

The Third Wave in the Soviet Union
Exploring Development and Religion in Post-Communist Democratization

A thesis submitted to
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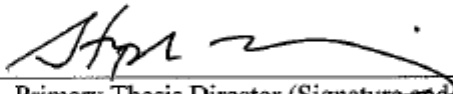
by

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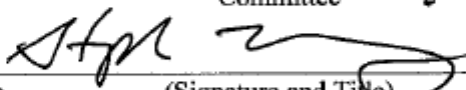
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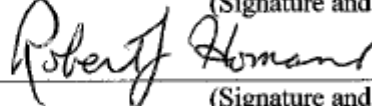
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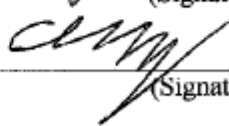


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Preface

This project began as the ambition of an undergraduate student in the social sciences who was desperately seeking, first, to be able to lay claim to at least one extensive research project, and second, to establish a verifiable body of knowledge in the realm of post-communist studies. I am proud to say that, at the end of my thesis defense, I was left feeling I had accomplished as much as I had set out to. There was more than one moment where I contemplated giving up on the project, at least temporarily, with the hope that I might resume such study after graduation. Nevertheless, I am glad I opted instead to stay the course. I could not have done this alone, otherwise the paper that follows would have been unpresentable. I would like to thank first the numerous scholars that preceded me, granting me the background literature for and context within which I wrote. The University of Detroit Mercy library and online resources were as well crucial in this ten month-long odyssey. Of the utmost importance were my thesis committee members; Committee Chair, Political Science Chair, and my academic adviser for the last four years, Dr. Stephen Manning, who was my first instructor in comparative politics; Criminal Justice Chair Dr. Robert Homant; and Assistant Professor of Political Science, Dr. Alex Zamalin. These men helped to provide direction, conversation, and, of course, their expertise. Nor would this paper likely have made it to the defense without my friends and brothers, who, most importantly, provided much needed distractions at times. Lastly, I would like to thank my mother, Ann Marie Clark, for her tireless support and encouragement.

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The Third Wave in the Soviet Union

Exploring Development and Religion in Post-Communist Democratization

1 - The Third Wave & the Questions It Poses

In 1991, Samuel Huntington published the seminal work *The Third Wave*, exploring what the author noted was a string of movements toward democracy that had sprung up across the globe in a group of countries so diverse as to include South Africa and Poland. This “wave” had, per the author, begun on the Iberian Peninsula in 1974 and could be explained as part of a global historical pattern. Two prior waves of democratization had been followed by reversals, or retreats, and the encroachment of dictatorship and totalitarianism. Huntington’s version of history, explained summarily, was that the first, long wave of democratization lasted from the emergence of universal white male suffrage in 1828 to the instatement of new democratic regimes in the aftermath of the First World War. The first retreat began shortly thereafter, and could be seen in the rise of fascism and communism in Central and Eastern Europe. Following the Second World War, a second democratic wave, coinciding with the rise of the Cold War powers, emerged, only to peter out. By the mid-1970’s—just, in fact, as the third wave Huntington identified began to emerge—social scientists were grimly predicting the long-term retreat of democracy.

Third wave democratizations occurred in Latin America, Europe, and Asia, engulfing non-democracies of every variety—fascist, military, bureaucratic-authoritarian. These would have a variety of sources, ranging from organized popular opposition, to regime-initiated “decompressing”. The ‘Evil Empire’ would not be spared, either, as “[a]t the end of the [1980’s], the democratic wave had engulfed the communist world.

In 1988 Hungary began the transition to a multiparty system. In 1989 elections for a national congress in the Soviet Union produced the defeat of several senior Communist party leaders and an increasingly assertive national parliament. In early 1990, multiparty systems were developing in the Baltic republics and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) abandoned its guiding role. In 1989, in Poland Solidarity swept the elections for a national parliament and a noncommunist government came into existence. In 1990 the leader of Solidarity, Lech Walesa, was elected president, replacing the Communist Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski. In the last months of 1989, the communist regimes in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Romania collapsed, and competitive elections in these countries were held in 1990. In Bulgaria the communist regime also began to liberalize, and popular movements for democracy appeared in Mongolia. In 1990 what appear to be reasonably fair elections occurred in both these countries.¹

¹ Huntington, S.P. (1991). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Vol. 4, Julian J. Rothbaum Distinguished Lecture Series). University of Oklahoma Press. p. 23

While Huntington authored the bulk of *The Third Wave* in 1989 and 1990 “as the class of events with which it was concerned was still unfolding”,² and had the Eastern Bloc’s incipient combined disintegration and democratization as only one part of a broad area of examination, it seems clear that the Soviet Union’s closely-following destruction can be examined as a third wave occurrence due not only to chronological proximity, but because some of the events documented by Huntington, as shown above, were among those first shots fired in the upheaval behind the Iron Curtain.

2 - Study Purpose, Design, & Methodology

The primary question asked here is why some post-Soviet states are more democratic than others. A comprehensive comparative examination of these countries, utilizing their whole history and a vast multitude of variables is not printed here. In treating the Soviet Union’s collapse as a part of the third wave phenomenon, the variables discussed by Huntington in 1991 are applied to governments that emerged after it. It is not a matter of question that all post-Soviet governments ratified constitutions that instituted democratic elections, separate branches of government, the protection of civil liberties, and a divorce of party from government. However, some post-Soviet governments kept with those norms and rules listed in their constitutions; others did not. Some saw elections proceed for decades after with little impropriety. In other cases the opposite happened. As such, the question is not why some anti-Soviet or anti-communist democratic movements emerged in some countries rather than others in the years preceding the Soviet Union’s collapse, but rather what factors were and are present that allowed some of these countries to maintain democracy while others’ political life withered.

In the section “Why?”, running from page 31 to page 108, Huntington discussed a vast number of variables pertaining to democratization. The temptation to test each one of these in regards to the present sample could be mitigated by Huntington’s own decision to examine five specific causal variables. “The question to be answered is: What change in plausible independent variables...produced the dependent variable, democratizing regime changes in the 1970s and 1980s?” The changes he identified could be summarized as (1) problems in legitimacy and performance faced by authoritarian regimes; (2) economic growth spurring economic development; (3) an international pivot initiated by the Catholic Church; (4) “changes in the policies of external actors”; (5) and “snowballing”—the phenomenon of one democratization leading to others.³

What can be stated about the former Soviet Union removes a few of these from contention. The fact that the Soviet Union collapsed at all indicates that the regime’s legitimacy had been sufficiently depleted in enough of its republics and among enough of its citizenry. Similarly, the collapse itself was, partially, the result of the policies of “external actors” that Huntington already mentioned—the Helsinki Accords, the presidencies of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, and Mikhail Gorbachev himself.⁴ Similarly, that snowballing to some extent or another occurred within the Soviet Union is more than evident. What the Soviet Union left behind, however, was a collection of new countries, varying in economic and cultural makeup. It is theorized thusly that

² Ibid. p. xiv

³ Ibid. pp. 45-46

⁴ Ibid. pp. 90, 93, 99

these countries possessed different attitudes towards and preconditions favorable for democratic flourishing following their independence, regardless of the *de jure* democracy installed by their 1990's constitutions.

In responding to changes 3 and 4 listed by Huntington—what might be summarized as economic growth and a change in Catholicism—and applying them to the former Soviet Union, we are forced to ask:

1. What is the relationship between economic development and democracy in the former Soviet Union?
2. What is the relationship between religion and democracy in the former Soviet Union?

To measure this, the modern-day (2014) democratic status of each country in the sample was assessed, and comparison was made between that and (1) economic development and (2) religion in order to attempt to construct a working understanding of their relationship with government type. Huntington acknowledged that both had *some* effect—loosely formulated in the statements that (1) excepting for those that were dependent on fuel extraction for wealth, “[a]n overall correlation exists between the level of economic development and democracy”;⁵ and (2) “a strong correlation exists between Western Christianity and democracy” and that “the expansion of Christianity encourages democratic development.”⁶ Beyond merely testing whether these assertions are correct, effort was made to explore them further and to explain their exceptions.

2.1 - The Sample

The primary focus of this paper is on the former Soviet Union. This is partially for the sake of simplicity and in order to locate a relatively small, diverse and easily distinguishable sample of countries. This is referred to in-text as “former S.S.R.’s” or “post-Soviet countries” (n=15). Alphabetically, they are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. It is these 15 which are ultimately assessed in detail. Other countries from outside the Soviet Union shall be considered as well, including former member states of the Warsaw Pact and Yugoslavia—with some exceptions. This larger sample, against which comparisons are occasionally made in order to contextualize and test large trends, shall be referred to as “Eurasian Post-Communist countries” (n=28). It comprises Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia, and former S.S.R.’s.

2.2 - Variables & Measures

A number of variables are employed here. Of primary importance is the dependent variable, against all other variables are compared. It is the composite “freedom score” assigned by Freedom House to each country. This score ranges from 1 to 7, with 1 denoting the upper echelon of free countries in the world and 7 being the total absence of citizen freedom. There are a total of 13 scores available, as each country’s composite score is the average of its political

⁵ Huntington. (1991). p. 59

⁶ Huntington. (1991). pp. 72-73

freedom and civil liberties scores, themselves ranging from 1 to 7 and comprising only integers (The use of these scores implies an inherent connection between ‘freedom’ and democracy, evident itself in Freedom House’s decision to factor in political freedom). In this case, the spectrum of 1 to 7 shall be reversed, so that, when correlating variables, a more direct statement may be made. Otherwise a negative correlation between Freedom House’s numbers and gross national product, for example, would actually be a positive relationship between GNP and freedom. “1”, therefore, shall be discussed as the least-free score a country may receive, while “7” shall be the most. In order to clarify the reversal of Freedom House’s original scoring system, the term “Freedom House adjusted scores” is used. Freedom House’s three categories—“free”, “partly free”, and “not free”—are also employed to allow segregation and categorization of countries. They are referred to as “Freedom House status”.

In order to appraise economic development, the following measures were be employed: gross national income shown in real numbers and divided into World Bank categories of lower income, lower middle income, upper middle income, and upper income; gross domestic product divided between service, industry, and agriculture and shown as percentages; and national exports divided by economic area and shown as percentages. Religion is displayed as broken down by both affiliation and Christian denomination and shown as percentages. Both of these general concepts are also presented descriptively through a variety of secondary sources which themselves present other statistics.

3 - Economic Development

The idea that a country’s wealth and the likelihood of successful democratization correlate is far from new. However, in examining the data below, there are notable exceptions to this general rule that merit further exploration. In today’s terms, the political transition zone Huntington identified—between \$500 and \$1,000 in 1960 USD—stands, if directly transposed, at roughly \$4,000-\$8,000 GNI per capita.

Table 3.1: 2014 GNI per capita according to World Bank income categories for Eurasian post-communist countries. (N=28)	
Low Income ≤\$1,046 (n=0)	
Lower Middle Income \$1,046-\$4,125 (n=6)	Tajikistan (\$1,080), Kyrgyzstan (\$1,250), Uzbekistan (\$2,090), Moldova (\$2,560), Ukraine (\$3,560), Armenia (\$4,020).
Upper Middle Income \$4,126-\$12,735 (n=12)	Albania (\$4,450), Georgia (\$4,490), Bosnia & Herzegovina (\$4,840), Macedonia (\$5,150), Serbia (\$5,820), Montenegro (\$7,320), Belarus (\$7,340), Azerbaijan (\$7,600), Bulgaria (\$7,620), Turkmenistan (\$8,020), Romania (\$9,520), Kazakhstan (\$11,850),
Upper Income >\$12,735 (n=10)	Croatia (\$12,980), Russia (\$13,220), Hungary (\$13,340), Poland (\$13,680), Latvia (\$15,250), Lithuania (\$15,410), Slovakia (\$17,750), Czech Republic (\$18,350), Estonia (\$19,010), Slovenia (\$23,580)

In compiling information on Eurasian post-communist countries, some insight confirming the conventional wisdom can be gleaned. With Huntington having cited others in referring to per capita Gross National Product as the “dominant explanatory variable”⁷, comparisons will be made using modern-day numbers on Gross National Income, the contemporary term for GNP. Table 3.1 segregates Eurasian post-communist countries by World Bank income category, based on real numbers from 2014. The World Bank’s categories, as can be observed in Table 3.1, separate countries into low income, lower middle income, upper middle income, and upper income. In speaking to the current conditions of the sample, the vast majority of countries are upper middle income or upper income, with only the remaining six qualifying as lower middle income.

Table 3.2: Eurasian post-communist countries (N=28) grouped by 2014 Freedom House status, alongside 2014 World Bank GNI per capita averages.

Country Groupings	Average GNI per capita
Free (n=14)	\$13,176
Partly Free (n=7)	\$3,640
Not Free (n=7)	\$7,314
Total (N=28)	\$9,005

For those with a material or moral interest in the well-being of the peoples of post-communist countries, this may appear encouraging, especially when considering the purported relationship between wealth and democracy. When conducting a Pearson’s correlation (r) between GNI and Freedom House adjust scores for the same year, a strong relationship of .579 was yielded. When data are broken down by Freedom House’s categories of free, partly free, and not free, the relationship becomes less clear, for partly free countries are not only poorer, on average, than free countries, but also poorer than unfree countries.

Table 3.3: Eurasian post-communist countries exempting former Yugoslavia (N=22) grouped by 2014 Freedom House status, alongside 2014 World Bank GNI per capita averages.

Country Groupings	Average GNI per capita
Free (n=9)	\$14,437
Partly Free (n=6)	\$3,388
Not Free (n=7)	\$7,314
Total (N=22)	\$6,948

Table 3.4: Former S.S.R.’s (N=15) grouped by 2014 Freedom House status, alongside 2014 World Bank GNI per capita averages.

Country Groupings	Average GNI per capita
Free (n=3)	\$16,557
Partly Free (n=5)	\$3,176
Not Free (n=7)	\$7,314
Total (N=15)	\$4,026

In order to except for potential outliers within the sample, two other configurations were presented: Eurasian post-communist countries, excluding the former Yugoslavia; and only former S.S.R.’s. While results, to be seen in tables 3.3 and 3.4, varied, the same trends—a general correlation between wealth and freedom paired alongside an apparent reversal of this relationship toward the bottom of the freedom scale—were observed. In the case of Eurasian post-communist countries exempting Yugoslavia, the correlation between GNI real numbers and Freedom House scores was .587, and for only former S.S.R.’s, the r was .474.

⁷ Huntington, S.P. (1991). p. 60. Quoting Bollen & Jackman.

What became apparent was that, while unfree countries were below the average when measuring all of the Eurasian post-communist sample, the exclusion of Yugoslavia saw the same seven unfree countries be reclassified as above average. This was exacerbated when measuring only former S.S.R.'s. Moreover, the disparity between partly free and unfree countries widened as the sample itself was narrowed. Worthy of note is the fact that all seven unfree countries are former S.S.R.'s, and that the three wealthiest former S.S.R.'s are not only also the only three to be categorized as free, but also comprise the Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Two alternative ways to illustrate this counter-intuitive interaction between freedom and gross national income per capita were (1) to average Freedom House adjusted scores by national income group as shown in Table 3.5, and (2) to segregate countries not by real numbers, but instead by the categories provided by both the World Bank and Freedom House—this is observed in Table 3.6.

Table 3.5: Eurasian Post-Communist countries (column 2) and former S.S.R.'s (column 3) with the average Freedom House adjusted score for each World Bank income group.		
Income Group	Eurasian Post-Communist Countries	Former Soviet Socialist Republics
Lower Middle Income	3.16	3.16
Upper Middle Income	4.08	2.3
Upper Income	6.25	5.5

The obvious trend in Table 3.6 is unsurprising: there are no lower middle income countries that are free, and there are 9 upper income countries that are free. The purported relationship between income and freedom appears to hold. In removing the first row, however, the relationship becomes far less clear: there are more lower middle income partly free countries than lower middle income not free countries; there are more upper middle income not free countries than upper middle income partly free countries; and the only upper income country from the 28-country sample's 'bottom two-thirds' is the unfree Russia. In referring to Table 3.5, it appears that it is primarily within the former Soviet Union that this backwards, bottom-end correlation between wealth and freedom can be seen. Lower middle income countries are freer on average than upper middle income countries.

Table 3.6: Eurasian Post-Communist countries distinguished by World Bank income levels and Freedom House categories. (N=28)			
	Lower Middle Income (n=6)	Upper Middle Income (n=12)	Upper Income (n=10)
Free (n=14)	0	5 (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia)	9 (Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia)
Partly Free (n=7)	4 (Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine)	3 (Albania, Georgia, Macedonia)	0
Not Free (n=7)	2 (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)	4 (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan)	1 (Russia)

At this point there may be those seeking a simple explanation, and one is readily presented: that the farther East one goes, in general, the presence of wealth and democracy becomes rarer. Yet, the fact that poverty and tyranny themselves are shown to be not directly or linearly related calls for further curiosity.

Alternate Variables

In seeking to explain this, the economic makeup of former S.S.R.'s was examined. The Central Intelligence Agency provides estimates, most of which are as recent as 2015, on the division of each recognized country's economic between service, industrial, and agricultural sectors. The service sector dominated nearly every economy, occupying anywhere between over one-third to nearly three-quarters of country economies. Country economic makeup can be viewed in Table A2. Below in Table 3.7 are figures derived from those numbers.

Table 3.7: Averages of CIA figures for national economic makeup, segregated by 2014 Freedom House statuses in former S.S.R.'s. (N=15) Pearson's r correlations taken from 2014 Freedom House scores and CIA percentages.

	Free	Partly Free	Not Free	R
Service	69.03%	59.54%	49.64%	.782
Industry	27.43%	24.56%	38.67%	-.523
Agriculture	3.53%	16.00%	11.67%	-.385

What is apparent is that the strongest service sectors will be found among free countries, the strongest industrial sectors will be found among unfree countries, and the strongest agricultural sectors will be found among partly free countries. Moreover, a strong service sector is particularly predictive of a country's level of freedom. Having established the general relationship between freedom and economic makeup, the same ought to be established for national income and economic makeup, and such is on display in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8: Averages of CIA figures for national economic makeup, segregated by 2014 World Bank income categories in former S.S.R.'s. (N=15) Pearson's r correlations are taken from 2014 World Bank real numbers and CIA percentages.

	Lower Middle Income	Upper Middle Income	Upper Income	r
Service	55.58%	50.40%	66.70%	.376
Industry	25.28%	41.20%	29.53%	.193
Agriculture	19.22%	8.40%	3.75%	-.849

The findings in the above table are not entirely predictable, but make sense in the context of the previous pages. Upper income countries—the 'freest' group—possess also by far the most service-heavy economies. Upper middle income countries—less free—are the most industry-dependent. Lower middle income countries, meanwhile, have the strongest agriculture sectors. What is now clear is that there is no direct, linear relationship between development—as evidenced both by GNI per capita and by nations' economic makeup—and liberal democracy. It does appear that there is a relationship that is indirect and influenced by other variables. An industrial economy is considered more developed than an agricultural economy, and it is true that one is wealthier than the other, but industrial economies are less democratic than agrarian societies.

In seeking an explanatory variable, one is forced to refer once more to Huntington, who pointed out that high income, non-democratic countries were predominantly those oil-rich exporters: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates. In the timespan that Huntington investigated, there was only one high-income, non-democratic country—Singapore—that was an exception to this.⁸ “The implication is that broad-based economic development involving significant industrialization may contribute to democratization but wealth resulting from the sale of oil (and, probably, other natural resources) does not.”⁹ In pursuing this, World Bank-provided information on natural resource rents as a percentage of a country’s gross domestic product was utilized, and these numbers can be seen in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: World Bank figures on natural resource rents as a percent of gross domestic product alongside 2014 Freedom House statuses for former S.S.R.'s. (N=15)		
Azerbaijan	28.70%	NF
Kazakhstan	27.50%	NF
Turkmenistan	20.60%	NF
Russia	16.20%	NF
Uzbekistan	13.70%	NF
Kyrgyzstan	8.30%	PF
Ukraine	8.10%	PF
Armenia	3.30%	PF
Estonia	2.70%	F
Latvia	2.60%	F
Belarus	1.90%	NF
Tajikistan	1.80%	NF
Georgia	1.3%	PF
Lithuania	1.2%	F
Moldova	0.4%	PF

With two exceptions, all unfree post-Soviet countries derive 10% or more of their gross domestic product from natural resource rents. Supplementing this, while there is a negligible relationship between natural resource rents and wealth ($r=.075$), the correlation between rents and Freedom House 2014 adjusted scores ($r=-.573$), and rents and industry as a portion of the national economy ($r=.743$) appear far more significant.

However, as with every measurement examined thus far, there are exceptions. It appears that a lack of reliance on natural resource rents is no guarantor of freedom. Two countries as different in economic makeup, geography, and ethnic composition as Belarus and Tajikistan both stand as unfree countries that derive less of their economy from natural resource rents than either Estonia or Latvia. And, while Tajikistan’s status as the poorest country out of the entire former Soviet Union would serve to help explain its lack of democracy, Belarus—among other exceptions—demonstrates that macro-level statistical explanations still must contend with regional, demographic, and historical narratives.

⁸ Huntington, S.P. (1991). p. 60

⁹ Ibid. p. 65

In the case of the former Soviet Union, discussing economic development is a far different phenomenon than discussing such in a comparative study of Germany, France, and Great Britain. Each of the regions the Soviet Union inhabited not only went through distinct historical experiences prior to the Soviet Union, but then experienced quasi-simultaneous modernization efforts taking place between the Pacific Ocean and the Baltic Sea. Some brief attention toward these narratives—with attention to the variety of variables discussed above—is merited.

3.1 - The Baltics: A Model of Democratization

The freest and wealthiest of the former Soviet Union, it is the Baltics that most closely fit the model of democratic ethos accompanying economic development. More incorporated into the Central and North European growth of capitalism and commerce during their pre-Russian days, they were exposed to ideas and resources that other future S.S.R.'s would wait centuries to see. Baltic commerce developed rapidly owing to the region's incorporation into the Hanseatic League, a German-led trade protection confederation.¹⁰ The time spent by Estonia and Latvia under German dominion appears to have, at least partially, benefitted them, as the Germans brought both superior technology eastward.¹¹ By the seventeenth century, Estonia had established its own higher education system.¹² Lithuania's merger with Poland in the sixteenth century "opened the doors to Western models in education and culture."¹³ The Baltics were well-situated, not only to their proximity to the rest of Northern Europe, but as well due to their access to the ocean.

The favorable geographical position of Latvia alongside the Baltic Sea and on the outer frontier of a vast, mostly landlocked Russian Empire provided the impetus for an extremely rapid economic development of the region. The most rapid growth occurred between 1880 and World War I. Riga became the third largest port in the Russian Empire; in 1913 its port had a larger trade turnover than St. Petersburg's. Many huge factories were constructed, attracting great masses of new workers from the Latvian countryside and from the interior of Russia.¹⁴

The spurt of growth experienced in the nineteenth century was not isolated to Latvia, nor was the birth of a nationally conscious intelligentsia. Similar developments occurred in Estonia¹⁵ and Lithuania.¹⁶ The strength of industrialization in the area as opposed to the rest of the Russian Empire could be observed by the fact that, prior to their first experience of independence, the Bolsheviks in the All-Russian Constituent Assembly election received the support of 71.9% of votes in Latvia. "By contrast, in the entire empire less than a quarter voted for the Bolsheviks."¹⁷

¹⁰ Iwaskiw, W. R. (1996). *Estonia, Latvia, & Lithuania: country studies*. Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. pp. 12-14

¹¹ Ibid. p. 94

¹² Ibid. p. 14

¹³ Ibid. p. 178

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 95

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 15

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 179

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 95

Latvia's experience with political independence "was characterized by both economic viability and political instability,"¹⁸ and all three new states created by the First World War gradually subsumed to authoritarianism in a manner that led some to compare them to the Weimar Republic. In 1926, the army in Lithuania affected a *coup d'état*, placing M. Antanas Smetona at the head of state, in a "revolution" against the paralyzing ineffectiveness of the unstructured political system in the new state.¹⁹ Estonia's fall began in 1933 with the ascension of Konstantin Pats to head of government, who in March of the next year invoked emergency powers to forestall attempts at electoral overthrow.²⁰ Latvia's turn came in 1934 when Kārlis Ulmanis, a founding father, was installed at the helm.²¹ Nevertheless, these years displayed admirable economic management. Latvia saw currency stabilization, exports, and the maintenance of social welfare programs²² while Estonia experienced great growths in entrepreneurial activity²³ and agrarian reform.²⁴

Annexing the Baltics in 1939, the Soviet Union undertook collectivization of agriculture and nationalization of industry toward the end of the 1940's.²⁵ "By the beginning of the Fifth Five Year Plan in 1950, new industries were being introduced geared to markets within the Soviet Union."²⁶ In a not-uncommon pattern, the Soviet Union brought development to the region. In Lithuania, between 1939 and 1992, the percentage of population in urban areas jumped from 23% to 69%.²⁷ Latvia, in 1990, reached an urban population of 71%.²⁸ The region nevertheless possessed certain distinctive characteristics that prepared it well for both a modern economy and for privatization—beyond the fact that its development upon acquisition by the Soviet Union had already surpassed that of other S.S.R.'s. Buoying its service sector, "[t]he Baltic coast offers sandy beaches and pine forests and attracts thousands of vacationers,"²⁹ and the major tourist destinations of the region were inhabited by very few Russians.³⁰ Estonia, meanwhile, was "the cradle of private entrepreneurship in the Soviet Union" in both the 1980's and the 1990's.³¹

The early years after the fall of the Soviet Union proved rocky, but it was countries such as Estonia that "became a model of economic transformation" into a free market.³² Of note is not only the successful privatization in the Baltics, but the way it affected different aspects of the economy. In the early 1990's, while absolute numbers of companies more than doubled in

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 96

¹⁹ Gustainis, V. (April 1939). "Lithuania: The First Twenty Years". *The Slavonic Review*, 17(51), pp. 606-617. p. 612

²⁰ Siaroff, A. (March 1999). pp. 115-116

²¹ Iwaskiw, R. (1996). p. 97

²² Ibid. p. 96

²³ Liuhto, K. (January 1996). p. 124

²⁴ Siaroff, A. (March 1999). "Democratic Breakdown and Democratic stability: A Comparison of Interwar Estonia and Finland". *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 32(1), pp. 103-124. p. 111

²⁵ Senn, A.E. (May 1958). "The Sovietization of the Baltic States". *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 317, pp. 123-129. pp. 124-125

²⁶ Ibid. p. 125

²⁷ Iwaskiw, R. (1996). p. 191

²⁸ Ibid. p. 115

²⁹ Ibid. p. 186

³⁰ Ibid. p. 191

³¹ Liuhto, K. (January 1996). pp. 121-122

³² Iwaskiw, R. (1996). p. 39

Estonia, it was wholesale and retail trade that experienced the greatest increase as a percentage of the total.³³ In that same period, industrial production plummeted, and within that sector, Estonia came to rely more on lighter industries that were dependent on locally-sourced raw materials.³⁴ Contemporary statistics, displayed earlier, demonstrate how the Baltics possess the strongest service sectors of the post-Soviet economies, and mention was made of how this correlated in a more linear fashion with Freedom House's perceptions of freedom. Nevertheless, with the Baltics having developed alongside other Northern European countries for many centuries, it is unsurprising that the Soviet era would represent for them more a brief pause in what might otherwise have been a gradual march toward the modern era.

3.2 - The Industrial Despots

As was stated previously, the former S.S.R.'s that have been deemed 'not free' experienced an average Gross National Income per capita of \$7,314 in 2014 (2014 dollars). This put them, on average, over \$3,000 above 'partly free' former S.S.R.'s and well into the World Bank's 'upper middle income' category. 'Not free' former S.S.R.'s have on average the weakest service sectors compared to other countries in the sample, and by that same token have the strongest industrial sectors. And, while resource extraction is a good predictor of a relative lack of freedom, it is hardly a proportional relationship—only 1.9% of the economy of the relatively wealthy and unfree Belarus was comprised of natural resource rents. In this light, it appears that autocracy is hardly the result of poverty, nor is it simply the product of 'resource traps'.

One of the most notable features of post-Soviet autocracies has to be that they were particularly late to industrialize, most of them receiving some aspects of an industrial economy during their time under Russian hegemon, then receiving most of their development during the Soviet period, owing to Stalinist 'crash industrialization'. The geographically westernmost among these is Belarus. "Before the communist revolution Belarus was arguable the poorest region of European Russia... The first industrialization wave (1880s) that affected many regions of European Russia skirted Belarus."³⁵ What urban population there was in Belarus prior to the Russian Revolution was itself hardly comprised of ethnic Belarusians—Jews and Russians combined made up sixty to seventy percent of city-dwellers.³⁶ Prior to the Second World War, Belarus would lag behind its fellow European S.S.R.'s, with industrialization occurring more quickly in both Russia and Ukraine. Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the devastation on the Eastern front, "Belarus' industrial spurt began with post-war reconstruction."³⁷ Between the beginning of the Cold War and its end, the Soviet Union propelled Belarus' industrial expansion, making it a regional leader in production—especially in light industry. This was to have an effect not just on the country's economic makeup or even material wealth, but on quality of life, as well. As the 1980's drew to a close, the Belarusian S.S.R. had actually overtaken both Russia and Ukraine in terms of life expectancy. "A country of dismal workshops and unproductive wetlands at the beginning of the

³³ Liuhto, K. (January 1996). p. 131, Table 3

³⁴ Iwaskiw, R. (1996). p. 56

³⁵ Ioffe, G. (January 2004). "Understanding Belarus: Economy and Political Landscape." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 56, pp. 85-118. p. 86

³⁶ Marples, D. R. (September 2005). Europe's Last Dictatorship: The Roots and Perspectives of Authoritarianism in 'White Russia'. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 57, pp. 895-908. p. 899

³⁷ Ioffe, G. (January 2004). p. 86

twentieth century, Belarus 70 years later was dominated by large-scale industry and vastly modernised agriculture.”³⁸

It appears, however, that development had yet to spawn what Ioffe (2004) calls a “pro-reform constituency” that would back privatization, liberalization, or seriously oppose Lukashenka (Belarus’ contemporary, post-Soviet dictator) in mass numbers; he speculated that this owed to the fact that Soviet industrialization occurred “too quickly”³⁹ to modernize the personalities and worldview of those it had affected; the norms of communal, pre-modern Belarus were still in vogue. It is this rushed modernization that may be the key to understanding other post-Soviet autocracies.

In Central Asia, the slow industrialization that plagued much of the Russian and Soviet worlds emerged even later. That development took on the nature of an entirely government-driven phenomenon, as it came to in Russia, remains unsurprising in light of the fact that, “[b]esides lacking adequate oil, gas, and coal for its own needs, southern Central Asia is deficient in other important minerals.”⁴⁰ In the early twentieth century, the combined working class employees of mines and railways made up a total of 32,000. Moreover, while the majority of workers were composed of local peoples, “Russian workers alone were skilled... Moreover, while the Russians were permanently employed, most of the others were peasants who had been dispossessed of their lands or unable to live on the produce of the land alone, persons who worked seasonally for lower wages than the Russians. For practical purposes, the only permanent proletariat was Russian.”⁴¹ This resulted in a pattern of European leadership in Central Asia not only among the Soviet hierarchy, but economically as well. In the words of one non-native, “The revolution has been waged by Russians; that is why the power is in our hands in Central Asia.”⁴²

In the Soviet period, as industrialization and modernization proceeded with heavy government oversight, white collar employment, both in the political realm and in other sectors of the economy, was European-dominated, as proletarian employment had been in the previous era.

Here [in industry], the senior managerial posts in large enterprises, and technical posts down to a relatively low level, tend to be held by immigrants (not necessarily Russians; a substantial role is played in Central Asia by Armenians and Georgians). At the manual worker level, and perhaps now at the foreman level, immigrant skilled workers tend to predominate at least in modern industrial plants; in the smaller factories (food and textile industries, for example) it seems to be common in Central Asia for virtually all the staff, up to top management, to be natives.⁴³

³⁸ Ibid. pp. 87-88

³⁹ Ibid. p. 107

⁴⁰ Matley, I.M. (1994). “Industrialization”. In E. Allworth (Ed.), *Central Asia: 130 Years of Russian Dominance, a Historical Overview* (209-348). U.S.A.: Duke University Press. p. 309

⁴¹ d’Encausse, H. C. (1994 2). The Stirring of National Feeling. In E. Allworth (Ed.), *Central Asia: 130 years of Russian Dominance, a Historical Overview* (172-188). U.S.A.: Duke University Press. pp. 180-181

⁴² d’Encausse, H. C. (1994 3). The Fall of the Czarist Empire. In E. Allworth (Ed.), *Central Asia: 130 years of Russian Dominance, a Historical Overview* (207-223). U.S.A.: Duke University Press. p. 218

⁴³ Nove, A. & Newth, J.A. (1967). *The Soviet Middle East: A Communist Model for Development*. New York, NY: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers. p. 131

Naturally, urban areas were similarly immigrant-dominated.⁴⁴ This was for a number of reasons, including the lack of indigenous citizens that were trained for administrative and scientific work.⁴⁵

Despite expectations of regional cooperation in the post-Soviet period, the trend in Central Asia since independence has been to solidify national barriers, and to prefer protectionism and national monopoly over economic integration.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the trading partners for the new governments have largely emerged from within the boundaries of the former Soviet Union,⁴⁷ reinforcing the economic schema these countries became accustomed to in the 20th century. This may prove an obstacle for the building of a commercial class large enough to make significant demands for democracy.

‘Resource trap’ theory, aspects of which have been mentioned previously, deserves further explanation here. Backed by an amount of empirical research,⁴⁸ the theory postulates the possibility that states reliant on the extraction and exporting of natural resources may use profits from these to substitute for other forms of legitimacy, increase centralization, and forestall democratic transitions that might have occurred in other states with similar wealth.⁴⁹

The post-Soviet dependence on natural resource rents is topped by Azerbaijan at 28.7% of its national economy. Aside from Belarus and Russia, it is perhaps the westernmost autocracy in the former Soviet Union. Notably, Azerbaijan featured the first developments of an industrial economy in Transcaucasia. The Baku oil wells, near what is modern-day Azerbaijan’s capital, spawned not only the oil industry itself in that city, but “became the parent of a wide range of industrial activity”.⁵⁰ This early growth of industry was reflected in the midst of the Russian Revolution, when, out of the three nations of Transcaucasia, it was only in Azerbaijan around Baku that Bolshevik sympathies manifested. This was due not only to industry itself, but that such coincided with a heavier presence of Russian immigrants.⁵¹

Following independence, Heydar Aliyev, former Communist leader of Azerbaijan, took power, and his ten-year stay in office reflected a serious tilt toward oil exports, resulting in a GDP increase that was not reflected in domestic investment.⁵² “With proven oil reserves of seven billion barrels, Azerbaijan’s ‘transition’ allowed the executive to maintain control over most of the economy and precluded a dispersion of resources.”⁵³ Following his death, his son, Ilham

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 129

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 83

⁴⁶ Bohr, A. (May 2004). “Regional in Central Asia: new geopolitics, old regional order”. *International Affairs*, 80, pp. 485-502. p. 486

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 488

⁴⁸ O’Lear, S. (September 2007). “Azerbaijan’s Resource Wealth: Political Legitimacy and Public Opinion”. *The Geographic Journal*, 173(3), pp. 207-223. p. 208

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 208

⁵⁰ Nove, A., & Newth, J.A. (1967). p. 18

⁵¹ Suny, R.G. (1994). *The Making of the Georgian Nation*. U.S.A.: Indiana University Press. pp. 205-209

⁵² O’Lear, S. (September 2007). p. 210

⁵³ Radnitz, S. (January 2010). “The Color of Money: Privatization, Economic Dispersion, and the Post-Soviet ‘Revolutions’”. *Comparative Politics*, 42(2), pp. 127-146.

Aliyev, took power, his hold on Azerbaijan being occasionally legitimized by elections the occurrence of OSCE-criticized national elections.⁵⁴

Lastly, the geographically largest and historically most important of the post-Soviet nations, Russia. Substantial scholarship has been devoted to the fact that Russia's economy, from time immemorial, stubbornly refused to move forward, often doing so only at a snail's pace. Substantial scholarship has likewise been devoted to the social causes concerning the Russian Revolution, as well as to the effects of Stalinist crash industrialization and collectivization. All that need be stated right now is that, for a variety of practical, political, and ideological reasons, the Fifteenth Party Congress of the Soviet Union voted in 1927 to collectivize agriculture and proceed with crash industrialization.⁵⁵ Naum Jasny (1974), himself a former Soviet manager and economist, postulated that, at least up until the 1950's, this "Great Industrialization Drive" had been, as a product of its forced nature, lacking in the features of other industrial revolutions.

It was a great event that a backward agricultural country was converted into an industrial nation in so short a time and in spite of immense handicaps. Another great event was that an indifferently armed country became one of the best armed countries in the world. The most striking event of all was that industrialization was accomplished without its normal concomitant--the improvement of the living standards of the population.⁵⁶

Observations on the Soviet Union in the decades to come faced two different narratives. One, where "Soviet urbanization was accomplished in record time,"⁵⁷ and another where life for the average housewife was marked by "uncertainty, absurdity, coarseness...dullness," and a struggle for consumer goods taken for granted in the West.⁵⁸

It was to be both of these features, not merely Soviet communism's inadequacies, that spelled its eventual defeat, as the development it spurred helped ensure its own undoing.

Communism came to an end when the tenacious mentality nurtured by the redistributive peasant commune had weakened its grip over the majority of people in a few principal urban areas. The urbanization of the people's mentality, a cosmopolitan trend, had finally grown through the cracks in the Soviet system, like grass shoots through asphalt.⁵⁹

These 'modern' classes concentrated in such cities as "Moscow and Saint Petersburg...became the loci of the crucial constituency for the change in regime."⁶⁰ It was with the support of this

⁵⁴ O'Lear, S. (September 2007). p. 213

⁵⁵ Jasny, N. (1974). The Great Industrialization Drive. In W. L. Blackwell (ed.), *Russian Economic Development from Peter the Great to Stalin* (pp. 293-317). New York, NY: Franklin Watts, Inc. p. 297

⁵⁶ Jasny, N. (1974). The Great Industrialization Drive. In W. L. Blackwell (ed.), *Russian Economic Development from Peter the Great to Stalin* (pp. 293-317). New York, NY: Franklin Watts, Inc. p. 295

⁵⁷ Ioffe, G. (January 2004). p. 107

⁵⁸ Silberzahn, P., Jones, M. *Constructing Cassandra: Reframing Intelligence Failure at the CIA, 1947-2001*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. p. 92

⁵⁹ Ioffe, G. (January 2004). pp. 107-108

constituency that “Yeltsin fully embraced the West and its institutions”.⁶¹ Nevertheless, this was an enthusiasm not found outside the professional classes, and soon Russia as a whole abandoned the embrace of “Atlanticism”. In the first eight years of post-communism, the Russian economy tanked while the country felt obligated to routinely curb its pursuit of the national interest in favor of its newfound friends in Europe and North America.⁶² Under such circumstances, the retreat into Russia’s contemporary neo-Soviet form of nationalism appears a predictable path.

Ioffe’s (2004) observations on Belarus seem the most pertinent in explaining how relatively recently industrialized countries, such as those that make up the former Soviet Union, have maintained so many features of the former system: “Although Belarus is heavily urbanized, the urbanization of the people’s mindset is still in progress.”⁶³ That these people may still be in the process of building their economies into those with sufficient ‘cosmopolitan’, democratic classes—in some cases despite their relative material wealth—is a theory that shall be built on. In the case of Russia, that its liberalization, led by a specific, affluent strata that were unrepresentative of the nation at-large, failed the test of time due to the perhaps still-backwards nature of the rest of the country means that it is only the most advanced of this group of countries.

What has gone undiscussed here is Tajikistan, an unfree country that is the poorest of the post-Soviet nations. Its situation poses little challenge to Huntington’s observations or to modernization theory in general, as it follows the typical pattern outlined in earlier pages.

3.3 - Mixed Economies and Mixed Results

Blessed with “the best soil in all of Europe,” a climate “quite favorable to the development of agriculture,”⁶⁴ and natural resources that “place it among the most richly endowed in the world,”⁶⁵ Ukraine is nevertheless a lower middle income country according to the World Bank with a 2014 per capita GNI of \$3,560. The irony of the Ukrainian economic position—and people taking note of it—is nothing new. Writing in 1958, Konstantyn Kononenko remarked, “It is difficult to understand, how so richly endowed Ukraine could fall behind other lands of Europe; how it could show signs during its historical development, contradicting all the possibilities of its natural resources.”⁶⁶ This usurpation of nature was accomplished largely during its period of Russian domination, where early signs of development were deliberately quashed in favor of the economics of Empire. With the mercantile economy favoring development of an industrial base at home, with outlying colonies serving as sources of raw materials and markets for manufactured goods, “Russia did not hesitate to wreck Ukrainian enterprises outright.”⁶⁷ This consisted of actively prohibiting construction of materials

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 108

⁶¹ Hancock, K.J. (2007). “Russia: Great Power Image Versus Economic Reality”. *Asian Perspective*, 31(4), pp. 71-98. p. 73

⁶² Ibid. pp. 74-76

⁶³ Ioffe, G. (January 2004). p. 110

⁶⁴ Kononenko, K. (1958). *Ukraine and Russia: A History of the Economic Relations Between Ukraine and Russia (1654-1917)* (Vol. IV, Marquette Slavic Studies). Milwaukee, WI: The Marquette University Press. p. xi

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. xiii

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. xi

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 25

processing plants, heavy taxation with little return, confiscatory purchases of grain, and literally taking factories from Ukraine to be rebuilt in Russia.⁶⁸

Following the Russian Revolution, some manner of imperial exploitation continued. While Soviet-spurred industrial development, increased industrial output four times, manufacturing employment by three, and nearly double the urban population from 19% to 34% of the country, it was not without its costs. Agricultural collectivization resulted in the famine of 1932-1933, a “man-made demographic catastrophe unprecedented in peacetime.”⁶⁹ After the Second World War, where much of Ukraine’s industrial capacity had been destroyed by the retreating Red Army to prevent its capture by Nazis, the country necessarily underwent reconstruction. Nevertheless, Ukrainians continued to be deported east while Russians came west into the country. “[C]entrally directed transfers of wealth from Ukraine, amounting to one-fifth of its national income, helped to finance economic development in other parts of the Soviet Union, mostly Russia and Kazakhstan.”⁷⁰

Even before the Russian Revolution, “the nationalities of Transcaucasia were in the forefront of the national minorities within the Tsarist Empire”.⁷¹ This was indicated not only in the relatively early growth of nationalist movements in the region, but as well by their relative education. Georgian education rates actually exceeded that of the Russian Empire at-large in 1914,⁷² and Georgian literacy was seen as noteworthy by Communist officials in the 1920’s.⁷³ Armenia was bragging 100% literacy rates by the year 1960,⁷⁴ and Azerbaijan by 1970;⁷⁵ the latter country, obstructed from democratization for other reasons discussed above, was in general seen as a noteworthy exception to the stereotype of illiterate Middle Eastern Muslim countries during the Soviet period.⁷⁶

The people of Transcaucasia easily infiltrated the professional and administrative classes in a way not seen in, for example, Central Asia. *Korenizatsiya*, ‘nativization’ of the party apparatus, proved rather effective. In Armenia, these classes were almost entirely composed of ethnic Armenians, and Georgia and Azerbaijan had “overwhelming majorities” of ‘their’ people functioning in various white collar positions both in the party and the economy in general.⁷⁷ Due, however, to Soviet development policies, countries targeted most for modernization contributed less overall in terms of revenue to the Union at-large.⁷⁸ Despite the capture of the local party apparatus, and despite what might be called ‘preferential treatment’ by Moscow, the peoples of the Transcaucasus—particularly the Georgians—despised the Soviet presence.⁷⁹ Meanwhile,

⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 24-31

⁶⁹ Stebelsky, I., Zasenkov, O.G., Yerfeyev, I.A., Kryzhanivsky, S.A., Hajda, L.A., Makuch, A. Ukraine. In *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine>

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Nove, A., & Newth, J.A. (1967). pp. 75-76

⁷² Ibid. p. 76

⁷³ Suny, R.G. (1994). p. 221

⁷⁴ Curtis, G. E. (1995). *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: country studies*. Washington D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. p. 38

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 111

⁷⁶ Nove, A., & Newth, J.A. (1967). p. 76

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 83

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 97

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 121

Soviet development had failed to fully pervade the countryside, where many traditions were still maintained—much to the chagrin of economic managers.⁸⁰

Kyrgyzstan and Moldova, the second and fourth poorest countries—according to GNI per capita—of the former Soviet Union, appear to lack both the early signs of promise of Ukraine, and the ‘capture’ of the professional class that occurred in Transcaucasia. In fact, the most consistent feature of Moldova’s economy has been perhaps its underdevelopment. While Moldova is superficially similar to Belarus in that both are nations that have only now experienced sovereignty since their foundation—spawning the claim that they are invented countries—the two shared very different Soviet experiences. There was no Moldovan ‘miracle’. Instead, in its colonial days, it had earned the moniker “Siberia of the West”,⁸¹ and stood out in the Soviet period as the “fourth least-urbanized of the Soviet republics, at 47% urban population,” leading only three Central Asian S.S.R.’s.⁸² “As late as the mid-1960s Moldavia had the lowest productivity, capital investment, and industrial employment rates of any of the union republics.”⁸³ What industrialization projects did occur were marred by waste and fraud.

Kyrgyzstan, meanwhile, is remarkable in that it has maintained some semblance of a democratic practice and civil liberties—the only ‘partly free’ Central Asian republic—despite being the second-poorest in the region, and in the entirety of the former Soviet Union. Its service economy is smaller than that of two other, less free, republics in the region, and as such there is little in the conventional metrics thus far applied that would single it out as particularly ripe for democracy. However, it, along with its neighbor Kazakhstan (the wealthiest in Central Asia), send out an array of exports that are “relatively well diversified, including agricultural products and some manufactured goods in addition to natural resources.”⁸⁴ This contrasts with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, which “have discouraged the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises, thereby impeding the formation of an indigenous business class that would have a natural interest in trade with neighbouring states.”⁸⁵ This, and perhaps privatization, are Kyrgyzstan’s distinguishing characteristics.

The ‘partly free’ countries of the former Soviet Union thus seem to constitute a group of nations that either seemed well-poised to develop independent of imperial domination, or view their time under Russian control as a negative. Kyrgyzstan’s negligible industrial sector (25%) similarly speaks to its apparent lack of interaction with or attachment to the development of the Soviet period.

3.4 An ‘Industrial Trap’?

As has been stated before, but without an over-arching explanation, the unfree countries of the former Soviet Union are also those with the strongest industrial sectors, and are on average upper

⁸⁰ Suny, R.G. (1994). p. 313

⁸¹ King, C. (Summer 1994). Moldovan Identity and the Politics of Pan-Romanianism. *Slavic Review*, 53, p. 348

⁸² Crowther, W. (April 1991). The Politics of Ethno-National Mobilization: Nationalism and Reform in Soviet Moldavia. *The Russian Review*, 50, p. 184.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 185

⁸⁴ Bohr, A. (May 2004). “Regional in Central Asia: new geopolitics, old regional order”. *International Affairs*, 80, pp. 485-502. p. 497

⁸⁵ Ibid.

middle income. This flies in the face of the typical story of development that *The Third Wave* and modernization theory in general rely on. Moreover, this is not wholly a result of the ‘resource trap’ phenomenon, though this certainly merits inclusion. There exist theoretical ramifications for this. Beyond merely discounting material development as a correlate of democratization and freedom—which could certainly be a proposal—this proposes two other, related explanations of this phenomenon.

‘Communism’ as a Transitional Stage

Perennially the irony of socialist and communist revolutions the world over would be their emergence not in the globe’s industrial centers where the proletariat was most numerous, but rather in primarily peasant and agricultural nations. The market mechanisms and available raw materials thus did not exist in such an array so as to allow for easy, ‘consensual’ modernization in nations such as Russia and that of many of its emulators. Instead, communist parties in power circumvented this by essentially suspending the rules of market economics and ‘normal’ development to produce many perhaps pre-modern countries with the trappings of modern economies ‘ahead of time’. This appears to be the result in a good portion of post-communist countries extending from the farthest reaches of the ‘Soviet Middle East’, through Russia, to Belarus. One would be forced to speculate that these nations, despite communism’s *de jure* collapse, are still in this transition phase. Russia experienced something close to a bourgeois revolution in the 1990’s, only for their failure to result in essentially a reversion to what was by then the country’s default. Other post-Soviet countries, both observing Russia’s example and themselves lacking the necessary classes at that point to force such a shift, didn’t bother.

The possibilities present in this framework can be seen, once again, in Belarus. While now a decade and a half removed, analysis of Lukashenka’s 2001 re-election victory showed his primary support lying in the rural areas of the country while the “dominant groups” of the opposition constituency were “18-20 year olds, students, and small businessmen.”⁸⁶ Similarly, nationalist sentiment—which, in the case of Belarus, implies antipathy towards union with Russia—was identified among “college students of social sciences and humanities... Those in the middle [of the internal East-West divide] include the so-called technical intelligentsia—thousands of graduates of technical schools, small businessmen and scores of medical and education professionals.”⁸⁷

The Industry-Privatization-Democracy Connection

Related to some of the assumptions about development contained above, a tenuous relationship has been observed between the strength of a country’s industry, its willingness to privatize, and the presence of some democratic inclinations. Savchenko (2002) compared the reform and privatization experiences of the Baltics and Belarus over the preceding decade or so. In the Baltics, industrial workers—many of whom were themselves Russian—mobilized in favor of the Soviet Union. Seen as a ‘fifth column’ due to this, their representatives in the legislature were denied a platform, and successful privatization commenced without their input and despite their

⁸⁶ Ioffe, G. (January 2004). p. 98

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 112

protests.⁸⁸ “In Belarus, large industrial enterprises had support not only in the legislature, where more than 30 percent of deputies were managers of state-controlled firms, but also in the executive branch of government.”⁸⁹ In the latter, ‘reform’ was much more hesitant in the 1990’s and was ultimately reversed.

Radnitz (2010) conducted an entirely separate study examining the interaction that privatization had with the ‘color revolutions’ in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan in the mid-2000’s. In doing so, each of the three was compared to their neighbors, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, respectively.⁹⁰ While each of the first group of nations remains only ‘partly free’ today, they stand so in stark contrast from the world they came from. Radnitz’ focus, however, was not on Freedom House numbers, so much as the creation of non-governmental power centers that could act in favor of opposition movements. Both Georgia and Ukraine had, by the end of the 20th century, achieved the privatization of the vast majority of enterprises.⁹¹ Askar Akayev, Kyrgyzstan’s first president in the independence period, meanwhile “immediately privatized small enterprises, dismantled collective farms, and opened the country to foreign trade.”⁹² In each of these three cases, this had allowed for oligarchs and economic elites to hold onto and seek power outside of the state apparatus. This cut loose “the resources to campaign, recruit, and organized mobilization,” and resulted in “fragility of the regime’s support base.”⁹³

While the exact links between the strength of industry and resultant privatization do not appear to have been examined across the entire post-Soviet sphere, the above two studies demonstrate the possibility for a more complex relationship between the strength of industry and, broadly conceived, ‘freedom’ that may have been neglected by other students of post-communism.

4 – Religion

Just as pertinent to the discussion of freedom and democracy as economy, is the subject of faith. The ability of religion—and, more broadly, culture—to affect other, seemingly unrelated, facets of human society is perhaps one of the oldest observed phenomena in the history of sociology. While faith may, of course, not be a determining variable in politics at the state and international level it has, as the last forty years have demonstrated, nevertheless played a contributing role in world-shaking events. As such, even outside any deterministic viewpoint, it is worthy of examination.

As Huntington pointed out, the Christian faith had a profound influence on democratization movements throughout the world, and in as motley a crew of countries as South Korea, Poland, and the nations of Latin America. While much of the Protestant world had already democratized by the last quarter of the 20th Century, the Third Wave was very much a Catholic wave.

⁸⁸ Savchenko, A. (January 2002). “Toward Capitalism or Away from Russia? Early Stage of Post-Soviet Economic Reforms in Belarus and the Baltics”. *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 61(1), pp. 233-257. pp. 253-254

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 253

⁹⁰ Radnitz, S. (January 2010). “The Color of Money: Privatization, Economic Dispersion, and the Post-Soviet ‘Revolutions’”. *Comparative Politics*, 42(2), pp. 127-146. p. 128

⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 135, 136

⁹² Ibid. p. 138

⁹³ Ibid. p. 133

Explanations for this vary; one might posit that Protestant countries had already democratized and now it was Catholic countries that had entered the political and economic transition zone. More explanatory, however, is the fact that the Catholic Church, at the international, and at the country and local levels, opted to stand on what might now be called the ‘right side of history’. Prior to the 1960’s, the Catholic Church in, for example, Latin American countries had been associated with the dictatorial and economically privileged authorities. By the 1970’s, however, the Church had opted to become a force for democracy, siding with the opposition movements in a number of those same countries. Among other features at the level of Rome was

the Second Vatican Council, which [Pope John XXIII] called and which met from 1962 to 1965. Vatican II stressed the legitimacy and need for social change, the importance of collegial action by bishops, priests and laity, dedication to helping the poor, the contingent character of social and political structures, and the rights of the individuals.⁹⁴

Huntington also notes changes at the level of parish and nation, including a new type of clergy, the growth of a “religious left” in many Latin American countries, support for grassroots, human rights groups, and the violence that authoritarian governments responded with. “The result was often political, ideological, and economic warfare between church and state”.⁹⁵

Pertaining to Soviet-bloc countries, the position of the Church was likely different. Catholicism—and religion in general—had stood athwart the secular left-wing authoritarianism for some time prior to 1974. Nevertheless, the election of the first Slavic pope in the Church’s history marked a turning point in the Church’s role in fighting international communism. The Soviets, perhaps, best understood the threat they faced, Yuri Andropov having been reported to exclaim “How could you possibly allow the election of a citizen of a socialist country as pope?”, while the KGB asserted rather plainly that “The Pope is our enemy”. For an historian such as the likes of John Lewis Gaddis (2005),

Real power rested, during the final decades of the Cold War, with leaders like John Paul II, whose mastery of *intangibles*—of such qualities as courage, eloquence, imagination, determination, and faith—allowed them to expose disparities between what people believed and the systems under which the Cold War obliged them to live.⁹⁶

It is Gaddis that asserts that Pope John Paul II, with his visit to Warsaw in 1979, “began the process by which communism in Poland—and ultimately everywhere else in Europe—would come to an end.”⁹⁷ Huntington seems to offer a modicum of agreement, stating “[w]ith the accession of John Paul II, the Pope and the Vatican moved to the central stage in the Church’s struggle against authoritarianism.” John Paul II’s first encyclical would assert the Church’s role as the “guardian” of freedom. His actions over the next decade would include visits to not only

⁹⁴ Huntington (1991). p. 78

⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 81

⁹⁶ Gaddis, J.L. (2005). *The Cold War: A New History*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.. p. 196

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 193

Poland, but a number of other Third Wave countries.⁹⁸ While there are, no doubt, those schools of thought who would—perhaps rightfully—dismiss the power that any *one man*, or even one faith, could have against the bulwark of the state, the power of what a materialist might dismiss and intangible or irrelevant ought not be underestimated.

Beyond conscious, singular actions taken by individual actors in the Cold War, the fact remains that, as of today, all European ex-communist states with a plurality identifying as Protestant, Catholic, or Unaffiliated are deemed, internationally, to be free in both aspects of civil liberties and political participation. Tracking back three decades to the time Huntington observed as he authored *The Third Wave*, “Democracy was especially scarce among countries that were predominantly Muslim, Buddhist, or Confucian”. In 1988, the vast majority (39/46) of democratic countries were Catholic or Protestant, 39/68 Protestant or Christian countries were democratic, and only 7/58 of non-Christian countries were democratic.⁹⁹

Table 4.1: Freedom House Rankings and Dominant Religion/Denomination among ex-Soviet, ex-Warsaw Pact, and ex-Yugoslavian states (N=28).					
Not Free <i>n</i> =8	0	0	0	2 (Belarus, Russia)	6 (Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)
Partly Free <i>n</i> =7	0	0	0	4 (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)	3 (Albania, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan)
Free <i>n</i> =13	3 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia)	0	6 (Croatia, Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia)	4 (Bulgaria, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia)	0
	Unaffiliated <i>n</i> =3	Protestant <i>n</i> =0	Catholic <i>n</i> =6	Orthodox <i>n</i> =10	Muslim <i>n</i> =9

What the above fails to reveal, however, is a cleavage within the world of Christianity. As of 2015, those European ex-Communist, or otherwise ex-Soviet states that are Orthodox are a mixed bag, while Islamic countries in the former Soviet Union have had particularly little success in liberalizing either politically or civilly. Religious breakdown can be seen in the Appendix in Table A3. This raises a number of questions, but these varied sentiments, stated most efficiently, might ask: Are there reasons—theological, sociological, or cultural—that the third wave was a Catholic one, and not Orthodox or Islamic? Given Huntington’s choice to focus on a purported relationship between Christianity and democracy, it is this schism—if you will—between East and West that may occupy our attention.

4.1 - The Orthodox Autocracies

The Russian Orthodox Church, since time immemorial, has enjoyed a close relationship with the state, juxtaposed with tales of Western Europe and the chess match played by pope and king for

⁹⁸ Huntington (1991). p. 83

⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 73

centuries. Russia was inaugurated into Christian civilization in 988 with King Vladimir the Great's decision to accept Orthodoxy. "Like the emperors of the East, he was to claim supreme authority over the church; and with this end in mind he promoted the autonomy of the Russian Church [from] the Patriarch at Constantinople."¹⁰⁰ From there, the Church "fused more thoroughly with the nation, and its ambitions were closely linked with those of the people."¹⁰¹ This cozy relationship has reemerged since the demise of the Soviet Union, taking very overt forms—including Patriarch Kirill's residence in the Kremlin and his declaration of the Putin-led recovery as a "miracle of God."¹⁰²

'Civilizational', or cultural arguments for Russia's slowness to progress, and specifically the ties between Church and state, have been proposed the world over. Huntington himself remarked later in the 1990's that "in Orthodoxy, God is Caesar's junior partner."¹⁰³ Nevertheless, such viewpoints ignore the ideological and material realities of the Church. Putin has articulated a worldview—referred to by Petro (2015) as "pluriculturalism"—that repudiated liberalism's claim to universality and asserts each region or nation's role in governing itself. This would allow the Church to cultivate its own sense of morality among what it regards as its own people.¹⁰⁴ From a practical perspective, the Church has faced a number of difficulties since 1991, in part fostered by its history of reliance on the state, and in part ameliorated by its present reliance. "[B]etween 1991 and 2008 the percentage of Russians who identify as Orthodox increased from 31 percent to 72 percent... During the same period...the percentage professing belief in God only went from 38 percent to 56 percent".¹⁰⁵ Independent research restated this in far more glaring terms: "only 3.3 percent of the population attends Easter service, the most important Church holiday."¹⁰⁶ The Church likewise faced immense maintenance costs from reclaimed property during the post-Soviet period,¹⁰⁷ and—strangely or not—the current generation of churchgoers contain attitudes significantly more pro-Soviet than those generations that actually attended services prior to the 1990's.¹⁰⁸ In such a set of circumstances, the further welding of the Church to the state in order to secure itself materially, protect its already stray flock from foreign influences, and propagate its ideology appears practical.

While religion in Russia might manifest as a pillar of nationalism, in Belarus, this relationship is strangely inversed. With the eventual absorption of the entirety of modern-day Belarus into the Russian Empire in 1795,¹⁰⁹ the 'Greek Catholic' Uniate Church—the closest to a national church

¹⁰⁰ Kirchner, W. (1976). *History of Russia*. Barnes & Noble Publishing. pp. 13-14

¹⁰¹ Ibid. pp. 16-17

¹⁰² Bryanski, G. (February 8, 2012). "Russian patriarch calls Putin era 'miracle of God'". Reuters. Retrieved from <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-russia-putin-religion-idUKTRE81722Y20120208>

¹⁰³ Soroka, G. (February 11, 2016). "Putin's Patriarch: Does the Kremlin Control the Church?". *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2016-02-11/putins-patriarch>

¹⁰⁴ Petro, N. N. (September 24, 2015). "Russia's Moral Framework and Why it Matters". *The National Interest*. Retrieved from <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/russia%E2%80%99s-moral-framework-why-it-matters-13923>

¹⁰⁵ Bryanski, G. (February 8, 2012).

¹⁰⁶ Mitrokhin, N. (Spring 2009). "The Russian Orthodox Church in Contemporary Russia: Structural Problems and Contradictory Relations with the Government, 2000-2008". *Social Research*, 76(1), pp. 289-321. p. 290

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 307

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 299

¹⁰⁹ Marples, D.R., et al. (May 13, 2016). "Belarus". *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Belarus>

the country ever had—was soon dissolved and Orthodoxy became the creed of the land.¹¹⁰ The Russian Orthodox Church in Belarus has faced problems similar to those experienced by its counterparts across the border. Despite being identified as 61.5% Orthodox, Bohdan (2012) observed that only 18% of Belarusian Orthodox believers attended church services regularly, and that Orthodox church attendees around Christmas, 2011 were nearly equaled by Catholic mass attendees despite the Orthodox dwarfing them demographically. “Adherence to the Orthodox Church is mostly declarative and could disappear once all denominations obtain equal treatment” before the law.¹¹¹ Symbolic of the Orthodox Church’s relegation to the mere level of cultural identity is the fact that President Lukashenka himself identifies simply as “Orthodox atheist”.¹¹² The Church, meanwhile, functions as a subordinate of the Russian Orthodox Church centered in Moscow, and effectively tied to those same forces associated with support for Putin’s administration in Russia.¹¹³ It has further debased itself by using its tax exempt status to profit from sales of alcohol and tobacco.¹¹⁴ While Lukashenka and the Vatican had begun a rapprochement of sorts that might have tied the country more with the West in the years to come, the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 forced these discussions to be tabled.¹¹⁵

4.2 - The Post-Soviet Middle East

Islam arrived in Central Asia as a consequence of the region’s being overpowered by Arab conquerors beginning in the mid-7th century.¹¹⁶ The Islamization of the region was “protracted and uneven”, but what can be stated is that south Central Asia most quickly conformed to the new norms. “Islam is a religion of settled people, since it requires a developed urban infrastructure for institutionalized Muslim practices.” The Uzbeks and the Tajiks most fit this profile, and easily adopted Islamic practices and adherence. The northern, more nomadic peoples of Central Asia would take up Islam much later, and in many cases on their own terms.¹¹⁷ The Kyrgyzs, subsuming to Genghis Khan’s son Jochi in 1207, had previously remained insulated from world events and continued to do so afterwards. Islam only penetrated their people in the seventeenth century, with shamanism “still flourishing” as late as the sixteenth. It would take the rule of Muhammad Ali in the 1820’s to cement Islam’s presence and influence in the region.¹¹⁸ All around, the “Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen were known as nominal Muslims, for they have never observed Islamic prohibitions and laws very closely.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁰ Ioffe, G. (December 2003). “Understanding Belarus: Belarusian Identity”. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 55(8), pp. 1241-1272. p. 1242

¹¹¹ Bohdan, S. (March 1, 2012). “Orthodox Church Is Losing Belarus”. *Belarus Digest*. Retrieved from <http://belarusdigest.com/story/orthodox-church-losing-belarus-8036>

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ed. Fraser, M. (n.d.). “‘Europe’s last dictator’ seeks Vatican acceptance”. *Concordat Watch*. Retrieved from <http://www.concordatwatch.eu/topic-40661.834>

¹¹⁴ Bohdan, S. (March 1, 2012).

¹¹⁵ Fraser.

¹¹⁶ Smith, D.R. (May 7, 2016). “Tajikistan”. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tajikistan>

¹¹⁷ Omelicheva, M. Y. (March 2010). “The Ethnic Dimension of Religious Extremism and Terrorism in Central Asia.” *International Political Science Review*, 31, p. 175

¹¹⁸ Allsworth, E. “Kyrgyzstan”. (2016). In *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Kyrgyzstan>

¹¹⁹ Omelicheva, M. Y. (2010). p. 175

With Central Asia relegated to a series of outlying provinces in the Tsarist Empire by the mid-1880's, Russian authorities pursued two different policies on religion. In Turkistan where Islam was well-established, the Russians sought to simply ignore it. On the Kazakh Plain, however, where Islam was a recent addition and weakly institutionalized, they hoped to break it. One of the results of this would be forced population shifts, as traditional society was the chief obstacle to the goal of a de-Islamized population.¹²⁰ And, while Russians promoted a combination of Russification and local, traditional rule over Islamic authority in the north, Shari'a reigned supreme to the south. These policies served primarily to strengthen religious patterns that were already present in the area.¹²¹ Regardless of Russian intentions, however, growth in Islam in Central Asia persisted, spurred by the Russian failure to improve the lives of the indigenous peoples.¹²²

During the Soviet era, while religion was initially treated as a foe to be stamped out, Islam came to be regarded instead as a social control mechanism. This was done through the promotion of a state-sponsored, state-approved, and state-controlled 'official' Islam.¹²³ Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, controls on religious practice were somewhat lessened, and the previously atheist leaders of the Central Asian republics embraced the religion of their people.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Central Asia have always treated 'official' Islam with suspicion, and such has resulted in the erection of a 'parallel' structure of Islam in most of the region. State reactions to parallel Islam have varied depending on the country.¹²⁵ This has resulted in a fragmented religious consciousness that was already weakened by decades of Russian and Soviet persecution.

One aspect of the regional religion in general, and of the oppressive regimes with their attempted co-optation of religion, has been Islamism. The Soviet and the independent eras have resulted in nationalism, secularism, and democracy becoming associated with oppression and corruption.¹²⁶ The search for a non-nationalist, non-secular, and non-democratic alternative has led some to Islamism, in both its violent and non-violent strains. Unsurprisingly, it has manifested the strongest in the more oppressive, and more fervently religious, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In these countries, the non-violent Hizb-ut-Tahrir claims greater membership than the main democratic parties, the latter of which proved unable to rally supporters to protest rigged elections.¹²⁷ The relatively more liberal republics to the north have been freer of religious violence, by comparison. The demographics of Islamist support, meanwhile, include members of all classes, large numbers of those under the age of 40, and members of student and professional organizations; "They belong to the post-Soviet generation searching for a new identity."¹²⁸

¹²⁰ d'Encausse, H. C. (1994 1). Organizing and Colonizing the Conquered Territories. In E. Allworth (Ed.), *Central Asia: 130 years of Russian Dominance, a Historical Overview* (151-171). U.S.A.: Duke University Press. p. 159

¹²¹ Omelicheva, M. Y. (2010). p. 75

¹²² Ibid. p. 160

¹²³ Gunn, T. J. (Autumn, 2003). Shaping an Islamic Identity: Religion, Islamism, and the State in Central Asia. *Sociology of Religion*, 64(3), pp. 389-410. p. 405

¹²⁴ Ibid. p. 402

¹²⁵ Ibid. p. 406

¹²⁶ Collins, K. (October 2007). "Ideas, Networks, and Islamist Movements: Evidence from Central Asia and the Caucasus". *World Politics*, 60(1), pp. 64-96. p. 76

¹²⁷ Ibid. p. 77

¹²⁸ Ibid. pp. 77, 84

Azerbaijan, the only post-Soviet, Muslim majority state outside of Central Asia, was introduced to Islam by Arab rulers beginning in the seventh century.¹²⁹ Despite this, and despite the nation's geographic proximity to Iran, the Azeri are “[a] culturally and linguistically Turkic people”,¹³⁰ owing in part to their domination by Turkish rulers from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.¹³¹ This has manifested in its domestic and international leanings as much as any other phenomenon, as it treats Turkey as its natural ally and seeks to emulate its secular style of governance. Such a relatively secular worldview appears to also stem from Soviet era policies, as, similar to Central Asia, Soviet authorities created the Muslim Spiritual Board of Transcaucasia to govern Islam,¹³² thereby tying to tie religion to the state.

While the demise of the Soviet Union saw the reemergence of a number of ages-old rivalries between different ethnocultural groups, it appears that Azerbaijan did not suffer from the revitalization of Shia-Sunni tensions; “most people see themselves simply as ‘Muslims’.”¹³³ This has affected the country in the international realm, as Azeris share little identification with their Shia neighbor Iran. Iran’s decision to support Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute in the 1990’s—perhaps, itself, to put pressure on the Azerbaijan government to Islamicize—instead resulted in widening the gulf between the two Muslim nations. The Islamic Party of Azerbaijan, which never developed a strong following, was primarily kept alive by funding from Iran. It found its exclusivist Shia identity unpopular, and was in fact banned “on the grounds that it violated the constitutional separation of religion and state.”¹³⁴ Collins and Owen (2012), in a series of self-report surveys conducted in Azerbaijan, showed that a combined 45.2% of Azeris supported some sort of secular government, while Islamic variations received a total of 23.1% support. Similarly, 76.5% of Azeris viewed an international caliphate as negative.¹³⁵ The secularism of Azerbaijan’s current government has instead itself been used as a bludgeon, engaging “in limited religious repression and extensive surveillance of religious institutions.”¹³⁶

4.3 - Dissent and Diversity

Table 4.2: Religion in the Baltics, showed as percent of population. Columns 2, 3, and 4 are from Pew (2010) and Column 5 is sourced from Pew (2015).

Country	% Catholic	% Protestant	% Orthodox	% Unaffiliated
Estonia	0.7%	21.2%	18.9%	59.6%
Latvia	19.1%	20.1%	16.5%	43.8%
Lithuania	83.2%	1.4%	5.1%	10.0%

Situated at a cultural crossroads between Orthodox Russia, Catholic Poland, and Protestant northern Europe, the Baltics are not only unique compared to the rest of the post-Soviet world, but as well compared to one another. Estonia, the most secularized, brags a nearly 60%

¹²⁹ Curtis, G.E. (1995). p. xxiv

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 87

¹³¹ Ibid. p. 88

¹³² Ibid. p. 106

¹³³ Collins, K. (October 2007). p. 90

¹³⁴ Ibid. pp. 89-90

¹³⁵ Collins, K., & Owen, E. (September 2012). “Islamic Religiosity and Regime Preferences”: Explaining Support for Democracy and Political Islam in Central Asia and the Caucasus”. *Political Research Quarterly*, 65(3), pp. 499-515. p. 506, Table 1, p. 507, Table 3

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 505

“unaffiliated” identification, according to Pew. Latvia, while possessing a very strong plurality of unaffiliateds compared to individual Christian denominations, maintains a very diverse Christian majority. Lithuania, the southernmost, appears the most like Poland, with over 80% of the country identifying as Catholic.

The extent of state infiltration of religion that occurred elsewhere in the Soviet Union appears to have bypassed the Baltics for a number of reasons. Primarily, Moscow was ill-situated to coopt the primary faiths of the Baltics—Evangelical Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism—owing to their extensive connections outside the Soviet Union. As well, “the Roman Catholic Church in Poland and Lithuania was stronger than other monopoly churches because it relied less on state support prior to communism and retained enough autonomy and resources to support nationalist opposition to communist rule.”¹³⁷ The Baltic faiths’ resistance to Soviet rule resulted instead in “a 50-year-long period of persecution.”¹³⁸ What this created was the opportunity for religious identity to act as a construct around which national identity could be built. This even infiltrated the regional intelligentsia; “Just as in artistic circles in the 1920s it had been a sign of nonconformity to be a nonbeliever, in the 1980s it was a sign of protest to be a believer.”¹³⁹

What this has meant for the post-Soviet period is that, while a number of other former S.S.R.’s had dominant religions that demanded a similar level of non-competition that they had experienced prior to the 1980’s, there were few social forces present in the Baltics to express similar sentiments. The Catholic Church in Lithuania, while having engaged in resistance to modernity since 1989,¹⁴⁰ has not approached the level of statist aspirations or state-reliance that other dominant religions in the sample have. In the two other Baltic states, bereft of religious majorities, such agitation has been further minimized.

Serving as a poignant contrast to the largely secular Baltics is Ukraine. Known in times past as the Soviet Union’s “Bible Belt”¹⁴¹, Ukraine held two-thirds of Soviet Orthodox churches prior to 1991, and continues to have more Orthodox churches on its soil than in Russia itself. This religiosity has extended to other denominations as well, as ‘New Religious Movements’ in Ukraine are swelling, and the country has been recognized as “one of the most active and competitive ‘religious marketplaces’ in Eurasia”.¹⁴² “Legally, Ukraine offers far more freedoms to nontraditional religious communities and foreign religious organizations and this, in turn, has generated greater religious diversity in Ukraine.”¹⁴³

Modern-day religious diversity failed to prevent the growth of nationalist sentiment in Ukraine, however. Ukraine, per Pew research, still has a higher percentage of its populace willing to identify as Orthodox than either Russia or Belarus. Nevertheless, Ukrainian Orthodoxy is not as

¹³⁷ Froese, P. (Spring 2004). “After Atheism: An Analysis of Religious Monopolies in the Post-Communist World”. *Sociology of Religion*, 65(1), pp. 57-75. p. 71

¹³⁸ Hoppenbrouwers, F. (June 1999). “Romancing Freedom: Church and Society in the Baltic States since the End of Communism”. *Religion, State & Society*, 27(2), pp. 161-173. p. 161

¹³⁹ Ibid. p. 162

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 169-171

¹⁴¹ Wanner, C. (Winter 20004). “Missioners of Faith and Culture: Evangelical Encounters in Ukraine”. *Slavic Review*, 63(4), pp. 732-755. p. 732

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 736

¹⁴³ Ibid. p. 738

monolithic a concept as it is to the north and east. One of its three manifestations, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church served, alongside the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, as “an anti-Soviet cornerstone of Ukrainian national identity.”¹⁴⁴ Russian chauvinism to no small extent aided the growth of national consciousness in the 1980’s. One thousand years after Vladimir the Great brought the Rus’ into Orthodox Christianity in Kiev in 988, the Soviet Union celebrated the millennium anniversary—in Moscow.¹⁴⁵

In the years following the Soviet Union’s dissolution, no single religious entity was positioned to dominate Ukrainian politics as they had been in Belarus or Russia. Rather, the disjointed status of Ukrainian Orthodoxy presented an opening for the institutionalization of religious pluralism. Split between the UOC—Kiev Patriarchate, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, and the UOC—Moscow Patriarchate, the failure to unite, “combined with the Russian Orthodox Church’s history of complicity with the Soviet state, tarnished the reputation of Orthodoxy in general and brought an end to the state-backed monopoly status of the Orthodox faith in Ukraine.”¹⁴⁶ Thus, like in the Baltics, the religious and cultural institutions that have backed Putin and Lukashenka were missing in Ukraine. Not much scholarship is available on religion in Moldova, but the area from which it was drawn was Romanian Orthodox prior to its incorporation into the Soviet Union, upon which these believers were incorporated into the extremely regulated Russian Orthodox Church. Upon independence, popular agitation resulted in the instatement of two different episcopates—one paying allegiance to Moscow, the other to Bucharest.¹⁴⁷ It might thus be stated that the Orthodox disunity found in Ukraine was echoed in Moldova, and with similar effect.

Presuming continuity with early principalities of the Common Era, Armenia and Georgia can lay claim to being two of the oldest Christian states in existence. While the traditional date of Armenia’s adoption of Christianity is 306, it may have occurred as late as 314, A.D.¹⁴⁸ A mere 16 years later in 330, Georgia too became Christian.¹⁴⁹ It merits noting that, “[a]lthough the Armenian Apostolic Church often is identified with the Eastern Orthodox churches of Eastern Europe, Russia, and Georgia, the Armenian church has been juridically and theologically independent since the early Middle Ages.”¹⁵⁰

Despite the immense legacy Christianity has had in the two Christian nations of Soviet Asia, such length of stay has not correlated with an enthusiastic congregation. In the midst of the Second World War, Stalin engaged in a gambit to obtain the greater loyalty of the nationalities by lessening restrictions on religion.¹⁵¹ This found its way to Georgia in 1943 with the restoration of autocephaly,¹⁵² and to Armenia in the post-war era.¹⁵³ This was largely a social

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 735

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 734n7

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. pp. 735-736

¹⁴⁷ Fedor, H. (1995). *Belarus and Moldova: country studies*. Washington D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. p. 125

¹⁴⁸ Curtis, G.E. (1995). p. 10

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 158

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 34

¹⁵¹ Suny, R.G. (1994). p. 283

¹⁵² Curtis, G.E. (1995). p. 163

control policy, however. The Armenian Apostolic Church, in Soviet eyes, functioned as a safety valve that would catch nationalist or anti-Soviet sentiment, or perhaps channel the former in support of the state. Owing to its shaky political position, “survival ranked higher than defending doctrine and developing Christian responses to change in society.”¹⁵⁴ The Church in the era of *glasnost*, positioned as a leader in the nationalist movement in Armenia, found itself on unsolid ground. Assessments of the state of the congregation in the late 1980’s revealed low religious knowledge, low faith, and low church attendance.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, while the liberalization of religious activity that presaged the collapse of the Soviet Union created ample opportunity for a reinvigoration of Church life, the clergy instead chose to focus on issues of parish maintenance as opposed evangelization or pitching doctrine to a new generation.¹⁵⁶ As such, “the spontaneous religious revival of the late 1980s largely bypassed the official Church.”¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, religion remained important in politics for identarian reasons; Armenia’s first president, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, was sworn in on an ancient copy of the Gospels and asked for Catholicos Vazgen’s blessing, kissing the ring of the Church leader.¹⁵⁸ In the case of Georgia, “[r]esponding to the dominant mood in the torn country, the former Communist announced in November 1992 that he had been christened, that his church name was Georgi, and that an icon of the Virgin hung in his office.”¹⁵⁹

4.4 - ‘Religious Capture’

The relationship between religion and regime in the former Soviet Union does thus not appear to be one purely of creed, culture, or their socializing effects. The Soviet Union’s general policy was to use religions—and, specifically, the Christian Orthodox and Muslim faiths—as tools of social control and to thusly disarm them from their potential effects in mobilizing people and nationalities against their authority. This has persisted since 1991, in one form or another.

State-sanctioned religions were significantly weakened by their associations with the government, the compromises they were forced to make for survival, and that they had come to rely on the state for much of their strength. In Belarus and Russia, the Orthodox Church thus has forged strong relationships with the post-1991 governments, jettisoning the possibility for a vibrant congregation in exchange for security. They in turn have acted on behalf of the governments there. Throughout the post-Soviet Muslim world, a split—to varying degrees—has occurred between state-sanctioned Islam and ‘parallel’ Islam, weakening the Islamic consciousness of a region that was already weak due to years of Soviet domination. Meanwhile, secularism, democracy, and corruption have become associated, leading some, primarily in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, into the arms of violent and non-violent Islamist movements, with little room for a religious liberalism to flourish.

¹⁵³ Corley, F. (September-December 1998). “The Armenian Church Under the Soviet and Independent Regimes, Part 3: The Leadership of Vazgen”. *Religion, State & Society*, 26(3/4), pp. 291-355. p. 345

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 346

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 303-304

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. pp. 309-310

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 312

¹⁵⁸ Corley, F. (1998). pp. 315-316

¹⁵⁹ Suny, R.G. (1994). p. 328

In countries with either very secular attitudes, very pluralistic religious bodies, or predominant faiths that could not be coopted by the Soviet Union, religion and state have manifested together very differently. The Catholic Church of Lithuania, unaccustomed to reliance on the state even before the Soviet era, was positioned against Soviet authority during the Cold War years, and since then has not been as socialized to seeking state support to the extent that its Orthodox neighbors have been. In Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, and Moldova, religious makeup has been far too mixed—even among Orthodoxy itself—to allow for the rise of faith-supported tyranny. In Georgia and Armenia, where national faiths were legalized but still underwent a degree of state co-optation, they were nevertheless able to act as agents of national mobilization, though, as was pointed out in the case of Armenia, retained their taste for state support. It might be stated that the aspect of religion in the post-Soviet world that best correlates with contemporary measures of freedom is not the faith itself, but how effectively the Soviet Union was able to establish state-supported religious monopolies in each country.

5 – Conclusions

This study set out to seek the answers to two questions that, in one form or another, had been posed by Samuel Huntington in 1991. Reprinted from previous pages, they are as follows:

1. What is the relationship between economic development and democracy in the former Soviet Union?
2. What is the relationship between religion and democracy in the former Soviet Union?

The first proceeded with the assumption that gross national income per capita could serve as the explanatory variable in aligning economics and government. In 1991, this was surely validated by the data that Huntington observed, both in ‘third wave’ countries, and in the world at large. In the former Soviet Union, however, it appears that GNI per capita, even when exempting ‘resource trap’ states, may promote the opposite of democratic growth. This was found to be true in states with particularly high levels of industry (as opposed to service and agriculture). Proposed as a counter-explanation was the idea that relatively high industry itself would be either an indicator of, or determinant for, oppressive regimes—an ‘industrial trap’, per se. The latter might be accomplished through two theoretical variations: (1) that communist-spurred industrialization was a transition phase that these countries had yet to leave; or (2) that industrial economies were more resistant to privatization, leaving the economy in the hands of state *apparatchik*, and thus resources could not be mobilized to oppose the incumbent regimes during instances of massive fraud or dissatisfaction.

The second proceeded with the assumption that Protestant and Catholic countries were more receptive to democracy than Orthodox and Islamic countries. This was confirmed in a cursory investigation of post-Soviet national religious makeup, with Orthodoxy having a mixed record, and Islamic countries in the sample producing no free countries. In order to explain this without resorting to civilizational theories, the concept of ‘state capture’ of religions was introduced, and seems to bear out with better explanatory consistency.

What could be surmised at this point is that, while the Soviet Union collapsed near the height of third wave upheaval, its successor countries have, at least in the economic realm, not developed

as one might have predicted. One is forced to ask whether the end of communism—at least, east of Krakow—could indeed be called part of the third wave at all. In seeking an alternative framework, McFaul (2012) proposed instead a “Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship”,¹⁶⁰ or, put more concisely, a “fourth wave of *regime change*.”¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, merely observing regime change does not offer an explanation for it or explore its underlying causes; the entire world saw the Soviet Union collapse. Moreover, his examinations, while challenging aspects of *The Third Wave* that were not examined here, were tautological: “Democracy emerged...in countries where democrats enjoyed a decisive power advantage... Conversely, in countries in which dictators maintained a decisive power advantage, dictatorship emerged.”¹⁶² Rather, it appears that the collapse of the Soviet Union—alongside the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, as well as other multi-national Communist states such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia—constituted not a movement toward any type of government, but instead comprised a *nationalist wave*. A number of post-Soviet countries are experiencing their first ever time as nation-states, having ironically been granted their borders and governmental structure by the allegedly de-nationalizing Soviet Union. In this way, the fate of the former Soviet Union resembles that of second wave countries, where antidemocratic movements deposed new democracies, operating in countries experiencing independence for perhaps the first time, within a decade or two. One need merely examine the fate of the Baltics’ first stint at self-government for an example of this. Perhaps it shall require another event as earth-shaking as the Second World War to see the installation of strong democracies in Eurasia.

¹⁶⁰ McFaul, M. (January 2002). “The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World”. *World Politics*, 54(2), pp. 212-244. p. 212

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 242

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 214

Appendix

Table A1: Eurasian Post-Communist countries listed with GNI per capita for 2014 (2014 dollars), World Bank categorizations, Freedom House adjusted scores, and Freedom House status for.

Country	GNI Per Capita	WB Category	FH Scores	FH Status
Albania	\$4,450	Upper-Middle Income	5	PF
Armenia	\$4,020	Lower-Middle Income	3.5	PF
Azerbaijan	\$7,600	Upper Middle Income	2	NF
Belarus	\$7,340	Upper Middle Income	1.5	NF
Bosnia & Herzegovina	\$4,840	Upper Middle Income	4.5	F
Bulgaria	\$7,620	Upper Middle Income	6	F
Croatia	\$12,980	Upper Income	6.5	F
Czech Republic	\$18,350	Upper Income	7	F
Estonia	\$19,010	Upper Income	7	F
Georgia	\$4,490	Upper Middle Income	5	PF
Hungary	\$13,340	Upper Income	6	F
Kazakhstan	\$11,580	Upper Middle Income	2.5	NF
Kyrgyzstan	\$1,250	Lower Middle Income	3	PF
Latvia	\$15,250	Upper Income	6	F
Lithuania	\$15,410	Upper Income	7	F
Macedonia	\$5,510	Upper Middle Income	4.5	PF
Moldova	\$2,560	Lower Middle Income	5	PF
Montenegro	\$7,320	Upper Middle Income	5.5	F
Poland	\$13,680	Upper Income	7	F
Romania	\$9,520	Upper Middle Income	6	F
Russia	\$13,220	Upper Income	2	NF
Serbia	\$5,820	Upper Middle Income	6	F
Slovakia	\$17,750	Upper Income	7	F
Slovenia	\$23,580	Upper Income	7	F
Tajikistan	\$1,080	Lower Middle Income	6	NF
Turkmenistan	\$8,020	Upper Middle Income	1	NF
Ukraine	\$3,560	Lower Middle Income	5	PF
Uzbekistan	\$2,090	Lower Income	1	NF

Table A2: Economic makeup (Central Intelligence Agency) of countries comprising the former Soviet Union (N=15). Estimates largely conducted year 2015, countries listed from greatest to smallest Gross National Income per capita.

Country	Agriculture	Industry	Service
Estonia	3.7%	28.4%	67.9%
Lithuania	3.5%	30.7%	65.8%
Latvia	3.40%	23.20%	73.40%
Russia	4.40%	35.80%	59.70%
Kazakhstan	4.80%	35.30%	59.90%
Turkmenistan	12.70%	49.30%	37.90%
Azerbaijan	6.00%	58.00%	36.10%
Belarus	9.30%	41.30%	49.40%
Georgia	9.20%	22.10%	68.70%
Armenia	23.30%	30.10%	46.70%
Ukraine	13.30%	24.40%	62.70%
Moldova	16.20%	20.70%	63.20%
Uzbekistan	18.80%	33.70%	47.50%
Kyrgyzstan	18.00%	25.50%	56.40%
Tajikistan	25.70%	17.30%	57.00%

Table A3: Information on Christian denominational breakdown, and on religious affiliation breakdown in countries comprising the former Soviet Union, Warsaw Pact, and Yugoslavia (N=29). Source from two different studies (Pew 2011, Pew 2015)

Country	Designation	Catholic	Protestant	Orthodox	Total	Christian	Muslim	Unaffiliated
Albania	Muslim	10.20%	0.30%	7.50%	18.00%	18.00%	80.30%	1.40%
Armenia	Orthodox	8.70%	2.20%	86.60%	98.50%	98.50%	<0.1%	1.30%
Azerbaijan	Muslim	<0.1%	0.20%	2.80%	3.10%	3.00%	96.90%	<0.1%
Belarus	Orthodox	8.70%	1.00%	61.50%	71.20%	71.20%	0.20%	28.60%
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Muslim	14.40%	<0.1%	38.20%	52.70%	52.30%	45.20%	2.50%
Bulgaria	Orthodox	0.50%	0.60%	83.00%	84.10%	82.10%	13.70%	4.20%
Croatia	Catholic	88.50%	0.30%	4.40%	93.40%	93.40%	1.40%	5.10%
Czech Republic	Unaffiliated	35.40%	3.50%	0.30%	39.40%	23.30%	<.01	76.40%
Estonia	Unaffiliated	0.70%	21.20%	18.90%	41.30%	39.90%	0.20%	59.60%
Georgia	Orthodox	0.80%	0.40%	87.80%	89.30%	88.50%	10.70%	0.70%
Germany	Protestant	33.90%	34.80%	1.40%	70.80%	68.70%	5.80%	24.70%
Hungary	Catholic	60.60%	21.60%	<0.1%	82.7	81.00%	<.01	18.60%
Kazakhstan	Muslim	2.40%	2.00%	21.40%	26.20%	24.70%	70.40%	4.20%
Kosovo	Muslim	2.30%	<0.1%	6.90%	9.40%	6.10%	93.80%	0.10%
Kyrgyzstan	Muslim	<0.1%	1.80%	10.20%	12.30%	11.40%	88.00%	0.40%
Latvia	Christian	19.10%	20.10%	16.50%	55.70%	55.80%	0.10%	43.80%
Lithuania	Catholic	83.20%	1.40%	5.10%	89.80%	89.80%	<.01	10.00%
Moldova	Orthodox	<0.1%	1.40%	95.40%	97.50%	97.40%	6.00%	1.40%
Montenegro	Orthodox	3.6	<0.1%	75.10%	78.80%	78.10%	18.70%	3.20%
Poland	Catholic	92.20%	0.40%	1.30%	94.30%	94.30%	<.01	5.60%
Romania	Orthodox	5.70%	6.30%	87.30%	>99.00%	99.50%	3.00%	0.10%
Russia	Orthodox	0.50%	1.80%	71.00%	73.60%	73.30%	10.00%	16.20%
Serbia	Orthodox	5.60%	1.30%	86.60%	93.50%	92.60%	4.10%	3.30%
Slovakia	Catholic	75.30%	9.80%	1.00%	86.50%	85.30%	0.20%	14.30%
Slovenia	Catholic	74.80%	1.20%	3.00%	79.20%	78.40%	3.60%	18.00%
Tajikistan	Muslim	<0.1%	<0.1%	1.20%	1.40%	1.60%	96.70%	1.50%
Turkmenistan	Muslim	<0.1%	0.50%	5.30%	6.30%	6.40%	93.00%	0.50%
Ukraine	Orthodox	5.60%	1.30%	76.70%	83.80%	83.80%	1.20%	14.70%
Uzbekistan	Muslim	<0.1%	0.80%	1.70%	2.60%	2.30%	96.70%	0.80%

Information on Christian denominations sourced from a December 19, 2011 Pew Research Center report entitled "Global Christianity - A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population". <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/> Information on religious affiliation sourced from an April 2, 2015 Pew Research Center report entitled "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050". Refers to 2010 numbers. <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>