jones (1994): *Georgia: A Failed Democratic Transition*, p. 295.

sovereignty was regarded as a challenge of the majority sovereignty and an attack on the social and spatial homogeneity. 'The government elaborated a theory of minority rights based on the assumption that members of minorities with a relatively recent history of settlement in Georgia...qualified neither for an inalienable right to residence in the republic nor to equal status with the dominant ethnic group.'[235]

The Georgian political situation became more and more dependent on violent practises, in which particularly former Soviet sub-proletarians had a chance to be used. Gamsakhurdia decided to create his violent power base from the former troops of the Ministry of Interior Affairs that came to be called the National Guard and was led by a former dissident and artist by profession, Tengiz Kitovani. The opposition to Gamsakhurdia formed a paramilitary organization called *Mkhedrioni* (horsemen). The first commander of *Mkhedrioni*, Jaba Ioseliani, a professor but also a convicted bank robber, was arrested by Gamsakhurdia. Indeed, Gamsakhurdia's political style gradually developed from a radical rhetoric to authoritative practises, pursuing everyone opposing him or even disagreeing with him.[236] Under various violent circumstances, Gamsakhurdia was elected the first president of the independent Georgia on May 1991, but at this point, his career was close to its end. The number of his opponents was increasing dramatically. This group arguably consisted mostly of higher proletarians who could not stand his mystical nationalism as well as his authoritarian style heavily, his pressure on the media and his evading of parliament through directly appointed prefects.[237] Nevertheless, most visibly, it came to be led by Gamsakhurdia's power contenders like Chanturia or Tsereteli. Gamsakhurdia probably made a crucial mistake when he lost the support of his former allies

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[235] Jones (1994): *Georgia: A Failed Democratic Transition*, p. 295.

[236] The Gamsakhurdia factor should also include his personal uncertainties and even paranoias. Cf., for example, Nodia (1996): *Political Turmoil in Georgia and the Ethnic Policies of Zviad Gamsakhurdia*.

[237] Interviews with professors Ramaz Kurdadze and Tamar Kiknadze.

Sigua and Kitovani.[238] Moreover, as Suny has noted in the case of the resignation of Sigua and foreign minister Khoshtaria, 'they were replaced by men whom many believe to have been close to the Georgian ''mafia'', the complex networks of entrepreneurs, politicians, and criminals that ran much of the ''second economy'' under the Soviets.'[239]

The situation clearly reached the stage of a civil war between the camps of the popular but authoritative president, who rather naively relied on the support of the 'mafia', and relatively strong public figures, which to a large extent controlled the armed guards. Nodia has described Gamsakhurdia's opposition as 'an extremely diverse coalition of ex-allies who hated him personally, paramilitary formations driven by clan interests, nationalists angered by his bumblings, former communists who lost their positions, certain criminal elites, and pro-Western democratic intellectuals.'[240] Crucially, it was the triumvirate Sigua – Kitovani – Ioseliani who founded the Military Council and, in December 1991, organized an armed attack on the parliamentary buildings, where Gamsakhurdia hid himself in an underground bunker.[241] During Christmas, the civil war in Georgia left a few dozen victims. Gamsakhurdia escaped to Mingrelia and perhaps also to Chechnya[242] and tried to prolong the civil war through raids by his paramilitary supporters called ''Zviadists''. On the eve of the war in Abkhazia, Georgian politicians from the anti-Gamsakhurdia coalition invited Shevardnadze to pacify the situation in Georgia. Generally speaking, the political turmoil in Georgia described above might serve as an illustration of the idea hypothesized above that unsuccessful and defeated leaders viewed

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[238] Sigua reportedly was not able to cooperate with the erratic leader, and Kitovani opposed Gamsakhurdia's decision to disband the National Guard, which followed the demands of the Soviet military commander after the August coup against Gorbachev. It is quite interesting that Gamsakhurdia never condemned the 'August putsch'. Cf. Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 324.

[239] Suny (1988), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 324.

[240] Nodia, Ghia (1995): 'Georgia's Identity Crises', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6, No. 1, p. 111.

[241] Slider (1997), *Democratization in Georgia*, p. 166.

[242] He had built an alliance with Jokhar Dudayev before.

violent mobilization and ethnic radicalization as the elementary means to shift the power distribution. The riots of Gamsakhurdia's "Zviadists", recruited predominantly from Mengrelians, were but another example.

The previous lines should illustrate the political processes that strongly suggest that the institutions and structures that should have managed the difficult times of the post-Soviet transitions did not develop after the Soviet ones disappeared. I have suggested that it was primarily not a strong nationalist feeling carefully managed by ethnic entrepreneurs that precluded carrying out the transformation in a more stable fashion, but rather the effect of a collapsed state that did not manage to substitute the relatively comfortable conditions of the former developmentalist state. The failure in the attempt to create alternative institutions and structures should be attributed to the inherited system of clientelism, patronage, corruption and criminal practises, which paralysed the post-Brezhnev economy in the Soviet south and, as I will show now, crippled also any constructive attempts at transformation in the crucial period of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The following part should offer a view on the above mentioned events from a different perspective.

5.3.1   Georgian national mobilisation

The privatization of the coercive forces had a great impact on the political development in Georgia. Jaba Ioseliani, the first commander of *Mkhedrioni*, one of the crucial challengers to Gamsakhurdia, and Shevardnadze's close ally and friend, had been a powerful clan leader and a figure heavily involved in the Georgian black market activities during the Soviet Union. His close and friendly relations with Shevardnadze came from the period when Shervardnadze headed the Georgian Communist Party. Ioseliani was indeed a distinguished, though not exceptional, example of a Georgian thief-in-law influencing Georgian politics both during and after the Soviet period. He served a seventeen-year long sentence for a bank

robbery in Leningrad before being released in the mid-1960s. He gained a doctorate in philology in Tbilisi, became a poet, playwright and critic, and returned to prison for manslaughter. His *Mkhedrioni*, predominantly people with a criminal background recruited from allied clans (subproletarians), were reportedly extremely violent and inhumane gunmen with particular internal orders which understood abdication as betrayal.[243] As a vice-president of the Council for Safety and Defence and a deputy of the Parliament, he put through an amnesty for roughly 5000 criminals in 1993 and divided the spheres of influence and tributes with Kitovani's National Guards.[244] [245]

The leading figures of Georgian politics did not only lose control over the coercive forces, but, in the condition of the collapsed state, also over most of the political economic processes that were governed by corruption and patronage networks built around the former *nomenklatura*. The illustrations could start with the most important Georgian bank during the transformation, the United Georgian Bank. This bank was founded by the relatives of the former directors of the Soviet's Georgia National Bank, who allegedly defrauded millions of rubels during the 1980s.[246] More precisely, the United Georgian Bank was established through a connection of three smaller banks. The new bank bosses Tamaz Chkhartishvili, Zaza Sioridze, and Ivane Maglakelidze had already created their own patronage network as *Komsomol* members and as students of engineering at the Tbilisi State University.[247] Nevertheless, it should also be noted that the bank

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[243] Cf. Corley, Felix (2003): 'Jaba Ioseliani: Violent Warlord in post-Communist Georgia', *The Independent on Sunday*, 25 March 2003, available at, for instance, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/jaba-ioseliani-730149.html; Slider (1997), *Democratization in Georgia*, p. 165.

[244] Nordin, Virginia Davis, and Glonti, Georgi (2006): 'Thieves of the Law and the Rule of Law in Georgia', *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, undated, available at http://cria-online.org/Journal/1/Thieves%20of%20the%20Law%20and%20the%20Rule%20of%20Law%20in%20Georgia.pdf

[245] Jaba Ioseliani died in 2003 at the age of 77 and is buried in the Didubisk pantheon, the cemetery for the most distinguished Georgian public figures.

[246] Stefes (2006), *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions*, p. 187, fn. 33.

[247] Chiaberashvili, Zurab, and Tevzadze, Gigi (2005): 'Power Elites in Georgia: Old and New', in Fluri, Philipp H. and Coloe, Eden, *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia's Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform*, Vienna: National Defence Academy, pp. 192-193, available at http://www.bmlv.gv.at/wissen-forschung/publikationen/publikation.php?id=238

sector generally served more for money laundering as most of the Georgia capital circulated in the shadow economy and there were virtually no savings among people.[248]

In the case of the United Georgian Bank, the former *nomenklatura* bosses provided needful capital but remained more or less outside the business. Nevertheless, as was also the case elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, some of the former *nomenklatura* managers were up to recognizing the tackles of the transformation and skillfully managed to privatize large industrial or agricultural assets. Stefes has interestingly mentioned how Soviet managers in the final era of the Soviet Union managed to create capital by overstating production rates and numbers of employees. It should be noted that this was a 'smarter' way of making capital before the uncertain transition period as other stories sound almost incredible. Some of the factories, particularly in regions, were exempted from privatization, so the former local *nomenklatura* had a chance to steal and sell the equipment as scrap to Turkey, and the local official in the Georgian town Ninotsminda even ripped out the telephone cables and similarly sold them as scrap.[249]

When disposing of this extra capital, potential oligarchs were very well prepared on the voucher privatization as they could create groups of their followers and voucher-providers from their employees through extra salaries and other staffing advantages.[250] The most distinguished Georgian tycoon has been Gogi Topadze, who had worked as scientist before he started his career in Soviet business. As the former director of the socialist company keeping the world-famous Borjomi mineral water, Topadze managed to establish a beverage empire called Qazbegi[251], which was comparable with similar Russian enterprises. Topadze, together, for example, with the

[248] Cf. Shelley, Louise (2006): 'Introduction', in Shelley, Louise, Erik R. Scott, and Anthony Latta (eds.): *Organized Crime and Corruption in Georgia*, London: Routledge and a chapter by Shalva Machavariani in the same volume.
[249] Stefes (2006), *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions*, p. 94.
[250] Stefes (2006), *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions*, p. 92 and p. 187, fn. 33.
[251] The highest mountain in Georgia, which is also considered to be mythical.

wine tycoon Zurab Tqmeladze, was also one of the founders of the Union of Industrialists[252] that came into being as early as June 1990 to promote the interests of the new/old economic elite.[253] It could be mentioned here that Industrialists since the mid-1990s changed their strategy, and instead of trying to influence leading politicians, they sought direct positions in central organs.

Virtually all of the names mentioned above have been members of 'clan' structures that had dominated the Georgian economy and politics for decades before the fall of the Soviet Union. So far, I have mentioned some of the 'clans' whose leaders were in top managerial positions. Other typical structures were 'clans' which were governed from the top political positions. The most famous case of this type has certainly been Shevardnadze's family, though its golden age came mainly later after Shevardnadze's return on the political scene.[254] Several former high-ranking members of the Communist Party became, through the 'clan' structures, powerful entrepreneurs and later again achieved high political posts.[255] A very specific case that deserves attention is that of Aslan Abashidze, a holder of a well-known noble (royal) family name. However, his case will mentioned later in a chapter dealing with situation in Ajaria.

The dysfunction of elementary political as well as economic structures went naturally hand in hand with the drastic deterioration of living conditions for most of the Georgians - mostly those formerly dependent on the Soviet state (proletarians). For instance, the prices rose overwhelmingly and caused a massive hyperinflation that became visible after the introduction of a provisional coupon currency in April 1993. While the exchange rate started at roughly 650 coupons

[252] The Union associated many former red directors.
[253] Jones, Stephen F. (2000): 'Democracy from Below: The Interest Groups in Georgian Society', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 59, No. 1, p. 55.
[254] A detailed description can be found in Chiaberashvili and Tevzadze (2005): *Power Elites in Georgia*, pp. 190-192 and Stefes (2006), *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions*, pp. 99-100.
[255] For instance, one of the Georgia PMs during the second Shervardnadze era, Niko Lekishvili, or the minister of the same period Teimuraz Gorgadze. Cf. Stefes (2006), *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions*, p. 94.

for one dollar, it reached the rate of almost 2,000,000 after five months.[256] The shift in the priorities is also 'nicely' visible from the expenditures of the average household on foodstuff. Whereas in 1985, these costs amounted to about 36 percent of the family budget, the share became 19 percent in 1991, 62 percent in 1992, and 79 percent in 1993.[257]

I have tried to illustrate above that Georgia had to suffer from a large social discontent and instability, as virtually no segment of the state operated plausibly. Generally, the overall social radicalization naturally touched a fertile soil as violent bandits and criminals found their use in paramilitary organizations backing political interests and guarding economic assets, lower proletarians found their expression in demonstrations and violent provocations, higher proletarians became frustrated from not finding any support or means for a true democratic transition, and the former *nomenklatura*, undisturbed, continued in its Soviet business. It was not a lack of ethnic homogeneity that caused the waves of violence and wars in Georgia but, essentially, the state breakdown in the centre that resulted from the impossible transformation.

5.3.2   *National mobilisation in Abkhazia*

Abkhazia was part of the Soviet Riviera and has been often regarded by numerous individuals as the most beautiful place of the Caucasian region. Yet, it was Abkhazia which experienced the most violent conflict in Georgia. The conflict situation in Abkhazia could be viewed as particularly surprising regarding the factual number of Abkhazians and their relative proportion in Abkhazia. In 1989 Abkhazians made up about 17.7 percent of the inhabitants of Abkhazia (almost as much as the Russians or Armenians).[258] Abkhazia

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[256] Gachechiladze, Revaz (1995): *The New Georgia: Space, Society, Politics*, London: University College Press, p. 112.

[257] Ibid., p. 117.

[258] It should be also noted that the proportion of Georgians was growing during Soviet times. For a detailed commented survey, cf. Müller, Daniel (1999): 'Demography', in: Hewitt, George, *The Abkhazians*, Routlege Curzon, pp. 218-241.

hence provides one of the most critical cases of post-Soviet transformation.

Abkhaz is a member of the same family of Caucasian languages that Georgian belongs to. However, Abkhaz is a part of the North West Caucasian group of languages and the languages are not mutually understandable.[259] Abkhaz also does not use the Georgian alphabet and, as Derlugian mentions, winning back the Cyrillic-based alphabet after Stalin's death was considered as a great symbolic victory for Abkhazians.[260] The autonomous republic was also to a high extent divided along ethnic lines. Nearly all Abkhazians (as well as Armenians and Greeks) spoke Russian but only two thirds of Georgians did. Furthermore, only 2 % of Abkhazians spoke Georgian, which was a language of the republic, whereas 0.4 % Georgians spoke Abkhaz, which was a titular language in the autonomy.[261] The Abkhaz religious identity was not strong as 'the majority of Abkhazians remained essentially pagan believers under the thin veneer of mixed up Christianity and Islam.'[262] The small number of Abkhazians also corresponds with the role of kinships and village communities, through which Abkhazians establish their identity.

These characteristics also imply Abkhaz ties with other North Caucasian nations. A description of the particular ethnography of the Northern Caucasus would go beyond the possibilities of this thesis.[263] Nevertheless, the cooperation of the North Caucasian nations was institutionalized already in the Republic of Mountain People, which existed shortly before the sovietization, and in the Confederation of

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[259] Cf. Hewitt, George (1999): 'Abkhazia, Georgia and the Circassians (NW Caucasus)', *Central Asian Survey*, 18, 4, p. 465; for an analysis of the North Caucasian languages, see Chirikba, Vjacheslav (1999): 'The Origin of Abkhazian People', in Hewitt (ed.), *The Abkhazians*, pp. 37-48.

[260] Derlugian, Giorgi M., 'The Tale of Two Resorts: Abkhazia and Ajaria before and since the Soviet Collapse', in: Crawford, Beverly, and Lipschutz, Ronnie D. (eds.), *The Myth of Ethnic Conflict*, Berkeley: University of California, p. 269.

[261] Tishkov, Valery (1997): *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union*, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, London, p. 92.

[262] Derlugian, Giorgi M. (2001): *The Forgotten Abkhazia*, Northwestern University, January, p. 7. For a detailed study on the religious situation in Abkhazia, see Clogg, Rachel (1999): 'Religion', in: Hewitt (ed.), *The Abkhazians*, pp. 205-218.

[263] See, for example, Goldenberg Susan (1994): *Pride of Small Nations: The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder*, Atlantic Highlands: Zed Books.

Mountain Peoples, which was created in 1989.[264] Many Circassians, most notably Chechens led by Shamil Basayev, fought on the Abkhaz side in the war.

When explaining the conflict in Abkhazia, Nodia has referred to the divergent national projects of Abkhazians and Georgians. The Georgian national project was historically inclusive in relation to the Abkhaz bourgeoisie that spoke Georgian but excluded Abkhaz popular culture.[265] The situation in Abkhazia during the First Georgian Republic was highly unstable and violent.[266] Georgians perfectly understood that the greatest challenge to their independent statehood was Bolshevik expansionism. Abkhazia, as well as other similar Caucasian regions, suffered from the influence of nationalist forces that exacerbated local conflicts. The Abkhaz village militias *Kiaraz* did not hesitate to turn to Bolsheviks to gain an alternative source of weapons, and the Bolsheviks naturally bestowed them with the perspective of gradual penetration.[267] The Georgian perception was that ungrateful elements among the Abkhazians manipulated by Russia tried to undermine the Georgian endeavour to create a democratic state, in which minorities would be granted autonomy. Consequentially, the Georgian interventions were explained as necessary to restore the territorial integrity of Georgia, which was violated by Bolshevik encroachments and hence driven by existential incentives.[268] As Nodia notes, the consequences of this situation are still actual. Georgia filled the slot for an enemy in the Abkhaz

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[264] Cornell (2001) *Autonomy and Conflict*, p. 178.

[265] Nodia, Ghia (1997-8): 'Causes and Visions of Conflict in Abkhazia', Berkeley Program of Soviet and post-Soviet Studies, *Working Paper Series*, Winter 1997-1998, at http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~bsp/publications/1997_02-nodi.pdf; also cf. Nodia, Ghia, *The Conflict in Abkhazia: National Projects and Political Circumstances*, at http://www.abkhazia-georgia.parliament.ge/Publications/Georgian/ghia_nodia_1.htm.

[266] Cf. Menteshashvili, Avtandil (1992): *Some National and Ethnic Problems in Georgia 1918-1921*, Tbilisi 1992.

[267] Derlugian (2001): *The Forgotten Abkhazia*, p. 10.

[268] Menteshashvili (1992): *Some National and Ethnic Problems in Georgia 1918-1921*, or Cornell (2001): *Autonomy and Conflict*, p. 175.

national project and moreover Russia gained the role of the protector against Georgian imperialism.[269]

Under the Soviet patronage, the hugely popular leader Nestor Lakoba led Abkhazia until 1936. Derlugian describes Lakoba as a 'semi educated former honorable bandit of the 1905 generation, who by 1917 had spent years underground or in tsarist prison and became a Bolshevik convert with strong personal ties to Stalin.'[270] He was responsible for the collectivization of the traditional Abkhaz peasantry. After his sudden death in 1936[271], many autonomous rights were rendered under Beria's supervision. Most visibly, the Abkhaz language, provided with an alphabet during the korenizatsiia policies, was replaced by Georgian in official usage and all native language schools were closed.[272] The Stalinist measures decimated the Abkhaz intelligentsia.

With the strengthening of the Soviet developmental state, the Abkhaz economy gained significance as Abkhazia exported its affordable and highly demanded exotic fruits. Similarly, the Black Sea beaches came to be visited by more than 2 million people annually. The ethnic divisions could also be observed in the various economic sectors. Whereas urban Abkhazians controlled the crucial *nomenklatura* positions and formed an influential *intelligentsia*, the tourist business was left to the Greeks and Armenians and the mining industry to the Russians and Ukrainians.[273] The only problematic element in this overall framework of satisfaction remained the danger of the growing Georgian presence. The number of Georgians increased

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[269] Nodia, *The Conflict in Abkhazia: National Projects and Political Circumstances*, p. 7.

[270] Derlugian (2001), *The Forgotten Abkhazia*, p. 11.

[271] According to some sources, Lakoba was poisoned on Beria's command.

[272] Jones, Stephen (1994): 'Georgia: A Failed Democratic Transition', in Bremmer, Ian, and Ray, Taras (eds.): *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, Cambridge University Press, p. 291.

[273] Derlugian, *The Tale of Two Resorts: Abkhazia and Ajaria before and since the Soviet Collapse*, pp. 269-270.

from roughly 158.000 (39 percent) in 1956 to almost 239.000 (46 percent) in 1989.[274]

Hence, the post-Stalinist period was characterized by the returning protests of Abkhazians. The most visible demonstrations were organized in 1956 and 1968 but the strongest act of resistance came during Brezhnev's constitutional process in 1977, when 130 Abkhazian intellectuals signed a letter sent to the Kremlin complaining about the subordination to Tbilisi and asking for direct subordination to Moscow. Their request was rejected but the situation in Abkhazia changed.[275] The native language schools in Abkhazia were re-opened, and broadcasting and and a newspaper in the titular language were established. In 1979 a sector for Abkhaz language and literature was founded in the Sukhumi Pedagogical Institute.[276] It should also be noted that despite their minority position after 1977, the Abkhaz chaired more than two thirds of the regional government and similarly overwhelmingly controlled local economic sources. [277]

Their position could have even increased following the plan for direct budgetary support coming from Moscow in the late 1980s, which aimed at a modulation of national moods and at securing agricultural supplies, and which was explained by the disproportionate budgetary flows coming from Tbilisi.[278] However, this unrealized plan was preceded by various provisions forcing Abkhazians to sell their agricultural products to northern Russian industrial centres for low prices that reflected the growing economic crisis. It is crucial in this regard that even though these pressures

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[274] Müller (1999), *Demography*, pp. 220-222.
[275] Ibid., p. 292.
[276] Suny (1998), *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, p. 302.
[277] Cornell (2003): *Small Nations and Great Powers*, p. 156.
[278] Slider, Darrel (1985): 'Crisis and Response in Soviet National Policy: The Case of Abkhazia', *Central Asian Survey*, 4, 4, p. 63.

were coming from Moscow, they were executed by Georgian authorities.[279]

5.3.2.1   *Mobilisation to War*

Abkhaz history knows some remarkable leaders and not surprisingly, their descendants and relatives belong among the intellectual and political elites of recent times. In general, there were two streams that viewed the relations to Georgia differently. The group of moderates recruiting mainly from the former administrative *nomenklatura* argued for the avoidance of the conflict-related destruction that was at some point evident in South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh. The other group was formed by radicals, whom Derlugian describes as a 'rather motley crowd, ranging from former members of the ideological nomenklatura to professional gangsters, from socially unstable youth to newly made politicians of the perestroika period.'[280] The Abkhaz radical leadership that gradually prevailed was formed around the petitions and appeals of 1977. In June 1988, sixty leading Abkhaz figures signed a letter addressed to the 19th Party Conference in Moscow claiming the improvement of the status of Abkhazia to a full union republic. A few months later, a popular forum, *Aidgylara* (Unity), was formed around the the Writers' Union of Abkhazia. This group initiated a huge demonstration of 30,000 Abkhaz that took place in Lykhny. The declaration explicitly calling for the recognition of Abkhazia as a union republic was approved there.[281] The Supreme Soviet of Georgia condemned the declaration in the atmosphere of growing national mobilization. I have already mentioned that the demonstrations that reached their peak on 9 April 1989 originally started with Abkhaz claims.

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[279] Derlugian, *The Tale of Two Resorts: Abkhazia and Ajaria before and since the Soviet Collapse,* p. 271.

[280] Derlugian, *The Tale of Two Resorts: Abkhazia and Ajaria before and since the Soviet Collapse,* p. 273.

[281] Otyrba, Gueorgui (1994): 'War in Abkhazia: The Regional Significance of the Georgian-Abkhazian Conflict', in: Szporluk, Roman (ed.): *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Euroasia*, M.E. Sharpe, p. 285.

The leading Abkhaz separatists were to a great extent members or close associates of the Abkhaz *nomenklatura* and generally educated people enjoying respect in Abkhaz society. This was the case with Valerian Kobakhia, the head of the Abkhaz Party in 1977, and especially Boris Adleiba, the first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers and later the head of the Party, or Vladimir Khishba, a former Georgian deputy minister who replaced the first leader of *Aidgylara*, the writer Alexei Gogua.[282] The leading figure of Abkhaz nationalism became the historian Vladislav Ardzinba, who was elected as the chairman of the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet in December 1990. He very quickly managed to secure his position through becoming a visionary nationalist figure as well as through his ties with influential figures of central politics.[283] It could be argued that it was the combination of political and cultural capital that made leading Abkhaz politicians particularly successful in the mobilization of the Abkhaz minority, which was mostly made up of sub-proletarians.[284] This power could be illustrated by the unilateral declaration of independence approved by the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia on 25 August 1990 or by the participation of the non-Georgian population of Abkhazia in Gorbachev's referendum of March 1991 on the renewal of the Soviet federal framework, which was boycotted by Georgian authorities. Also, the Abkhazians did not participate in the referendum on the question of Georgia's independence that took place two weeks later.[285]

In the difficult conditions of the coming civil war, even Gamsakhurdia tried to negotiate some power-sharing agreement.

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[282] Kholbaia, Vakhtang, *Labyrinth of Abkhazia*, at http://www.abkhazia-georgia.parliament.ge/Publications/Georgian/labyrinth_of_abkhazia.htm.

[283] When serving as a deputy in the Union's Supreme Soviet, he began a close relationship with Anatoly Lukyanov, a Russian hardliner and parliamentary chairman, who later became known as the ideologue of the August coup. His previous scientific career was also associated with the Institute of Oriental Studies, then chaired by Yevgeniy Primakov. Cf. Cornell (2001): *Autonomy and Conflict*, p. 182.

[284] Only 7 percent of the Abkhazians in Abkhazia lived in towns and cities.

[285] Coppieters, Bruno (2001): *Federalism and Conflict in the Caucasus*, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, p. 21, also Nodia, Ghia (1996): 'Political Turmoil in Georgia and the Ethnic Policies of Zviad Gamsakhurdia', in: Coppieters, Bruno (ed.): *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, Vrije University Brussels, VUB Press, p. 12.

Although the negotiation was framed by a nationalist rhetoric, for example, in the summer of 1991, some agreement was reached about the electoral law for parliamentary election in Abkhazia. The design was clearly compromising, since the Abkhazians, despite their significant minority in Abkhazia, gained 28 seats, whereas the Georgians, who made up the majority in Abkhazia, received only 26 seats. The last 11 seats were allocated to other minorities, from which 5 supported the Abkhaz after the election and 6 the Georgian side. For constitutional changes, a two-third majority was required, but the Abkhazians found the two-seat majority sufficient enough to introduce substantial constitutional changes. Facing these efforts, the Georgian representation decided to boycott this assembly, and the project soon failed.[286] It is true perhaps that in the context of the ongoing war in South Ossetia, Gamsakhurdia rather sought to buy time.[287] On the other hand, any experience with successful negotiation could have been of a certain value. During the last days before the war, Shevardnadze clearly wanted to negotiate, but he lost his control over the activities of various militias[288] that supported the National Guard, which was led by Kitovani and associated with his close fellow Ioseliani.[289] Nodia has stated that 'the lion's share of blame is, however, apportioned to Tengiz Kitovani…His actions in Abkhazia allegedly defied the political authorities and forced Shevardnadze to accept the war as a fait accompli.'[290] Shervardnadze himself carefully admitted at the time that Kitovani, with his direct attack on Sukhumi, exceeded instruction.[291]

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[286] Coppieters (2001): *Federalism and Conflict in the Caucasus*, pp. 21 - 24.

[287] Ibid., p. 21.

[288] One of the warlords that cooperated with Kitovani was Vakhtang Loti Kobalia, who formerly served as commander in the National Guards but joined the "Zviadists" after Gamsakhurdia's fall.

[289] Stefes, Christoph H. (2006): *Understanding Post-Soviet Transitions: Corruption, Collusion and Clientelism*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 62.

[290] Nodia, Ghia (1999): Georgian Perspective, *Conciliation Resources*, available at http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/georgia-abkhazia/georgian-perspectives.php.

[291] See, for example, the interview published in Erlanger, Steven (1992): 'As Georgia Chief, Shevardnadze Rides Whirlwind', *The New York Times*, 25 August 1992, available at http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E0CEEDB103EF936A1575BC0A964958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all.

There are many dimensions of the war in Abkhazia that had to be omitted by this thesis. The issue of Russian involvement, for example, would be one of the crucial ones.[292] Nevertheless, the case of Abkhazia strongly appears to illustrate several notions. The Abkhaz-Georgian relations always deteriorated in the periods of political transitions in Russia and the USSR (the First Republic and the bolshevization of the South Caucasus, the creation of the Stalinist terrorist state in the 1930s, and all the major years of unrest in the post-Stalinist era – 1956, 1968, 1977-78, the late 1980s). This strongly suggests that the hidden Abkhaz ethnic identity was not awakened during the perestroika period. Rather, it seems to be the case that the Abkhaz elite managed to fully use its potential and seriously raised the issue of the separatist national project at a particular moment of diminishing structural constraints given by the decay of the Soviet Union and the absolute internal weakness of the Georgian center. Moreover, from the political economic perspective, with the crisis and the fall of the developmentalist state, the further dependence was disadvantageous. The elite could try to 'privatize' or even 'promote' their own positions through national mobilization against the obvious enemy. Moreover, they had an advantage in terms of the control over institutions they gained due to Soviet affirmative action policies.

5.3.3   *National non-mobilisation in Ajaria*

Ajaria is strategically located by the Turkish border and was also part of the former Soviet 'Côte d'Azur'. Despite a completely different evolution in the 1990s, Ajaria also shares many similarities with Abkhazia. As Derlugian notes, they are both resorts with Mafia-permeated societies, they both experienced a period of Islamization, and they both gained the status of autonomous republics during the

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[292] See, for example, Goltz, Thomas (1993): 'Letter from Euroasia: The Hidden Russian Hand', *Foreign Policy*, fall 93, Issue 92, or Cornell (2002): *Small Nations and Great Powers*, pp. 151-160.

era of the Soviet Union.[293] Ajaria was part of the Ottoman Empire until the end of the Turkish-Russian War in 1878, when it was incorporated into the Tsarist realm. Its strategic position, fundamentally strengthened by the railaway and pipeline connection to Baku, became clear after World War I, when all three of the newly established Transcaucasian republics lay claim to the control of this region. While Britain considered free port status for Batumi, Armenia sought to gain access to the sea, and Azerbaijan urged for a corridor to the defeated Turkey. However, it was Menshevik Georgia that finally successfully demanded this part of its historic state and thus Ajaria later appeared as the ASSR.

The Ajar language (written and spoken) is Georgian; more precisely Ajars speak the western Georgian Gurian dialect, which also includes many Turkish loanwords.[294] Indeed, Ajars, being ethnic Georgians, share many similarities with the Laz minority, which inhabits northeastern Turkey. The Laz people, who create the second largest minority in Turkey after the Kurds, are also linguistically related to another ethnic Georgian minority – Mingrelians.[295]

Since the census in 1926, when Ajars numbered 71.000 and thus formed 54 % of the population of the then Ajaria, Ajars have not been counted in the Soviet censuses as a distinct group but simply as Georgians.[296] This implies that Ajars were not considered as a titular nationality in Ajaria and consequently Ajaria did not have a titular language. In relation to Tbilisi, there was no reason for this, since the Ajar (Gurian) dialect is absolutely understandable for other Georgians. This fact was also reflected in the relatively low rate of

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[293] Derlugian (1998): *The Tale of Two Resorts: Abkhazia and Ajaria before and since the Soviet Collapse*, p. 261.
[294] Benningsen, Alexandre, Wimbush, Enders S. (1985): *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide*, Hurst, London, p. 207.
[295] Cornell (2001): *Autonomy and Conflict*, p. 215; for an encompassing overview of the ethnic divisions in the NW Caucasus, see Hewitt, George (1999): *Abkhazia, Georgia and the Circassians (NW Caucasus)*, pp. 463-499.
[296] The figures come from Fuller, Elizabeth (1991): 'Georgia's Adzhar Crisis', *Report on the USSR*, 9 August 1991, p. 8.

knowledge of Russian. Tishkov found out that only 42 % of Georgians (including Ajars) in Ajaria spoke Russian in the late 1980s.[297]

The pre-Russian Turkish influence was significant in establishing the Muslim religion as the main determinant of social identity. Also, the administration system resembled the Turkish system of millets, i.e. state-sponsored religious communities. The cultural distinctions were particularly visible during the first Georgian republic after World War I. Later, 'Ajaria became the only autonomous entity in the Soviet Union that had enjoyed its status because of religious differences from the titular nationality of the republic it belonged to.'[298] In general Ajars were ethnolinguistically Georgians before the Soviet Union and hence most of the fundamental distinctions were determined by the Muslim religion, which was heavily targeted by the Bolshevik atheistic campaigns.

Although the Bolsheviks considered language as a key ethnic indicator, they introduced in the late 1930s a new ethnonym – Azerbaijani – to simplify the ethnically complicated situation in the Caucasus. 'Anyone in Transcaucasia who persisted in considering himself Muslim became, by fiat, Azerbaijani, regardless of language.'[299] Moreover, Beria's practices of the 1930s, which were aimed at suppressing the religious identity of Muslims in this area, bordered on ethnocide. To choose to be identified as an 'Azerbaijani' soon became either to be Georgian or to be classified as one of the totally alien Meskheti Turks, who were later deported to Central Asia.[300] The processes of a culturally and physically violent homogenization (Georgianization) were proceeding already before World War II. As a consequence the new Ajars were still literate in Georgian just as their ancestors were, but they became secular and hence lost the only essential distinctive feature of their identity.

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[297] Tishkov (1997): *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union*, p. 92.
[298] Cornell (2001): *Autonomy and Conflict*, p. 214.
[299] Derlugian (1998): *The Tale of Two Resorts: Abkhazia and Ajaria before and since the Soviet Collapse*, p. 277.
[300] Mesketi Turks are basically Sunny Muslims living in exile in Uzbekistan. They speak the Georgian dialect and in the meantime formed the only Muslim group of the area.

Indeed, after the Soviet period, there has been an Ajaria but no Ajars.[301]

Ajars are ethnolinguistically Georgians, but moreover they themselves claim a strong Georgian identity.[302] Similarly, the Ajars are the only minority population to be viewed as Georgians in the predominant conceptions of the Georgian nation.[303] However, this only happened in the period of the hardest Georgian nationalism, when leading nationalist radicals tried to challenge the mutual inclusiveness of both identities. This interesting situation, where 'one group does not think of itself as an "other" but another group does' has been referred to by Toft as two-way mirror nationalism.[304] Indeed, the challenges came mainly from Tbilisi. Academics of the Batumi University, as a response to Gamsakhurdia's pan-Islamic threat rhetoric, wrote that his charges, which caused significant distress, are neither historically nor politically justified. Moreover, for Ajars, 'nothing was more galling than aspersions on their Georgianness.'[305] Similarly Toft noticed the former chairman of the Ajar ASSR Council of Ministers Guram Chigogidze's speech in the Georgian Supreme Soviet, where he stated that the separatist organization of Ajaria consisted of six persons.[306]

In fact, it is extremely difficult to reconstruct anything from the political economic functioning of the Soviet Ajaria as there are hardly any analytical sources on this topic. This notion is logical given the virtually unproblematic relations of the autonomous republic with the center. For similar reasons, and contrary to Abkhazia, Moscow never intervened in Ajaria. It seems to be safe to argue that Ajaria

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[301] Derlugian (1998), *The Tale of Two Resorts: Abkhazia and Ajaria before and since the Soviet Collapse*, p.279.

[302] Ramaz Kurdadze, a Georgian linguist and a professor at the Tbilisi State University, told me that he himself was surprised by the Ajar relation to the Georgian language. While he was carrying out a linguistic research on Ajar dialects, Ajars very often expressed their perceptions that they speak a major Georgian dialect. Personal conversation with Ramaz Kurdadze, Tbilisi, Spring 2004.

[303] Cornell (2001): *Autonomy and Conflict*, p. 216.

[304] Toft, D., Monica: *Two-Way Mirror Nationalism: The Case of Ajaria*, paper provided by Svante Cornell, p. 2

[305] Fuller (1991): *Georgia's Adzhar Crisis*, p. 10

[306] Toft, *Two-Way Mirror Nationalism: The Case of Ajaria*, p. 7

functioned along the typical Soviet peripheral rules that are described above in detail. The benefits coming from the tourist and petroleum industries were distributed by the *nomenklatura*, who were strongly influenced by various social networks or even criminal groups. The predominantly rural and mostly subproletarian inhabitants were not challenged by central policies, as was the case with their Abkhaz counterparts. Nevertheless, the more irrelevant the political economy appears to be for the explanations related to the Soviet period, the more important was the role that it played in the process of the post-Soviet de-escalation.

5.3.3.1   *De-mobilisatpion to stability*

I have already mentioned that the nationalist challenge came unilaterally from Tbilisi during the transitional period. This nationalist discourse was accompanied by an elite change directed from Tbilisi. The new leaders were mostly Christians and had previously little or no ties with Ajaria. On the other hand, having a similar experience from different spots, they quickly managed to accommodate to Ajar structures. 'Immediately upon arrival, the new government set out to divide the spoils, awarding their friends and clients the most lucrative positions at the seaport, customs, licensing agencies, tourist hotels, and restaurants.'[307] The old Communist *nomenklatura* was (often violently) suppressed. Under the Georgian nationalist government, the situation deteriorated like the appearance of political Islam. Although Ajaria has been correctly understood as a case of peaceful transformation, the clashes between 'National Guards' and various Ajar groups left a few people dead.

The situation reversed almost miraculously after one of the phenomena of the post-Soviet Caucasus, Aslan Abashuidze, as a local deputy of the government, shot down the president of the Georgian nationalist government during a 'discussion' on the cabinet meeting.[308]

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[307] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 231.
[308] Derlugian (2003): *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*, p. 232.

During the Soviet period, Abashidze, after serving in lower *nomenklatura* positions, reached the post of the deputy minister of municipal affairs in Tbilisi and, as Derlugian notes, anyone at all familiar with Mafia-permeated societies would appreciate the kickback possibilities of such a position.[309] Abashidze was elected the chairman of the Supreme Soviet in April 1991, when Gamsakhurdia forced Tengiz Khakhva to resign. Symbolically, the vote was unconstitutional, since Abashidze had not been a member of the Soviet before. Abashidze's popularity in Ajaria quickly became enormous. It might be partly due to the fact that Abashidze belongs to one of the well-known noble family names in Georgia. This family ruled Ajaria several times before 1917 and its member Memed chaired the Ajarian parliament in 1918-1921.

It is necessary to exceptionally cross the time framework of this thesis to explain the nature of Abashidze's strategy. Since the period of unrest in April 1991 until his escape to Moscow after the electoral defeat in April 2004, Abashidze ruled Ajaria, in Derlugian's words, Fujimori-style, guarding the civil rest against 'parliamentary demagogues' and Georgian warlordism and gangsterism.[310] He also kept Ajaria's neutrality in the South Ossetian and Abkhaz conflicts and moreover managed to take advantage of this bargaining position. For example, he sued for a lower contribution to come from Ajar taxation to the central budget. More importantly, the central government did not disturb his control over the busy trading with neighboring Turkey. During the culminating negotiation about the transport of Azerbaijani oil through Georgia, Abashidze threatened to thwart the plans of the transport via Batumi unless the Ajarian status as a sovereign republic within Georgia would be formalized in the near future.[311] Abashidze's position was significantly improved by his well-cultivated relations with Russian military commanders in

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[309] Derlugian (1998): *The Tale of Two Resorts: Abkhazia and Ajaria before and since the Soviet Collapse*, p. 280.
[310] Ibid., p. 283.
[311] RFE/RL *The Caucasus Report*, 6 May 1996.

Batumi, especially with the chief commander General Gladyshev. His support for the Russian presence in Ajaria radically contrasted with Georgian moods as well as with the claims of the Georgian leaders. The benefits were, however, mutual as the Russians guarded the Ajar autonomy within Georgia and were in turn awarded with various benefits coming from the Ajar economy.[312]

Apart from the above mentioned industries and subtropical agriculture, the most important benefits came from Ajaria's strategic position on the border with Turkey. The cross-border trade was highly illegal and, as will be seen, even the legal profit stayed in Ajaria. Everybody who went to Georgia through Turkey before the Rose Revolution and crossed the Ajar-Turkish border could experience the curious conditions on the border and see buses overstuffed with various kinds of undeclared goods. To illustrate the extent of the trade exchange, Derlugian brings an example from the border passage at Sarpi, which is situated close to Batumi on the South, where he estimates the barter trade reached $60-70 million per month in the 1990s.[313]

In summary, Abashidze[314] never challenged the Georgian territorial cohesiveness. For the promise of repressing any separatist tendencies, he could rule Ajaria single-handed and enjoy and share the good profits coming from the subtropical agriculture, vacation capacities, and cross-border trade. During Shevarnadze's rule, his position seemed to be unshakable and his popularity in Ajaria was also stable. Although his regime was autocratic and violated several

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[312] Hin, Judith: *Ajaria: The Interest of the Local Potentate in Keeping Violent Conflict at Bay*, paper provided by Svante E., Cornell, p. 13.

[313] Ibid., p. 283.

[314] No matter how critical one can be towards Abashidze, his personality remains, to a certain extent, spectacular. Abashidze, for example, managed to prepare a business deal with Tony and Hugh Rodham (brothers of the former First Lady Hillary Clinton), according to which the Rodhams should have invested $118 into the export of hazelnuts from Ajaria. The relationship between Abashidze and the Rodhams went even further as Tony Rodham betcame the godfather of Abashidze's grandson. Abashidze did not hesitate then to claim that he was backed by the Clinton administration. After this the White House intervened and the project was stopped. Cf. Novak, Viveca and Branegan Jay, Are Hillary's Brothers Driving Off Course, *Time*, 1, November 2001; Ignatius, David, Rambling Rodhams, *The Washington Post*, 16 September 1999; Ignatius, David, The Rodhams: Back in Georgia, *The Washington Post*, 29 December 1999.

human rights, Ajaria, in contrast to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, still did not undergo any destructive warfare and experienced relative wealth. Ajaria is clearly a case where identity politics was suppressed by the local elite as the de-mobilization served its interest better in 'privatizing' power and economic positions. This was also possible due to the fact that Georgian state structures fell into ruins and were substituted by structures that brought the country to the civil war.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1   From developmentalist state to etnopolitical mobilisation

After the deep empirical examination of the mechanisms defined in the model, the first part of the conclusion will aim at summarizing the functioning of all three types of mechanisms. In line with the theoretical and methodological background, the summary will approximate to a generalized pattern of this specific causal explanation.

The first *environmental mechanism* has been coined as the social change mechanism focusing on capturing the socio-economic changes in consequence of the divergent developmentalist strategies. The empirical illustration has shown the effects of industrialisation and urbanisation that resulted from the strategies aiming at overcoming the development gap. One of the crucial effects concerned the increasing need of educated specialists and semi-specialists, whose uneasy development was often connected with the concessions in educational policies (rising openness of information, language concessions). This dynamics led to the very birth and later development and growth of the educated middle class proletarians, whose social, political, cultural or economic needs began to be receding from the idea of the Soviet totalitarian state.

Following the deteriorating of the overall economic conditions, most representatives of both major classes, the *nomenklatura* and proletarians, lost any belief in Soviet ideology and were locked in the rigid processes of the everyday functioning of the Soviet system. Whereas *nomenklatura* dealt primarily with clientelist structures and intrabureaucratic struggles related to the political-bureaucratic management of the state, the Soviet proletarians faced an unprecedented situation, where the Soviet system still provided enough working opportunities but failed to satisfy general social economic welfare requirements. The logical result of this

development was growing inefficiency gradually deepening the social and economic concerns and pressures.

The second form of *relational mechanism* provided link to the micro level of particular class dynamics. This mechanism was largely concpetualized on the tenure of the strategic capital in the period of transformation. The empirical part showed how the various segments of society capitalized on the possession of specific knowledge enabling them to seek the improvement of their positions. In this vein, the *nomenklatura* and higher proletarian technocrats strove for privatisation of their political/administrative or economic positions. The instrumental utilisation of "cultural capital" very often involved corruption, bribery or taking advantage of various clan or patronage structures that had a particularly strong potential in neopatrimonial societies.

Whereas the elite was to a large extent occupied by the power grab of the declining developmentalist state, the proletarians suffered from the growing inefficiency of the state and became receptive to the alternative social projects that very often (not necessarily always) had nationalist foundations. Particularly these nationalist groups were lead by public figures, which were often oscillating on the regime's edge and hence disposed of a certain form of „dissident" capital. It was precisely through this mechanism, how the anti-regime moods driven mostly by the socio-economic situation converge with the ethnopolitical mobilisation agenda. The role of sub-proletarians went through both of the dynamics. They serve as the coercive force for clan or patronage networks as well as radical element on nationalist riots.

The final form of *cognitive mechanism* focused on the dynamics of ethnopolitical mobilisation on the micro level of both Georgia and the autonomies. Although resulting from the conditions captured by the former mechanisms, the mobilisation became instrumental for those individuals and groups, who became discontent with the

development of the situation. The instrumentality was shown when observing in detail the processes aiming at deepening or even creating cultural or ethnic gaps that in the tensed situations radically changed mutual perceptions. In a nutshell, the violent conflicts were in the final stages accompanied by the clashes of identity politics but resulted from the complex socio-economic conditions.

6.2 Conclusion

The perspective applied in this thesis stressed the long-term continuities that should be studied on the linkage between macro and micro levels. It is quite essential to understand that the processes traced in this thesis until the early 1990s have continued and their analysis might potentially provide us with relevant observations about the Georgian social, political, and economic performance in the last decade. This continuity worth noting since, with the time flowing, the approaches based on the short-term transition period are gradually loosing ground. Even after the Rose Revolution that occurred in the autumn of 2004 the social and economic crisis has been fringed by the tangled development of efficient and functioning state structures, which are essential for broader stability and prosperity.

Although some of the reforms, mostly under the auspices of the EU and US, have already improved the situation, Georgia is still quite far from becoming a stable democracy with a fair economic environment. Following the general reasoning of this thesis, it is possible to assume that in many respects the change coming in 2004 had a substantially better prospect than the immediate post-Soviet transition. Nevertheless, even the post-revolutionary elites have not been able to resolve the remnants of the violent post-Soviet transition symbolized by the "uncertain" status of the former Georgian autonomies. Even worse, they allowed another violent event, although the conflict did not involve massive ethnic mobilisation.

This thesis sought to establish a causal link between the two macro phenomena – developmentalist state and ethnopolitical mobilisation. The explanatory causal mechanisms were formed into the figure inspired by the general macro-micro-macro sociological model. The explanatory causal framework was aimed at providing alternative to the dominant stream of literature that is based on the modernisation paradigm.

The thesis started with the overview of the approaches studying the collapse of the Soviet Union. The common ground of these approaches building on the notion of modernisation was critically assessed while opening space for the alternative explanation and theorization, which would celebrate the political economic complexity of the late/post-Soviet transformation. This alternative theorization was based on a combination of broadly speaking sociological literature. The world-system analysis literature provided theoretical background for distinguishing a particular class of developmentalist states of the 'Communist' world that sought to overcome underdevelopment and catch up with the Western core through rapid (military) industrialisation. Although the strategy was at some point quite effective, the application of revolutionary and often totalitarian strategies, resulting in the building of the strong states, whose functioning and management was clearly at odds with the prevailing systemic 'capitalist' ideas, led to unbearable limitations.

The appropriate way in which it was possible to further analyse these limitations was through the social changes that were boosted by this strategy. In theoretical terms several accounts from the field of historical sociology provided the ground for grasping this dynamic. Apart from the relevancy of class perspective, the historical sociological research offered various theoretical insights that essentially stress the role of the state breakdown in social transformation. More specifically, the thesis has illustrated how the particular behaviour and strategies of the *nomenklatura* cadres contributed to the overall instability and de facto retreat of the state,

how most of the proletarian part of the society which was formerly dependent on the state, became existentially threatened by the new conditions and hence at least partly prone to radicalization, and finally how the *subproletarians* provided the element that was prepared to resort to violence.

To summarize the argument, this thesis has asserted that the mobilisation and wave of violence that blew over the Soviet southern periphery in the late 1980s and early 1990s was not directly caused by a sudden arousal of deeply rooted ethnic and national identities, though it has not denied the impact of the national mobilizations. Rather, it has viewed these mobilizations as desperate reactions to the decay of the Soviet developmentalist state accompanied by the erosion and disappearance of state structures that left an open room in the areas of power execution and state management. The space within these structures was readily saturated with various informal processes and institutions which had traditionally functioned in Georgian society and which had become strengthened during the Soviet period. These institutions became quickly utilized by the actors, who actively participated on power grab in the dismantling Soviet state as well as by those, who failed succeeding in this process and tried to find effective ways to challenge it.

Unfortunately, Georgia was a particularly good theatre for observing the diverging tracks of mobilisation and violent transformation. Once one of the reasonably developed countries of the Soviet Union with a great national tradition and a relatively educated society, it virtually collapsed in a few months and experienced a severe civil war as well as extremely radical national mobilization that apparently killed any chances for stabilizing the complicated relations with the ethnic minorities. In addition, the Georgian society sustained many traditional social phenomena and institutions that happened to play important role both during and after the era of the Soviet Union. Although such features of the Georgian society that draw on the rich cultural traditions generally provide a unique

category interestingly distinguishing the Georgian society from other societies, from a broader perspective, the functioning of many other developmentalist states is essentially formed by similar social attributes. Hence, and again, the understanding of the Georgian experience, which obviously should not be limited only to the period observed in this study, may significantly exceed the post-Soviet world.

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