



Democratization Processes and Conflict in Post-Soviet Countries: A Look at Violence/Linkage Shifts.

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Democratization Processes and Conflict in Post-Soviet Countries: A Look at
Violence/Linkage Shifts

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Abstract

This thesis modifies and expands an analytical framework for understanding the democratization process and its relation to conflict in post-Soviet countries after the breakdown of Soviet Union. It utilizes the concept of linkages and leverages by Stephen Levitsky and Lucan Way to explore linkages of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus to Russia, as an example of consolidated authoritarian regional power and analyzes the patterns of conflict in the post-Soviet countries.

The research for this thesis is conducted by a mixed-method approach that simultaneously applies qualitative and quantitative analysis. Quantitative research involved analyzing national-level variables for four countries while qualitative analysis, through examination of local sources in Russian, Ukrainian, Moldovan, Georgian and Belorussian languages helped to fill the gaps that were not adequately addressed by the quantitative research alone.

Preliminary investigation of conflicts between Russia and its neighbors found that conflicts go hand in hand with democracy changes. As such, after each instance of structural violence, democratization score tends to worsen. Worsening of democratization score ceases only upon presence of an armed conflict. Furthermore, after each armed conflict democratization score tends to improve, unless followed by another instance of structural violence.

Next, through multiple regression analysis, the research found that all the linkages were important for democratization. While each country had a different picture of significant for democratization linkages, intergovernmental linkage with Russia proved to have an impact on democratization in all four countries. Leverages proved to have an impact on democratization only in the case of Belarus.

While armed conflict and structural violence, along with revolution did not prove to have direct impact on democratization, changes in linkages were indeed affected by conflicts: armed conflict brings decrease in linkages with Russia while instances of structural violence showed an immediate drop in linkages and a gradual rise afterwards.

The thesis concluded that instances of structural violence and armed conflict influence democratization differently as they provide different ways for solving the hostile situations. The cooperation, possibly at the expense of pro-Western democratic policies, is possible only in the case of structural violence. Furthermore, linkages are important for democratization as a bargaining tool in a conflict.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Theories of international factors in the process of democratization often center Western countries at the core of their explanations, either as a case study or positioned as active players advancing the democratization process and encouraging new countries to join their political system. Most prominent theories in the area such as those by Rosenberg, Bunce, and Diamond emphasize that susceptibility of a certain state to democratic pressures from Western countries and democratization aid as well as close relations to the West¹ will all be decisive for successful democratization. While these theories may partially account for the complexity of democratization processes, they often fall short in explaining the democratization of post-Soviet countries, where conflict and the proximity to authoritarian systems add new elements to the complexity of the development of their political system.

Majority of post-Soviet states have experienced armed conflicts since their independence.² Thus, democratization in the region occurs against the constant presence of structural or actual violence. Furthermore, a number of countries showed improvements on democratic indicators in the aftermath of a conflict or, conversely, became more authoritarian after it. This phenomenon cannot be explained by the degree of Western pressure alone. Furthermore, recent global geo-political changes such as the

¹ In this research, “West” is conceptualized as the sum of influences from the US, the EU, and multinational institutions dominated by Western countries such as IMF, World Bank and EBRD.

rise of China and Russia, as well as a hesitance of US and European powers to interfere into affairs of post-Soviet countries underline the importance of making regional power the center of analysis of international factors.

This thesis aims to modify and expand an analytical framework for understanding the democratization process and its relation to conflict in post-Soviet countries after the breakdown of the Soviet Union. It presents a framework that utilizes the concept of linkages and leverage by Levitsky and Way to explore linkage of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus to Russia, as an example of consolidated authoritarian regional power and analyzes the patterns of conflict in the post-Soviet countries as additional variables.

My research attempts to answer a main question: Can local geopolitical context in terms of real or implied violence explain patterns of democratization in post-Soviet countries? Supplementary questions are: Are patterns of democratization in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus the consequence of some or all of the following linkages:

- Democratization ambitions of Western countries?
- Regional power ambitions of Russia?
- Local alliances and political preferences?

In what ways do these factors interact? What part does the threat of real or implied violence play in the degree of influence of each of these factors?

The main hypothesis of this research is: Local changes in linkages and leverages are related to the degree of actual or implied violence and are accountable for the vectors in democratization. Supplementary hypothesis: Different degrees of violence influence democratization differently. In order to test the hypothesis, this research applies the

theory of Levitsky and Way to Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus as examples of the former Soviet states. A number of national-level variables from each subject country is used to see how linkages to Russia interact with democratization process.

This research aims to shed light on democratic transitions in post-Soviet countries. Since all the countries have linkages to Russia, which is a regional power and a consolidated authoritarian state and many countries have already experienced conflict at a certain point in their democratization process, it is important to understand the role of local geopolitical factors in altering the trajectories of democratization. Furthermore, my research will develop more the theory of linkages and leverages (usually studied from the point of susceptibility of a country to democratization/promotion of democracy from abroad) since it explores an additional direction of linkages with authoritarian state (linkages and leverages to authoritarian country are not significantly explored at a present moment). On a bigger scale, the research would help to shed light on the importance of the shifts in linkages and leverages and their relation to peaceful/violent democratization.

Chapter II

Examining Changing Environment of Post-Soviet Space: Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus through the Prism of Democratization

The perspective towards democracy in post-Soviet countries has dramatically changed over the last decades, as scholars tried to explain the complex social and political developments of this constantly changing region. After the breakdown of Soviet Union, and approximately for a decade ex-republics were defined as states in transition to democracy. Democracy in this case was considered as an inevitable end-result for the newly established countries. As the time passed, however, it became clear that the post-Soviet states had uneven improvements on the front of democratization. Some countries, like Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were successful in establishing consolidated democracies; others, like Russia or Belarus, gradually established themselves as consolidated authoritarian regimes.³ Yet others, Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova, were caught “in between” authoritarianism and democracy as hybrid regimes.⁴ Because of the lack of a one-way trajectory towards democracy and preserving by many states of non-democratic regimes, scholars started to refer to post-Soviet countries as “faking democracies”⁵ and later called for “the end of transitional paradigm.”⁶

³ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World*. <http://www.Freedomhouse.com>.

⁴ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World*.

⁵ Andrew Wilson, *Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), xiii.

Even though suspected as static non-democratic regimes, several post-Soviet countries showed improvement of a number of democratic values while others deepened their authoritarian stand. For instance, according to the data by Freedom House, over the span of ten years from 2004 to 2013, indicators of electoral process, civil society and independent media declined in Belarus while at the same time increased in Ukraine.⁷ Different patterns of democratization by post-Soviet countries with similar domestic conditions have brought attention to the importance of better understanding international factors influencing democratization.⁸

One of the most comprehensive attempts at explaining the complex role played by international factors in altering the patterns of democratization is the concept of Linkages and Leverages developed by Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way in 2006. The concept suggests that post-cold war international environment operates along linkages and leverages or the degree to which governments are vulnerable to external democratizing pressures and the density of ties between a democratizing country and the West.⁹ Therefore, the stronger ties of a certain country to the West – the more likely this country would make democratic progress. Since its development, the concept has proven itself as an effective tool in analyzing the patterns of democratization in various contexts.

⁶ Thomas Carothers, “The End of the Transition Paradigm,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (January 2002): 5-20.

⁷ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World*.

⁸ Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999); Thomas Carothers, *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004); Michael McFaul, “Democracy Promotion as a World Value,” *Washington Quarterly* 28 (2004): 147-163.

⁹ Levitsky and Way, “International Linkage and Democratization,” 20-34.

In the case of post-Soviet countries, the studies with utilization of the concept of Linkages and Leverages highlighted importance of making regional non-Western power the center of analysis, namely the importance of looking at linkages and leverages of smaller countries with Russia. Jonathan van Eerd, for instance, has proven that regional influences are able to replace missing Western linkages and induce full democratization in neighboring countries.¹⁰ Yakouchuk similarly explored linkages and leverages of several post-Soviet countries to Russia finding that the local power played a role in inducing authoritarianism in these countries.¹¹ It is possible to conclude thus that, in case of democratization of Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, and Moldova, defining the effect that Russia plays for altering democratization through better understanding local linkages and leverages is crucially important.

It, however, would be premature to suppose that understanding linkages with regional hegemonic power is enough for explaining and predicting the patterns of democratization in the post-Soviet Union. The nature of local geo-political context dictates the need to also account for the factors that drastically shift relations between the countries, namely conflicts. First of all, a majority of post-Soviet states have experienced international conflicts since their independence and democratization in the region occurs against the constant presence of structural or actual violence. Furthermore, a number of countries showed improvements on democratic indicators in the aftermath of a

¹⁰ Jonathan van Eerd, "The Limits of Democratization through a Regional Hegemon: South African Linkage and Leverage and the Skewed Playing Field in Lesotho Party Competition," *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 10, supplement 1 (2016): 137-154.

¹¹ Katsiarina Yakouchuk, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ambitious: Democracy and Autocracy Promoters Competing in Belarus," *European Political Science Review: EPSR* 8, no. 2 (May 2016): 195-224.

conflict or, conversely, became more authoritarian after it. Finally, a number of studies proved that conflicts indeed drastically alter linkages and leverages of the countries.¹²

It could be seen that, in order to understand democratization processes in post-Soviet countries and due to the fact that a majority of the countries have experienced conflicts since their independence, it is important to look at linkages with Russia and as well account for the conflicts. Despite the newly acquired interest towards the linkages and leverages in analysis of democratization, the studies are still few. Furthermore, there is a need for more comprehensive analysis of democratization and conflict in post-Soviet states looking at them through the lenses of changed linkages and leverages. This thesis is different from previous studies on democratization in post-Soviet countries since it incorporates the aspects of conflict as a factor changing linkages and leverages and look at democratization in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Belarus through the theory of linkages and leverages.

¹² Laurence Broers, “Diffusion and Default: A Linkage and Leverage Perspective on the Nagorny Karabakh Conflict,” *East European Politics* 32, no.3 (2016): 378; John Beyer and Stefan Wolff, “Linkage and Leverage Effects on Moldova’s Transnistria Problem,” *East European Politics* 32, no. 3 (2016): 335-354; Metteo Fumagalli, “Stateness, Contested Nationhood, and Imperiled Sovereignty: The Effects of (Non-Western) Linkages and Leverage on Conflicts in Kyrgyzstan,” *East European Politics* 32, no. 3, (2016): 355-377.

Chapter III

Timeline of Conflicts between Russia and Its Neighbors

This chapter looks at the timeline of the main instances of violence between Russia and Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova in the period from 1991 to 2016. It investigates the intensity of the conflicts and distinguishes between armed conflicts and structural violence. It examines PRIO conflict database as well as the information from primary sources in Russian, Ukrainian, Moldovan, English, and Belorussian languages.

3.1 Multiplicity of Conflicts in Post-Soviet Space.

Structural Violence vs. Armed Conflict

Before their independence, post-Soviet countries were functioning as a single well-adjusted political and economic structure. The countries remained greatly dependent on Russia for their natural resources even after the breakdown of Soviet Union. Their long isolation from Western world in soviet times left them in a situation where Russia was the main export market. Russian policy of “near abroad” outlined a system in which Russia remained a centralized decision-maker utilizing economic and military means to alter the directions of neighboring countries’ policies to serve its own political interests. The conflicts in post-Soviet space therefore occur within the structure of interdependence with Russia, with Russia playing primary or secondary party to the dispute.

To account for such interdependence inside the unequal power structure that gravitates towards Russia as well as to better reflect the context in which democratization

in post-Soviet countries occurs, this thesis will look at instances of both armed and non-armed conflicts.¹³

This thesis adopts its Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP)¹⁴ definition of an armed conflict as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year.”¹⁵

The term “structural violence” was first mentioned by the founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies, Johan Galtung in 1969. It was developed to expand the notion of violence to include situations where there is no armed conflict, yet the hostility is present (built into the structure in terms of injustice), for example when power to decide over the distribution of resources is uneven.¹⁶ While Galtung originally described structural violence as a static concept, in order to successfully illustrate it, this thesis will refer to concrete instances of trade, gas and oil wars over the span 1991 to 2016. Table 3.1 summarizes each of the four countries' conflicts with Russia. These conflicts are discussed in detail further.

¹³ Additionally, this thesis acknowledges democratic revolutions as important political events that often trigger following instances of structural violence and armed conflicts. It does not, however, concentrate on revolutions separately, since Russia does not play a role of secondary or primary party to them.

¹⁴ The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) is the world's main provider of data on organized violence and is the oldest ongoing data collection project for civil war, with a history of almost 40 years.

¹⁵ Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), “Definitions,” <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/>.

¹⁶ Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research,” 168-171.

Table 3.1. Multiplicity of Conflicts between Russia and its neighbors Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus.

<i>Conflict Type</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Georgia</i>	<i>Moldova</i>	<i>Belarus</i>
Structural Conflict				
Oil or Gas War	2006, 2009			2006, 2007, 2010
Trade War	2006, 2013	2006	2006, 2013, 2014	2009
Armed Conflict	2014-	1991-1993, 2004, 2008	1992-	
Democratic Revolution	2004, 2014	2003	2009*	2006*

*unsuccessful revolution

3.2 Conflicts between Ukraine and Russia

In the period of Ukraine's independence from Soviet Union from August 1991 - 2016, Ukraine and Russia have experienced several major structural conflicts. Each of them led to a significant damage of Ukrainian economy. As such, Russia lodged two "gas wars" in 2006 and 2009. In 2006, after Orange Revolution in Ukraine, Russia raised gas prices almost five-fold. Even though it is true that the gas prices before 2006 for Ukraine were below their market rate, the timing of the price increase suggests that it was a response against the pro-Western changes in Ukraine. In 2009 another gas war occurred resulting in very unfavorable for Ukraine prices and the decrease of country's GDP by 15%.¹⁷

¹⁷ Rilka Dragneva and Kataryna Wolczuk. "Between Dependence and Integration: Ukraine's Relations with Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no. 4 (June 2016): 689.

In January 2006, during the “gas war” with Ukraine, Russia has also completely banned the import of milk and meat products from Ukraine. Ukrainian companies could import products to Russia only after undergoing a lengthy check of their products to align to Russian standards and receiving permission from Russian government, with the permissions dependent on the political situation between two countries. During the presidency of Viktor Yuschenko (a pro-western candidate), the number of permits was stable at 5-10, and immediately increased to 30 after Yanukovich became president. It decreased after the Maidan to 13. Before the restrictions, hundreds of Ukrainian firms were supplying milk and meat products to Russia with the amount of export being over \$600 millions per year.¹⁸ Ukrainian exports to Russia were subjected to lengthy and detailed checks again by Russia in 2013 causing huge losses for the Ukrainian exporters and Ukrainian economy sliding down into recession.¹⁹

In 2014 Russian strategy shifted from non-armed into armed intervention. After Euromaidan revolution and the fall of Ukrainian president Yanukovich, Russian soldiers without insignia took control of key positions in Crimean peninsula. Russia proceeded to annex Crimea arranging a flawed referendum in which Crimean voted to join Russia. Conflict between two countries escalated after Russian military vehicles crossed Ukrainian border into Lugansk and Donetsk regions in Eastern Ukraine in support of separatist forces, and continues nowadays.

¹⁸ Volodymir Ckhomyakov, “Najvidomishi torgovi vijny Rosiyi,” *Kontrakty*, no. 1-3 (January 2012): 1.

¹⁹ Dragneva and Wolczuk, “Between Dependence and Integration,” 692.

3.3 Conflicts between Georgia and Russia

Following Georgia's independence from Soviet Union in 1991, its relations with Russia have been filled with mutual mistrust and tensions. Georgia's separatist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia were one of the areas of such tensions.²⁰ In 1990, South Ossetia declared its independence from Georgia and Abkhazia – in 1992. In 1993 Georgian civil war took place with Russian troops establishing a ceasefire. Both regions were not recognized as independent from Georgia then and Russian troops were stationed in the country until the new outbreak of the conflict in 2008. In 2008 Russia formally recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.²¹

In the realm of structural conflicts, in March 2006, Russia prohibited the import of Georgian wines and mineral water. Economic sanctions coincided with the arrests in Tbilisi of Russian army officers upon suspicion in spying. Losses of Georgian industry accounted to \$35-40 million per year. Georgia needed almost five years to compensate for the losses of wine and mineral water industries that previously were almost exclusively exporting to Russia.²²

3.4 Conflicts between Moldova and Russia

Moldova – Russia relations experienced both structural violence and armed conflict with the instances of structural violence prevailing.

²⁰ Tracey C. German, "The Pankiski Gorge: Georgia's Achilles' heel in its relations with Russia?" *Central Asian Survey* 23, no. 1 (2004): 27

²¹ Dominic Sonnleitner, "Russia's Backyard – Unresolved Conflicts in the Caucasus," *Politics in Central Europe* 12, no. 1 (2016): 89.

²² Ckhomyakov, "Najvidomishi trgovji vijny Rosiyi," 1.

Moldova was subjected to a ban on its main export to Russia from March 2006 to August 2007. After aggravation of the situation in Transnistria, Moldovan wines were “suspected” to be of a low quality. Similar to Ukraine, Moldovan companies were subjected to lengthy quality checks in order to receive the permit to import into the Russian market. The loss of Moldova from the prohibition of its export in 2006-2007 consisted \$60-100 million.²³ Furthermore, in 2013 and 2014 Russia introduced embargoes on Moldovan produce: in 2013 banning the import of wines and in 2014 extending the ban to vegetables, fruits and meat.

Armed conflict in Transnistria, Moldova was initiated during the last phase of the Soviet Union as a reaction against Moldova’s independence.²⁴ This half-a-year conflict claimed lives of close to 1000 people.²⁵ Russian military played an active role in Transnistria gaining its de-facto independence from Moldova. Elements of 14th Russian army actively supported separatists, which allowed them to successfully break away from Moldova.²⁶ The Russian military has maintained its presence in Transnistria ever since the conflict while multiple peace negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict were not

²³ Ckhomyakov, “Najvidomishi Torgovi Vijny Rosiyi,” 1.

²⁴ Theodor Tudoroiu, “The European Union, Russia, and the Future of the Transnistrian Frozen Conflict,” *East European Politics and Societies* 26, no. 1 (February 2012): 136.

²⁵ Valeriu Cherba, “Analiz prichin vznikoveniya konflikta, istoki i perspektivy razresheniya pridnestrovskogo konflikta,” *Materialele Conferentei Internationale Stintifico-Practice “Abordari Europene in Cercetare si Inovare,”* 9-12 October 2014.

²⁶ Matthew Crandall, “Hierarchy in Moldova-Russia Relations: The Transnistrian Effect,” *Studies of Transition States and Societies* 4, no. 1 (2012): 5.

fruitful. The conflict created the situation of long-term instability in Moldova and served as a symbolic threat of Russian aggression to neighboring countries.

3.5 Conflicts between Belarus and Russia

From its very independence Belarus continues to be one of the strongest allies of Russia. It is one of Russia's main trade partners currently occupying sixth place in Russia's foreign trade turnover.²⁷ There is not even a formal border between Belarus and Russia when travelling by train.²⁸ Not surprisingly, there were no instances of armed conflicts between these countries thus far. Having said that, there were multiple instances of structural conflicts between Belarus and Russia. From 1990 to 2006 the relationships between the two countries were friendly to moderately friendly, the years after 2006 were moderately confrontational.²⁹ In 2011 relationships improved again after Belarus had entered the customs union with Russia.³⁰

Three out of four cases of structural conflicts between Russia and Belarus concerned the price for natural resources. From 1991 to 2006, Belarus has enjoyed cheaper prices for Russian oil and gas, as compared to other European states. In March 2006, however, Russia suddenly increased its gas prices almost twofold. In response to

²⁷ P. Borodin, "Russia and Belarus: The Goals of Union-Building," *International Affairs* (Moscow), no. 3 (2010): 132.

²⁸ D.R. Marples, "Outpost of Tyranny? The Failure of Democratization in Belarus," *Democratization* 16, no. 4 (2009): 766.

²⁹ David Rotman and Natalia Veremeeva, "Belarus in the Context of the Neighborhood Policy: Between the EU and Russia," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 80.

³⁰ Ckhomyakov, "Najvidomishi trgovji vijny Rosiyi," 2.

this, Belarus imposed a tax on the oil running through its territory. The conflict escalated when Russia cut the supply of oil to Belarus.³¹ Similar conflicts happened between the two countries in 2007 and 2010. In 2007 the conflict concerned the sudden increase of oil prices and in 2010 – gas prices.³² Another significant for Belarus conflict happened in June 2009. This time similarly to the structural conflicts with the other three countries, Russia banned the imports of milk and dairy from Belarus affecting an important industry of the country.

³¹ “Russia Oil Row Hits Europe Supply,” *BBC News*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6240473.stm>.

³² Wojciech Kononczuk, “More Than Neighbors,” *Stefan Batory Foundation*, 2007: 5.

Chapter IV

Changes in Linkages and Leverages in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus over the Period from 1991 to 2016

This chapter investigates the dynamics of linkages and leverages between Russia and Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus and Moldova in the period 1991–2016. Strength of linkages and leverages is judged based on national-level variables. This chapter illustrates that the main shifts in linkages occur on or after instances of structural violence and armed conflicts.

In the previous chapter we have established that Russia and its neighbors prior to the breakdown of Soviet Union, and to a great extent after the breakdown, were functioning as a single tightly interconnected structure. Disintegration of Soviet Union shattered the ties and brought the necessity of reevaluating relations between the states. Relations between Russia and its neighbors were fluctuating depending on new political trajectories of the countries, each country's domestic circumstances in terms of corruption, ruling party, existence of oligarchy, and Russia's diplomacy strategies. Relative stability of linkages and leverages could be observed throughout the first ten years of independence with major fluctuations happening on or after 2006.

4.1 Dynamics of Linkages and Leverages between Russia and Ukraine

Economically, much like the other three countries after 1991, Ukraine has been greatly interdependent with Russia in its energy and trade. Key industrial outputs of

Ukraine emerged from cross-border production processes with Russia and its energy intensive manufacturing was until recently powered almost exclusively by Russian gas.³³ Even upon this interdependence, Ukraine has never fully committed to building a much stronger relationship with Russia and its main course of actions over the years of independence was pro-European.³⁴

Economic linkage of Ukraine with Russia experienced several fluctuations that occurred on or immediately after the conflicts between these countries. In terms of export from Ukraine, there was a two-year increase after the crisis of 2006 followed by a significant decrease during the economic conflict with Russia in 2009. There was an immediate increase in export after the crisis, from 2010. In terms of imports from Russia, a similar pattern can be observed: slight decreases in imports were registered in 2009, 2012-13, and then a drastic decrease in imports from Russia after the start of armed conflict in 2014. The value of Ukraine's imports to Russia decreased threefold between 2014 and 2015 – from 12 billion to 4 billion dollars.³⁵

Social Ties between the two countries (measured in this research through the number of Russian visitors to Ukraine every year) have been growing steadily. These were not interrupted neither by Orange Revolution in Ukraine nor by economy fluctuations. After the start of an armed conflict, however, the number of visitors suddenly dropped five-fold, from 10.2 million to 2.3 million and then 1.3 million people per year.

³³ Dragneva and Wolczuk. "Between Dependence and Integration," 680.

³⁴ Dragneva-Lewers and Wolczuk, *Ukraine Between the EU and Russia: The Integration Challenge* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 9.

³⁵ Dragneva and Wolczuk. "Between Dependence and Integration," 694.

It is important to mention in relation to *Intergovernmental Ties* between two countries that the very independence of Ukraine from Soviet Union was perceived by Russia as an abnormality and a temporary phenomenon. Breakdown of the USSR per se did not bring a Russian recognition of Ukrainian sovereignty or its borders and solving these issues seemed to always be dependent upon Ukraine's further integration initiatives.³⁶

Ukraine, however, never fully committed to integration. While economic conflicts between two countries seemed to favor establishment of closer ties, armed conflict with Russia completely disintegrated intergovernmental ties between two countries. Ukraine entered CIS right after its independence in 1991 and exited it in 2016 after the start of the armed conflict. It became a member of EurAsEC in 2003 upon the economic crisis with Russia and exited it in 2005 after Orange revolution. Finally, it entered CISFA in 2011 after another economic complication with Russia and exited it in 2016 together with saying farewell to CIS. Ukraine has never become member of CSTO and currently is not a member of any regional organization established by Russia.

In terms of *Economic Development*, through the early years of independence and until 1998-1999 Ukraine was enjoying a steady growth in GDP; the two-year drop could have been an influence of an economic crisis in Russia of that time. Ukrainian GDP has returned to the trajectory of increase after 1999 until a drop in 35% in 2009, a year of conflict with Russia. Finally, a significant and gradual drop could be observed after the start of armed conflict in 2014 when economic relations with Russia deteriorated. It could be said that Ukrainian extreme dependency on Russian natural resources and economic

³⁶ Ukraine and Russia: Managing Interdependence, 10-11.

relations with Russia as a main export country were the reasons for some significant fluctuations in its GDP.³⁷

Military Spending in Ukraine in the years of its independence fluctuated between 2.3 and 3.9 percent of GDP. The tendency observed is that the spending is always lower the next year after each instance of structural violence by Russia, perhaps done as a way to compensate for the shortcomings in economic output caused by the conflict. The only exception is an increase in military spending in 2014 upon presence of an armed conflict.

The variable of *Population Size* was included into the analysis to reflect the changes that resulted from the loss of territories by the countries. In the case of Ukraine, such annexation occurred in 2014. In general, during the years of Ukrainian independence, its population has a trajectory of gradual decrease, with a downfall from 45 to 42 million after annexation of Crimea peninsula by Russia.

4.2 Dynamics of Linkages and Leverages between Russia and Georgia

Economic Ties of Russia and Georgia in terms of export and import experienced ups and downs throughout all the years of independence. An increase in trade would last three to four years and be followed by a year of decrease. A significant decrease in trade could be seen after some of the years of economic conflicts with Russia in 2006 and 2008.

Social Ties between Georgia and Russia have been growing at a stable pace, with the only decrease in 2008, the year of armed conflict. The number of Russian visitors that

³⁷ Dragneva and Wolczuk. "Between Dependence and Integration," 679.

year was only 4600 people. After the end of the conflict the flow of tourists restarted and reached 230,000 people per year in 2016.

Intergovernmental Ties between two countries were greatly influenced by the armed conflicts. Georgia became a member of CIS in 1993 and exited it after the start of the armed conflict with Russia in 2008. In 1994 Georgia became a member of CSTO and exited it just several years later in 1999. It has never been a member of EEU or CISFTA and is currently not a member of any organizations established by Russia.

Georgian economy was greatly influenced by its relationship with Russia. Until 2008 (the year of the second armed conflict with Russia), Georgia enjoyed strong *Economic development*. The GDP increase of the country each year constituted 19 to 30%. After 2008, however, the GDP dropped drastically, by almost 15%. Even though there were two years, 2011 and 2012, where GDP increased by 25 and 11 percent respectively, Georgian economy has never recovered slowing down to approximately 2 to 3% GDP increase each year.

Military spending of Georgia reflects uneasy situation in the country with frozen conflicts bursting into armed violence. Military spending grew gradually from 1% to 9% of GDP until the second armed conflict where annexation of two territories occurred. It gradually decreased after that and in 2016 was 2.1%.

Finally, *Population* of Georgia has been decreasing constantly throughout the years of its independence dropping from 1991 to 2016 by 23%.

4.3 Dynamics of Linkages and Leverages between Russia and Moldova

Similar to other three countries, Moldova has strong *Economic Ties* with Russia. The later is by far the most important country for Moldova in terms of export and is one of the three main export destinations.³⁸ In terms of imports, Moldova brings the most goods from Ukraine (16%), with Russia accounting for approximately 11%.

The incidences of structural violence from Russia in 2006 and 2013 have influenced the trade between two countries in that it decreased the next year after the conflicts, in 2007 and 2014 respectively, but drastically improved in the following years.

In terms of *Social ties*, the number of Russian visitors to Moldova varied between 7 and 11 thousands per year. In general, the number of visitors increased over the years, however no certain relation between conflicts and the number of visitors could be observed.

It could be said that, in terms of *Intergovernmental Ties*, Moldova's relations with Russia are slowly improving. Along with other countries, Moldova became a member of CIS in the beginning of its independence, in 1994. It later entered CISFTA in 2011 and EEU in 2017 and is currently a member of three regional organizations.

In terms of *Economic development*, the GDP of Moldova is slowly, but gradually increasing. Unlike those in Ukraine, the fluctuations are not significant, with the only drop in 2009 constituting 10%. The drop in GDP that year is thought to be a delayed outcome of 2006 trade war with Russia; the decrease was compensated the very next year by 7%.

³⁸ Crandall, "Hierarchy in Moldova-Russia Relations," 10.

Military spending of Moldova virtually does not exist: it fluctuates between 0.3 and 0.6% of country's GDP. Moldova's army currently consists of a mere 7000 troops and is a result of cost-cutting measures by the country after the breakdown of Soviet Union.³⁹ Low military spending by the country signals that it does not consider Russia a threat. Furthermore, *Population* of Moldova fluctuates around 3.5 million-mark with no certain trajectory.

4.4 Dynamics of Linkages and Leverages between Russia and Belarus

Economic Ties of Belarus with Russia throughout the years of its independence were, perhaps, the closest among the four countries. Lacking the raw materials to support its industrial enterprises, Belarus has served as an 'assembly shop' for other countries during the times of Soviet Union and, after its breakdown, resolved to close economic relations with Russia as a survival strategy.⁴⁰ Despite such interdependence, trade relations between two countries worsened on two occasions: firstly, during the conflict of 2006 and 2007 when both imports and exports between the two countries fell significantly, and secondly around the time of political instability in the country in 2013-2014.

Social Ties between Russia and Belarus have been growing constantly and significantly each year after 2003. After 1998 and until 2003 there was a setback in

³⁹ Crandall, "Hierarchy in Moldova-Russia Relations," 6.

⁴⁰ Rotman and Veremeeva, "Belarus in the Context of the Neighborhood Policy," 76-77.

Russian visitors to the country, perhaps associated with the economic crisis in Russia of the time.

Intergovernmental Ties between Russia and Belarus are, again, the strongest out of the four countries. Belarus is a member of all four organizations: CIS since 1991, CSTO since 1994, EurAsEC/ EAEU since 2001 and CISFTA since 2011.

Economic Development of Belarus has experienced a strong growth up until 2009 (the year of structural violence incident by Russia) and was unable to fully recover ever since. The conflicts with Russia of 2006-7 slowed Belarus economy's growth by 8% and a conflict of 2016 put GDP growth of the country at negative 13%.

Military Spending of Belarus over the years has generally stayed at the 1.2% of GDP mark. It has been at its very highest in 2006 and 2007, upon presence of two conflicts with Russia, with the second largest spending directly before and after the conflicts. Finally, *Population* of Belarus over the years decreases constantly, but not drastically, from slightly over 10 million to 9.4 million citizens.

In conclusion, all four countries experienced changes in linkages and leverages in their relationship with Russia during the period of their independence. Linkages, with the exception of social linkages, showed a tendency of either decreasing in the year of economic conflict and increasing in the following year (such as the case of economic linkages), or increasing after the economic conflict (in case of intergovernmental ties). Armed conflicts showed a tendency of destructing the linkages. In terms of leverages, economic development is generally influenced by both armed conflicts and structural violence. Military spending is lower in times of economic difficulties and higher during the times of armed conflicts. Finally, population of all the four countries is gradually

decreasing, with two instances of sudden decrease that occurred after the annexation of the regions by Russia.

Chapter V

Research Methods, Data and Limitations

The research for this thesis was conducted by a mixed-method approach that simultaneously applied qualitative and quantitative analysis. It looked at the statistics and data available on the topic of conflict and democratization in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Belarus first. Then, after considering the data based evidence, the present research evaluated it by a qualitative analysis. Quantitative approach was chosen in order to bring greater generality and easy cross-comparison between the countries while qualitative method was used to fill the gaps that were not adequately addressed by the quantitative method only. It is hoped that the combined approach has thus contributed to a more comprehensive analysis of the issue resulting in a more appropriate answer to the research questions.

5.1 Quantitative Research

This research investigated the dynamics of linkages and leverages between Russia and Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova in the period from 1991 to 2016 using datasets and primary source analysis. Linkage was measured based on three following elements:

1. *Economic Ties* were measured for each country by the extent of trade of Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Belarus with Russia; research investigated both export to, and import from Russia.⁴¹
2. *Social Ties* were measured by the annual number of Russian citizens traveling to each of the four countries.
3. *Intergovernmental Ties* were measured by membership of Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus in the main regional organizations established by Russia: Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) that later became Agreement on the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)⁴² and CISFTA.

Leverage was measured based on the following elements:

1. *Economic development* (per capita GDP measured in constant international \$ in purchasing power parity).
2. *Military Spending as a percent of GDP*.
3. *Population Size* (the estimates of total population per country).

The sources for the data measuring Linkages and Leverages include World Bank and IMF statistical data and are chosen due to their reliability.⁴³

⁴¹ The data obtained for Belarus covered the years 2000 to 2016, for Ukraine – 2005 to 2016, Georgia – 1995 to 2016 and Moldova – 1997 to 2015.

⁴² Since EAEU has overtaken the place of EurAsEC on May 29th 2014, EurAsEc EAEU are considered the same in this research.

⁴³ See Appendix for a complete description of variables and data sources for this research.

Democratization data for this research is based on the annual indicators obtained from Freedom House.⁴⁴ Research utilized each country's democratization score, assigned by Freedom House on a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being most democratic and 7 being fully authoritarian. The democratization data from 1991 to 2002 included democracy scores in natural numbers, which made it difficult to account for all the changes and fluctuations. Data from 2003 to 2016 was obtained with post-decimal numbers and was used for most of the quantitative research. More precise data allowed to account for slight changes as well as to successfully communicate with other data. Finally, the data on armed conflicts was obtained from PRIO database.⁴⁵ Conflicts in four countries were measured by intensity, and longevity.

5.2 Qualitative Research

In order to evaluate results of quantitative research as well as to compensate for its limitations, this thesis has analyzed primary sources in native languages in five selected countries, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia. The sources included governmental decrees and reports, speeches by higher officials and newspaper articles.

Statistical tests were performed in order to test the hypothesis. First, the significance of relationship between changes in linkages and leverages between Russia and each of the subject countries and the degree of actual or structural violence was

⁴⁴ Freedom House is an independent watchdog devoted to promotion of democracy in the world. Its *Freedom in the World* survey provides an annual evaluation of the state of global freedom as experienced by individuals.

⁴⁵ Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), <https://www.prio.org/>

checked. The hypothesized relationship here was for Linkages and Leverages to be connected to the instances of Structural and Actual Violence and the intensity of conflicts.

Next, the research investigated the significance of the connection between the degree of Actual or Structural violence and Democratization. The hypothesized relationship here was to see different degrees of influence of Structural and Actual Violence on Democratization.

5.3 Research Limitations

Data for each indicator of linkages and leverages were unavailable for several years limiting the scope of the quantitative analysis. Furthermore, democracy indicators obtained from Freedom house for the years 1991 to 2002 did not include post-decimal numbers, which further complicated quantitative analysis due to inability to account for all the changes and fluctuations for the period.

Chapter VI

Findings and Discussion

This chapter will summarize the results of quantitative analysis of national-level variables from Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus. First, it will illustrate the changes in democratization scores after instances of structural violence and armed conflicts. It will then present results suggesting that different linkages and leverages have different importance for democratization. In the discussion part, based on the qualitative analysis of native language sources, the chapter attempts to explain divergent trajectories of democratization response to the conflicts as well as discuss possible mechanisms that make some linkages important, but not others.

6.1 Relation of Linkages and Leverages to Structural Violence and Armed Conflicts

National-level data for four countries was analyzed in order to test supplementary hypotheses: “Different degrees of violence influence democratization differently.” The analysis confirmed that the instances of structural violence contribute to an immediate increase in democratization score, meaning that democratization experiences a setback, the very year of structural violence or the following year. Armed conflicts, on the other hand, contribute to the improvement in democracy score.

Figure 6.1. Democratization – Conflict Relation, Structural Violence

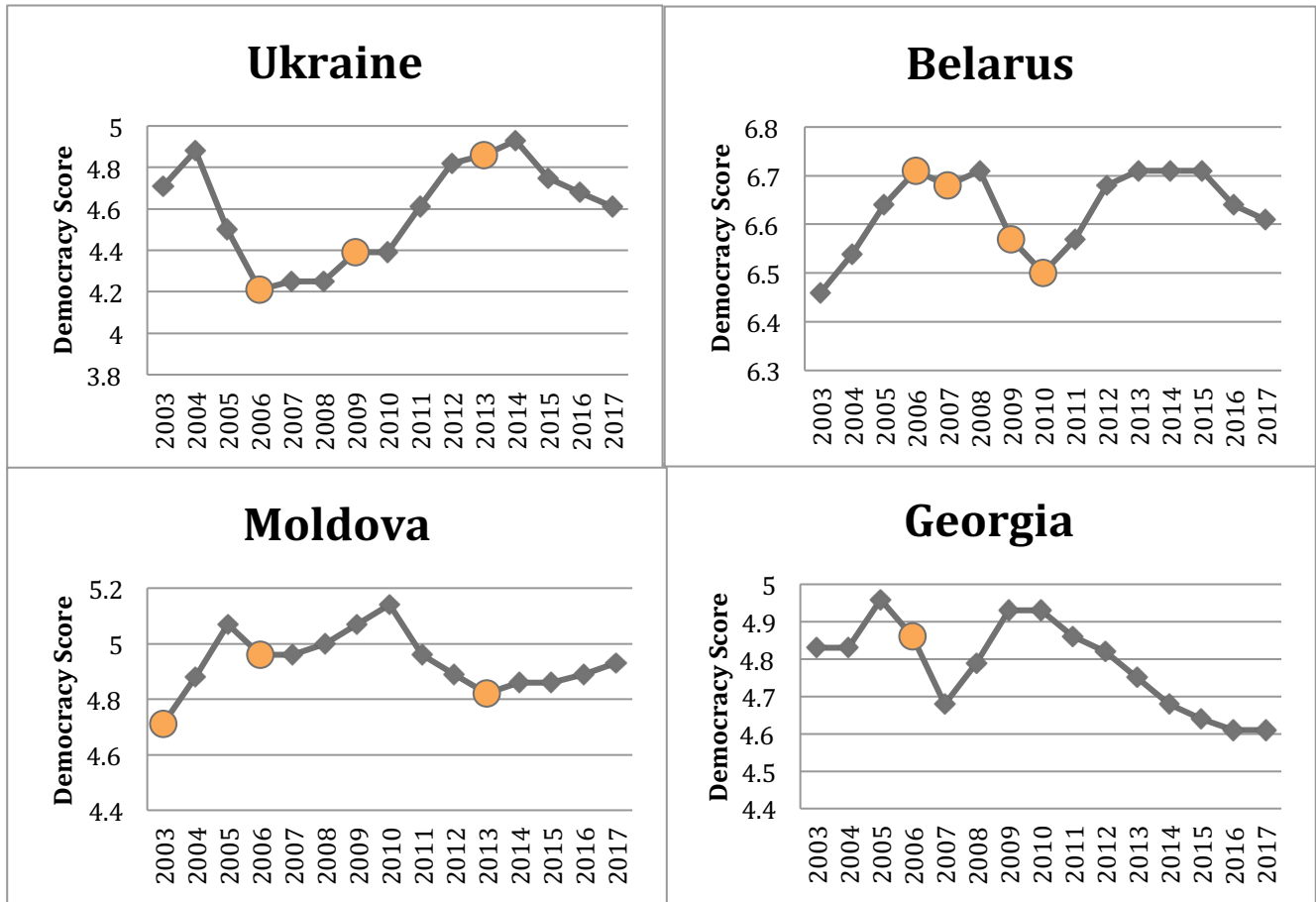


Figure 6.1. Illustrates the changes of the democracy score in response to structural violence. The instances of structural violence are highlighted with circles. After most cases of structural violence, democratization score has gone up, and thus aggravated, in each country. In case of Georgia as well as in two cases in Belarus, democracy score has improved briefly after the instances of structural violence and then followed the same pattern.

The pattern towards the structural violence was similar throughout all the countries. After each instance of structural violence, democratization score tends to worsen. Worsening of democratization score ceases only upon presence of an armed conflict. Unlike the instances of structural violence, after each instance of an armed conflict democratization score tends to improve, unless followed by another instance of structural violence. In case of Belarus, upon absence of actual violence, the score tends to worsen indefinitely after each instance of structural violence. The term “indefinitely” here is used upon understanding that democratization score cannot climb above 7. According to the classification by Freedom House, democracy score scale is between 1 (most democratic) and 7 (least democratic).

Figure 6.2. Democratization – Conflict Relation, Armed Conflicts

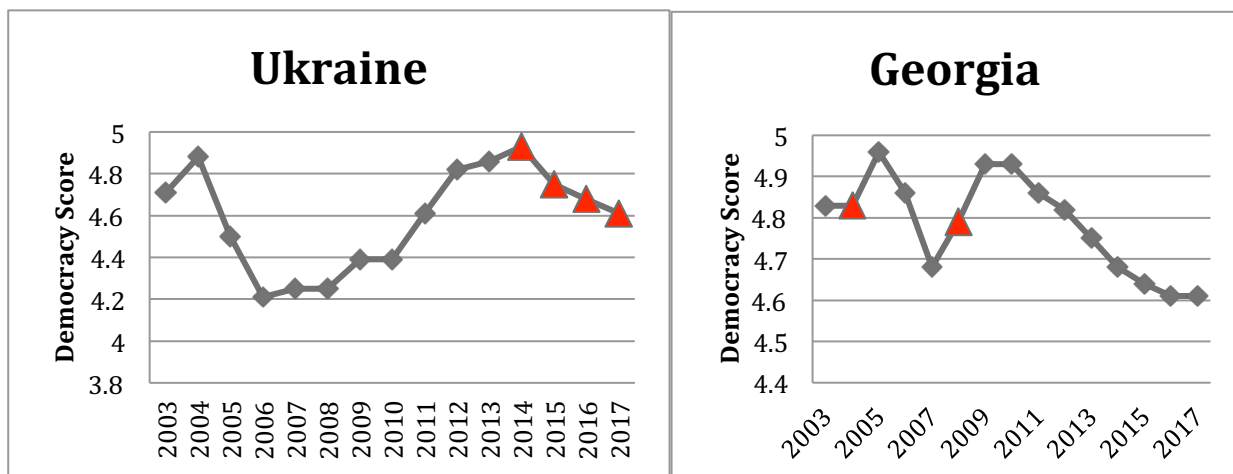


Figure 6.2 illustrates the relationship between democratization and armed conflict. It can be seen that in case of Ukraine, the armed conflict of 2014 that continues nowadays coexists with the constant drop in democratization index, meaning that the country

became more democratic during the conflict. In case of Georgia, democratization score decreases and country democratizes after armed conflicts, however there is one-year delay in democratization.

Furthermore, while the data observation and analysis can confirm the vectors of democratization in the countries after instances of structural violence and armed conflict, regression analysis per se could not confirm statistical significance of these events as standout triggers for changes in democratization.

It could be concluded that since democratization vectors are different after instances of structural violence and armed conflicts, supplementary hypothesis is at least partially true.

6.2 Influence of Changes in Linkages and Leverages on Democratization

In order to test the main hypothesis of this thesis “Local changes in linkages and leverages are related to the degree of actual or implied violence and are accountable for the vectors in democratization”, the significance of relationships between linkages and leverages of each country, conflict and democratization was investigated. Quantitative analysis showed that some, but not all, of the local changes in linkages and leverages are indeed related to democratization. Each country displayed a slightly different picture of linkages important for democratization. Furthermore, no significant direct relationship between conflicts and democratization was established through statistical analysis.

To test the hypothesis, regression analysis was performed using SPSS version 24 for each of the four countries. In each case, regression model was fitted for democratization score; the significance level of 5% was used. Each country’s linkages

were checked for significance against dependent variables Democracy score and Democracy score lagged by one year.

In the case of Ukraine, one of the independent variables, Intergovernmental linkage had a p-value of 0.5 or less indicating that membership in the regional organizations where Russia plays a major role does affect democratization score. Furthermore, the regression model showed no significant impact of other variables, including conflicts and revolutions on democratization score in the case of Ukraine.

Figure 6.3. SPSS Regression Results for Ukraine

		Coefficients ^a					95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.		
1	(Constant)	4.404	.179		24.611	.000	3.992	4.817
	Economic linkage	-8.695E-7	.000	-.017	-.032	.975	.000	.000
	Social linkage	-3.219E-5	.000	-.386	-.799	.448	.000	.000
	Intergovernmental linkage	.272	.120	.692	2.272	.053	-.004	.549

a. Dependent Variable: Democracy score

		Coefficients ^a					95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.		
1	(Constant)	4.471	.110		40.488	.000	4.221	4.721
	Armed conflict	.008	.116	.036	.073	.943	-.253	.270
	Intensity of AC	.146	.176	.384	.829	.428	-.252	.544

Success of revolution	.215	.208	.361	1.033	.329	-.256	.686
Structural violence	.072	.169	.133	.426	.680	-.310	.453

a. Dependent Variable: Democracy score

In the case of Georgia, one of the independent variables, Social linkage, had a p-value of less than 0.5 indicating significance for democracy. Economic linkage indicated significance for democracy score lagged by one year. Similarly, Intergovernmental linkage showed borderline significance with the p-value of 0.061.

Furthermore, no significant direct impact of other variables on democratization, including armed conflicts, structural violence and revolutions could be established through this model.

Figure 6.4. SPSS Regression Results for Georgia

Model		Coefficients ^a					95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	5.136	.134		38.452	.000	4.828	5.444
	Economic linkage	-4.867E-8	.000	-.034	-.112	.913	.000	.000
	Intergovernmental linkage	-.151	.098	-.665	-1.543	.161	-.376	.075
	Social linkage	-1.285E-6	.000	-.758	-2.759	.025	.000	.000
	Economic development	-6.226E-5	.000	-.651	-1.417	.194	.000	.000
	Military spending	-.011	.011	-.234	-1.017	.339	-.035	.014

a. Dependent Variable: Democracy Score

		Coefficients ^a						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	4.824	.188		25.651	.000	4.379	5.268
	Economic linkage	-1.268E-6	.000	-1.019	-2.981	.020	.000	.000
	Intergovernmental linkage	.241	.108	1.124	2.228	.061	-.015	.497
	Economic development	6.051E-5	.000	.629	1.134	.294	.000	.000
	Military Spending	-.031	.015	-.726	-2.130	.071	-.066	.003
	Success of revolution	-.132	.118	-.356	-1.121	.299	-.411	.147

a. Dependent Variable: Democracy score lagged by one year

		Coefficients ^a						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	4.785	.039		122.584	.000	4.698	4.872
	Intensity of armed conflict	.003	.106	.010	.031	.976	-.232	.239
	Success of democratic revolution	.043	.106	.139	.409	.691	-.192	.279
	Structural violence	.075	.131	.177	.569	.582	-.218	.368

a. Dependent Variable: Democracy Score

In the case of Moldova, the variables of Economic development and Intergovernmental linkage had a p-value of less than 0.5 indicating influence on

democratization. The regression model showed no significant impact of other variables on democratization score.

Figure 6.5. SPSS Regression Results for Moldova

Model		Coefficients ^a					95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	5.372	.258		20.816	.000	4.777	5.967
	Economic linkage	-4.360E-8	.000	-.060	-.179	.863	.000	.000
	Intergovernmental linkage	-.236	.116	-1.066	-2.045	.075	-.503	.030
	Social linkage	-3.124E-5	.000	-.366	-1.160	.279	.000	.000
	Economic development	.000	.000	.972	2.307	.050	.000	.000
	Military spending	-.310	.447	-.234	-.693	.508	-1.340	.721

a. Dependent Variable: Democracy Score

Model		Coefficients ^a					95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	5.287	.252		20.967	.000	4.717	5.858
	Economic linkage	-1.393E-7	.000	-.193	-.595	.566	.000	.000
	Intergovernmental linkage	-.315	.096	-1.420	-3.297	.009	-.531	-.099
	Economic development	.000	.000	1.113	2.707	.024	.000	.000
	Military spending	-.475	.432	-.358	-1.099	.300	-1.451	.502

a. Dependent Variable: Democracy Score

		Coefficients ^a						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	5.276	.164		32.254	.000	4.899	5.653
	Presence of revolution	.072	.097	.170	.745	.478	-.152	.296
	Structural violence	-.122	.061	-.457	-2.019	.078	-.262	.017
	Economic linkage	1.787E-7	.000	.248	.947	.371	.000	.000
	Intergovernmental linkage	-.065	.072	-.292	-.901	.394	-.230	.101
	Social linkage	-3.621E-5	.000	-.424	-1.405	.198	.000	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Democracy Score

Finally, in the case of Belarus, Military spending showed a high significance for the democratization score. Economic and Intergovernmental linkages along with Economic development and Military spending all showed importance for Democracy score lagged by one year.

Figure 6.6. SPSS Regression Results for Belarus

		Coefficients ^a						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	5.369	.356		15.089	.000	4.549	6.190
	Economic linkage	-1.197E-6	.000	-.056	-.075	.942	.000	.000
	Intergovernmental linkage	.121	.102	.712	1.179	.272	-.115	.356
	Social linkage	1.767E-7	.000	.134	.351	.734	.000	.000

Economic development	1.753E-5	.000	.391	.744	.478	.000	.000
Military spending	.548	.129	.932	4.252	.003	.251	.846

a. Dependent Variable: Democracy score

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	5.469	.353		15.487	.000	4.654	6.283
	Economic linkage	-3.969E-5	.000	-1.704	-3.406	.009	.000	.000
	Intergovernmental linkage	.173	.062	.991	2.766	.024	.029	.317
	Economic development	8.447E-5	.000	1.611	4.286	.003	.000	.000
	Military spending	.371	.154	.623	2.407	.043	.016	.727

a. Dependent Variable: Democracy score lagged by one year

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	6.715	.295		22.794	.000	6.036	7.394
	Presence of revolution	.157	.093	.484	1.692	.129	-.057	.372
	Structural violence	-.020	.049	-.117	-.406	.695	-.132	.093
	Economic linkage	1.544E-5	.000	.718	1.426	.192	.000	.000
	Intergovernmental linkage	-.089	.119	-.525	-.749	.475	-.362	.185
	Social linkage	7.397E-7	.000	.561	1.211	.260	.000	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Democracy score

Table 6.1. Summarizes the results of the regression analysis for all the countries. It could be seen that Intergovernmental linkage was an important variable affecting democratization in cases of all four countries. With the exception of Moldova, influence of stronger Intergovernmental linkage with Russia was negative for democratization.

Economic linkage was important in the cases of Georgia and Belarus, in both of the cases the influence of stronger economic ties to Russia was positive for democratization. Social linkage with Russia was important in the case of Georgia with stronger ties being better for democracy. In terms of leverage Military spending and Economic development variables were important only in the case of Belarus. Higher GDP and higher military spending would mean less democracy in Belarus. Finally, no conflict variables Armed conflict, Intensity of armed conflict, Structural violence, Presence of revolution or Success of revolution proved to have a direct significant impact on democratization.

Table 6.1. Summary of Regression Results

<i>Variable Type</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Georgia</i>	<i>Moldova</i>	<i>Belarus</i>
Linkages:				
Economic		Important (+)		Important (+)
Social		Important (+)		
Intergovernmental	Important (-)	Somewhat Important (-)	Important (+)	Important (-)
Leverages:				
Economy (GDP)			Important	Important (-)
Military spending				Important (-)

Armed conflict		N/A
Intensity of armed conflict		N/A
Structural violence		
<hr/>		
Presence of revolution		
Success of revolution	N/A	N/A
<hr/>		

While the above partially proves the main hypothesis of the thesis that changes in democratization can be, at least partially, attributed to the local changes in linkages and leverages and do not solely depend on the Western forces, it is important to understand the mechanism according to which the changes in democratization occur.

The importance of positive economic linkage for Georgia and Belarus indicates that these countries are democratically better off when they have better economic relations with Russia. It has already been mentioned in earlier chapters that democratization in the post-Soviet countries experiences a setback each time there is an instance of structural violence and bounces back afterwards. The results of the qualitative research also suggest that, upon presence of an economic conflict with Russia countries try to cooperate with it in order to improve the relationships, often sacrificing democratic values.

According to the quantitative analysis, intergovernmental linkage influences democratization of Ukraine, Georgia and Belarus in a negative way, so these countries are better off democratically not being in an alliance with Russia. This could be because entering the alliance with their neighbor Ukraine, Georgia and Belarus sacrifices certain

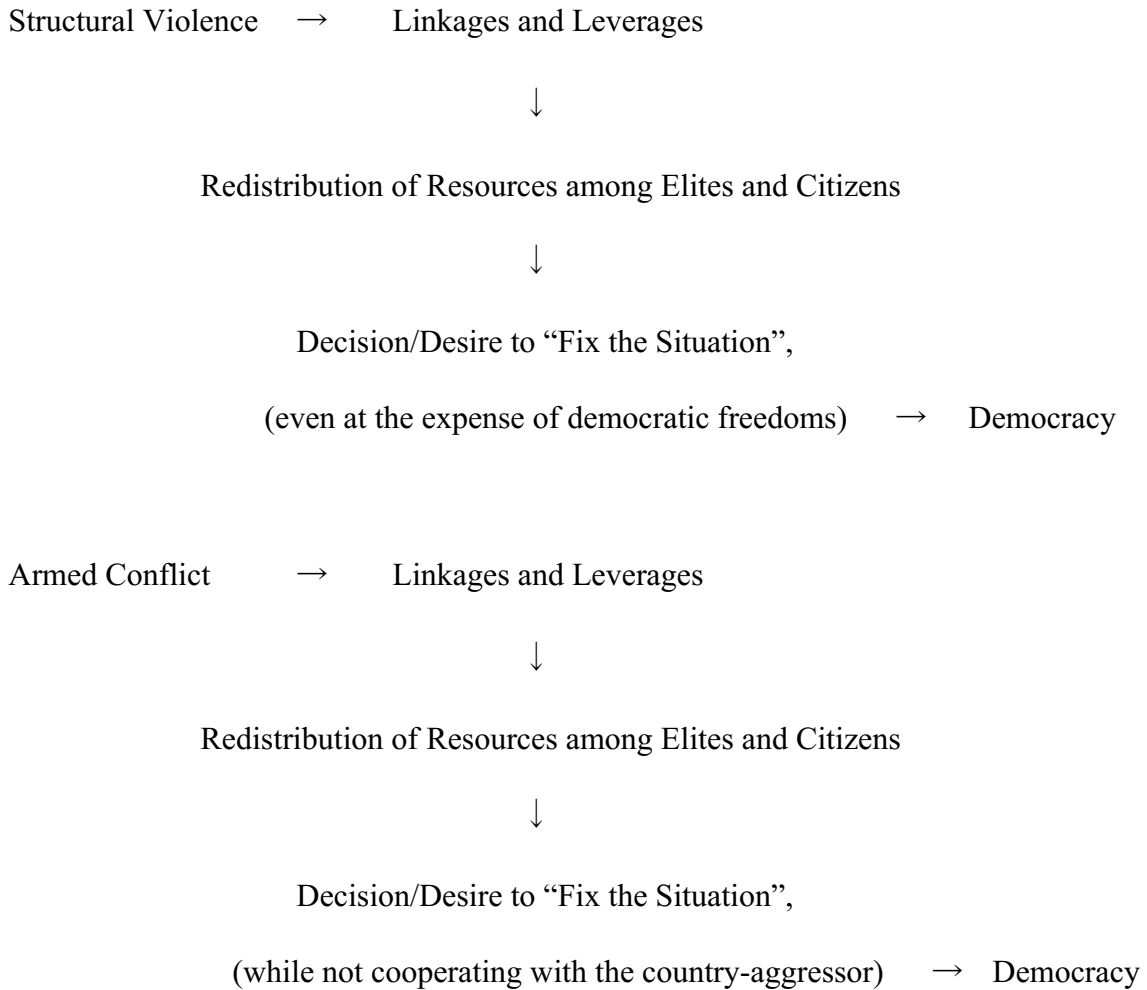
democratic freedoms. Conversely, Moldova showed that stronger intergovernmental linkage is better for its democratization. In the case of Moldova this might be reflecting democratic struggle of the first half of its independence, when democracy score of the country was above 5.

In terms of leverages, both higher GDP and higher military spending proved to be worse for democratization in the case of Belarus. This could be referring to the gradual deterioration of the democracy score that in the case of Belarus happens frequently each time following instances of structural violence from the side of Russia.

6.3 Mechanism of Regime Change in post-Soviet Countries

Based on the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis this research wishes to suggest the next mechanism of regime change for the post-Soviet countries (described in Figure 6.7.). Structural violence from the side of Russia purposefully targets economic linkages immediately destructing economies of the neighboring states. The downfall of the economic relations with, often the main trade partner, influences the redistribution of financial resources for elites and impacts directly the lives of the ordinary citizens domestically, for example through unavailability of heating or increase in prices. The elites of each country are often intertwined economically with Russia and are interested in reestablishment of strong relations. Citizens, too, are interested in improving the relations in order to stop the immediate suffering.

Figure 6.7. Mechanism of Regime Change in post-Soviet Countries



As a result, elites resolve to negotiations with Russia. However, because Russia has an unequally strong position in negotiations, and because the very decision to resolve to structural violence was based on the desire to curtail pro-Western or pro-democratic steps of neighboring countries to protect Russian national interests, the outcome of negotiations are prone to be a lesser democratic stances for the countries.

In the case of armed conflict, the difference in the mechanism is that cooperation with the “country-aggressor” at the expense of democratic values is not an option. Democratization thus is not an immediate target.

The reason for Russia to try to target pro-Western policies of the neighboring countries concerns its national interests. Western encroachment into the territory of Russian “near abroad” contradicts with country’s economic interests and constitutes a threat to national security, as outlined by Russia’s military and defense doctrine.⁴⁶ The structure of interdependent countries left after the Soviet Union provides a perfect opportunity to target the shortcomings of its system, manipulating skillfully the policies of neighboring countries.

⁴⁶ Russian Military Politics and Russia’s Defence Doctrine – Putin, Lavrov, Conventional and Nuclear Forces, Hierarchy of Russian Security, General Yuri Baluyevsky.

Chapter VII

Conclusions

This thesis investigated changes in linkages and leverages between Russia and its four neighbors Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus in context of structural violence and armed conflicts in order to see the impact on democratization.

Through the initial analysis of armed conflicts and instances of structural violence in the four countries, the research found that most of the conflicts started as a response to a certain policy contradicting Russian national and security interests. Further, after conducting analysis of linkages and leverages, the research found a similar repeating pattern: after an instance of structural violence concerning economic wellbeing of a country, the links with Russia would become stronger. After an instance of armed conflict, however, the linkages would deteriorate. The case of Georgia showed slightly different pattern and needs further investigation.

Next, through analyzing the patterns of democratization in four countries this research found that democracy score worsens each time after an instance of structural violence. After an instance of armed conflict, however, democratization score either worsens briefly and then improves afterwards, or improves immediately.

The study concluded that instances of structural violence and democratization influence democratization differently as they provide different ways for solving the hostile situation with cooperation, possibly at the expense of pro-Western democratic

policies, possible only in case of structural violence. Furthermore, linkages are mostly important for democratization as bargaining tools in a conflict.

The role of conflicts in defining linkages and leverages to the local authoritarian power and its effect on young democracies thus far has not been thoroughly researched. This study is the first attempt at expanding and modifying the theory of linkages and leverages by Levitsky and Way to define the role of authoritarian power for the democratization and peace. It therefore lays the foundation for further research in this area.

I hope that current thesis contributes to opening an interest in the topics related to structural violence and armed conflicts as important turning points for democratization and that the modified approach of Levitsky and Way becomes useful for the future analysis.

In the future studies, a thorough investigation that would include greater number of variables accounting for linkages and leverages between Russia and its neighboring countries is needed. Furthermore, study of additional countries could prove beneficial to account for changes in democratization in the post-Soviet space. Finally, changing circumstances in the region where some of the countries become more democratic or sustain authoritarian regime, and isolationist policy of Russia, provide yet another set of circumstances worth exploring in the future.

Appendix 1

Description of the Variables and Data Sources

Dependent Variables

Freedom House Liberal Democracy Index

The Gastil index, the 7-point scale used by Freedom House, measuring political rights and civil liberties annually since 1972. Index for the years 2003 to 2016 is obtained from the webpage of Freedom House. Index for the years 1991 to 2002 is obtained directly from the Freedom House Research Team in New York.

Source: Freedom House. *Freedom in the World*.

<http://www.Freedomhouse.com>.

Independent Variables

I. Linkages

Economic linkage to Russia: trade flows between Russia and Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova or Belarus.

Sources:

State Statistics Service of Ukraine (Derzhavna sluzhba statystyky Ukrainy).
<http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/>

National Statistics Office of Georgia. <http://geostat.ge/>

Statistical Databank of Moldova (Statistica Moldovej Statistical Databank).
<http://statbank.statistica.md/>

National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (Natsionalnyj statisticheskij komitet Respubliki Belarus). <http://www.belstat.gov.by/>.

Intergovernmental linkage: Membership of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus in Russia-led regional organizations.

Source: Stephen Aris et al., *Russian Analytical Digest*, no.76 (April 2010).

[http://www.laender-](http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland/rad/pdf/Russian_Analytical_Digest_76.pdf)

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Social linkage: Annual number of Russian citizens traveling to each of the four countries.

Source: World Tourism Organization. 2017. *Tourism Statistics Database*.

<http://statistics.unwto.org/news/2017-03-17/methodological-notes-tourism-statistics-database-2017-edition>.

II. Leverages

Economic development: per capita GDP measured in constant international \$ in purchasing power parity.

Source: International Monetary Fund. 2017. *World Economic Outlook Database*.

<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2017/01/weodata/index.aspx>.

Military spending: as a percentage of GDP.

Source: World Bank. 2017. Washington D.C.: World Bank Group
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.ZS?name_desc=false.

Population size: the estimates of total population per state in thousands.

Source: International Monetary Fund. 2017. *World Economic Outlook Database*.
<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2017/01/weodata/index.aspx>.

III. Conflict

Armed Conflict: Conflict availability, intensity and longevity.

Source: ECDP/PRIO. 2016. The ECDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Codebook.
<https://www.prio.org/Data/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/>.

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