

**DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT, PROTESTS, AND
AUTHORITARIAN VIOLENCE IN NON-DEMOCRACIES**

Dinara Pisareva

February 2021

A thesis is submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of the Australian National University

©Copyright by Dinara Pisareva 2021

All Rights Reserved

I, Dinara Pisareva, declare that the entirety of this thesis is my own work. No other persons were involved in the research on which the thesis is based, and no collaboration occurred. No parts of this thesis have been submitted previously for another degree or diploma.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I used the editing services provided by The Expert Editor (<https://experteditor.com.au>) for academic editing of my manuscript. The editor who worked on my thesis (and to whom I am *deeply* grateful) is David Herman. The Expert Editor abides by The Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) guidelines for editing research theses. Therefore, David provided assistance in the following areas: a) grammar, syntax, and punctuation, b) word use and clarity of expression, c) detailed spelling check, d) accuracy of internal cross-references, and e) consistent presentation style in the use of fonts, text sizes, and numbering schemes.

This thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of my supervising panel: Dr. Svitlana Chernykh, Dr. Ian McAllister, and Dr. Bjoern Dressel. I am deeply grateful for all their help and patience during the four years I spent researching and writing this thesis. All three are academic giants and outstanding mentors, and I can only hope that my thesis will live up to their expectations. If I turn out to be a decent researcher, it is because I have had the opportunity to learn from the best.

I am eternally obliged to the Australian National University (ANU) for providing me with the opportunity to do my doctoral degree in Australia, the place that I have come to love with all my heart.

I am also deeply indebted to the participants in the interviews that I conducted in Georgia and Armenia. Their patience and generosity with their time, not to mention the information they provided, allowed this thesis to come to life. Furthermore, they

reminded me why I study democratisation in the first place: few things are worth fighting for more than the freedom of your country.

Finally, this thesis would not have been possible without my parents, Zhalkakha and Stanislav, who have supported me through many years of higher education even if they did not completely understand my passion for academia. I dedicate my thesis to them and to my partner, Bermond, another reason why I am eternally grateful to the ANU: if it was not for the ANU Higher Degree Research Program, I would never have met the love of my life.

ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the effects of democratic support in non-democracies in relation to protest participation as well as violent/non-violent authoritarian responses to protests. Using Bayesian process-tracing, I investigate two democratic support-related hypotheses in case studies of democratic mass mobilisation. One case study centres on Georgia in 2003; the other centres on Armenia in 2018. The first “mobilising” hypothesis suggests that strong support for democracy on the individual level makes people more likely to join democratic protests. The mobilising hypothesis receives strong positive confirmation from both case studies. The second “moderating” hypothesis predicts that a high level of democratic support in non-democratic countries will make autocrats less likely to use violence against protesters. The findings for the moderating hypothesis are mixed: it is disconfirmed in Georgia’s case, but there is insufficient evidence fully to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis in the case of Armenia. Overall, the findings from the case studies show that democratic support plays a key role in motivating people to join democratic protests in non-democracies when the risks are high and the benefits are unclear.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: THE PUZZLE OF DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT IN NON-DEMOCRACIES	1
1. Introducing the “Mobilising” and “Moderating” Hypotheses	5
2. The Existing State of Knowledge and My Contribution	9
3. Research Design	14
4. Findings	27
5. Thesis Outline	30
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	33
1. Transitions to Democracy from “Above” and “Below”: What We Know	34
2. Public Support for Democracy: Its Role in Democracy’s Emergence and Survival	39
3. Protest Participation	43
3.1. Democratic Protests and Democratization	43
3.2. Protest Participation: Macro Factors	47
3.3. Protest Participation: Individual Factors	50
4. Authoritarian States’ Response: To Repress or Not Repress	57
4.1. Factors Affecting Authoritarian Decision-Making	57
4.2. Democratic Support in Non-Democracies: Origins	63
5. Summary: Addressing the Unknowns	69
CHAPTER 3. THE THEORY: THE MOBILISING AND MODERATING EFFECTS	71
1. The Mobilising Theory	72
2. The Moderating Theory	80
CHAPTER 4. BAYESIAN PROCESS-TRACING AND ITS APPLICATIONS TO CASE STUDIES	86
1. Introducing Bayesianism: Why Use It for the Case Studies?	87
2. How to Do Bayesianism	90
3. Process-Tracing the Effects of Democratic Support: Details and Challenges	100

4. Summary: Bayesianism and Hypothesis Testing in the Case Studies.....	104
CHAPTER 5. GEORGIA IN 2003.....	106
1. Background for the 2003 Democratic Protests in Georgia.....	107
2. Process-Tracing the Mobilising Effect of Democratic Support in Georgia.....	109
3. Process-Tracing the Moderating Effect of Democratic Support in Georgia.....	135
4. Conclusion.....	156
CHAPTER 6. ARMENIA IN 2018.....	158
1. Background for the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia.....	162
2. Process-Tracing the Mobilising Effect of Democratic Support in Armenia.....	167
3. Process-Tracing the Moderating Effect of Democratic Support in Armenia.....	189
4. Conclusion.....	208
CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION.....	210
1. Empirical Contribution: Key Findings.....	212
1.1. The Mobilising Hypothesis.....	212
1.2. The Moderating Hypothesis.....	216
2. Theoretical Contribution.....	220
1.1. The Mobilising Hypothesis.....	220
1.2. The Moderating Hypothesis.....	222
3. Contribution to Regional Studies.....	224
REFERENCES.....	230

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING IN A DEMOCRACY.....	3
FIGURE 1.2 A MODEL OF DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT AND MASS-LED DEMOCRATIC MOBILISATION.....	7
FIGURE 1.3 BAYESIAN PROCESS-TRACING: MAIN STAGES.....	18
FIGURE 1.4 DEMOGRAPHIC MAKE-UP OF THE INTERVIEWEES.....	22
FIGURE 3.1 COGNITIVE-STRUCTURAL MODEL OF PARTICIPATION.....	74
FIGURE 3.2 MOBILISING THEORY OF DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT.....	76
FIGURE 3.3 MODERATING THEORY OF DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT.....	82
FIGURE 5.1 THE ARGUMENT MAP FOR THE MOBILISING HYPOTHESIS IN GEORGIA.....	117
FIGURE 5.2 SOCIAL ORDER VERSUS INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM CHOICE, BASED ON 1996 WVS SURVEY DATA.....	121
FIGURE 5.3 ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEMOCRACY, BASED ON 1996 WVS SURVEY DATA.....	122
FIGURE 5.4 THE WVS DATA ON GEORGIA'S POLITICAL PREFERENCES, 1996 AND 2009.....	124
FIGURE 5.5 THE ARGUMENT MAP FOR THE MODERATING HYPOTHESIS IN GEORGIA.....	140
FIGURE 5.6 THE ARGUMENT MAP FOR THE MILITARY-DEFECTION HYPOTHESIS IN GEORGIA.....	141
FIGURE 5.7 THE POLITICAL LIBERTIES INDEX IN GEORGIA, 1989-2003.....	143
FIGURE 5.8 THE CSO REPRESSION INDEX IN GEORGIA, 1989-2004.....	144
FIGURE 5.9 THE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE INDEX IN GEORGIA, 1989-2004.....	145
FIGURE 6.1 THE ARGUMENT MAP FOR THE MOBILISING HYPOTHESIS IN ARMENIA.....	170
FIGURE 6.2 ARMENIA'S POLITICAL PREFERENCES, 1997 AND 2011.....	176
FIGURE 6.3 ARMENIANS' RANKING OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM VERSUS THE SOCIAL ORDER (1997).....	177
FIGURE 6.4 ARMENIANS' PREFERRED TYPE OF GOVERNMENT (1997).....	177
FIGURE 6.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRACY FOR ARMENIANS (2011)....	178

FIGURE 6.6 THE ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF DEMOCRACY FOR ARMENIANS..	182
FIGURE 6.7 THE ARGUMENT MAP FOR THE MODERATING HYPOTHESIS IN ARMENIA.....	191
FIGURE 6.8 THE V-DEM POLITICAL LIBERTIES INDEX IN ARMENIA.....	192
FIGURE 6.9 THE CSO REPRESSION INDEX, ARMENIA 1991-2018.....	193
FIGURE 6.10 THE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE INDEX, ARMENIA 1991-2018.....	194
FIGURE 6.11 THE ARGUMENT MAP FOR THE MILITARY-DEFECTION HYPOTHESIS IN ARMENIA.....	202

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 5.1 PROCESS-TRACING RESULTS FOR THE MOBILISING HYPOTHESIS IN GEORGIA.....	133
TABLE 5.2 PROCESS-TRACING RESULTS FOR THE MODERATING HYPOTHESIS IN GEORGIA.....	155
TABLE 6.1 PROCESS-TRACING RESULTS FOR THE MOBILISING HYPOTHESIS IN ARMENIA.....	187
TABLE 6.2 PROCESS-TRACING RESULTS FOR THE MODERATING HYPOTHESIS IN ARMENIA.....	207

**CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION:
THE PUZZLE OF DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT IN NON-DEMOCRACIES**

Democracy is not simply the result of clever elite bargaining and constitutional engineering, it depends on the deep-rooted orientations among people themselves. These orientations motivate them to press for freedom, effective civil and political rights, and genuinely responsive government.

Inglehart and Welzel (2005, p. 300)

In 2020, studies on “autocratisation”¹ and democratic decline have moved to the very forefront of democratisation research (Lührmann & Rooney, 2020; Maerz et al., 2020; Skaaning, 2020). This research trend is not surprising, given that the second decade of the 21st century has witnessed a deterioration in the quality of democracy—both in established democracies, such as the US, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, and also in emerging ones, such as Brazil, India, and Turkey (Bieber, 2018; Esen & Gumuscu, 2016; Castaldo, 2020; Chacko, 2018; Hanley & Vachudova, 2018). The “crisis” of democracy today has a global reach; however, it can be difficult to investigate due to the post-Cold War’s proliferation of hybrid regimes that combine external democratic facades (such as regular national elections) with electoral fraud and the abuse of individual freedoms (Levitsky & Way, 2020; Mechkova et al., 2017). As Przeworski (2019, p. 15) aptly puts it, “the spectre that haunts us today is a gradual, almost imperceptible, erosion of democratic institutions and norms, subversion of democracy by stealth.”

¹ Lührmann and Lindberg (2019, p. 1095) define autocratisation as a “decline of democratic regime attributes”.

It may seem as though the present moment is not the most promising time for democracy's survival, let alone democracy's advancement. Fortunately, we know that democratisation often defies deterministic predictions (Haggard & Kaufman, 2016a; Teorell, 2010). Even when the relevant factors² of democratisation have come into play in a given country, it is still fairly problematic to predict whether and when it will democratise. Thus, as Teorell (2010, p. 10) observes, "structural theories are not very successful at explaining short-term democratisation." Democratisation, in the end, is an outcome of interactions between structure and agency, in which, at times, agency manages to overturn the most adverse structural conditions. As much as the field of democratisation has learnt about democratic transition and its conditions, there are puzzles that remain. To use the terms of Geddes (1999, p. 141), despite a wealth of empirical data on the subject, research on the theoretical foundations of how democracies come to life remains relatively "thin". Granted, the study of democratisation has "thickened" somewhat over the last two decades; however, the "thin" places that remain are in urgent need of further investigation.

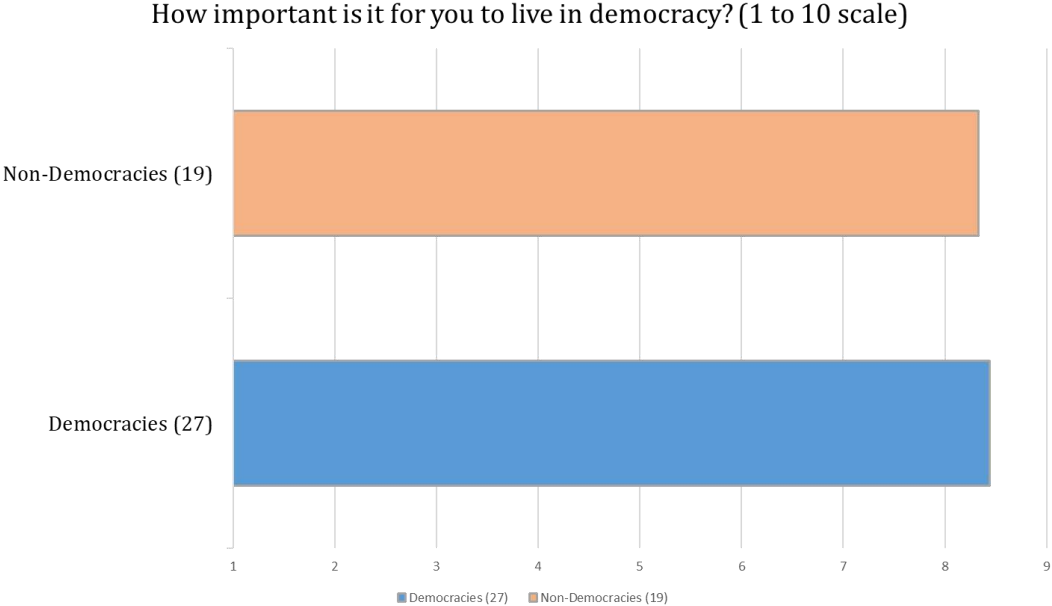
One such thin place in research on democratisation is the role of democratic support in democratic transitions. To be sure, a number of previous studies have explored the positive role played by democratic attitudes in the transition to and consolidation of democratic governments (Almond & Verba, 1963; Booth & Seligson, 2009; Claassen, 2020; Dalton, 2000; Diamond, 1999; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Putnam, 1993; Qi & Shin, 2011; Welzel, 2006). However, despite this impressive body of work, the situation with democratic

² The structural conditions most often linked to democratic transitions include the following: economic development (Boix & Stokes, 2003; Hadenius & Teorell, 2005; Lipset, 1963; Murtin & Wacziarg, 2014), inequality (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006; Ansell & Samuels, 2014; Boix, 2003), natural resource endowments (Haber & Menaldo, 2011; Ross, 2001, 2013), the characteristics of an authoritarian regime (Fortin, 2012; Geddes et al., 2014; Hadenius & Teorell, 2007; Magaloni & Kricheli, 2010), and international factors (Brinks & Coppedge, 2006; Gleditsch & Ward, 2006; Pevehouse, 2002; Whitehead, 1996).

support and democratisation is best described as “paradoxical”, to use Moreno-Alvarez and Welzel’s (2014) term. The paradox of democratic support is that, as indicated in Figure 1.1, there is widespread support for democracy in non-democratic polities (Norris, 2011; Kirsch & Welzel, 2019).

Figure 1.1

The Importance of Living in a Democracy



Note. Adapted from the World Values Survey (2010-14)

The consistently high levels of support for democracy in many non-democratic countries present an empirical challenge to the well-established argument that support for democratic values is conducive to the onset of democratisation (Diamond, 1999; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Indeed, the results of recent quantitative research on democratic support and

democratisation provide even stronger evidence for the counter-argument: namely, that support for democracy has little effect on the emergence of democracy (Claassen, 2020).

While acknowledging this evidence, I find it intuitively difficult to believe that popular attitudes about democracy are entirely irrelevant to democratic transitions. One of the case studies in my research, Armenia, started its democratic transition³ with a surprising nationwide mass mobilisation that demanded the resignation of its decade-long political leader, Serzh Sargsyan. Armenia's protest movement was not triggered by a socioeconomic crisis, fraudulent elections, or any of the other most frequently cited protest triggers (Grigoryan, 2019). Instead, my research suggests, the 2018 mass mobilisation was primarily a result of the Armenian people's desire to see democratic changes in the country.

Observing the unfolding of the 2018 protest in Armenia made me think that one way to investigate the complex relationship between democratic support and democratisation is to study cases of mass-led democratic transition⁴ and determine if and how democratic attitudes have affected people's behaviour and decision-making. Studies of this sort should focus not only on the people who participate in the protest but also on the autocrats against whom the protesters are demonstrating. A successful democratic mobilisation requires not only large protest participation but also the absence of overt state violence. These two factors—protest participation and the way in which regimes respond to protests—are the

³ Although the transition began in 2018, Armenia has yet to become a democracy. The latest 2019 assessments from V-Dem and the Freedom House define Armenia as “electoral autocracy” and “partly free regime”. The consolidation phase in case of Armenia has been made more challenging due to the 2020 military conflict with Azerbaijan over the Nagorno Karabakh territory.

⁴ In democratisation, there can be elite- and mass-led modes of transition (Della Porta, 2014). Early work in the field assumed that elites mattered the most for successful democratisation (Collier, 1999; Mainwaring & Perez-Linan, 2013; Schmitter, 2018). However, following the end of the Cold War, attention has increasingly been paid to the role of the general public (Bermeo, 1997; Bunce & Wolchik, 2013, 2018b; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Kendall-Taylor & Frantz, 2014; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Rossi & Della Porta, 2009; Tilly, 2004). Since democratic support is a measure of public attitudes, I reduce my universe of cases to mass-led democratic transitions.

final variables of interest that I use to formulate two principal research questions in this project. The first research question is: *What are the effects of high levels of democratic support on individuals' protest participation in non-democracies?* The second research question is: *What are the effects of high levels of democratic support on the authoritarian use of violence in response to protests?*

1. Introducing the “Mobilising” and “Moderating” Hypotheses

Before I introduce my hypotheses about the role of democratic support in mass-led democratic transitions, it is important for me to situate them in the vast field of democratisation studies. In the literature, democratisation is often interpreted as a result of two competing forces: either certain structural conditions or the behaviour of actors.⁵ I have consciously distanced my research from structural explanations because, first and foremost, I am interested in actors' behaviour—e.g., the behaviour of people who take part in democratic protests and of autocrats who have to decide how to respond to protests. Further, as previously mentioned, structuralism does not always offer a satisfactory case-specific explanation for successes or failures of democratisation. In the words of Pop-Eleches and Robertson (2015, p. 155), “even structurally disadvantaged countries like Kyrgyzstan and Mali, despite having poor prospects for democratic stability, are not doomed to experience long spells of authoritarianism. For the very structural vulnerabilities that undermine their democratic progress also impede authoritarian consolidation.” Hence, my theoretical framework for democratic transitions comes closest to O'Donnell and Schmitter's

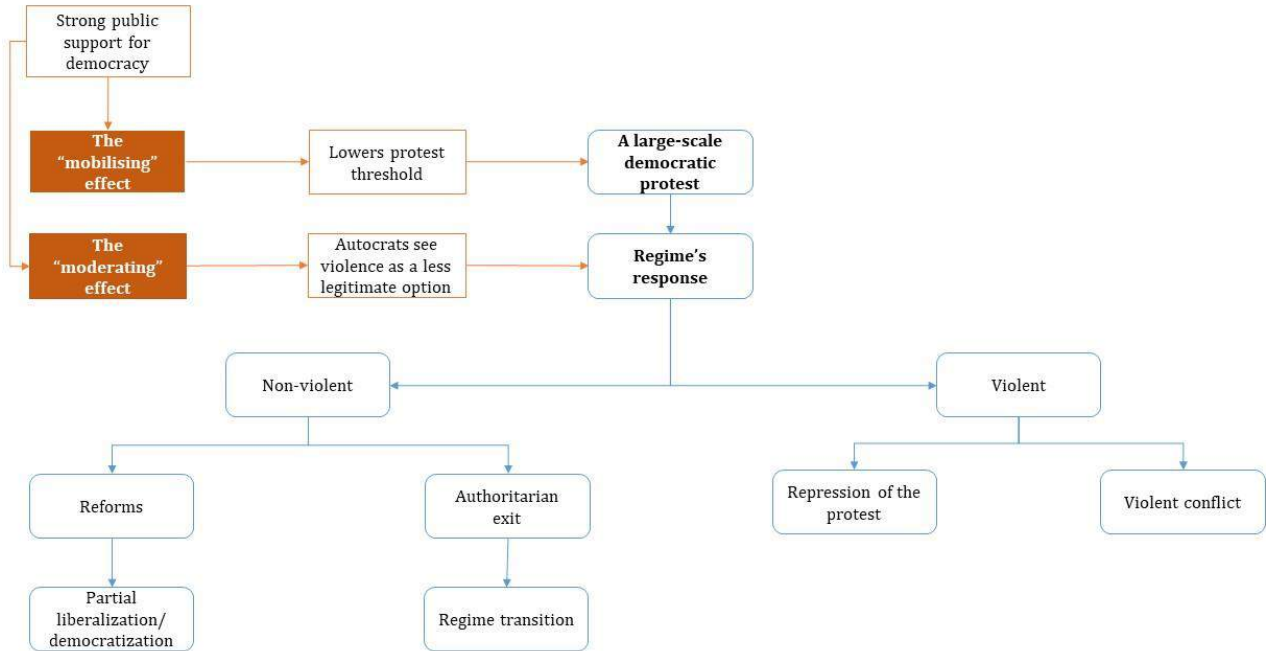
⁵ See, for example, Møller and Skaaning (2013).

(1986) classic account, according to which the uncertainty surrounding democratic transitions ensures that structural conditions often remain secondary to the role of actors.

Having established that my approach to democratic transitions is focused on the actors and their choices, I turn to the nature of these transitions. In traditional models, the process of democratic transition unfolds in several stages (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986; Rustow, 1970). It starts with an initial challenge to an authoritarian system, such as an inter-elite struggle (elite-led transition) or a mass protest against the existing regime (mass-led transition). In the best possible scenario, an incumbent regime responds to the challenge by eventually recognising a need to change the status quo and design more inclusive rules and political institutions (Rustow, 1970). Following this recognition, the process of transition moves to a consensus-making phase, as the regime adopts new democratic rules and institutions that can address and represent a plurality of political interests. Lastly, democratic transitions enter a consolidation phase, in which both elites and the wider population get used to new democratic practices and, ideally, find them to be more beneficial overall than the practices associated with the previous system. This vision of democratic transitions is known as a consensus-based model of democratisation; it is based on examples from Latin America and Southern Europe, where democracy was frequently an outcome of bargaining between established elites and protesters (Bunce, 2000). As is well-known, however, democracy does not always occur via a peaceful transition. Therefore, my model of mass-led democratic transition encompasses both peaceful and violent state responses to mass mobilisation (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2

A Model of Democratic Support and Mass-led Democratic Mobilisation



This model, too, consists of several stages. In the first stage, we see an emergence of a large-scale democratic protest that challenges the authoritarian status quo. The next stage involves the regime’s response to the challenge; this response can be either peaceful or violent. In the case of peaceful response, autocrats and the opposition either agree to some opening of the regime and implement liberalising or democratising reforms, or else the regime is forced to exit. In the case of state repression, autocrats either suppress the protest or else engage in a violent confrontation with protesters that increases the overall uncertainty over the protest’s future and significantly lowers its chances for success.

There are two factors in this model that play a crucial role in determining the outcome of democratic challenges to authoritarian regimes. First, in order for the challenge to be

perceived as a credible threat to the regime and taken seriously, protest size is paramount (Brancati, 2016; Carey, 2010). Therefore, the first factor is protest participation. The “mobilising” hypothesis (H1) states that *a strong support for democracy on the individual level makes people more likely to join democratic protests in non-democracies*. I expect high levels of democratic support to lower individuals’ threshold for protest participation by enhancing moral or internal satisfaction from public demonstration of democratic preferences. Therefore, H1 predicts that, in non-democracies with strong democratic support, there is a high probability for large-scale protest participation.

Second, the mode of the regime’s response has a strong effect on protest outcomes. If the regime’s response is non-violent, it considerably increases the chances for democratic success (Chenoweth et al., 2017). Thus, the second factor is whether the regime responds with violence or not. The “moderating” hypothesis (H2) states that *a high level of mass democratic support makes autocrats less likely to use violence against protesters*. The moderating hypothesis assumes there is a pacifying effect of a pro-democratic culture⁶ on authoritarian worldviews; this effect decreases the desirability and acceptability of the use of violence against civilians. H2 predicts there is a high probability that autocrats in countries with strong democratic support will peacefully step down rather than use force to try to suppress democratic protests.

⁶ A “pro-democratic” political culture refers to a culture marked by long-term political attitudes with a strong preference for democracy on the national level.

2. The Existing State of Knowledge and My Contribution

There are numerous studies on democratisation and democratic protests, so one might ask why we need another one. Nonetheless, I believe that my research makes two useful contributions. In the first place, it provides an innovative detailed analysis of the casual mechanisms that link political attitudes and behaviour. Second, it supplies new data about protest triggers and mass mobilisation in the former Soviet Union (FSU) region, as well as new interpretations of those data.

My work aims to investigate a puzzling assumption: namely, that public support for democracy has little to no effect on democratisation. The existing literature contains arguments both for and against this assumption. On the one hand, there is a rich literature that links democratic culture (civic values, emancipative values, and democratic support) to democracy, starting with de Tocqueville's (1835) early claim that a unique political culture is the foundation of American democracy and continuing through Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) contemporary theory of emancipative values and their importance for democratisation. On the other hand, Hadenius and Teorell (2005) and Claassen (2020) use available data to argue that there is no statistically significant relationship between democratic values or support and democratisation. To settle the question about the role of democratic support, I process-trace case studies of two countries that have experienced democratic transitions and demonstrated high prior levels of democratic support: namely, Georgia in 2003 and Armenia in 2018. I use these two case studies to explore how support for democracy affects the behaviour of both the wider population and elites during democratic transitions.

Regarding popular attitudes vis-à-vis mass mobilisation, there is a large amount of research on protest participation and various incentives that encourage people to defy authority (Beissinger, 2007, 2013; Booth & Seligson, 2009; Brancati, 2016; Bunce & Wolchik, 2006; Chaisty & Whitefield, 2013; Larson et al., 2019; Thyen & Gerschewski, 2018). In the context of research on protest movements, my theory and analysis focus on the role of private preferences in the formation of individuals' protest thresholds. Protest thresholds refer to a fundamental aspect of protest participation: namely, that for each individual there is a certain number of protest participants such that, if that number is reached, it will motivate a person to join the protest. The lower this number is for a given individual, the easier it is to mobilise that person.

A key question here is why some people join in when there are only a dozen protesters, whereas others wait for the number to rise to the thousands. Kuran (1991, 1997) answers this question by advancing the idea of private preferences that describe individuals' "inner" attitudes towards the incumbent regime and the opposition. The higher a person's anti-regime preferences are, the lower that person's protest threshold. That said, it is not easy to identify which normative and attitudinal factors can tip a person towards joining a protest (Opp, 1989). Recent work on protest participation suggests that factors like the state's use of violence against protesters and the feeling of "missing out" on an important collective action play a role in motivating individuals to join protests (Aytaç et al., 2017; Aytaç & Stokes, 2019). I expand this list further by including an individual's support for democracy as a key factor affecting private preferences and, subsequently, lowering individuals' protest thresholds, thereby making it easier to mobilise people. Accordingly, the first theoretical contribution of this study is the development of a detailed causal chain that

links an individual's support for democracy with his or her final decision to join a democratic protest in a non-democratic setting. One of the most important pieces of this causal chain can be illuminated through the "cognitive benefits" argument; this argument states that protest participants who strongly support democracy or democratic values are primarily motivated by non-material cognitive benefits, such as a feeling of moral satisfaction that comes from demonstrating their democratic preferences. The interviews that I conducted for both case studies confirm the existence and significance of cognitive benefits of this sort.

In regard to responses to protests by the regime and by members of the elite, there is also an extensive literature that studies factors that can potentially influence a violent response from the state (Davenport, 2007a; Klein & Regan, 2018). The overall consensus is that a non-democratic regime uses repression when a protest movement is perceived as a serious threat, meaning that it is large, well-organized, and fomented by participants who are not shy about using violence. However, although there is extensive research on state repression and its determinants, there is a research gap when it comes to the potential relationship between broad cultural factors such as public support for democracy and a state's inclination to deploy violence. Therefore, a principal theoretical contribution from this research is the introduction of the moderating hypothesis; this hypothesis reveals a causal pathway through which a pro-democratic political culture can affect authoritarian decision-making. Although the moderating effect is not definitely confirmed in both case studies, authoritarian decision-making in Armenia's case followed the predicted path of the moderating hypothesis when an autocrat (Serzh Sargsyan) refused the option of using force to save his regime and instead peacefully stepped down. In summary, this research introduces a novel perspective on the causal relationship between democratic support and

protest participation, on the one hand, and democratic support and the way regimes respond to protests, on the other hand. These causal mechanisms have not been identified, let alone analysed, in previous studies.

Complementing this study's theoretical contribution, the data gathered during my fieldwork in Georgia and Armenia afford new insights into how popular mobilisation works in the FSU region. Specifically, the results of my research in Georgia and Armenia challenge earlier findings from Ukraine and Russia that post-Soviet protest participants do not demonstrate a strong commitment to democracy (Beissinger, 2013; Chaisty & Whitefield, 2011). Survey results in these two FSU countries suggest that mass mobilisation in the region is mostly triggered by nationalist and cultural attitudes. However, the data from Georgia and Armenia demonstrate that democratic preferences are actually a strong motivating factor as well. This conclusion may have received additional support during the 2020 Minsk protests.⁷

To outsiders (including myself), the long-lasting authoritarian regime under Alexander Lukashenka (1994-present) seemed to be particularly resilient to internal and external pressures. However, rapid mass mobilisation in Minsk in August 2020 in response to the results of the fraudulent presidential election showed that no dictator should feel safe today (Ilyushina et al., 2020). By the same token, the 2020 Belarusian protests suggest that people's attitudes do matter. In Belarus, there was a significant shift in the endorsement of democratic values by the wider population. Thus, in 2011, 85% of those surveyed chose democracy as the best form of government, compared to 66% in 1996 (Inglehart et al., 2014). Furthermore, in 2011, only 47% of Belarusians believed it was good to have a strong leader

⁷ The 2020 Belarusian protests require a much more extensive investigation, and further empirical data, before the primary motivations of the participants and the significance of their democratic preferences can be established.

who did not bother with elections and parliament. This rise in the Belarusian population's preferences for democracy is strongly consistent with the democratic discourse identified during the 2020 protests. In the words of the factory workers who protested at the Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant (MWTP): "We came to express our free choice which was stolen from us" (Oganessian, 2020). Similarly, street protest participants in Minsk said, "Everyone has the same motivation to be here: we want a transparent count of our votes and the superiority of the rule of law in our country" (Sivtsova, 2020).

In addition, the results of my fieldwork also contribute to the discussion about the interpretation and implications of mass democratic support in non-democracies (Kirsch & Welzel, 2019; Maseland & van Hoorn, 2012; Qi & Shin, 2011). As indicated in Figure 1.1, the World Values Survey results show that many non-democracies endorse democracy; however, pro-democratic attitudes do not seem to have a significant effect on democratisation (Claassen, 2020; Fails & Pierce, 2010; Hadenius & Teorell, 2005). One explanation for this weak relationship is that people in non-democracies have an unorthodox understanding of democracy that is not necessarily aligned with liberal ideas (Shin & Cho, 2010). If people support an "illiberal" idea of democracy, it does not motivate them to challenge the authoritarian status quo. Kirsch and Welzel's (2019) work on "authoritarian" notions of democracy finds that people often attribute non-liberal characteristics to democracy, such as an unquestioning obedience to rulers. These results are supported by similar studies on East Asian public opinion; these studies likewise show that people's understanding of democracy can be a mix of democratic and authoritarian elements (Cho, 2014; Pietsch, 2015).

Apropos of this discussion of the interpretation of democracy, I should note that in my interviews with the participants in democratic protests in Georgia and Armenia I include a series of special questions focused on people's understanding of democracy. My findings, however, support earlier arguments that people across the world share a more or less common "liberal" understanding of democracy (Bratton, 2007; Dalton et al., 2007). The results from the case studies of Georgia and Armenia (those from Armenia are especially pertinent, since Georgia is now a democracy) show that among my interview participants support for democracy has a rather conventional meaning associated with support for free and fair elections as well as individual freedoms.

3. Research Design

Democratic Support and Challenges of Conceptualization

Public attitudes towards democracy can be challenging both to operationalise and to measure, given that different nations interpret survey questions on democracy differently (Kirsch & Welzel, 2019; Stegmueller, 2011). For example, according to the Asian Barometer, the majority of the population in authoritarian Singapore believes that their country is democratic (Pietsch, 2015). Southeast Asia is not the only example of this sort of confusion; similar observations have also been made about Russia (Hale, 2011). The polls demonstrate that a majority of Russians endorse democracy primarily in the sense of being able to regularly elect their national leaders, not in the sense of being governed by a regime that embodies liberal values. It appears that for Russians the idea of democracy is close to O'Donnell's (1994) delegative democracy: they recognise their government as democratic when they can vote for their national leaders and invest them with a high degree of power

and minimal accountability until the next elections. Thus, while a majority of people worldwide do support the principle of democracy, cultural contexts help determine what democratic or non-democratic elements are actually involved in this support (Moreno & Mendez, 2002).

In response, scholars have developed alternative conceptualisations of democratic support that do not directly involve democracy or are supplemented with additional criteria. For example, Welzel and Klingemann (2008) use the concept of “substantive demands”, which measures support for democratic freedoms rather than democracy. For their part, building on Norris’s (2011) idea of critical citizens, Qi and Shin (2011) develop the idea of “critical democratic orientations”; this idea combines the measurement of democratic support with the measurement of democratic satisfaction with government performance. Despite these innovative ideas, a majority of researchers still use a classic definition of democratic support as a straightforward preference for democracy supported by a rejection of authoritarian alternatives (Bratton & Mattes, 2001; Claassen, 2020; Chu et al., 2008; Dalton et al., 2007; Mattes & Bratton, 2007; Mishler & Rose, 2001a; Welzel, 2007). I also use this conceptualisation, because my goal is to measure general support for democratic principles rather than specific support for individual freedoms or a regime’s performance. In both the interviews and survey data, support for democracy is operationalised as a clearly expressed preference for democracy as the only desirable form of government, coupled with the rejection of non-democratic alternatives. The survey data on democratic support are taken from the *World Values Survey* (WVS) dataset.

Protest Participation and Democratic Protests

The conceptualisation of “democratic protest” is, like that of democratic support, contingent on the definition of “democratic”, and there is a long history of different conceptualisations. One can start from the procedural Schumpeterian (1943, p. 269) approach, according to which democracy is a “system for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for people’s vote”, and progress to the “democracy with adjectives”⁸ (Collier & Levitsky, 1997) and the “embedded democracy”⁹ concepts (Merkel, 2004). For the sake of parsimony, the democratisation research often favours a minimal electoral conceptualisation of democracy; this tendency explains why democratic protests are often narrowed down to electoral protests. For example, Dawn Brancati (2016, p. 5) defines democratic protests as “mass public demonstrations that demand countries adopt or uphold democratic elections”. This definition effectively excludes human rights and anti-governmental protests from her sample.

The present study’s definition of democracy hews close to Dahl’s (1989) definition of “polyarchy”, marked by a similar emphasis on free, competitive elections and the inclusion of basic political and civil rights such as freedom of association, expression, and information. I operationalise democratic protests as mass public demonstrations that demand that regimes either adopt the main elements of democracy, such as competitive, free, and fair elections and the protection of basic political and civil rights, or else resign in order for

⁸Collier and Levitsky (1997) use the rubric “democracy with adjectives” for newly emerging forms of democracy such as “neopatrimonial democracy” and “authoritarian democracy”.

⁹Merkel (2004, p. 36) defines embedded liberal democracies as democracies that consist of five partial regimes: a democratic electoral regime, political rights of participation, civil rights, horizontal accountability, and the guarantee that the effective power to govern lies in the hands of democratically elected representatives.

democratic changes to take place. This definition allows me to classify both electoral and anti-regime protests in non-democracies as democratic protests.

State Repression

In the literature, state repression is described as “a mechanism of state influence that involves force or the threat of force used in an effort to (1) counter and/or eliminate domestic challenges, (2) create specific political-economic arrangements, and (3) sustain domestic order” (Davenport, 2010, p. 75). In this broad definition, the concept can include a wide range of activities: from state surveillance and harassment of the opposition to mass arrests, torture, beatings, and killings. However, the state’s use of direct violence has been linked to a much stronger deterrent effect on protests than non-violent repression (Klein & Regan, 2018). For this reason, I operationalise state repression by narrowing the concept down to episodes of direct coercion, such as the beating or killing of protesters.

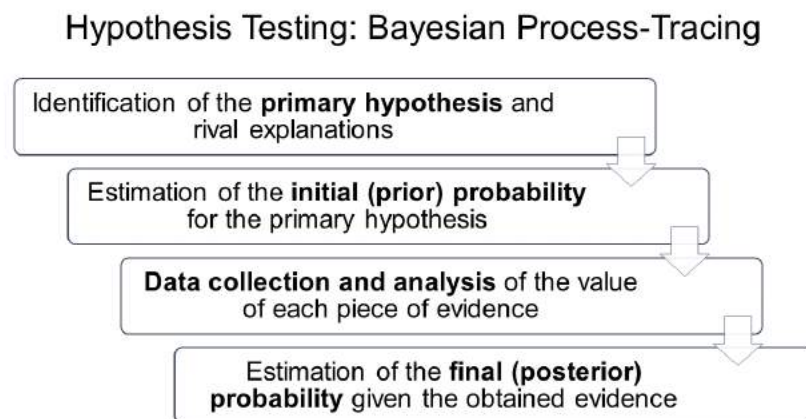
Methodology: Bayesian Process-Tracing

Since my principal research objective is to test causal mechanisms, I apply a within-case analysis to selected cases of mass-led democratic transition. Notwithstanding occasional arguments that qualitative research fails to measure up to well-executed quantitative studies (Beck, 2006), one needs not only a robust dataset but also reliable causal-process observations in order to develop a theory that includes well-developed causal mechanisms (Brady & Collier, 2004; Mahoney, 2010). Accordingly, a small-N case study can play a decisive role in theory development and testing, given “statistical results alone rarely provide sufficient evidence of the robustness of a theoretical model” (Lieberman, 2005, p. 442).

The theory-testing itself is done using Bayesian process-tracing (see Figure 1.3). Bayesianism is a deductive approach to process-tracing that allows the analyst to estimate how much confidence each uncovered piece of evidence provides when it comes to evaluating the hypothesis in question (Bennett, 2015). In other words, at the core of Bayesian process-tracing is a method that reveals how certain we can be that our hypothesis is true, given all the available information. A detailed description of Bayesianism and its practical application to the case studies is provided in chapter 4.

Figure 1.3

Bayesian Process-Tracing: Main Stages



Although case studies are the most common method of research in democratisation studies, Bayesian process-tracing has not been frequently used to analyse the process of decision-making among democratic and authoritarian actors (Bogaards, 2019). Bayesianism's weak visibility in democratisation research is surprising, given that it has demonstrated rather impressive results in other studies, including Tannenwald's (2007)

study of nuclear taboo in the U.S. and Fairfield's (2015) analysis of economic elites' decision-making with respect to taxation. In the present study, the Bayesian method has proved invaluable for assessing the strength of the evidence and for making final verdicts on the credibility of my hypotheses.

Case Selection

The case selection follows rules for exploratory within-case analysis with typical cases (Rohlfing, 2012). Typical cases are positive on both cause and outcome and are considered to be optimal choice for theory-testing and development because they allow the analyst to study causal mechanisms in greater detail (Beach & Pederson, 2019; Gerring, 2007; Goertz, 2017; Schneider & Rohlfing, 2016; Seawright & Gerring, 2008). They also provide strong external validity, because findings in typical cases are highly likely to be representative of the larger population (Bennett & Checkel, 2015).

The universe of cases are all non-democratic countries that had large-scale democratic protests and non-coercive authoritarian response. Typical cases selected have positive score on cause and outcome: (a) non-democracies that had high levels of democratic support prior to democratic transition, and (b) non-democracies that had mass-led democratic protest. The identified cases are two post-communist countries, Georgia and Armenia¹⁰.

Georgia is a colourful small country in the South Caucasus with a population of a little over three million people. It was the first country in the former Soviet space to have a large

¹⁰ As mentioned previously, as of 2020, Armenia still remained in the transition phase; therefore, its classification as democracy may be interpreted as premature. However, in the 2019 V-Dem Electoral Democracy Index, Armenia scored 0.81 (compared to its score of 0.39 in 2017) due to non-corrupt, free, and fair elections following the revolution. Praise for Armenia's post-revolutionary elections has also been expressed by other observers (Lanskoj & Suthers, 2019).

democratic protest, which occurred after its 2003 parliamentary elections. The protest started as a movement against electoral fraud and ended in a peaceful resignation of then President Shevardnadze.

Armenia, a neighbour of Georgia, is also small in both size and population. The 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia was a month-long democratic protest whose participants demanded the resignation of Prime-Minister Sargsyan. On April 23, 2018, Sargsyan unexpectedly yielded and stepped down with the now-famous words: “Nikol Pashinyan [the protest leader] was right. I was wrong”. (Krutov, 2018, para. 8)

Although Georgia and Armenia are geographic neighbours that share many historical and cultural traditions, there are important differences between them. First of all, there is a temporal distance between the two case studies—Georgia made its transition in 2003 and Armenia in 2018—that excludes the possibility of democratic diffusion¹¹ (Brinks & Coppedge, 2006; Weyland, 2019). Second, the democratic protests in the two countries had different characteristics. Georgia was a clear case of electoral revolution, with the opposition and the public mobilising in response to fraudulent elections, whereas Armenia’s mass mobilisation was a public reaction to anti-democratic constitutional changes. This divergence is useful, because it points to the role played by democratic support in protest movements that go beyond the electoral revolutions that are frequent in this region (Bunce & Wolchik, 2011). Finally, both cases involved peaceful authoritarian exits but in different contexts; this difference, too, provides a source of variation. In the case of Georgia, the

¹¹ One of popular theories about democratic protests is that they tend to diffuse within the same region. This happens due either to the activities of transnational civil society organisations and civil activists or to the demonstration effect that occurs when successful strategies are borrowed by members of the opposition across countries. Recently, Brancati and Lucardi (2019) published a counterargument to this hypothesis, stating that democratic protest is primarily a result of domestic, not international, factors.

regime's weakness and diminished legitimacy were crucial accompanying conditions that can be interpreted as alternative explanations for state's non-use of violence in response to the protest. In Armenia, however, the regime did not experience a legitimacy crisis, and had sufficient military resources to suppress the protesters.

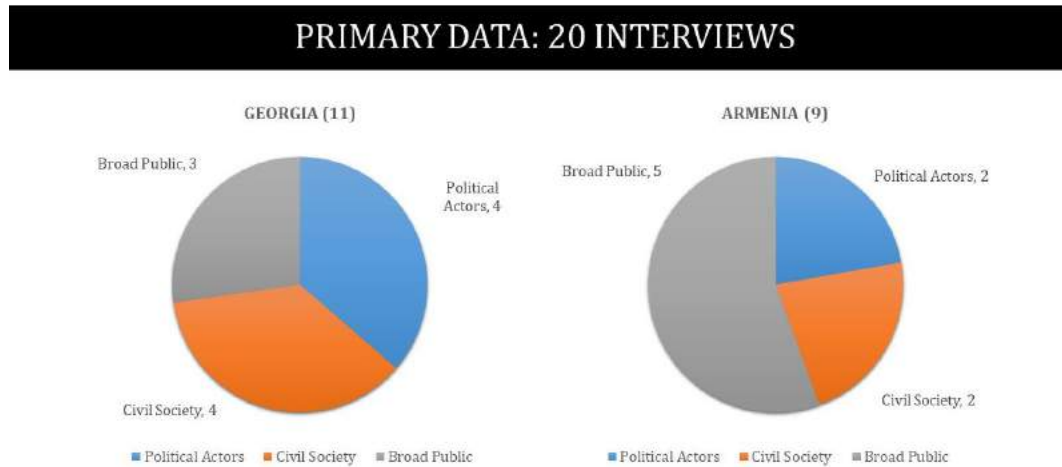
From the perspective of data gathering, Armenia is a particularly important case, given that it is the most recent peaceful regime transition in Eurasia. The case of Armenia is somewhat of a "black box", because there has been limited information about Armenia's "revolution" and the actors involved. In fact, in 2019, I myself was among the very few fortunate researchers who were able to visit Armenia in the crucial post-revolutionary period. I conducted some of the first interviews with people who had just been blocking street traffic and calling for Sargsyan's resignation.

Data: Sources and Limitations

With respect to data, my observations for Georgia and Armenia are primarily drawn from 20 interviews conducted in 2018-2019 with individuals who either directly participated in or observed democratic protests (see Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4

Demographic Make-Up of the Interviewees



Although in Georgia’s case there are already a lot of existing data about the events, my interviews are nonetheless significant for two reasons. First, the earlier interviews and data do not provide any specific information about whether people’s regime preferences played any role in their protest participation. There are also relatively brief and at times controversial comments about why Shevardnadze peacefully resigned—an issue that continues to be debated today. The 2018 interviews are critical in filling these information gaps.

Second, there is an important factor of temporal distance. Most of the earlier interviews in Georgia were conducted during the first few years after the protest, when many of the interviewees, both “winners” and “losers”, had an active interest in promoting specific interpretations of these events. Fifteen years later, in 2018, the Rose Revolution remains an important event, but it no longer has much practical significance for domestic politics. The diminished political relevance of 2003’s events, at the time of the 2018 interviews, allowed

the interviewees to be more open in their responses, contributing to an increased confidence in the veracity of their statements. Finally, having access to the data from two time periods (2003 and 2018) has enabled me to maximise the credibility of my sources, by cross-checking statements of several interviewees.

With regard to Armenia, the interviews provide a large amount of original information. Unlike Georgia's protests in 2003, which have enjoyed an impressive amount of media coverage and academic analysis, the 2018 mass mobilisation in Yerevan and Sargsyan's peaceful resignation have not been covered comprehensively. To date, there are only few publications that describe revolutionary and post-revolutionary Armenia in any detail. Therefore, my 2018 interviews with Armenian protesters and the former regime's elites shed new light on this most recent Eurasian revolution.

Sampling Technique

The recruitment strategy for interviews was snowball sampling (referral sampling) when initial participants created "referral chains" by recommending acquaintances who could qualify for participation (Robinson, 2014). Snowball sampling is recognised as a useful strategy of recruitment for hard-to-reach and hidden population that was useful in Georgia's case since their protest had occurred fifteen years ago (Daniel, 2012).

In Georgia's case, two initial participants were Lincoln Mitchell and David Darchiashvili. Both were identified via literature review as potential first contacts. The initial communication was done via email. Mitchell was a popular foreign expert who had worked as a consultant with several Georgia's regimes prior and post the 2003 revolution. He provided me with references to politicians and civil society sector's actors. Darchiashvili was a university professor at the Tbilisi State University and protest participant who referred me

to several interviewees not linked to politics and civil society organisations. Unfortunately, in Georgia's case, there was a general problem with recruitment of ordinary participants due to the difficulties with their identification.

In Armenia's case, two initial contacts were Aren Manukyan and Philip Arzumanyan. Both were identified via Russian media coverage of 2018 protest and contacted via Facebook. Manukyan was a protest participant and media consultant who provided me with references to the members of the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) that ensured a balanced participation from both "winners" and "losers" of the protest. Arzumanyan was a protest participant and political consultant who referred me to students and young people who took part in the protest.

Interviews

All the interviews are semi-structured since they are recognised to be more versatile and accommodating compared to structured questionnaires (Galletta, 2013). The beginning of interviews includes general open-ended questions based on participants' experiences that further develop into more specific and theory-driven questions.

A typical interview lasts for ninety minutes and starts with a discussion of participant's experience of protest and their overall feelings about the event. At this stage, I ask how participants felt about the pre-revolutionary regime and old political leaders to deduce their position about the status quo. There are some general questions about protest themselves: how it occurred, was it a surprise, were there any concerns related to participation. More specific questions are related to testing out people's motivations for protest participation such as whether participants interpreted a large-scale mobilisation as a response to socioeconomic problems or corruption, what was the role of protest leaders in

mobilisation, did protest participants feel support from police and law enforcement. Gradually, by the middle of interview, questions turn to participants' personal expectations from protest participation – were they expecting primarily a better quality of life or political changes, what were their ideas about the post-revolutionary life, what were their feelings during and after protest. There are also questions about their assessment of the post-revolutionary regime: in what aspects it met their protest expectations and how it failed.

Sampling and Reverse Causality Bias: Effect on Causal Inferences

It is important to recognise potential weaknesses of my primary data. There is a relatively small sample size, because only eleven out of a planned seventeen interviews took place in Georgia. The timing of my fieldwork in Georgia coincided with the 2018 presidential elections. On the one hand, elections observation provided a helpful illustration of Georgia's vibrant political life; on the other hand, however, it resulted in the cancellations of six interviews with people who were closely associated with Shevardnadze's regime. Thus, the 2018 presidential elections affected not only my sample size but also, to some degree, the representativeness of interviews, which were more skewed towards the 2003 "revolutionaries" and civil society actors as a result of the cancellations. In Georgia, eight out of eleven participants (70%) are associated with either politics or civil activity. Armenia's case is more representative of general population as only four (44%) participants out of nine are either politicians or civil activists.

In Bayesian process-tracing, the only practical way to address issues of sample bias and interview reliability is to use triangulation (cross-check) across different persons and types of sources (Beach & Pederson, 2019, p. 214). Following this recommendation, whenever possible, I cross-checked data obtained from my interviews with secondary data

sources such as surveys, earlier interviews and testimonies, the scholarly literature, and media coverage. In Georgia's case, causal inferences from interviews were cross-checked with data from literature on Georgia's political culture and 2003 events and analysis of the World Values Survey (WVS) data. Similarly, in Armenia, triangulation was applied to interviews, media coverage, and the WVS data. Only propositions that had support from more than one type of data source changed confidence into overall hypothesis. Propositions that had empirical support from only one data source (e.g., interviews) did not have any effect on overall confidence estimation.

It is also important to address issue of endogeneity or reverse causality for both case studies. Reverse causality refers to the possibility that not only independent variable has effect on dependent variable, but dependent variable has effect on independent variable (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2018). In the context of this research, the concern might be that successful protest participation has a reverse effect on democratic support identified in interviews. Reverse causality is also intertwined with concerns about sampling bias such as whether participants who come from liberal political parties and civil society misrepresent their incentives to participate (peer pressure, connections to civil society organisations, political interests) as commitment to democracy.

It is impossible to completely eliminate problem of endogeneity in a non-experimental setting as the problem of causal inference in observational studies will always stand (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2018). In case studies, the best one can do is to demonstrate that independent variable had a strong presence prior to changes in outcome and not the other way around (Bennett & Checkel, 2015). In Georgia and Armenia's case studies, however, it is

not possible to demonstrate that individual interview participants were committed to democracy prior to protest events.

I can, however, demonstrate that both countries had strong support for democracy on the aggregate level prior to democratic protests. This is what I do in the process-tracing section of Proposition #1 in each case study. In both Georgia and Armenia's cases, Proposition #1 received positive confirmation from interviews, literature review, and more importantly the WVS data. I recognise that the use of nation-level data is not a decisive solution to endogeneity problem since one cannot make causal inferences about individuals using aggregate-level data. However, since it is impossible to take interviews before protest occurrence prior nationwide democratic preferences is the only empirical argument against both reverse causality and sampling bias.

4. Findings

I present my research findings in detail in Chapter 7, so here I will provide only a brief overview. The mobilising hypothesis receives strong positive confirmation from both case studies. Process-tracing results show that people's motivations to join the protests in Georgia and Armenia are closely linked with their preferences for democracy and desire for democratic change. The moderating hypothesis, however, needs to be investigated further, because its confirmation (or disconfirmation) depends heavily on direct access to hard-to-reach subjects such as authoritarian elites or persons who are close to them. Even here, though, my findings look promising. Sargsyan's resignation demonstrates that authoritarian behaviour does not necessarily adhere to standard assumptions about instrumental rationality—i.e., that authoritarian leaders will always keep their regimes' survival foremost

in mind. That said, in the case of Armenia, there are not enough data to confirm with high confidence that peaceful authoritarian exit occurred due to the influence of democratic culture.

Findings: Georgia

In the case of Georgia, the mobilising hypothesis explains the 2003 protest participation in terms of pre-existing strong support for democracy. The rival explanations for mass mobilisation include: a) the diminished popularity of the regime due to high levels of corruption and economic inequality, b) a high level of activity from CSOs (civil society organisations), and c) the popularity and efficacy of the anti-Shevardnadze opposition. The evidence obtained from interviews and the review of previous studies in this area allows me to confirm the mobilising hypothesis with a high level of confidence. The interviews also provide disconfirming evidence for the rival explanations of protest participation. Typical comments from the interviews conducted in Georgia include the following:

Yes, social aspects were important. But ask anybody during the Rose Revolution what they wanted, what they were dreaming about, they would say democracy. Not a strong state that would protect them or stuff like that. (Eka Grigalava, NGO sector in 2003, protest participant)

The demand for freedom and justice had always been there, and we were moving step by step. The first priority was to finish the civil war and get rid of the corrupt system, but the next priority and the reason we protested [in 2003] was to create a democracy so no one could appropriate power. (Giorgi Meladze, co-founder of the Kmara youth movement in 2003, protest participant)

The moderating hypothesis, however, does not receive significant empirical support from the evidence I gathered in Georgia. Indeed, the most likely explanation for Shevardnadze's peaceful exit is military defection. In a post-revolution interview, Shevardnadze insists he chose to resign peacefully in 2003 due to his commitment to

democratic principles. However, this explanation is disconfirmed by other credible sources, including Shevardnadze's former advisor, who confessed that the former President was ready to use force but could not secure the military's loyalty.

Findings: Armenia

In the case of Armenia, process-tracing via the mobilising hypothesis yields results similar to those obtained in the analysis of Georgia: a strong positive confirmation that protest participation in 2018 was linked to public support for democratic change. The interviews conducted in Armenia provide even more confidence in the hypothesis, given that more than half of interview participants are ordinary people who were not politically active prior to 2018. Typical comments from these interviews include the following:

Pashinyan asked people to take revolution into their own hands. They were not his soldiers, and he was not their commander. He told people: just do whatever you can, peacefully, and within the law. (Hovhannes Hovhannisyan, lecturer at the American University of Armenia in 2018, protest participant)

Even the people who were previously afraid went out to the streets. My neighbours were always apolitical people, but even they blocked streets because they felt it was a decisive moment for the future of the country. (Aren Manukyan, media consultant in 2018, protest participant)

The moderating hypothesis, however, is neither confirmed nor disconfirmed in the case of Armenia. Sargsyan had sufficient military resources to suppress protests; indeed, Armenia in 2018 was the most militarised country in Europe and the third most militarised country in the world (Mutschler, 2017). All the available evidence indicates that peaceful resignation was Sargsyan's own decision. However, discourse analysis of Sargsyan's speeches and interviews does not produce sufficient evidence to confirm or disconfirm that he stepped down under the influence of democratic ideas.

5. Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of two sections: theoretical and empirical. The first four chapters review the existing literature in this area of inquiry, discuss the study's theoretical framework, and describe the methodology used in the research, with chapters 5 and 6 then focusing on the two case studies. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by discussing the empirical findings. The chapter examines the implications of these findings both for this study's research questions and, more generally, for research on democratic movements in the former Soviet space.

Chapter 2 reviews the existing state of knowledge about democratic support, protest participation, and state repression, and outlines the significance of these factors in mass-led democratic transitions. The literature review consists of four parts, covering the importance of mass-led democratic transitions, the role of public democratic attitudes in democratisation, protest participation and its known macro- and individual-level determinants, and authoritarian decision-making in response to democratic dissent.

Following the literature review, chapter 3 introduces causal mechanisms behind the mobilising and moderating hypotheses. The mobilising hypothesis is introduced via understandings of collective action and theories of "framing". The theoretical foundations of the moderating hypothesis are rooted in research on the effects of culture, beliefs, and attitudes in authoritarian decision-making.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the Bayesian method of process-tracing and its application to the case studies. The chapter starts with a detailed discussion of how Bayesianism can be applied to the case studies; this discussion synthesises the recommendations of recognised authors in the field (Beach & Pederson, 2019; Bennet & Checkel, 2015; Fairfield, 2015;

Fairfield & Charman, 2017). This part of thesis also explores the advantages and disadvantages of the method. I argue that Bayesian process-tracing does not receive sufficient attention in the literature on political science methodologies. Chapter 4 is thus designed to address questions about the method and its methodological utility.

Chapters 5 and 6 contain the empirical part of my research and tell the story of democratic protests and regime transitions in post-communist Georgia and Armenia. Chapter 5 is a within-case analysis of the 2003 democratic transition in Georgia; chapter 6 process-traces the 2018 regime change in Armenia. Both chapters follow a similar structure. I start with a brief account of the political and historical contexts for the protest movements and introduce the main political actors and key factors (i.e., the factors other than my main explanatory variable of public democratic attitudes) that were influential in each case. For example, in the case of Georgia, relevant factors include the regime's low popularity and the high level of activity by the opposition and by civil society more generally. The chapters then move to a description of primary and secondary data sources and to the process-tracing itself. The process-tracing for each hypothesis is introduced in five parts: identification of primary and rival hypotheses, assessment of the prior probability for the primary hypothesis, introduction of confirming propositions, evidence collection and analysis, and assessment of final posterior probability.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis and consists of three parts. It begins with a brief summary of key findings from the process-tracing and then proceeds to discuss what these results mean, first, for the mobilising and moderating hypotheses and their causal mechanisms; and second, for the regional study of protest movements in the former Soviet Union. Based on my analysis and the latest regional developments, the chapter provides a

tentative forecast for the future of protest movements in the region and predicts which countries could be next in line for a large-scale democratic mobilisation. In the near future, I expect Kazakhstan to follow the path of Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia, and Belarus.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a literature review, surveying the existing state of knowledge about the general themes of the present study: mass-led democratic transitions, democratic support and its role in democratisation, protest participation and the factors that affect it, and the determinants of states' use of violence in response to protests. The first part of the review introduces the reader to the classic model of democratic transition, discusses differences between elite- and mass-led democratisation, and considers whether elite- or mass-led transitions produce "better"¹² democratic results. Then, the chapter proceeds to discuss the most notable studies that analyse the effects of public democratic attitudes on the attainment and sustainability of democracy. The literature review concludes by focusing on studies of the determinants of two main outcome variables: protest participation and states' use of violence.

The protest participation section uses the existing literature to establish the importance of democratic protests in mass-led democratisation and discusses known factors bearing on protest participation. I categorise these determinants into macro- and micro (individual)-level factors affecting participation. Macro-level factors are the factors that are related to large-scale structural causes or processes, such as economic crises or fraudulent elections. Micro-level factors are the ones that are studied at the level of individuals, such as individuals' preference for democracy. The last part of the chapter reviews previous research on how autocrats decide whether to repress protesters. The existing literature tells us quite a lot about the different factors that provoke a violent state response, such as the

¹² In referring to "better" outcomes, I mean outcomes leading to a higher level of democratic consolidation.

size of protests and their level of organization. However, little is known about the relationships among broader cultural factors on the national level, authoritarian beliefs, and the causal processes influencing authoritarian decision-making. The lack of knowledge about these relationships is one of the significant gaps in the literature that the moderating hypothesis aims to fill.

1. Transitions to Democracy from “Above” and “Below”: What We Know

The history of democratic transition studies goes back to Rustow (1970) and O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986); these researchers developed the classic transition model that shows how interactions and bargaining among political elites can result in the liberalisation and/or democratisation of non-democratic regimes. Liberalisation and democratisation are two main dimensions of the transition from authoritarian rule that can emerge independently of each other.¹³ In the classic model, the opening of an authoritarian regime usually starts with liberalisation, which is a process of “making effective certain rights that protect both individuals and social groups from arbitrary or illegal acts committed by the state or third parties” (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986, p. 7). Ideally, liberalisation is followed by democratisation; however, this is not always the case, due to the uncertainty that surrounds the process of transition. In other words, the transition model is characterised by a high level of indeterminacy, because the factors that ensure the breakdown of authoritarian regimes do not necessarily result in the establishment of a consolidated democratic regime. The uncertainty surrounding the process of transition

¹³ O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) were among the first scholars to predict the emergence of hybrid regimes that score high on liberal values and low on democratic measurements, such as liberalised autocracies or dictablanda.

results in a greater emphasis on actors and their choices, with “momentary confrontations, expedient solutions, and contingent compromises being in effect defining rules which may have a lasting but largely unpredictable effect on how and by whom the ‘normal’ political game will be played in the future” (O’Donnell & Schmitter, 1986, p. 75). This actor-focused perspective is one of the primary features distinguishing studies of democratic transitions from other theories of democratisation, such as the modernisation theory.

For a long time, the dominating perspective has been that political elites are the key actors in democratic transitions (Diamond et al., 1989; Higley & Gunther, 1992; Schmitter, 2018). Thus, O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986, p. 19) remark that “there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence—direct or indirect—of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners.” Names aside, there is no fundamental difference between hard- and soft-liners: both are prone to repressions and violence. However, soft-liners are better at recognising the need for reforms to ensure regimes’ survival—reforms such as the provision of moderate freedoms and the introduction of competitive elections. The elite-enabled transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe in the 1970s are the best known examples of elite-led democratisation. Yet transitions from above are not the universal experience of the entire Third Wave.¹⁴ The predominance of the elite-centered perspective in the democratisation literature has been criticised by scholars who study cases from Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia, where democratisation has occurred from below (Bunce, 2003;

¹⁴ The Third Wave of democracy refers to the global spread of democracy that started in the 1970s and that encompassed Latin America, Southeast Asia, and former communist states. This wave of democratisation increased the number of democracies from 40 in 1974 to 117 in 1995 (Diamond, 1999).

Schock, 2005; Teorell, 2010). As Ekiert and Kubik (2001, p. 9) write, “little was known (in democratization) about activities of non-elite actors”.

A large part of the research about democratisation from below, or non-elite democratisation, comes from studies of social movements and mass mobilisation (Bermeo, 1997; Collier & Mahoney, 1997; Tilly, 2006). Della Porta’s (2014) well-known work on social movements and democracy introduces two models of mass-led transitions to democracy: participatory pacts and eventful democratisation. In the case of participatory pacts, civil society is able to negotiate changes with an incumbent regime by introducing the threat of mass mobilisation. In the case of eventful democratisation, however, mobilisation needs to take place. The author stresses how protest participation can transform people’s attitudes and behaviour through a variety of cognitive and emotional mechanisms (which resemble the causal mechanisms of the mobilising hypothesis). Cognitive mechanisms include “growth in discursive generality and politicization”, meaning that, fueled by a range of emotions from moral indignation to the feeling of empowerment, protesters’ demands and grievances tend to grow from being socioeconomically motivated and particularistic to being politically fueled and general. Both cognitive and emotional mechanisms provide a necessary foundation for a broad democratic networking that connects various actors across time and space. In Della Porta’s (2014, p. 299) own words, “claims become politicized as growing participation creates a sense of empowerment and relations become increasingly dense, with formal and informal networks connecting recently mobilized individuals into broad oppositional webs”.

Quite a few analysts remain skeptical about the wider population’s role in democratic transitions, however. Some of the most authoritative voices in the field, such as Huntington

(1984) and O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), argue that radical and contentious protests are more harmful than helpful to democratisation, because they increase risks for elites that deter them from enacting the necessary reforms. As Huntington (1984, p. 212) puts it, "democratic regimes that last have seldom, if ever, been instituted by mass popular actors". Research on Eurasian electoral revolutions in the mid-2000s has also convinced many scholars that mass protests do not result in democracy in the absence of favorable structural conditions and strong institutions (Hale, 2005; Kalandze & Orenstein, 2009; Pop-Eleches & Robertson, 2014). Finally, some empirical tests demonstrate that democratic protests do not occur in many cases of democratic transitions. For example, Brancati (2016, p. 180) shows that democratic protests occurred in only one-third of all democratic transitions that happened from 1989 to 2011.

At the same time, other scholars argue that many of the Third Wave democracies, including the 1989 post-communist transitions, owe their success and legitimacy to large-scale democratic mass mobilisation (Aleman & Yang, 2011; Celestino & Gleditsch, 2013; Della Porta, 2014; Geddes, 1999; Karatnycky & Ackerman, 2005; Schock, 2005; Wood, 2000). Even if mass mobilisation does not always result in a completed democratic transition, it still has a long-lasting liberalising effect. Bratton and van de Walle (1997) show that 28 sub-Saharan African countries that experienced mass protests between 1988 and 1992 had some degree of liberalisation following these protests. Drawing on more recent studies, Kim (2017) demonstrates that mass mobilisation and anti-regime uprisings have a democratising effect even in closed autocracies, prompting them to introduce multiparty elections and

transition to electoral authoritarianism.¹⁵ As Haggard and Kaufman (2016b, p. 163) note in their theory about importance of mode of democratic transitions,

there are also good theoretical reasons to believe that mass mobilization during the transition might have enduring consequences as well ... it is mass mobilization itself, however, that actually demonstrates what Acemoglu and Robinson call “de facto power”¹⁶ and makes it credible.

The primary reason why the present study focuses on democratisation from below is that public democratic support represents the preferences of the wider population and not the elites. Yet in some cases, the preferences of the two groups can converge, and I do go on to investigate whether such convergence happens in the case of democratic support. In any case, a fair question at this point might be whether mass-led transitions produce “better” (more consolidated) democratic outcomes than elite-led ones. The accurate answer is that both modes of democratic transition have their share of criticisms. Albertus and Menaldo (2018, p. 11), in presenting their theory of elite-biased democracy, argue that elites only “introduce democracy when they have an advantageous position that they can leverage to their future benefit”. When authoritarian elites are forced to exit by systemic threats such as economic crisis, they still are able to ensure their future success through the exercise of control over major institutions, such as media outlets and political parties, and also through constitutional engineering. According to the authors’ estimates, only one-third of new democracies since 1800 have created new constitutions, with the majority choosing to operate under constitutions that, designed by previous non-democratic regimes, often

¹⁵ Electoral authoritarianism is a non-democratic form of governance with multiparty elections for the executive and legislative branches and universal suffrage (Schedler, 2013).

¹⁶ In *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (2006, p. 21), Acemoglu and Robinson make a distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* political power, stating that the former is “what a group can do to other groups and the society at large by using force”.

protect old elites. In other words, in terms of power and inequality, an elite-led democracy “might not reset the political game” (p. 270) for the majority of the population. Mass-led democratisation, however, may also fail, as mentioned previously in connection with the example of Eurasian Colour Revolutions (Kalandze & Orenstein, 2009; Pop-Eleches & Robertson, 2014). Ultimately, I tend to agree with Haggard and Kaufman’s (2016b) conclusion that there is no convincing evidence that the mode of transition significantly influences the outcome of post-transition democratic consolidation. As Haggard and Kaufman (2016b, p. 196) put it, “development of democracy depends on changing economic and social conditions in the post-transition period and the strategies adopted by the main political contenders”.

2. Public Support for Democracy: Its Role in Democracy’s Emergence and Survival

Many scholars have argued that an important condition of democracy’s survival is people’s long-term support for democracy and its principles (Booth & Seligson, 2009; Dalton, 2000; Diamond, 1999; Easton, 1965; Lipset, 1959; Mattes & Bratton, 2007; Norris, 2011; Rose et al., 1998). Work on the connection between mass attitudes and democracy can be traced as far back as de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* (1835), which postulates that the U.S.’s unique political culture is the main basis for its democratic political system. This uniqueness is expressed in citizens’ readiness to form voluntary associations in order to address outstanding issues, rather than waiting for a central authority to solve them. For de Tocqueville, such an attitude is essential for the formation of strong civil society and a safeguard against the emergence of individual dictatorship. In de Tocqueville’s (1863, p. 383) words:

the manners of the people may be considered as one of the great general causes to which the maintenance of a democratic republic in the United States is attributable. I here use the word *manners* with the meaning which the ancients attached to the word *mores*; for I apply it not only to manners properly so called,--that is, to what might be termed *the habits of the heart*,--but to the various notions and opinions current among men, and to the mass of those ideas which constitute their character of mind. I comprise under this term, therefore, the whole moral and intellectual condition of a people.

Following *Democracy in America*, Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture* (1963) offered the first comparative study of different political cultures. This study introduces the concept of democratic civic culture, marked by high levels of interpersonal trust, strong mutual tolerance, and extensive political participation that is strongly conducive to the maintenance of democracy. In this study, the theorised causal mechanism leads from mass democratic attitudes (such as social trust, obligation to participate, and feeling of individual efficacy in politics) to the civic engagement that results in a consolidated democracy. This being said, one of notable problems with that study is its limited number of cases, with the authors considering only five countries: the US, France, Germany, Mexico, and Italy (Lipset & Lakin, 2004). There are also some problems with the suggested causal relationship between people's attitudes and behaviour. The correlation between different political attitudes and civic cooperation seems to vary even among the five chosen countries. For example, high levels of social trust result in an increased cooperation in the U.S. and France, but not Germany or Italy (Jasper, 2005).

The next major contribution to the study of political culture is Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* (1993), which examines the cultural and political differences between Northern and Southern Italy. The author's main conclusion is that democracy works more effectively in Italy's northern regions because of higher levels of social capital, defined as "norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement" (1993, p. 167). Like de Tocqueville

and Almond and Verba, Putnam believes that civic engagement is the most important form of social capital directly relevant to the performance of democratic institutions. He further develops his ideas in the context of American democracy (2000), introducing the “bowling alone” theory; this theory predicts that declining levels of social capital, civic engagement, and membership in traditional associations in the U.S. will lead to citizens’ estrangement and weakened political participation. Putnam’s theory has raised several important questions and counterarguments. Some scholars believe that Putnam’s indicators of engagement are outdated, because there are new forms of civic engagement that are more adapted to the rhythms of modern life (Cohen, 1999). Other scholars raise the possibility of “American exceptionalism”, noting that although there has been a decline in social capital in the U.S., many European democracies still enjoy a robust associational life (Hall, 1999; Rothstein, 2001).

In the years since these influential studies were published, there has been relatively scarce research on the effect of public attitudes on democratisation, partly because democratisation studies are dominated by elite-centered and structural approaches (Welzel, 2006). In his book on democratic consolidation, Diamond (1999, p. 173) argues that although the elite’s political culture is important for consolidation, it is “not the whole story”. Diamond suggests that mass attitudes are important for democratic consolidation since they help establish democracy outside the context of formal institutions. In the post-Putnam period, Welzel and Inglehart (2005) have produced the most prominent research on political culture and democracy, advancing a theory of emancipative values¹⁷ --i.e., values that motivate

¹⁷ Inglehart and Welzel (2005) use the terms “self-expression” and “emancipative values” interchangeably. They develop an index of self-expression values measured by five main components: postmaterialistic aspirations for political and civil liberty, tolerance of other’s liberty (e.g., tolerance for homosexuality), civic activity (signing

people to take actions to attain and sustain democracy. Subsequent work seems to support this theory. For example, Zavadskaya and Welzel's (2015) analysis of elections in authoritarian regimes reveals that authoritarian electoral defeat is more likely to occur in societies with widespread support for emancipative values, because such values tend to decrease support for authoritarian rule. However, there is also some skepticism about the democratic effects of emancipative values. One of shortcomings of the cultural theory is an ambiguity caused by confounding variables that can influence support for emancipative values as well as democracy. For example, after Dahlum and Knutsen (2016) adjusted for initial levels of democracy, they found no significant relationship between self-expression values and democracy during the period 1990-2000. There are countries like Taiwan, whose democracy level improved without any significant changes in self-expression values, and also countries like Jordan, where there was an increase in support for self-expression values but without any signs of democratisation. The authors' conclusion is that self-expression values are largely endogenous to democratic institutions and on their own have little to no influence on democratic transition and survival.

Qi and Shin (2011) study the role of democratic support in democratisation by introducing the concept of "critical democrats". Critical democrats do not simply support democratic principles; what is more, they are capable of critically assessing a regime's performance. In other words, critical democrats demonstrate strong democratic support but weak democratic satisfaction, a combination that has a mobilising effect on overall political

petitions), interpersonal trust, and life satisfaction (15). Critics of this theory, however, have noted that most of these factors have only a distant relation to democracy. In a subsequent study, Welzel (2013, 57-66) presents an emancipative values index (EVI), arguing that it represents an improvement over the self-expression index because the latter is too broad: not all of its components, such as life satisfaction, are relevant to value orientation. By contrast, the EVI is focused on four domains of emancipatory orientation—namely, autonomy, choice, equality, and voice—with each of these being characterised by three individual measures.

participation. The authors demonstrate that critical democratic orientations have a substantive positive effect on democratisation that is stronger than the effect of democratic support or of Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) emancipative values. Finally, the latest relevant findings come from Claassen's (2020) empirical test of the assumption that there is a positive association between democratic support and democratic transition in non-democracies. The study tests whether democratic support has a significant correlation with increased levels of democracy in both democracies and non-democracies. The results show that there is a substantive positive effect of democratic support on democracy, but it is overwhelmingly concentrated in democracies. In other words, democratic support seems to help democracy endure but not emerge in the first place.

3. Protest Participation

3.1. Democratic Protests and Democratisation

After several decades of research on mass mobilisation and protests, we know quite a lot about how they can affect the process of democratic transition. The effects of democratic protests can be divided into two categories: elite-oriented and public-oriented effects. In regard to the effects on authoritarian elites, large-scale democratic protests represent a direct threat to regimes' survival; this threat to elites' interests increases the probability that they will divide into reformers and conservatives (Schmitter, 2018; Svobik, 2012; Ulfelder, 2005). If such a split occurs, then democratic protests will provide a source of legitimacy and public support for the reform-oriented elites, effectively pressuring the old regime into introducing more competitive and fair elections and/or more equal and inclusive political institutions (Brancati, 2016; Bunce, 2003; Magaloni, 2006; Onuch & Sasse, 2016). In regard

to their importance for the broader population, democratic protests serve a crucial informational function by spreading knowledge about electoral fraud or other misdeeds of the regime in power (Beissinger, 2007; Lohmann, 1994; Tucker, 2007). Such information diffusion spreads the feeling of electoral discontent, raising mass support for the protest in the population and advancing further mass mobilisation (Bunce & Wolchik, 2011).

Thus, democratic protests can play an important role in regime transitions; however, as we know, not all democratic protests end up in democratisation. The success of democratic protests can be assessed by whether they are able either to pressure authoritarian regimes into democratic concessions or else facilitate their exit. In her study of authoritarian exits, Frantz (2018) observes that out of 473 authoritarian exits from 1950 to 2012, only 10% happened in response to popular uprisings.¹⁸ This mixed record leads to an important question about what the determinants of successful democratic protests are¹⁹.

In the literature, several factors have been recognised as facilitating authoritarian breakdown in the context of democratic protests. First, the type of authoritarian regime matters, because different types of authoritarian regimes tend to break down under different threats. Geddes (1999, 2014) introduces three types of authoritarian regimes based on their organizational structure: personalist, single-party, and military regimes. Each of these types has different survival expectations when faced with the threat of mass uprisings. Personalist and single-party dictatorships are the most durable ones, while military authoritarian regimes are the most prone to internal splits among elites.

¹⁸ That being said, the number of protest-related exits has increased considerably since the end of the Cold War period.

¹⁹ It does not necessarily follow that because there is a low percentage of authoritarian exits that occurred in the context of protest, there is a “mixed record” in relation to democratization. Per my examiner’s comment, this 10% could be significantly more likely to engender democracy than the other 90% (Celestino & Gleditch, 2013; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011).

Second, the timing of the protests matters. A large-scale mass mobilisation is often explained by the presence of certain grievances that can be caused by economic deprivation or political injustice (Gurr, 1970; Olson & Hafer, 2001). Grievances on their own, however, do not always result in protests, because there might be a lack of a political opportunity or resources for such actions (Corning & Myers, 2002; Klandermans, 1984). Starting a large-scale protest during critical periods, such as elections, contributes to better mobilisation opportunities and greater risks for the regime. Indeed, there is a large sub-field of studies focused on how authoritarian elections can enhance the vulnerability of regimes. For example, one of the large-N studies done in Sub-Saharan Africa demonstrates a positive relationship between the introduction of multiparty elections in the region and the rise in protests and riots (Salehyan et al., 2012). Here a question arises: why introduce elections at all? The literature on electoral authoritarianism offers a range of answers. Authoritarian elites may introduce elections to strengthen their legitimacy and send signals about the opposition's weakness (Gandhi & Lust-Okar, 2009; Magaloni, 2006; Malesky & Schuler, 2008), to gain international legitimacy (Miller, 2017), or to co-opt elites and the opposition (Boix & Svobik, 2013; Gandhi, 2008). Regardless of initial reasons, elections under authoritarianism can turn into a substantial threat for a regime's survival, because the results of authoritarian elections can often work as a powerful catalyst for large-scale protests (Kendall-Taylor et al., 2020). Therefore, mass mobilisation during elections is a valid strategy for ensuring high protest participation and, hence, a strong challenge to authoritarian regimes. The other fortuitous time for protesting might be during the leadership turnover period. If protests occur during the power transition period, it might

increase their likelihood of success, as was observed during the Eurasian Colour Revolutions and the Arab Spring protests (Hess, 2016).

Finally, factors such as resource endowments and a regime's popularity also matter for the success of mass protests. If a regime (like one of the Gulf monarchies) has an abundance of natural resources, it will be much more resilient to protests than states that lack such resources (Hess, 2016). Conversely, a regime's vulnerability in the face of mass mobilisation can come from low popularity, which prevents the regime from mobilising the support either of the elites or of the public (Ezrow & Frantz, 2014; Magaloni, 2008).

The other group of factors that affects the success of protests is related to the protests themselves. Two particular features stand out: the scale of a protest, and whether it is a violent or a non-violent one. In regard to numbers, a protest must be large enough to represent a sufficient threat to the regime and attract participation from the broad public (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011). In her study of democratic protests, Brancati (2016) finds that the size of protests has the largest effect on whether the protest would be effective in bringing about democratisation; as she puts it, "the likelihood that a (democratic) transition will occur is higher as the number of protest participants is higher" (p. 160). Meanwhile the issue of violence versus non-violence remains somewhat controversial, with many authors arguing that for a number of reasons non-violent protests have more chances for success (Celestino & Gleditsch, 2013; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Schock, 2005). Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) suggest that non-violent democratic protests are more likely to be successful because they have more international and domestic legitimacy and more likely to gain wide public support. This finding is confirmed in other studies (Madestam et al., 2013; Mazumder, 2018). Brancati (2016), however, does not find empirical evidence for the argument that

violence acts as a deterrent to protest participation. Her analysis shows that more than one-third of the protests with episodes of violence attracted over 10,000 participants. In summary, the existing literature tells us that democratic protests are more likely to result in regime change if they have strong organisation, attract a large number of participants, are non-violent, and take place during elections or when there is weak public support for the regime.

3.2. Protest Participation: Macro Factors

In the vast literature on protest participation, individual regime preferences are not considered among the top factors of mass mobilisation. As Brancati and Lucardi (2019, p. 2359) comment in their work on the diffusion of democratic protests, “democracy protests do not arise only, or necessarily, as a result of a strong public sentiment in favor of democracy but of *other* reasons”. These other reasons usually include macro-structural factors and processes to which people respond with mass mobilisation. The most researched triggers for democratic protests include economic crises (Brancati, 2016; Haggard & Kaufman, 1995), education (Dahlum & Wig, 2019; Dahlum & Wig, 2021), socioeconomic modernisation (Butcher & Svensson, 2016; Karakaya, 2018), presence of political opportunities (Chenoweth & Ulfelder, 2017), disappointment with the electoral process and its results (Aslund & McFaul 2006; Beissinger, 2007; Bunce & Wolchik, 2006, 2011; McFaul, 2005; O’Beachain, 2009; Pop-Eleches & Robertson, 2014; Tucker, 2007; Tudoroiu, 2007; Way, 2008), and the influence of international factors, such as protests in a neighbouring country (Beissinger, 2007; Bunce & Wolchik, 2018a; Gleditsch & Ward, 2006; Weyland, 2019).

Of these potential triggers, the most frequently cited reason for the emergence of protests is economic crisis; that is, protests are more likely to occur “when economies perform poorly” (Brancati, 2016, p. 177). Indeed, most explanations for protests suggest that people publicly express their dissatisfaction with the government when their quality of life starts to deteriorate (Brancati & Lucardi, 2019; Cederman et al., 2011; Haggard & Kaufman, 1995). As Gill (2000, p. 84) observes, “the most obvious way in which popular attitude could be significant relates to the implications of failings in regime performance”. Yet the economic theory of protests does not always apply. Moreover, existing studies on economic grievances and political participation fail to answer conclusively whether economic hardships mobilise or demobilise people (Bernburg, 2015; Rudig & Karyotis, 2014; Kurer et al., 2019; Solt, 2015). The grievances hypothesis suggests if there is a large group of people who suffer from economic injustices, they will target the ruling regime and express their disappointment through voting and protests (Brady, 2004; Kern et al., 2015). The withdrawal hypothesis, however, states the opposite: when faced with economic problems and the need for survival, people tend to withdraw from politics, so their participation weakens (Rosenstone, 1982). This divergence of opinions implies that economic issues, like other structural factors, does not offer a universal explanation for large-scale democratic protests. To quote Chenoweth and Ulfelder (2017, p. 300): “there are few—if any—stable conditions that systematically determine whether a nonviolent campaign can and will emerge, as well as whether it succeeds”.

The disappointment with electoral processes and results is another frequently mentioned reason for people’s protests (Bunce & Wolchik, 2006, 2011; Kim, 2017). Brancati (2016) shows that during the period 1989-2011, 43% of democratic protests emerged

following episodes of electoral fraud, while 30% of the protests that were held called for elections to become more inclusive and competitive. Electoral protests and revolutions have become particularly significant following the end of the Cold War and the proliferation of competitive authoritarian regimes²⁰ that, paradoxically, combine regular elections with extensive electoral fraud (Brownlee, 2007; Bunce & Wolchik, 2018b; Levitsky & Way, 2010). The Colour Revolutions that occurred in the mid-2000s in Eurasia represent the first post-Cold War wave of electoral protests that drew attention to the role of mass mobilisation in regime change (Aslund & McFaul 2006; Beissinger, 2007; Bunce & Wolchik, 2011; Fuhrmann, 2006; Kandelaki, 2006; Kuzio, 2006; McFaul, 2005; Mitchell, 2004; O’Beachain, 2009; Tucker, 2007; Tudoroiu, 2007; Way, 2008; Wheatley, 2017). Although initial hopes for such electoral revolutions were quite high, based on the assumption that they might play a role as catalysts for democratisation, the actual outcomes led many scholars to believe that mass mobilisation could not have a long-term positive effect in the absence of favourable structural conditions (Hale, 2005). Kalandze and Orenstein (2009) observe that in most cases the impact of protests on democracy’s quality and survival is rather weak, because protests do not offer a solution to structural and institutional problems such as corruption, weak rule of law, and patrimonialism. As Pop-Eleches and Robertson (2014, p. 21) put it, “our findings suggest rather pessimistic conclusions about the prospects for democratic governance breakthroughs in structurally disadvantaged countries that experience revolutionary upheavals.”

²⁰ Competitive authoritarian regimes are non-democratic regimes that have regular elections at the national level with some degree of access and competitiveness.

Finally, like norms and ideas, protests can be diffused from one country to another (Beissinger, 2007; Brinks & Coppedge, 2006; Bunce & Wolchik, 2006, 2011, 2018; Gleditsch & Ward, 2006; Weyland, 2012). The regional diffusion of protests is often considered to be a key reason for the emergence of three protest waves in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989, Eurasia in the mid-2000s, and the Middle East in 2011 (Weyland, 2019). The assumption that democratic protests diffuse, however, has been recently challenged by Brancati and Lucardi's (2019) statistical analysis, which shows that democratic protests are no more likely to occur when there are parallel protests in neighbouring countries. The authors conclude that protests are mainly triggered by domestic causes such as economic grievances or fraudulent elections and are not greatly influenced by international factors. Weyland (2019) disputes this claim; he argues that, in certain cases at least, protests do diffuse. Specifically, protests can diffuse if the original protest erupts after a long period of stagnation, attracts large-scale participation, and is successful in ousting an authoritarian leader. These are the key characteristics of the initial protests in the protest waves mentioned previously, including the 1989 protests in Poland, the 2000 protests in Serbia, and the 2011 protests in Tunisia.

3.3. Protest Participation: Individual Factors

As indicated in the previous section, there are many well-executed studies on how mass mobilisation can be influenced by a range of macro-level structural factors, such as economic crises, electoral processes, and events in neighbouring countries.

There is also a considerable amount of research on meso-factors of protest participation especially in social movements literature. Meso-factors describe role of

individuals' relations, social networks, and linkages in the process of political socialisation and mobilisation (Amna & Zetterberg, 2010; McAdam & Tarrow, 2010). Butcher et al. (2018), for example, emphasise importance of organizational theory in studying outcomes of civil resistance. In particular, authors show that civil resistance movements that enjoy support from organizations with strong local ties (such as trade unions) maximise their chances for short-term success by building up leverage and resilience. Similarly, Thurber (2019), on the example of Nepal, introduce importance of social relations and ties in participants' ability to initiate a protest movement. Having a strong base of social support enables protest actors to see civil resistance as a more viable strategy which affects their estimation of efficacy. The importance of social networks and linkages have also been identified in a number of other studies on rebellion (Metternich et al., 2013; Parkinson, 2013; Sarbahi, 2014; Staniland, 2014) and protest mobilization (Gould, 1991; McAdam, 1986; Pinard, 1968; Tilly, 1978).

By contrast, there is a dearth of research on the role of micro-level factors, such as individuals' normative orientations and the political preferences that motivate them to join protests. A basic premise of the present study is that individual-level preferences urgently require further study. In Kuran's (1991, p. 16) words, "the focus on the individual level is justified by the assumption that a mass uprising results from multitudes of individual choices to participate in a movement for change; there is no actor named 'the crowd' or 'the opposition'".

When it comes to the role of individual-level factors in protest participation, the key question is what motivates people to join protests on an individual level. Existing studies tell us that ethno-nationalist sentiments motivate at least some protesters. For example, one of the best known democratic protests in the post-communist region happened in Ukraine in

2004; it became known as the Orange Revolution. Many commentators have assumed that the participants were young, educated people committed to democratic values. However, as Beissinger (2013) demonstrates, the majority of the participants had a rather weak commitment to the democratic narrative. The protest participants did not all share democratic values; rather they were strongly united against the pro-Russian presidential candidate Victor Yanukovich, who was accused of rigging the elections. This antipathy resulted in the emergence of what Beissinger (2013, p. 590) calls a “negative coalition”, which was based on the rejection of weak and corrupted pro-Russian regime. Turning to another example from the ex-Soviet space, Russia also had large-scale mass protests against electoral fraud during its 2011 parliamentary elections. Chaisty and Whitefield (2013) show that quite a few of these 2011 protesters were more likely to support nationalist views than democratic or liberal values.

Another factor that can matter is protesters’ perception of a regime’s legitimacy as weak. Thyen and Gerschewski’s (2018) study of the 2011 protests in Morocco and Egypt finds that protest participation in these countries can be explained by the weakness of the two regimes’ legitimacy. In the case of Egypt, perceptions of the regime’s compromised legitimacy were clearly linked to the nationalist sentiments of the participants. In Morocco, by contrast, people were mostly dissatisfied with the regime’s economic performance—with poor economic conditions often being correlated with perceptions of diminished governmental legitimacy. Thus, Booth and Seligson (2009) demonstrate that in Latin America, too, a regime’s economic performance has the strongest effect on people’s political participation and perceptions of legitimacy.

From a theoretical viewpoint, it can be challenging to explain why people take part in protests and revolutions in the first place, given that the individual costs of participation are exceedingly high due to state repression and violence. As Klandermans (1984, p. 363) puts it, “the logic of collective action provides an explanation for why people do not participate but fares poorly in explaining why people do participate”. Insofar as it seeks to incorporate individuals’ motivations into its theoretical framework, this study can be aligned with the collective-action explanation of protest participation offered by Kuran (1991), Bunce and Wolchik (2011), and Tucker (2007).

Kuran’s (1991) theory postulates that the participation threshold of an ordinary citizen depends on two principal factors: the predicted size of the protest and private preferences. The size of the protest plays a crucial role in individuals’ perceptions of participation costs. If one is to demonstrate publicly one’s private preferences, such as support for anti-regime protests, then one must perceive costs as sufficiently low. Because costs decrease with an increasing number of participants, large-scale protests are perceived to be less risky. Private preferences matter when it comes to the perception of participation’s benefits. If an individual’s internal preferences are strongly anti-regime, then the action of opposing the regime brings high levels of satisfaction and increases the perceived benefits of protest participation. Aytaç and Stokes (2019) further expand this discussion about the role of internal preferences by emphasising not only the costs of participation but also the costs of abstention. The latter costs involve the ethical and moral conundrums that people experience when they pass on an opportunity to participate meaningfully in political life—for example, by taking part in protests. This research on political participation suggests that

although everyone has a different revolutionary/protest threshold²¹, ultimately, the decision to join a protest is affected by internal preferences and normative orientations (for example, support for democracy).

In Tucker's (2007) interpretation of the collective-action problem, strong anti-regime grievances are also the main reason why people perceive protest participation to be worth the risk. In this context, electoral protests are especially important, given that, normally, people do not have opportunities to express their grievances in the authoritarian setting. Electoral protests provide such an opportunity, and people participate because they realise that the protests afford a possibility for real change.

Bunce and Wolchik (2011) similarly focus on participants' perceptions of electoral protests and their calculations of whether to join protests or not. The authors, however, are more interested in the role of political actors, such as members of the opposition, and the strategies they use to influence public opinion. Their electoral model framework successfully explains the failures and successes of Colour Revolutions in Eurasia. Bunce and Wolchik (2011) outline several factors that are most likely to explain differences in electoral outcomes—i.e., continued authoritarian rule versus regime change—in the region. First, and most importantly, there are diverse electoral strategies employed by the opposition to raise awareness of elections and motivate the wider population to vote and observe the electoral process. Second, there is a factor of regional diffusion, which explains the transmission of successful electoral strategies across countries. The final factor is that of international democratic aid. The electoral model is mainly concerned with the role of the opposition and

²¹ The revolutionary or protest threshold refers to the number of protest participants required to push an individual towards participation.

its efforts to convince the broader public that it can influence the outcome of elections through voting—and also by protesting if there is electoral fraud. Like the social movement theory, the electoral model recognises that elections in mixed authoritarian regimes are often a perfect political opportunity structure (POS) for large-scale mobilisations (Van Antwerp & Brown, 2018). In contrast with the social movement theory, however, Bunce and Wolchik (2011) do not attribute a lot of importance to structural factors; instead they focus on the actions of political actors and the effect of those actions on the broader public.

Beyond collective-action theory, individuals' beliefs and preferences also play a key role in research on social movements. Specifically, framing theory focuses on social psychological factors that affect protest behaviour (Noakes & Johnston, 2005; Opp, 2009; Snow et al., 1986). Framing theory plays a key role in the development of the mobilising hypothesis, because it provides a theoretical framework for explaining the mobilising effect of democratic support. Within the framework of this theory, a successful protest mobilisation can be described as an outcome of the interaction between macro-level factors of the sort discussed previously and micro-level (individual) factors like regime preferences. Thus, framing theory is a theoretical link that bridges “ideas, organizational, and political process factors” (Oliver & Johnston, 2005, p. 185).

The main idea of the theory is that an individual's decision to join a protest depends on how well the protest's goals fit that individual's “frame”. The “frame” here refers to a certain cognitive framework or belief system that allows the individual to interpret the world, by identifying patterns, categorising situations and things, and making meaning of events. Each individual has certain mental models (or frames) that include a number of beliefs and normative judgements, such as, for example, “democracy is good, non-democracy

is bad". Protests and social movements involve frames as well; indeed, they actively use certain frames to bring public attention to facts like fraudulent elections, with the aim of generating a strong reaction from individuals who find electoral fraud unjust and unfair (Opp, 2009). The moment when a protest's frame aligns with the cognitive models of multiple individuals and causes them to recognise some aspects of reality as unjust and requiring reparative action is known in the framing literature as "frame alignment" (Opp, 2009). Frame alignment is a crucial condition of mass mobilisation; it establishes a linkage between people's beliefs and the protest's goals, and motivates people to join the protest.

There are some conditions that make certain frames more successful than others when it comes to frame alignment. One crucial factor is "frame resonance", meaning that a protest's frame must "resonate" with audiences, through "a (close) fit between [the] frame and audiences' previous beliefs, worldviews, and life experiences" (Williams, 2004, p. 105). Frame resonance itself depends on a number of criteria, such as frame consistency, empirical credibility, the credibility of frame's promoters, centrality, and narrative fidelity (Snow & Benford, 1992). A frame with a strong resonance, thus, has the following attributes: it is promoted by actors with a credible reputation, presents a logical and consistent narrative that is aligned with cultural values of the majority, and aims to achieve goals that are both realistic and relevant to the audience. Since frame alignment does not happen with low-resonance frames, the key to a successful mass mobilisation is to put forward a protest goal that closely resonates with the beliefs and worldviews of the broader public.

4. Authoritarian States' Response to Protests: To Repress or Not to Repress?

Close investigation of the state's repressive apparatus can reveal complex moral and normative processes at work on the state side. Police and army officers go home after work and have families and neighborhood friends. These are social relations that present a different way of viewing the moral choices they face.

Johnston (2019)

4.1. Factors Affecting Authoritarian Decision-Making

All things being equal, the chances for democratic change are higher if there is a non-violent state response to the protest. However, a peaceful state response is unlikely, because when faced with large-scale, well-organised dissent, autocracies (unlike democracies²²) almost always use at least some form of repression (Davenport & Armstrong, 2004; Davenport, 2007b). In their breakthrough study on civil resistance and factors determining its success, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) reveal that around 90% of the 108 nonviolent protests or mass movements included in their *NAVCO (Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes)* dataset were subject to state repression in one form or another.

There is a good reason for autocracies to respond violently to protests: multiple studies confirm the existence of a positive relationship between authoritarian violence and the survival of authoritarian regimes themselves. For example, Escriba-Folch (2013) demonstrates that a regime's use of repression, including political terror (e.g., torture, mass

²² It is a well-established fact that, when it comes to correlating regime types with the use or non-use of state repression, democracies are considerably less likely to use coercion (Davenport & Armstrong, 2004). This pattern is also known as “domestic democratic peace” (Davenport, 2007b).

killings, and police beatings) and restrictions of civil rights (e.g., limiting mass gatherings), has a strong positive effect on the reduced likelihood of authoritarian exits. Moreover, it has also been demonstrated through many case studies that a state's enhanced coercive capacity is a reliable guarantee of authoritarian survival. Bellin (2012) argues that Middle Eastern dictatorships owe their durability to enhanced military and security forces that are able to quickly deter any threat from below. In a similar vein, Ross (2001) explains the democratic deficit in oil-rich countries in terms of their use of resource rents to sustain a large security apparatus that can crush any form of dissent. In their large-N study, Albertus and Menaldo (2012) empirically confirm that states' coercive capacity negatively correlates with democratisation; in other words, the ability to exert repressive force makes a democratic transition less likely to occur. It is safe to conclude that the larger the coercive apparatus of a regime, the more resilient it is to domestic threats.

At the same time, the use of repression does not determine a protest's outcome, because democratic movements can succeed even if there is extensive repression. The literature on state repression recognises the lack of a clear deterministic relationship within the repression-dissent nexus. First, there is a range of factors that can ameliorate the effect of state repression, such as a protest movement's high organisational capacity, strong discipline, and use of decentralised administrative structures (Nepstad & Bob, 2006; Pearlman, 2011; Sutton et al., 2014). Second, it seems unlikely that there is a linear relationship between state violence and protests, such that an increase in violence results in weaker protest activity (Gurr, 1970; DeNardo, 1985). Finally, there can be a substantive difference between the short- and long-term effects of state repression (Chenoweth et al., 2017; Earl & Soule, 2010; Rasler, 1996; Sullivan et al., 2012). In many cases, state repression

does deter protests in the short term, because it considerably increases costs of participation (McAdam et al., 2001). However, in the long term, there can be something akin to a “boomerang” effect (Chenoweth et al., 2017), whereby state violence suppresses dissent in short term, but then, by fuelling people’s anger at the regime, leads to further dissent in the future (Aytaç et al., 2017; Hess & Martin, 2006; Martin, 2007). For example, during the 2013 Euromaidan in Ukraine, the protest police’s use of violence to subdue protesters and young students resulted in a greater mass mobilisation and growing protests (Ondetti, 2006). In a recent study of ten protest waves from three different regions and time periods²³, Franklin (2019) demonstrates that reactive repression (in response to the protest) is not as effective as preemptive repression prior to the protest. Therefore, the presence of state repression does not mean that protests are necessarily doomed. In the short term, however, it is likely that state violence will become a significant obstacle to democratic transition, either by temporarily suppressing mass mobilisation or by initiating a violent conflict with more radical parts of the opposition.

The question most pertinent to this research is how autocrats make the decision to use violence. The broad consensus in the literature is that autocrats should be treated as rational actors for whom the use of repression is a purely strategic decision. The rational-actor framework implies that the principal reason why autocrats use violence is their belief that this option brings more benefits (such as the regime’s survival) than costs (such as international condemnation and sanctions) (Aytaç et al. 2017; Earl, 2003). As Valentino

²³ Franklin’s (2019) study covers Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile in the 1980s; China, Mongolia, and Taiwan in the 1990s; and Serbia (with two protest waves), Ukraine, and Belarus in the 2000s.

(2004) observes in his book *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century*, “perpetrators see mass killing as a means to an end, not an end in itself” (p. 235).

To stay with the rational-actor explanation, democratic protests impose costs on the regime, and the severity of these costs can be determined by the protests’ goal, use (or non-use) of violence, and level of organisation (Carey, 2010; Klein & Regan, 2018; Regan & Henderson, 2002; Valentino, 2004). In the first place, the broader the objective of the protest, the higher the cost for the regime. Klein and Regan (2018), in their study of government-protest dynamics, categorise the costs of protests into the costs of concession and the costs of disruption. The costs of disruption are economic costs brought by the disruption of economic activities. The costs of concession are political costs defined by the violence associated with protests and the nature of those protests’ demands. The more anti-regime the protest demands are, the higher the costs of concession. High concession costs inevitably result in a regime’s use of coercive force.

Second, violent protests almost always evoke a harsh response from the government, because the regime views such protests as posing a greater threat. Besides being a physical threat, violent protests weaken the government’s credibility in the eyes of the broader population, given that with them the regime appears to lose a monopoly on violence (Carey, 2010; Davenport, 1995). Conrad and Moore (2010), in their evaluation of what stops states from torturing, find that governments are more likely to stop using torture when dissent stops using violence. Similarly, Chenoweth and Perkoski (2017) observe that mass killings by governments are much more frequent during episodes of violent dissent compared to non-violent ones. Yet the debate about whether violent protests are always detrimental to their own goals has not been yet settled. Bermeo (1997) suggests that in some cases the

presence of violent tactics only reinforces the negotiation position of the opposition. Likewise, de Mesquita and Smith (2010) argue that in some situations, at least, authoritarian regimes choose to respond to anti-regime protests and riots with liberalisation measures. In an analysis of democratic transitions from 1980 to 2010, Kadivar and Ketchley (2018) show that in more than a few cases (one-third of all democratic transitions in the Third Wave) unarmed protest violence (fighting with police, looting, using Molotov cocktails) did not have any negative influence on democratic transition.

Finally, well-organised protests are usually perceived to be a bigger problem than spontaneous mass uprisings, because organised protests signal commitment and a recurrent threat to the regime (Carey, 2010). Furthermore, some study findings indicate that state repression is less effective against well-organised, coordinated protests (Sutton et al., 2014). Therefore, as noted previously, a well-organised violent protest with broad political goals is most likely to elicit a violently coercive response from authoritarian regimes.

In a recent study of the factors bearing on state violence, Tolstrup and colleagues (2019) call for a closer investigation not only of domestic but also of international determinants of the use of repression, and of the influence of so-called “autocracy promoters”.²⁴ There have been previous studies of the role played by international organisations that engage in “naming and shaming” tactics to discourage dictators from human rights’ violations (DeMeritt, 2012; Hafner-Burton, 2005; Hathaway, 2007; Krain, 2014). Nonetheless, it has long been assumed that domestic factors are much more significant for state repression than international ones (Davenport & Inman, 2012). Tolstrup

²⁴ An “autocracy promoter” is a non-democratic actor that makes deliberate attempts to export its political institutions to other countries (Burnell & Schlumberger, 2010). The most frequently mentioned autocracy promoters are Russia and China (Tolstrup, 2009).

and colleagues (2019), however, show that signals of support from the “great power patrons”²⁵ (namely, Russia and China) make authoritarian leaders feel more secure, and induce them to use increasingly more aggressive policies.

While there is a vast literature about the factors that facilitate authoritarian use of violence, there is still a lot to learn about the process of how decisions to employ violence are made (Shellman, 2006). The present study focuses on the under-researched influence of cultural factors on authoritarian decision-making. In the few investigations of this subject that have been published to date, scholars have emphasised that elites’ normative preferences matter insofar as they help form policy preferences. Mainwaring and Perez-Linan (2013) partly explain the divergence between democracies and dictatorships in Latin America by factoring in the normative preferences of members of the elite—preferences that shape their support for a given regime’s coalitions. As the authors observe, “political actors support the coalition that is most likely to satisfy their demands for a broad range of policy outcomes and normative preferences about political regime” (p. 34). Stevens et al. (2006) study the effects of antidemocratic attitudes among the elites of Latin America²⁶, discovering a significant relationship between authoritarian attitudes and the policy preferences of elites, such as support for social order and for a governmental role vis-à-vis the economy.

The existing research, however, tends to assume that the main source of authoritarian beliefs lies in the autocratic nature of the regime, with elites being exposed to ideas and norms through socialisation via their colleagues and close contacts. Moreover, practices of selective recruitment for top government positions are designed to ensure selection of

²⁵ Tolstrup et al. (2019, p. 519) define “great power patrons” as (great) powers “that have stood up for the incumbent autocracy in the past”.

²⁶ The sample included Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Mexico, and Venezuela.

individuals with high value conformity (Peffley & Rohrschneider, 2007; Putnam, 1976; Sullivan et al., 1993). Therefore, a natural conclusion is that elites who are socialised in a non-democratic context are very likely to develop and sustain authoritarian attitudes.

This is, however, not always the case. For example, studies of post-communist countries show that many post-Soviet elites believe in a traditional liberal notion of democracy associated with individual freedoms, despite their long-term non-democratic background (Miller et al., 1997). Somer (2011), in his study of Turkish political elites, asks a similar question: namely, whether it takes “democrats” to democratise. He proceeds to demonstrate how Islamic political elites in Turkey have gone through the process of value democratisation and moderation. His research shows that even illiberal elites can adopt democratic values. At first, it might happen for purely instrumental purposes; but there can also be a further process by which the values are internalised. Therefore, a non-democratic context does not always translate into a prevalence of authoritarian attitudes among elites. Yet the question remains: what could be the source of democratic attitudes in non-democracies? The next section addresses this question in more detail.

4.2. Democratic Support in Non-Democracies: Origins

Most of the existing research on democratic support focuses on democracies where people’s endorsement of democratic values is explained in terms of their previous experience with democratic institutions (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Camacho, 2019; Clarke, Dutt, & Kornberg, 1993; Hadenius & Teorell, 2005; Jackman & Miller, 1998; Muller & Seligson, 1994; Norris, 1999; Rustow, 1970; Seligson, 2002). It is more challenging to explain the origins of democratic support in countries whose citizens, even though they have not had

direct experience with democracy, nonetheless find democracy highly desirable. A skewed understanding of democracy is one possible explanation for this pattern; but how to explain observations of democratic support that are linked to traditional liberal ideas? Analysis of the existing literature suggests several possible explanations, summarised here as the modernisation, political culture, and external influences theories.

The Modernisation Theory

The modernisation theory proposes a causal connection between socioeconomic modernisation, support for democratic/liberal values, and democratic transition (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Lipset, 1959; Welzel, 2006). Although the origins of the modernisation hypothesis go back to the 1950s, it still remains one of the most frequently cited explanations for democratisation. Under the modernisation theory, democracy is perceived as a product of economic development, modernisation, and social changes such as industrialisation, urbanisation, and the rise of literacy and the middle class (Boix & Stokes, 2003; Epstein et al., 2006; Lipset, 1959; Murtin & Wacziarg, 2014).²⁷ According to the theory, these socioeconomic changes trigger the transformation of the political culture and create growing mass support for democratic and liberal values, which provide an important condition for further democratic consolidation.

The hypothesis concerning the relationship between socioeconomic modernisation and changes in mass attitudes is further developed by Inglehart and Welzel (2005) in their

²⁷ There are well-known problems with the modernisation theory. The best known criticism was developed by Przeworski and colleagues (2000), who argued that socioeconomic conditions could be crucial for democracy's survival but did not have any direct effect on the emergence of democracy in the first place. In other words, democracy was more likely to survive in rich rather poor countries, but democratisation could occur regardless of the initial economic conditions. Since they were first published, Przeworski's findings have been tested, resulting in the discovery that the relationship between income per capita and democracy has not been uniform across various time periods (Boix & Stokes, 2003; Treisman, 2012). Income had a weak endogenous effect on democracy during the period 1950-2000, whereas the relationship was much stronger prior to 1950.

cultural or emancipative theory of democracy. The authors suggest a causal connection among socioeconomic modernisation, the rise of emancipative or self-expression values in society, and the emergence of collective actions taken to attain and sustain democracy. As Inglehart and Welzel (2005, p. 209) put it:

Favorable existential conditions contribute to emerging self-expression values that give individual liberty priority over collective discipline, human diversity over group conformity, and civic autonomy over state authority... Rising self-expression values provide a social force that operates in favor of democracy, helping to establish democracy where it does not yet exist, and strengthening democracy where it is already in place.

The modernisation explanation works well for some case studies. For example, taking the case of the post-communist Russia, where mass democratic support increased by 20 percent between 1995 and 2006, there is a significant correlation between the rise in the endorsement of democratic values and triple-digit growth of Russia's GDP per capita. A clear causal link can be established among Russia's resource-based economic growth, social modernisation, the development of the urban middle class, and a broader shift in public values (Inozemtsev & Dutkiewicz, 2013).

That said, in other cases—such as the case of Georgia—the modernisation hypothesis does not offer a satisfactory explanation. In the post-Soviet period, Georgia's economic development and rising levels of education did correlate with increased mass support for certain emancipative values such as interpersonal trust. However, these same trends were also correlated with an increase in religiosity (Metrishvili & Metrishvili, 2014). At the same time, support for other key emancipative values, such as an inclusive attitude towards homosexuality, did not see any significant increase. These conflicting developments in Georgia's political culture demonstrate that economic development and modernisation do not always result in a society's embrace of emancipative values.

The Political Culture Theory

Mass attitudes towards democracy can also be analysed from the perspective of political culture. From this perspective, the social and cultural values of each nation are understood using the framework of political culture. Political culture can be defined as a set of stable, long-lasting attitudes shared by people within national communities, passed from generation to generation through the process of socialisation, and resistant to rapid changes (Fuchs, 2007; Smith, 2019). Insofar as these shared values and beliefs inform political behaviour, a long-standing assumption, also known as the democratic culture theory, holds that certain cultural beliefs are conducive to the emergence and survival of democracy (Almond & Verba, 1963; Diamond, 1999; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Putnam, 1993). In a general sense, the definition of democratic culture refers to the emergence of critically engaged citizens who uphold civic values, actively participate in the political life of their national communities, and sustain political and civil freedoms (Lacy, 2013; Norris, 2011). Here, we can turn to the classic works on political culture, such as de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835), Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture* (1963), and Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* (1993). These seminal works demonstrate that the life and functioning of many societies, including their attitudes towards democracy, are often determined by the enduring legacy of their political culture, a product of specific historical junctures that have played a key role in nations' development and choices (Jamal & Kensicki, 2016).

The political culture argument can be described as a "primordialist" approach to culture, because it defines culture as fixed and largely resistant to external changes (Geertz, 1973). In contrast to the modernisation theory, the political culture approach assumes that

national values and beliefs are not influenced by socioeconomic transformations; rather, those processes themselves are influenced by the society's values and beliefs. Ultimately, I would describe political culture theory as an essentialist argument that cautiously suggests that some societies and cultures are inherently more compatible with democratic institutions than others. In the words of Montesquieu (1752, p. 1), political institutions should be designed "in relation to the religion of the inhabitants, to their inclinations, riches, numbers, commerce, manners, and customs".

The External Influences Theory

Finally, in certain cases, mass attitudes and the adoption of new norms can be influenced from the outside. The influences can be both deliberate and non-deliberate. An example of non-deliberate influence is the phenomenon of norm diffusion or socialisation, which has been extensively studied in international relations (Acharya, 2004; Borzel & Risse, 2012; Checkel, 1997; Elkins & Simmons, 2005; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; March & Olsen, 2008; Payne, 2001; Risse & Sikkink, 1999; Wiener, 2008). Norm diffusion is understood as the process through which ideas and norms spread across time and space (Borzel & Risse, 2012). This process lacks any centralised intention and coordination; rather, it works because the norms are perceived as appropriate and effective by the actors that adopt them (Ambrosio, 2010). The appropriateness of norms refers to their perceived legitimacy, which increases with the number of actors who adopt these norms (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). The effectiveness of norms refers to the social learning process, whereby actors observe and learn from the experience of others and subsequently adopt the norms that result in the most effective outcomes (Elkins & Simmons, 2005). Norm diffusion often occurs due to simple geographical proximity; this pattern explains the emergence of regional democratic clusters,

as was the case in Southern Europe in the 1970s (Whitehead, 1996). Sometimes, however, it is not only geography but also common culture and identity that enable norm diffusion—as was the case with the 2011 Arab Spring protests that rapidly spread from Tunisia and Egypt to Yemen and Syria (Bellin, 2012).

However, norms vary in their levels of appeal and legitimacy. During the last couple of decades, democracy has enjoyed strong public support almost everywhere in the world (Moller & Skaaning, 2013; Norris, 2011; Steenekamp & du Toit, 2017). Democracy's popularity can explain the proliferation of various foreign policy strategies to foster democratic norms on the global level. Such strategies include democracy promotion, “by which an external actor intervenes to install or assist in the institution of democratic governance in a target state” (Hobson & Kurki, 2012, p. 3). The concept of political conditionality²⁸ is widely used to study democracy promotion methods. There are two rival theories that explain why non-democratic actors often comply with democratic conditionality: namely, the rationalist and the constructivist theories (Sedelmeier, 2012). In the rationalist approach, actors comply with democratic conditions because there are credible and tangible rewards that outweigh the domestic costs of adopting the conditions (Kubicek, 2013). In the constructivist view, non-material factors play a key role in successful norm adoption, including the legitimacy of the norms in the eyes of external actors (Guney & Tekin, 2015; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005). Thus, the constructivist approach illuminates how democratic conditionality can influence elites' perceptions of norms and

²⁸ The principle of conditionality rests on simple logic “do X get Y” meaning a target state has to improve its democratic performance in order to get a lucrative trade agreement or financial aid (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2013).

their appropriateness, resulting in the diffusion of democratic norms even in non-democratic societies.

To summarise, there are several reasons why citizens of non-democracies may endorse democratic principles without having an actual democratic experience in the first place. The modernisation theory emphasises the role of economic development and social modernisation, suggesting that these processes result in the rise of support for post-industrial values that accentuate individual freedoms and active political participation. The political culture theory instead focuses on long-term historical and structural factors, which are unique and immutable for each nation. Finally, the external influences theory recognises the role of globalisation and cross-national influences in the diffusion and socialisation of norms—if the norms in question possess high external legitimacy, like those associated with democracy do.

5. Summary: Addressing the Unknowns

As it can be seen in this chapter, there is a large amount of research on protest participation and various incentives that encourage people to defy authority (Beissinger, 2007, 2013; Booth & Seligson, 2009; Brancati, 2016; Bunce & Wolchik, 2006; Chaisty & Whitefield, 2013; Larson et al., 2019; Thyen & Gerschewski, 2018). There is, however, still much research to be done about private preferences in the formation of individuals' protest thresholds (Opp, 2009). The mobilising theory introduced in this research contributes to the existing literature by assessing whether individual's support for democracy can be a key factor that affects individuals' incentives to participate, subsequently, lowering individuals'

protest thresholds, thereby making it easier to mobilise people. Accordingly, the first contribution of this study to the field is the development of a missing causal chain that links an individual's support for democracy with his or her final decision to join a democratic protest in a non-democratic setting.

In relation to responses to protests by the regime and by members of the elite, there is also an extensive literature that studies factors that can potentially influence a violent response from the state (Davenport, 2007a; Klein & Regan, 2018). The overall consensus is that a non-democratic regime uses repression when a protest movement is perceived as a serious threat, meaning that it is large, well-organized, and fomented by participants who are not shy about using violence. However, although there is extensive research on state repression and its determinants, there is a research gap when it comes to the potential relationship between broad cultural factors such as public support for democracy and a state's inclination to deploy violence. Therefore, another principal theoretical contribution from this research is the introduction of the moderating hypothesis; this hypothesis reveals a causal pathway through which a pro-democratic political culture can affect authoritarian decision-making. In summary, this research introduces a novel perspective on the causal relationship between democratic support and protest participation, on the one hand, and democratic support and the way regimes respond to protests, on the other hand. These causal mechanisms have not been identified, let alone analysed, in previous studies.

**CHAPTER 3. THE THEORY:
THE MOBILISING AND MODERATING EFFECTS**

People often feel that they are obliged to participate when certain conditions are given, such as unjust political decisions of political bodies. Conformity to one's moral conceptions yields utility, whereas defection is costly.

Opp (1994, p. 103)

This chapter takes a detailed look at two hypotheses investigated in this research; these hypotheses centre on the mobilising and moderating effects of democratic support. The mobilising theory suggests that strong mass democratic support in non-democracies makes it easier to mobilise people for democratic protests, because their individual incentives are stronger and protest threshold is lower. The theoretical foundations for this hypothesis derive from studies on the collective-action problem and the role of private preferences in determining protest thresholds (Aytaç & Stokes, 2019; Kuran, 1991; Opp, 1994), as well as from work on framing theory. Framing theory describes how an individual's identification with a protest's goal can enhance or decrease his or her propensity to join the protest.

The second moderating theory considers the role of a pro-democratic political culture vis-à-vis the process of authoritarian decision-making; it suggests that public democratic support can have a moderating effect on the cognitive processes of authoritarian elites. The result of this moderating influence is the diminished acceptability of using violence against the protesters.

1. The Mobilising Theory

If you asked anybody what they wanted during the Rose Revolution, what they were dreaming about, they would say democratic and non-corrupt.

Eka Grigalava, a participant in Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution

We had certain experiences that made us different. First, Georgia is a part of Europe. Georgians see themselves as Europeans, a freedom-loving society that does not follow orders. We are a disobedient society, this is part of our culture. It was not easy to move to peaceful disobedience, but the civil war had played a big role. Hope played a big role, too. A lot had to do with our psychological mindset. We had a big migration out of the country, but still there were people who saw their future in this land. They wanted to build something that allowed for personal freedoms. Allowed for a just society. So, I think that was it.

Giorgi Meladze, a participant in Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution

Existing research on democratic and civic culture suggests that strong public support for democracy is overall beneficial for the emergence and quality of democracy (Almond & Verba, 1963; Dalton, 2000; Diamond, 1999; Easton, 1965; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Lipset, 1959; Mattes & Bratton, 2007; Norris, 2011; Rose et al., 1998). However, it is not always clear how the mechanisms of democratic support operate in practice. The present study aims to fill this gap by introducing the mobilising effect of democratic support, which motivates people to resist authoritarian regimes by taking part in democratic protests.

Protest participation is traditionally analysed through the framework of collective action problem when people decide to join a protest because they believe that the utility that they derive from their participation outweighs the costs (Chong, 1991; Goldstone, 1994; Hechter, Friedman, & Applebaum, 1982; Linares, 2004; Lochmann, 1994; Opp et al., 1995;

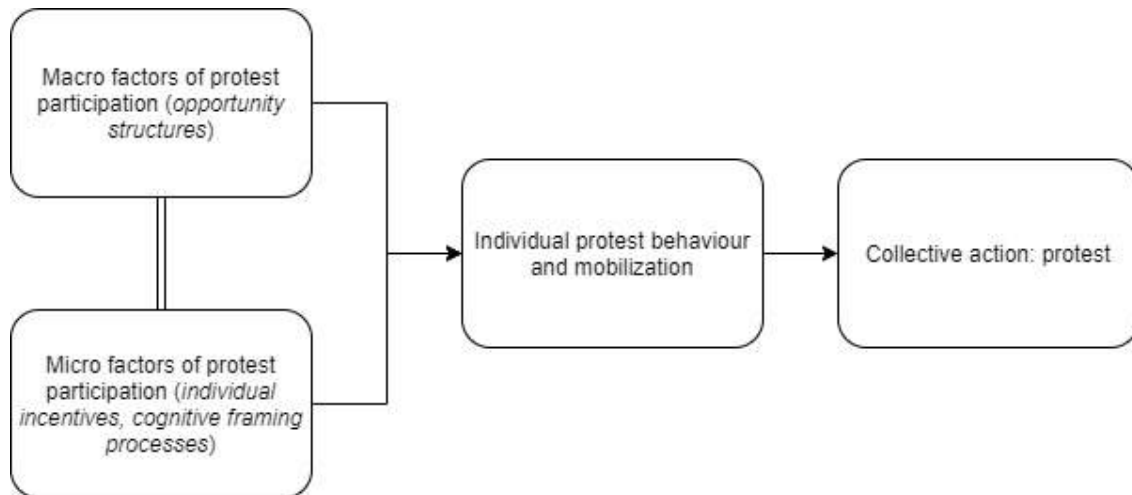
Wood, 2003). The utility of participation in collective action is always marginal, because one person's participation is unlikely to produce a difference in the outcome. Therefore, the initial incentive to participate is rather weak (Olson, 1965). At the same time, if the protest fails, then the cost of participation can be quite high, given the threat of authoritarian repression. There is thus a strong incentive for individuals to abstain from participating in protests and to "free-ride" on the achievements of others.

However, as we know, mass protests still regularly occur in non-democracies. Accordingly, certain factors on structural and individual levels can increase the perceived benefits of participation and lower the protest threshold (Lichbach, 1994; Nagel, 1987; Taylor, 1988). On macro/structural level, resource mobilisation theory states that such factors often refer to availability of structural resources such as: finances, time, knowledge and skills, access to facilities and mass media, population support, and institutions (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). On micro/individual level, supporters of value expectancy theory²⁹ (Klandermans, 1984, 1997) and framing model (Snow et al., 1986) emphasize importance of individual incentives such as grievances, expected benefits, and perception of personal efficacy (Buhaug, Cederman, & Gleditsch, 2014; Shadmehr, 2014). Both of these levels are accounted for in the structural-cognitive model of protests and social movements (Figure 3.1) introduced by Karl-Dieter Opp (2009) where both macro- and micro-factors of protest participation are synthesized into a unified model.

²⁹ In value expectancy theory, individual's behavior is determined by perceived value of expected outcomes and factors such as personal efficacy and expected number of participants.

Figure 3.1

Cognitive-structural Model of Protest Participation



Note. Adapted from Opp (2009, p. 328).

Mobilising theory is focused on micro- or individual-level part of mobilisation specifically role of individual’s democratic support in protest framing processes that determine individual’s protest behaviour (Opp, 2009, p. 332). In the framing theory, individual’s decision to join a protest depends on how well the protest’s goals fit that individual’s “frame” (Snow et al., 1986). The “frame” here refers to a certain cognitive framework or belief system that allows the individual to interpret the world by identifying patterns, categorising situations and things, and making meaning of events. Each individual has certain mental models (or frames) that include a number of beliefs and normative judgements, such as, for example, “democracy is good, non-democracy is bad”. Protests and social movements involve frames as well; indeed, they actively use certain frames to bring

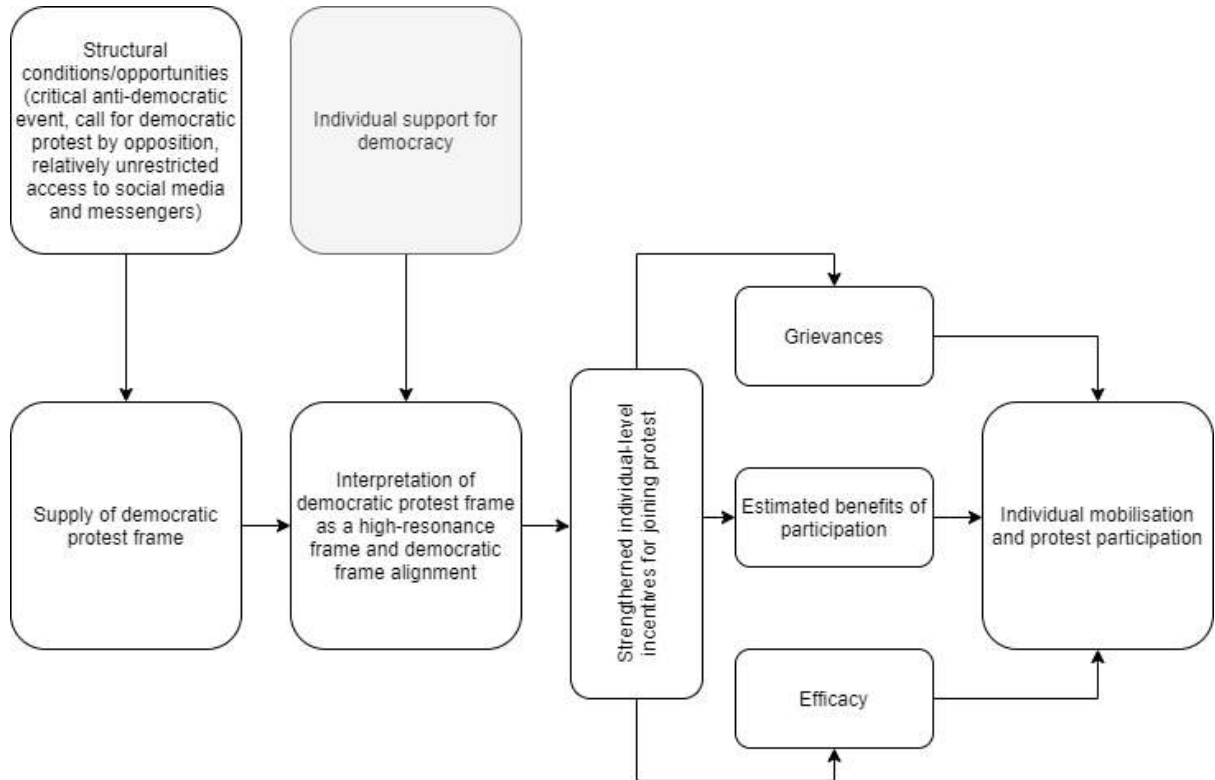
public attention to facts like fraudulent elections, with the aim of generating a strong reaction from individuals who find electoral fraud unjust and unfair. The moment when a protest's frame aligns with the cognitive models of multiple individuals and causes them to recognise some aspects of reality as unjust and requiring reparative action is known in the framing literature as "frame alignment" (Opp, 2009). Frame alignment is a crucial condition of mass mobilisation; it establishes a linkage between people's beliefs and the protest's goals and motivates people to join the protest.

There are some conditions that make certain frames more successful than others when it comes to frame alignment. One crucial factor is "frame resonance", meaning that a protest's frame must "resonate" with audiences, through "a (close) fit between [the] frame and audiences' previous beliefs, worldviews, and life experiences" (Williams, 2004, p. 105). Frame resonance itself depends on a number of criteria, such as frame consistency, empirical credibility, the credibility of frame's promoters, centrality, and narrative fidelity (Snow & Benford, 1992). Since frame alignment does not happen with low-resonance frames, the key to a successful mobilisation of individuals is to *put forward a protest goal that closely resonates with the beliefs and worldviews of the broader public.*

In mobilising theory, protest mobilisation happens as a result of macro/micro interactions between supply of a democratic protest frame by protest organizers and successful alignment of this frame with potential protest participants because of their support for democracy (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2

Mobilising Theory of Democratic Support and Protest Mobilisation



The process starts with a critical event³⁰ that initiates a strong response from broad public. In the case of democratic protest, a critical event should constitute a glaring anti-democratic behaviour such as fraudulent elections or a gross violation of human rights. A follow-up call for a democratic protest by opposition leaders, therefore, provides a democratic protest frame for broad population.

³⁰ In Opp's (2009, p. 95) interpretation, critical event is a 'suddenly imposed grievance' that changes incentives for collective actions for individuals.

However, a democratic protest frame does not result in large-scale protest mobilisation in absence of individuals' endorsement of democracy. A support for democracy is necessary for interpretation of democratic protest frame as a high-resonance frame (relevant, credible, and consistent with beliefs of majority) and successful frame alignment that increases individual's incentives for participating in a collective action by affecting intensity of anti-democratic grievances, perception of estimated benefits from participation, and belief in personal efficacy.

As a protest determinant, grievances are considered to be among classical factors of mobilisation that can decrease value of status quo for potential participants (Buhaug, Cederman, & Gleditsch, 2014; Buechler, 2004; Gurr, 1970; Muller, 1985; Shadmehr, 2014). The stronger is the intensity of grievances, the easier it is to overcome a collective action problem for participants (Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005; Goldstone, 2001). Given that people have a strong prior preference for democracy, anti-democratic grievances are expected to have a high intensity.

Perceived benefits from taking a democratic action are estimated to be high due to participants' normative desirability for democracy in relation to a non-democratic status quo. Normative desirability, or moral benefits of a collective action, has been introduced as a mobilisation factor in a number of protest studies (Bandura, 1986; Jasper, 1997; Sabucedo et al., 2018; Vilas & Sabucedo, 2012). Wood (2003) in her research of popular support for insurgents in El Salvador civil war describes benefits of participation in contentious politics using non-conventional normative terms. In particular, her explanation of participation is focused on the idea of "pleasure in agency" (p. 235) when benefits of participation are associated with "self-determination, autonomy, self-esteem, efficacy, and pride that come

from the successful assertion of intention.” Stapnes, Carlquist, and Horst (2020) in their analysis of protest participation introduce idea of “responsibility to protest” that comes from perceived violation of moral standards and moral obligation to participate in collective action that they observed among protest participants in Myanmar. Finally, Aytaç and Stokes (2019) talk about costs of abstention from protest participation on the examples of late 2010s mass protests in Turkey and Ukraine described as ethical and moral conundrums that people experienced when they passed on an opportunity to participate meaningfully in political life.

Finally, estimation of personal efficacy is expected to be high due to a perceived large number of people who are unhappy about a critical event (Klandermans, 1984). This last incentive structure is, however, dependent on existence of structural opportunities to learn and share information about anti-democratic grievances such as access to opposition media or social networks (Jost et al., 2018; Larson et al., 2019). Therefore, mobilising effect is expected to be weaker in highly repressive or closed authoritarian systems that can control means of mass communication and restrict exchange of information.

Mobilising theory fits well within cascade protest models that explain logic of large-scale social movements by focusing on actions of the so-called “first movers” – people who initially form and join protest when it still has low numbers (Pearlman, 2016). Cascade models explain high protest turnout by explaining how number of participants grow until it reaches a critical mass after which utility of participation outweighs potential costs (Granovetter, 1978; Kuran, 1991; Marwell & Oliver, 1993; Lohmann, 1994, 2000). There are two primary considerations for bystanders that motivate them to join protest. Firstly, protest solves a communication problem in regimes where people might not be well-aware

about true levels of regime's unpopularity. Protest movement signals both people's dissatisfaction and regime's potential vulnerability that creates sense of common grievances (Lohmann, 1994). Secondly, there are increasing reputational costs for bystanders who have not yet joined protest (Pearlman, 2016). Both communicative and reputational considerations are considered to be strong motivational factors for mobilisation in cascade models. The genuine puzzle in cascade models comes from motivations of "first movers": why do they take on substantial costs of joining a small-n protest in the beginning? In countries with strong democratic support, mobilising theory provides a convincing answer to this question in form of individuals' preferences for democracy that affect their incentive structures.

Following from the theory, the mobilising hypothesis (H1) predicts that *strong support for democracy on the individual level makes people more likely to join democratic protests in non-democracies*. The mobilising hypothesis and its implications are tested via case studies of democratic mass mobilisation in Georgia in 2003 and Armenia in 2018³¹. Since it can be challenging to ask people direct questions about the motivations behind their decision-making, I instead look for any "shadows" or observable implications of the cognitive processes that are theorised in the mobilising hypothesis. For example, if there is a successful frame alignment between individuals and democratic protest frame, due to public support for democracy, the expectation is that interviewees will mention feelings of strengthened personal efficacy and agency arising from their efforts to assist with democratic transition.

³¹ Both countries are described as competitive authoritarian regimes with weak censorship policies at times of protest movements that ensures population had access to opposition media (Georgia) and social networks (Armenia) for learning and sharing information. The availability of communication resources is important structural condition in both mobilising and cascade protest theories.

2. The Moderating Theory

The second research question asks why some autocrats respond to democratic protests peacefully even if they have the option of coercion. This puzzle is partially informed by observations of mass protests and state responses in the former Soviet Union (FSU) region. The ex-Soviet states of Eurasia have experienced quite a few successful mass protests. Successful protests include the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia, the 2004 Orange Revolution and the 2013 Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine, the 2005 Tulip Revolution and the 2010 Melon Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, and the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia. Significantly, with the exception of Ukraine in 2013, none of these protests saw the regimes' leaders use violence in attempts to retain their power. In the case of Georgia, President Eduard Shevardnadze (1995-2003) peacefully stepped down following intense negotiations with the opposition (Kandelaki & Meladze, 2007). In Ukraine, under the presidency of Leonid Kuchma (1994-2005), the 2004 Orange Revolution saw no use of force from the state, while the 2013 Euromaidan protests encountered a substantive amount of state violence from President Viktor Yanukovich (2010-2014) (Talmazan, 2019). Both Kyrgyz presidents—Askar Akayev (1990-2005) and Kurmanbek Bakiyev (2005-2010) – abandoned their rule without trying to maintain power by force. Finally, in the latest case of Armenia in 2018, the political leader Serzh Sargsyan (2008-2018) also peacefully stepped down without using military force (MacFarquhar & Perez-Pena, 2018).

It is quite remarkable that non-democratic regimes in Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine in 2004 did not use their security apparatuses to coerce participants and disperse protests. One factor that unites all these countries, with the exception of Ukraine, is a high level of democratic support prior to the protests. Armenia had a successful mass

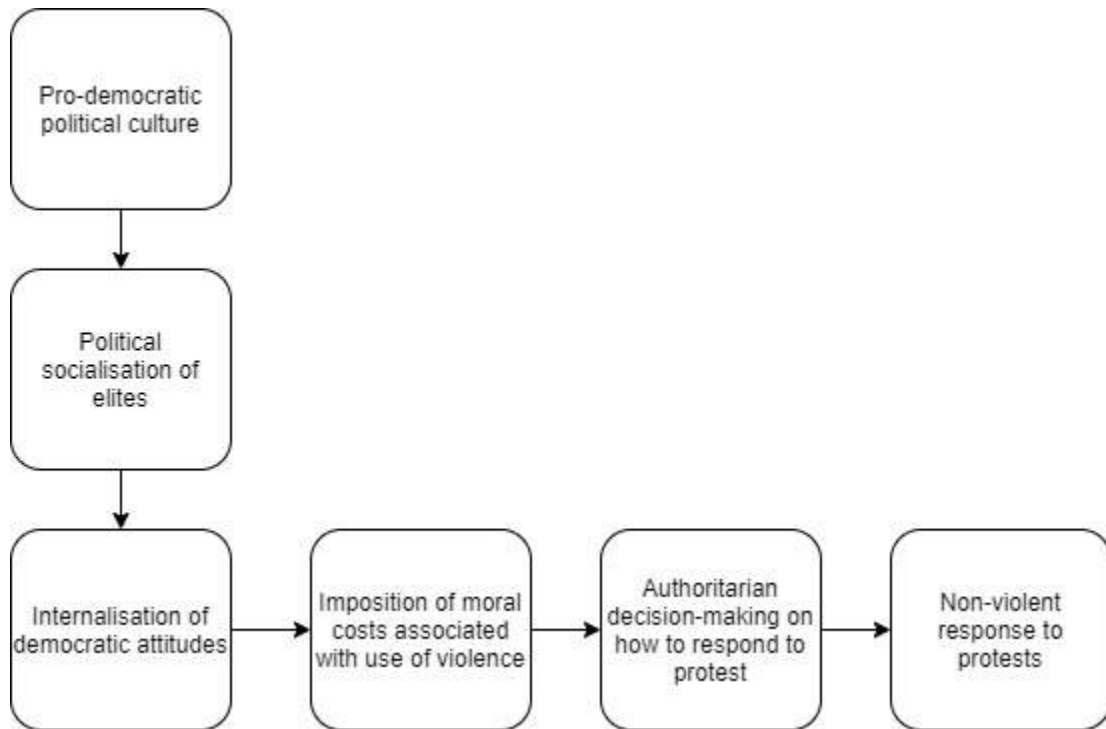
protest in 2018; its levels of democratic support reached 76% of the population in 1997 and 73% in 2011 (Inglehart et al., 2014). The Rose Revolution happened in 2003, but already in 1996 85% of Georgians showed support for democracy. Kyrgyzstan had its first successful mass protest in 2005; its level of democratic support was 78% in 2003. By contrast, Ukraine had low popular support for democracy in 1996, prior to the 2004 Orange Revolution: 55% of the population expressed support for democracy at that time.

Given that the countries that experienced mass protests and non-coercive authoritarian responses are also the countries with strong democratic preferences, the proposed moderating theory suggests there is an interaction between a pro-democratic political culture on the national level and authoritarian decision-making on the individual level. Specifically, the theory predicts that nationwide democratic attitudes get “passed” onto national elites during their process of socialisation resulting in internalisation of democratic norms. Later, when these elites are faced with dilemma of response to mass protests, these internalized norms have a cognitive effect³² on their decision-making by imposing high moral costs on violence (Figure 3.3).

³² There has been extensive research on the role of cognitive processes in decision-making (March & Simon, 1958; Simon, 1947; Snyder, Bruck, & Sapin, 1954). Here, the concept of cognition refers to the way individuals analyse information about the external world, including “people, places, ideas, or situation” (Oskamp, 1977, p. 8). The result of this analysis depends, in part, on the pre-existing worldview of the person, i.e., the beliefs and ideas that they have about how the world operates. In other words, beliefs are responsible for the construction of the cognitive frameworks through which new information is processed (Delli Carpini, 2004).

Figure 3.3

Moderating Theory of Democratic Support



The moderating theory consists of two key assumptions: internalisation of democratic norms by elites as a result of socialisation and importance of moral costs in authoritarian decision-making.

The dominant perspective in political psychology emphasises the role of early-years socialisation as primary explanation for the formation of long-lasting political attitudes such as ethnic identity, party identification, or support for a certain type of political regime (Annis & Corenblum, 1987; Bartels & Jackman, 2014; Campbell et al., 1960; Greenstein, 1975; Jennings, 1989; Jennings & Markus, 1984; Krosnik & Alwin, 1989; Neundorf & Pop-Eleches, 2020; Zaller, 1992). Preferences, values, and beliefs that result from political socialisation,

although sometimes undergo changes, are largely stable (Sears, 1975; Sears & Levy, 2003). These beliefs constitute a main cognitive framework that processes new information and later-life political experiences (Mishler & Rose, 2001b; Sears & Funk, 1992). The moderating theory assumes that if there is a stable level of strong democratic support nationwide (i.e., a level of support observed over years), then sympathies for democratic principles become a part of pro-democratic political culture that pervades all groups in society—including elites³³.

One of main arguments of moderating theory is that elites can have democratic orientations even in a non-democratic setting explained by introduction of a political culture as main source of political socialisation. Political culture is as a set of stable, long-lasting attitudes shared by people within national communities, passed from generation to generation via schools (Cantoni et al., 2017; Dinas & Northmore-Ball, 2020), family (Pop-Eleches & Tucker, 2017), and religious organisations (Mazgaj, 2010) and resistant to rapid changes (Fuchs, 2007; Smith, 2019).

Political culture is different from regime's ideology as can be observed on the history of post-communist countries such as Poland that resisted communism with major assistance of the Catholic Church (Mueller & Neundorf, 2012). Moreover, other struggles between nationalist movements in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus and the Soviet power can be interpreted as similar confrontations between national cultures and externally imposed ideology (Darden & Grzymala-Busse, 2006).

³³ There is an ongoing debate about whether elite and public's socialisation share same patterns (Sullivan et al., 1993). Empirical evidence demonstrates that it differs case-by-case. For example, if country is small, ethnically homogenous, and there is a strong sense of national identity, political socialisation for both elites and public does not have significant differences (Batiashvili, 2019).

Therefore, it should not be viewed as a paradox that even in such authoritarian entity as the Soviet Union it was possible to have some degree of liberal or pro-democratic political socialisation explained by specifics of different political cultures. For example, studies of post-communist countries show that many post-Soviet elites believe in a traditional liberal notion of democracy associated with individual freedoms, despite their long-term non-democratic background (Miller et al., 1997). Somer (2011), in his study of Turkish political elites, demonstrates how Islamic political elites in Turkey have gone through the process of value democratisation and moderation. His research shows that even illiberal elites can adopt democratic values. Therefore, a non-democratic regime does not always indicate exclusive commitment to authoritarian attitudes among elites.

The socialisation part of the theory establishes that in a pro-democratic political culture there is a strong possibility that elites' belief-sets include at least some democratic principles such as, for example, respect for others' autonomy. Another important question is how these beliefs fit into elites' decision-making in particular when they have to decide on how to respond to protests.

Existing literature strongly suggests that autocrats should be treated as rational actors for whom the use of repression is a purely strategic decision. The rational-actor framework implies that the principal reason why autocrats use violence is their belief that this option brings more benefits (such as the regime's survival) than costs (such as protest backlash, economic costs, international condemnation and sanctions) (Aytaç et al. 2017; Earl, 2003; Klein & Rogan, 2018; Shellman, 2006; Valentino, 2004). Moderating theory, parallel to mobilising theory and its idea about moral benefits from protest participation, introduces idea of moral costs that autocrats have to bear if they decide to use violence

against people. The intensity of moral costs is determined on autocrats' normative preferences and whether they hold democratic/liberal values in high regard.

The idea that normative preferences matter in elite's decision-making is not entirely new, although, there are no studies that investigate potential moral costs of repressions. In the few investigations of this subject that have been published to date, scholars have emphasised that elites' normative preferences matter insofar as they help form policy preferences. Mainwaring and Perez-Linan (2013) partly explain the divergence between democracies and dictatorships in Latin America by factoring in the normative preferences of members of the elite—preferences that shape their support for a given regime's coalitions. As the authors observe, “political actors support the coalition that is most likely to satisfy their demands for a broad range of policy outcomes and normative preferences about political regime” (p. 34). Stevens et al. (2006) study the effects of antidemocratic attitudes among the elites of Latin America³⁴, discovering a significant relationship between authoritarian attitudes and the policy preferences of elites, such as support for social order and for a governmental role vis-à-vis the economy.

Moderating theory, thus, makes an original suggestion that long-term nationwide democratic preferences “moderate” elites' worldviews and produce a more hesitant approach when it comes to the use of violence against dissenters. Therefore, moderating hypothesis (H2) expects that *a high level of democratic support in non-democratic countries makes autocrats less likely to use violence against protesters.*

³⁴ The sample included Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Mexico, and Venezuela.

CHAPTER 4. BAYESIAN PROCESS-TRACING AND ITS APPLICATIONS TO THE CASE STUDIES

In small-N case studies, there are two primary ways to explore the relationship between the outcome and the explanatory variable(s). The first option is to do a cross-case study, also known as the potential-outcome framework (POF), which is focused on observing whether the changes in the independent variable result in parallel changes in the hypothesised outcome (Morgan & Winship, 2007). The cross-case comparison allows the analyst to judge whether there is in fact a causal relationship between the cause and outcome. However, this kind of study does not necessarily disclose many details about the operations of the causal mechanism itself.

Since a cross-case study does not open the “black box” of causal mechanisms, the other option is to search for causal process observations (CPOs) in a within-case study. Such a study can tell a more nuanced story about how the causal mechanism operates (Beach & Pedersen, 2019). The CPO is broadly understood as a piece of data or an observation that provides insight into the operation of a particular causal mechanism. It is also sometimes called diagnostic evidence, i.e., evidence “that [has] probative value in supporting or overturning conclusions” (Mahoney, 2012, p. 571). The search for CPOs is the essence of the within-case method of process-tracing, which aims to identify and describe causal pathways between independent variables and outcomes (Bennet & Checkel, 2015).

However, within-case process-tracing can also be far from precise: at times, it can be difficult to say for what part of the causal process CPOs provide evidence. As Beach and Pederson (2019) put it, “how can we claim that our hoop test is evidence when we are never

told *what* is jumping through the hoop?”. An example used by the authors involves process-tracing the hypothesis that the impact of a meteorite led to the extinction of the dinosaurs (Mahoney & Barrenechea, 2019). The paper does not specify *a priori* what parts of the causal mechanism can be confirmed by which sorts of evidence. For example, the discovery of iridium in the earth’s crust in Italy are interpreted as providing strong support for the overall hypothesis. However, as Beach and Pederson (2019) point out, the presence of iridium offers support for only for *part* of the hypothesis: namely, that a meteorite indeed hit the Earth millions of years ago. It could be a large meteorite, but it also could be a small one. The truly decisive evidence comes from another discovery: the presence of iridium in Denmark’s soil. This finding confirms that meteorite did indeed have a large-radius impact.

This example illustrates some of the problematic aspects of within-case process-tracing. Specifically, problems can arise when the meaning or significance of the evidence is assessed by an *a posteriori* judgement concerning how a collected observation fits into the overall hypothesis. There is, however, a more structured way of doing the process-tracing. In this alternative method, one’s expectations about evidence discovery and meaning are specified and outlined *prior* to the process of data collection. The present study relies on this method, known as Bayesian process-tracing, in analysing the two case studies.

1. Introducing Bayesianism: Why Use It for the Case Studies?

Bayesian process-tracing bears a strong resemblance to detective work: it, too, uses deductive logic to assess how much confidence a discovered piece of evidence provides for the hypothesis in question (Bennett, 2015). In political science, interest in Bayesianism has been increasing, although “in qualitative case research it still remains a frontier that has not

been definitively addressed” (Fairfield & Charman, 2017, p. 1). In this connection, a number of researchers have suggested using Bayesianism as a part of mixed-method and qualitative research, but in practice work of this sort remains scarce (Bennett, 2015; Fairfield, 2015; Humphreys & Jacobs, 2015; Rohlfing, 2012). This study aims to contribute to the popularisation of Bayesianism by highlighting its advantages for a small-N case study.

Bayesianism indeed has much to offer case-study-based research. To start with, it provides a transparent and clear procedure for hypothesis testing. The process itself consists of several simple stages: identification of plausible hypotheses, assessment of the prior probabilities for these hypotheses (how likely it is that each hypothesis is true, based on prior knowledge), evidence collection, and estimation of the posterior probabilities for the hypotheses given the new evidence. The final confidence in the hypothesis is always proportional to the quality of the new evidence and observations. A high degree of confidence in the hypothesis is likely to be obtained only if it is supported by reliable evidence that does not allow for multiple interpretations. In other words, in Bayesianism your hypothesis is only as good as your evidence. This linear, transparent approach makes it easy for any observer to follow all the stages of the process-tracing from beginning to the end. In Beach and Pederson’s (2019) words, “the idea of purely objective ‘science’ is a myth: scientists always bring some subjective biases to the table. The Bayesian counterargument is that by laying subjective beliefs out openly on the table, we can produce more objective research.”

Furthermore, Bayesianism allows the analyst to compare rival hypotheses and see which one of them receives stronger empirical support. This is why Bayesianism can be particularly helpful in the situations where the evidence is complex and does not favour a

single explanation. Here, it should be noted that theoretical heterogeneity³⁵ is endemic to political science research, including the research informing the present study. Both mass mobilisation and authoritarian violence can be the outcome of several different factors. Accordingly, because in both case studies there are alternative theories that rival my hypotheses, Bayesianism provides an evidence-based assessment of how confident I am that my hypotheses are true—given that there is empirical support for several competing explanations.

For example, a long-standing explanation for the 2003 mass mobilisation in Georgia focuses on people's socioeconomic grievances and their disappointment with the government's performance. However, evidence from the 2018 interviews and some earlier accounts shows that although people had in fact been unhappy with state's outputs, there were also purely political grievances about Shevardnadze's anti-democratic practices, including his resorting to electoral fraud, that prompted people to join the protest. This evidence provides a strong positive confirmation for the mobilising role of support for democracy in protest participation. At the same time, however, it does not exclude or ignore other factors of mobilization. The use of Bayesian process-tracing thus allows me both to demonstrate that democratic support played a significant role in mass mobilisation in Georgia in 2003 and to acknowledge that there is empirical support for other explanatory factors, such as dissatisfaction with quality of life. Most of the stories we tell in social science are complex causal narratives, and Bayesianism allows analysts to preserve and show this complexity in a structured and accessible way.

³⁵ Theoretical heterogeneity describes the situation where there is more than one possible explanation for an outcome.

Finally, it is important to note that Bayesianism can work with any type of evidence, as long as that evidence can “tell” something new about the hypothesis in question (Fairfield & Charman, 2017). In my case studies, I use both qualitative and quantitative data, including interviews, a literature review, and survey data. The importance of each piece of evidence does not depend on its type but on other characteristics, such as the credibility of the source and the reliability of a given piece of evidence, which can be estimated by cross-checking the data with other sources. The cross-checking, or triangulation, of evidence is important in Bayesianism, because a genuinely reliable piece of evidence is one that can be corroborated by several independent sources.

2. How to Do Bayesianism

Formal versus Informal Bayesianism

Before discussing the method itself, it is important to note there is a certain divide between scholars who use “logical” (Bennett, 2015; Fairfield & Charman, 2017; Humphrey & Jacobs, 2015) versus “informal” or “psychological” versions of Bayesianism (Beach & Pederson, 2019). The main difference is whether one uses formal mathematical rules and logarithmic scales for the estimation of Bayesian probabilities or else employs a more interpretivist and less formalised approach. As Fairfield and Charman (2017, p. 2) put it,

Whereas psychological Bayesianism treats probabilities as a matter of informed opinion, logical Bayesianism seeks to represent the rational degree of belief that we should hold in propositions given the information we possess, independently of whims, hopes, or personal predilections.

For their part, however, Beach and Pederson (2019) refute the idea that informal or interpretivist approaches to Bayesianism are less “rational” than formal approaches. In

making their case, they refer to the long tradition of using informal Bayesianism in legal studies:

While we do not rule out the use of numbers and suggest the use of verbal equivalents when making claims about the probative value of evidence, quantification should not direct attention away from the critical evaluative judgment involved in transparently translating raw empirical material into mechanistic evidence. The field of legal studies had a similar debate on formalizing Bayesian reasoning during the mid-1980s and the nonquantification camp clearly won the debate with regard to employing Bayesian reasoning within individual legal cases, given the importance of qualitative interpretations of the meaning of empirical material in particular contexts that cannot be quantified. (177)

Taking this debate into account, I considered whether to proceed with a formal Bayesian approach using quantification and logarithmic scales. In the end, I was persuaded by Beach and Pederson's argument that it is problematic to use the formal approach when dealing with prior probabilities.

For one thing, in the case of prior probabilities (i.e., estimation of how much confidence can be invested in a hypothesis initially, given prior knowledge), initial knowledge about the case almost always comes from population-level studies and does not really afford relevant information about the case study in question (Leamer, 2010). Therefore, in such contexts, attempts to quantify the priors will, more often than not, lead to commission of the ecological fallacy (Beach & Pederson, 2019). To apply an analogy involving low income and crime, we know that there is a historically strong correlation between these two variables. However, this population-level knowledge should not affect the court's decision about whether a given suspect is guilty or innocent in a particular case. If the suspect comes from a low-income background, that fact might increase the overall probability that he or she committed the crime; but it should not affect the process of engaging in an impartial assessment of the evidence in a given case. The same logic applies

in the context of process-tracing. Even if one is aware of the factors that increase the overall probability that the hypothesis is accurate, this prior knowledge should not guide the assessment of the existing evidence. Because each hypothesis under Bayesian scrutiny is “innocent until proven guilty”, the estimate of prior probability does not play a genuinely meaningful role. In Beach and Pederson’s (2019, p. 177) words, “if priors were somewhat subjective, after a series of empirical tests that increase confidence in the validity of a theory, the final posterior probability would converge on the same figure irrespective of whether two different values of the prior were initially used”.

Second, since estimation of the evidence’s value is also subjective, assigning numerical values to the evidence’s uniqueness and certainty is arbitrary and not necessarily informative. As Charman and Fairfield (2015, pp. 31-32) themselves note, “the most probative pieces of evidence are precisely those for which quantification is least likely to provide added value. The author can explain why the evidence is highly decisive without the need to invent numbers.”³⁶

Bayesianism Step by Step

The classic Bayes’s theorem takes the following form (Howson & Urbach, 2006, p. 21):

$$P(H|E) = \frac{P(H)}{P(H) + \frac{P(E|\sim H)}{P(E|H)} * P(\sim H)}$$

³⁶ Although I do not use quantification and logarithmic scales, I do assign numerical values to prior and posterior probabilities during the process-tracing. However, these figures are not a product of formal logic or quantification but rather a symbolic representation of the change in confidence levels vis-à-vis the hypotheses.

$P(H)$ designates the prior probability of the hypothesis H being true before the collection of evidence E . $P(H|E)$ is the posterior probability that reflects the final degree of confidence one has in the hypothesis H after collecting the evidence E . $P(E|\sim H)$ is the theoretical uniqueness of the evidence E ; this uniqueness concerns the probability of finding evidence E under alternative explanations $\sim H$. $P(E|H)$ is the theoretical certainty of the evidence E , i.e., the probability of finding evidence E if the hypothesis H is true.

Both theoretical uniqueness and certainty are two principal characteristics of evidence E that allow the analyst to judge its value for the hypothesis confirmation. Theoretical uniqueness has a strong confirmatory effect: the higher the uniqueness of the evidence E for the hypothesis H , the less likely it is to be discovered under any other explanations $\sim H$. Theoretical certainty has a strong disconfirmatory effect: if we are positive that the evidence E must be present if hypothesis H is true, then the lack of this evidence strongly decreases confidence in the hypothesis. In other words, theoretical uniqueness corresponds to “smoking gun” evidence, while theoretical certainty is a “hoop test”.

Step 1. Introducing Hypotheses and Assessing Priors

Bayesian process-tracing starts with the introduction of hypotheses that one wishes to test in a given case study. There is rarely only one explanation for a pattern or phenomenon studied in political science; in this field, therefore, the Bayesian approach usually operates with several competing hypotheses whose probabilities are assessed against each other. In cases that are primarily focused on testing one theory, it can be easier to introduce two hypotheses, H_1 and H_2 , with H_1 being the principal hypothesis in question, and H_2 a designation for all alternative explanations. The ultimate aim of process-tracing is

to see which of the hypotheses acquires stronger final (posterior) probability following analysis of the evidence.

Introduction of the hypotheses is followed by the assignment of initial (prior) probabilities to H1 and H2. Estimation of the prior probabilities is performed on the basis of existing knowledge about the hypothesised causal mechanisms in the context of the case study (Beach & Pederson, 2019). It should be reiterated again that assessment of the priors is an exercise in subjective probability³⁷, and assigning numerical values to them is to a large degree an arbitrary process (Miller, 1987). Although the researcher should aspire to incorporate existing knowledge in the best possible and most bias-free way, it is still impossible to avoid subjectivity. Yet in Bayesianism “arbitrariness is cheerfully acknowledged rather than avoided” (Kitcher, 2002, p. 359). The advantage of the Bayesian approach is that, following the rigorous analysis of the existing evidence, final probabilities for all explanations should converge on correct values (Rosenberg, 2012).

How does assessment of the priors work in practice? Fairfield and Charman (2017) recommend starting with the position of ignorance and assigning equal probabilities to all hypotheses. However, in the process-tracing literature, the rule of ignorance is often not followed (Bennett, 2015; Rohlfig, 2012). Beach and Pederson (2019), for their part, suggest the following guidelines for the assessment of the priors. First, the analyst should start with the general question whether the causal mechanism is theoretically plausible. Here, knowledge about the relationship between independent and dependent variable(s) on the population level can be useful, since such knowledge can provide some hints about whether

³⁷ In other words, estimation of priors is just a measure of a subjective degree of belief in a certain assumption before the analysis of evidence (Rosenberg 2012, p. 195).

the hypothesis is plausible or not. Second, the researcher should consider what existing knowledge about the selected case tells us vis-à-vis the likelihood that the hypothesis is the primary explanation.

Based on my own experience with process-tracing, I have come to believe that Fairfield and Charman's advice to start from the position of ignorance is the most sensible recommendation. By assigning equal initial probabilities to all explanations, the researcher acknowledges the arbitrariness of the priors' assessment, and avoids getting distracted by the pre-existing knowledge that might not be supported by credible evidence. In the Georgia case study, one of the most frequently mentioned explanations for popular mobilisation is related to civil society theory, which emphasises the role and activities of civil society organisations (CSOs). However, during the interviews, the leaders of these organisations state that the role of the CSOs in people's mobilisation was largely overestimated by the mass media. This observation is supported further by interviews with protest participants who are outside of the civil society sector and who fail to mention any CSOs when discussing their decision to join the protest. Therefore, the evidence collection does not bestow much credibility on the civil society explanation, even though frequent references to this factor in the literature review should confer a high prior probability on the CSO-based explanation. The purpose of assigning equal prior probabilities, then, is to avoid giving preference to any hypothesis prior to the actual evidence collection.

Nonetheless, my research does apply Beach and Pederson's (2019) guidelines, and includes a two-stage assessment of the priors based on my review of the theoretical literature as well as literature pertaining to the case studies. Regardless of one's choices about how to approach priors, it does not affect the final result: the hypothesis that gains

more empirical support inevitably ends up with a stronger overall confidence than the rival explanations.

Step 2. Designing Empirical Tests: “Hoop” and “Smoking Gun” Types of Evidence

The next two steps in Bayesianism are crucial ones. Prior to proceeding directly to evidence collection and assessment, it is necessary to introduce certain empirical “hoops” through which the hypothesis must “jump” in order to prove itself valid (Beach & Pederson, 2019). These empirical hoops are the propositions that follow from the hypothesis and make up the argument map. Breaking a hypothesis into smaller propositions allows one to develop expectations about what kind of evidence one expects to find, in order to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis.

For example, if one process-traces a hypothesis about the influence of certain ideas on a policymaker’s decisions, then one of the most obvious propositions might be to expect that at some point in his/her career the policymaker had publicly committed to these ideas. The expectation is that one will discover discursive evidence that can illustrate this commitment. Such straightforward evidence meets the standard hoop test: it has high certainty but low uniqueness. In other words, the failure to discover discursive evidence has a strong disconfirmatory effect for the hypothesis, whereas success does not significantly upgrade confidence. After all, depending on the popularity and attractiveness of ideas, policymakers can express ideational commitments for a variety of instrumental purposes.

Such hoop tests are important, because they concern necessary conditions for a hypothesis to be true. However, they are not particularly informative and do not afford significant changes in the confidence level for a hypothesis, because they point to patterns that can also be observed under other explanations. For this reason, the argument map

should also aim to develop smoking gun propositions with high uniqueness that are unlikely to be observed under any other explanations. To revert to my example, such smoking gun evidence might consist of testimony from several independent witnesses with high credibility and close proximity to the source who confirm that the policymaker's motivations have strong ideational origins. At issue is a unique and certain piece of evidence that is unlikely to be observed if the hypothesis is not true.

In practice, however, such smoking gun evidence is the white whale of process-tracing. First of all (to return to my example), one would have to be quite fortunate to obtain testimony from a witness who is both credible and close to the actor in the question. To be able to cross-check this testimony against that of another source who is independent from the first source but similarly credible and proximate to the actor, one would have to be even more fortunate. My own research suggests that the most realistic option is to look for something in the middle: evidence that has medium uniqueness and high certainty. The evidence in question is more informative than a hoop test but not as decisive as a smoking gun. Accordingly, one needs to obtain several independent pieces of moderately unique evidence in order to work towards confirming or disconfirming the hypothesis.

Step 3. Evidence Collection and Evaluation of the Final Probability

The final step of the evidence-evaluation process differs depending on whether one uses formal or informal Bayesianism. If one chooses formal Bayesianism, then this stage is focused on the assessment of likelihood ratios and the evidence's uniqueness (Bennett, 2015; Fairfield & Charman, 2015). The likelihood ratio $P(E|H * I)$ refers to the likelihood of finding evidence E given the hypothesis H and prior information I ; this ratio demonstrates whether the evidence E is more probable in the world of H compared to other hypotheses.

As one sequentially incorporates different pieces of evidence into the process-tracing, the likelihood of each following piece of evidence is affected by prior findings. For example, if information from the interview $E2$ is confirmed by the prior information from the article $E1$, then the likelihood ratio $P(E2|E1 * H * I)$ will be higher than $P(E2|H * I)$. In simple terms, if the evidence is confirmed by several independent sources, its credibility is higher. The other important characteristic of the evidence in formal (and informal) Bayesianism is the weight of the evidence, i.e., its uniqueness, which shows how strongly the evidence discriminates between different hypotheses. Fairfield and Charman (2017, p. 11) measure this weight in decibels, meaning that a researcher should ask if “the evidence is whispering or shouting in favour of given hypothesis”. For example, decisive evidence that “shouts” weighs around 30 decibels.

Following evaluation of the likelihood ratios for all the available evidence, the posterior probability is then assessed by multiplying likelihood ratios for all competing hypotheses, using the following formula:

$$\frac{P(H1|E * I)}{P(H2|E * I)} = \frac{P(H1|I)}{P(H2|I)} * \frac{P(E1|H1 * I)}{P(E1|H2 * I)} * \frac{P(E2|E1 * H1 * I)}{P(E2|E1 * H2 * I)} * \frac{P(En|E1 * ... * En - 1 * H1 * I)}{P(En|E1 * ... * En - 1 * H2 * I)}$$

An alternative way to assess the meaning of each observation and its role as evidence is to interpret its uniqueness and certainty directly, without the use of likelihood ratios and a decibel scale (Beach & Pederson, 2019). Here, several caveats should be mentioned. First, failure to find evidence with high certainty does not necessarily disconfirm the hypothesis, given that the reason why evidence is not found is often related to the problem of access. When testing the moderating hypothesis in the case of Armenia, I failed to uncover any high-

certainty discursive evidence that Serzh Sargsyan (Armenia's president) endorsed democratic/liberal norms and principles. This absence, however, does not disconfirm my proposition that he held such beliefs, because my access was limited to the Russian and English portions of his speeches and interviews. It is probable that Sargsyan expressed commitment to these ideas in Armenian. Hence, the lack of positive findings should always be analysed in the context of the data accessibility.

Second, the source of evidence plays a paramount role. A good piece of evidence is one that can be corroborated by several independent sources. Data sources should always be critically evaluated. In evaluating the evidence's importance, one should ask whether the source was close or distant to the event, and whether that source could have had direct knowledge about the topic. If the evidence is obtained through an interview, then an equally important question is how much time has passed between the observation and the interview.

Third, various cognitive biases, such as people's tendency to look for simple explanations that seem most reasonable to them (Jervis, 2017), should always be taken into account. Cognitive biases raise questions of reliability—e.g., whether the source has any motivations for misrepresenting information. In almost all cases, it is preferable to have several sources confirm one observation. However, as noted previously, in certain situations it can be impossible to cross-check evidence. For example, while I was using the process-tracing method to investigate whether authoritarian decisions to use violence against the protesters were influenced by a country's pro-democratic culture and the leaders' endorsement of democratic/liberal norms, there were never more than a few witnesses present during such decisions, due to the sensitive and incriminating nature of the issues involved.

Finally, while it is important to have as many different observations as possible, for purposes of triangulation, it is worth keeping in mind the law of diminishing returns, which says that one should stop collecting evidence when adding new evidence does not reveal anything new (Beach & Pederson, 2019).

3. Process-Tracing the Effects of Democratic Support: Details and Challenges

Process-tracing ideational theories, i.e., theories that suggest certain normative preferences affect the process of decision-making and, subsequently, the outcome of the decisions made, can be quite a delicate and challenging endeavour. Empirical tests of ideational theories should ideally do three things: (a) demonstrate the presence of the independent variable, to show that the actor possesses certain ideas; (b) demonstrate the exogeneity of these ideas, to confirm that the actor's commitment to these ideas is intrinsic and cannot be explained by material circumstances or other incentives; and (c) demonstrate the effect of these ideas on the decision-making process itself (Jacobs, 2015).

These requirements imply that in order to confirm the mobilising hypothesis (a strong support for democracy on the individual level makes people more likely to join democratic protests), this research has to demonstrate (a) that the protest participants had a clear preference for democracy at the time of the democratic protests; (b) that instrumental explanations for their democratic preferences (e.g., support for democracy being a proxy for demand for better governance) can be eliminated with a high degree of confidence; and that (c) there is a clearly observed cognitive link between the participants' democratic preferences and their decision to join the protest.

The requirements for the moderating hypothesis (a high level of democratic support in non-democratic countries makes autocrats less likely to use violence against protesters) are similar. Process-tracing has to show (a) that authoritarian leaders systematically expressed commitment or sympathy for democratic and/or liberal principles prior to the protest; that (b) instrumental explanations for their ideational commitment (given that democracy has strong normative power and legitimacy) can be eliminated with a high degree of confidence; and that (c) there is a clearly observed cognitive link between democratic/liberal preferences and autocrats' decision not to use violence against the protesters.

The process-tracing design attempts to meet all three requirements in testing both hypotheses. On the country level, a steady level of strong democratic support can be confirmed in both Georgia and Armenia, starting in the early 1990s, via the WVS data. On the individual level, the study draws on interviewees' 2018 responses to questions about the participants' attitudes towards political institutions, elections, political accountability, and individual freedoms. The attitudes of non-democratic leaders towards democratic/liberal values in both cases are inferred from the analysis of their public discourse (interviews and speeches) and also from interviews with their supporters and acquaintances.

However, identifying strong democratic support on its own does not yet provide a full picture, because there is also the need to address problems of endogeneity and instrumental support. A genuine support for democracy should not be, first, a product of other factors such as democratic institutions, nor, second, a proxy for socioeconomic problems, such as concern over a weak corrupt government or low quality of life. The institutional effect is addressed

at the stage of case selection: both Georgia and Armenia were non-democracies when they exhibited the strong support for democracy shown in the early WVS data.

The proxy issue refers to the conceptual distinction between intrinsic and instrumental support for democracy (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). An intrinsic perspective postulates that democracy's value lies in its principles and procedures and not the outputs it can provide. By contrast, an instrumental perspective involves support for a democratic regime that is based on performance expectations, such as higher economic growth or greater social justice. Basically, instrumental support for democracy is a proxy for demand for other goals, such as a more capable government. For this reason, intrinsic support for democracy is of principal interest in studies of democratisation, given that such support is less volatile and not conditional on governments' performance. The test questions used in the interviews to identify intrinsic democratic support are focused on assessing the priorities of the protest participants, such as whether their preferences for the protest's outcomes were related to the emergence and strengthening of democratic institutions (transparent elections, rule of law, accountability) or economic and social well-being. The test for autocrats' intrinsic support of democratic/liberal principles is conducted, first, by checking for consistency between their narratives and actions and, second, by comparing their discourse with the narratives of their supporters and acquaintances.

Finally, the last and most challenging task in ideational process-tracing is to demonstrate that democratic support has a significant cognitive effect on the decision-making of protest participants and authoritarian leaders. With respect to the protesters, the presence of this causal link is tested using a series of questions about the participants' motivations and expectations prior to joining the protest. The methodological challenge here

is that people are often not consciously aware of the ideas and assumptions that underlie their decisions and actions. Therefore, a semi-structured or even unstructured interview can be used to ferret out complex issues such as participants' political preferences.

Doing so, however, remains a delicate task, because one cannot simply ask a direct question about how the interviewee feels about democracy. The principal reason for avoiding direct questions about democracy is that the meaning of the word "democracy" has developed far beyond a simple description of a political system. Accordingly, the interviewees' feelings about democracy might in reality be a projection of their attitudes towards U.S. foreign policy or other issues that are often tied to democracy discourse and debates. These concerns proved to be warranted, at least to some extent, in both Georgia and Armenia. The majority of the interviewees do not directly mention democracy (only two respondents in Georgia and one in Armenia focus their stories of the protest participation on the demand for democracy); instead, they insist that they wanted to achieve "practical" goals such as justice, accountability, and the rule of law. However, in the context of the interviews, it is obvious that the participants had a strong preference for a political system marked by accountability for political leaders and the separation of powers, with these features being defining characteristics of democracy. Given this context, it did not seem productive to ask the participants directly whether they protested because they wanted "democracy": they do not see themselves as concerned about such "global" matters.

Tracking the causal connection between authoritarian discourses and authoritarian leaders' decisions is even more challenging, because politicians have many reasons to conceal or distort their true motivations. The present study tests for this causal link by checking for consistency between autocrats' public discourse and their policies (e.g., their

endorsement of civil rights versus their regimes' record of human rights' violations), and also by cross-checking their narratives with the reports of interviewees who had direct access to these leaders during the decision-making period.

4. Summary: Bayesianism and Hypothesis Testing in the Case Studies

In summary, the process-tracing method is indispensable for unravelling the details of the causal mechanism that connects a hypothesised cause and one or more outcomes in small-N case studies. Bayesian process-tracing is particularly appropriate for testing causal inferences because it is an intuitive and transparent method that can incorporate several competing explanations and can be checked and cross-checked at any stage. The conclusions obtained during Bayesian process-tracing can be easily traced back to the original evidence on which those conclusions were based.

Bayesianism is particularly useful for investigations of the “black boxes” of agents and political actors, because the approach can shed light on their decision-making processes by incorporating different levels and types of evidence into the analysis. As in a good detective work, Bayesianism motivates the investigator to look everywhere for important clues—from interview responses to discourse analysis to quantitative data. This focus on a diversity of data sources is essential, because a decisive piece of evidence can sometimes come from an unlikely source—as when revealing testimony about the non-democratic motivations of Georgia's ex-President Shevardnadze came from one of his closest allies and advisors. By contrast, in the case of Armenia, the interviews did not reveal any genuinely valuable information about the motivations of the ex-Prime Minister Sargsyan. Instead, the process-tracing in the case of Armenia relied heavily on the analysis of Sargsyan's public discourse

across the years, which allowed me to identify his political preferences and attitudes towards democratic and/or liberal values.

In short, Bayesian process-tracing is a method that allows one to establish the most probable explanation in a case study given the best available information. It does not provide absolute certainty that this explanation is the correct one. To the contrary, it encourages other researchers to challenge one's conclusions if they have new or more informative evidence. This is the simplicity and beauty of Bayesianism: anyone can use a well-formulated argument map and empirical tests to assess new evidence and to evaluate how that evidence affects one's level of confidence in the hypothesis.

CHAPTER 5. GEORGIA IN 2003

Rain clouds gathered over Tbilisi, as if by order of the government. Rain poured down on protesters in front of parliament. Plastic sheets were delivered to the protesters, but everyone was cold, wet, and dirty. However, these inconveniences did not affect the number of participants in the protest. Every day more protesters came from around the country to join in. Some protestors became ill and had to be hospitalized. International photographers, who came in large numbers to Tbilisi, were exuberant. One photographer from the States said, "I haven't seen anything like this since the fall of the Soviet Union."

Chikhladze and Chikhladze (2003, p. 10)

In 2020, the ex-communist state of Georgia can easily be described as the most liberal of all the nations that were formerly members of the Soviet Union (with the exception of the three Baltic countries).³⁸ Its long road to democracy started in 2003, with large-scale mass protests that led to the peaceful resignation of President Eduard Shevardnadze (1995-2003). Shevardnadze's resignation, in turn, ushered in a regime change leading from soft authoritarianism to a *bona fide* democracy. A peaceful democratic regime change and enduring pro-democratic attitudes make Georgia a fitting case study to demonstrate how mass attitudes about democracy can affect both protest participation and authoritarian governments' use of violence.

The chapter starts with background for the 2003 protests and continues with Bayesian process-tracing of the mobilising hypothesis, investigating whether strong public

³⁸ According to the Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2019 ranking, Georgia is ranked the highest amongst all ex-Soviet states in terms of its civil and political freedoms. In Varieties of Democracy's Liberal Democracy Index 2018, Georgia also receives the highest score.

support for democracy in Georgia in 2003 contributed to large-scale protest participation. The mobilising hypothesis is tested against several alternative explanations of the 2003 mass mobilisation that have been identified in the literature. These alternative explanations include the regime's low popularity, the mobilising role of civil society organizations (CSOs), and the efforts of the opposition. The third and last section of the chapter tests the moderating hypothesis considering whether Georgia's pro-democratic culture had any effect on Shevardnadze's peaceful exit in 2003. The moderating hypothesis is tested against the military-defection hypothesis, which suggests that the lack of state violence in 2003 should be attributed mainly to the military's defection and to the military commanders' view of Shevardnadze as a non-legitimate and highly vulnerable actor.

1. Background for the 2003 Democratic Protests in Georgia

I do not intend to resign at the demand of individual politicians and a few dozen young people waving flags. If there were at least a million people, it would be different.

Shevardnadze, quoted in Kandelaki (2006, p. 4)

The Rose Revolution is a term used to describe the mass anti-regime protests that followed Georgia's parliamentary elections in the period from 3 to 23 November 2003, and that resulted in the peaceful resignation of Georgia's President Shevardnadze. It was also the very first example of a large-scale protest movement in the ex-Soviet space that played a crucial role in mobilising the public to demand democratic changes.

The 2003 uprising in Georgia is a well-documented event described in detail by multiple authors, both local and foreign (see, e.g., Chikhladze & Chikhladze, 2005; Hash-Gonzalez, 2012; Jones, 2006; Kandelaki, 2006; Kandelaki & Meladze, 2007; King, 2004;

Mitchell, 2004; Nodia, 2005; Tudoroiu, 2007; Wheatley, 2017). Due to a large number of existing accounts, there is a good amount of reliable knowledge about what happened in Tbilisi in November 2003.

Georgia's 2003 parliamentary elections turned out to be a major struggle between the regime's party (For a New Georgia) and opposition parties, such as the UNM (United National Movement), led by Mikheil Saakashvili, and the Burjanadze-Democrats, led by Nino Burjanadze and Zurab Zhvania. Prior to the elections, there were already widespread expectations that the ruling party would use fraud to win because of its weak performance during the 2002 local elections in Tbilisi (Wheatley, 2017). However, everyone was genuinely surprised by the actual scale of the electoral violations and their blatant perpetration. According to numerous accounts by local and international observers, election day that year was filled with multiple episodes of fraud that included voting "carousels", falsified voting lists, and even straightforward ballot stuffing (Kandelaki & Meladze, 2007; King, 2004; Mitchell, 2004).

What Shevardnadze and his supporters did not take into account was that the US-sponsored NGO National Democratic Institute (NDI) had arranged to conduct exit polls during the 2003 elections. The NDI conducted these polls in close cooperation with the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), which carried out PVT (parallel vote tabulation)³⁹ to support and validate the results of the exit polls.

The first official results, announced by Georgia's Central Election Committee (CEC) on 2 November 2003, put Shevardnadze's party in first place with 23% of the votes (Hash-Gonzalez, 2012). These figures, however, were dramatically different from those deriving

³⁹ PVT is a method employed to verify official election results by using specially trained election observers.

from the exit polls and from the PVT, which gave first place to Saakashvili's UNM party with 28% of the votes (Wheatley, 2017). The situation was further aggravated by a live nationwide broadcast of the results from the exit polls and the PVT on *Rustavi 2*, one of the most popular television channels in Georgia. The media's broadcasts and the subsequent harsh criticism of the electoral process by international observers assisted the opposition's efforts to mobilise people against the election results.

The protests started small but swiftly expanded due to the active involvement of civil society as well as the opposition. There were days when there were reportedly more than 100,000 people gathered in Tbilisi's Freedom Square (Fairbanks, 2004; Kandelaki & Meladze, 2007). Receiving such a broad public support, the opposition's demands quickly escalated from calling for the election results to be cancelled to calling for Shevardnadze's resignation.

On 22 November, after the opposition had broken through police cordons and entered the parliament building to demand the president's resignation, Shevardnadze escaped to his country residence. On November 23rd, after a brief meeting with Saakashvili and Zhvania, he officially resigned and passed power to the opposition. A new page in Georgia's modern history had officially begun.

2. Process-Tracing the Mobilising Effect of Democratic Support in Georgia in 2003

In November 2003, thousands of people gathered in Georgia's Freedom Square to demand free and fair elections and the resignation of their fraudulent authoritarian president. Many of the participants joined the protests not knowing whether the ruling regime would attempt to forcefully disperse the protesters or not. Nonetheless, thousands of people risked their own well-being in order to support the protests. My explanatory

variable for their decision to take on this substantial risk is widespread support for democracy in Georgia. In 2003, people's preference for democracy lowered their protest threshold for taking a collective action against a non-democratic regime that stole their votes. The feeling of internal satisfaction from protesting in support of democracy added to the perceived benefits of protest participation and outweighed potential costs from state repression. In other words, Georgians felt good about joining democratic protests in 2003 because the majority of the population had a strong preference for democracy. If this mobilising hypothesis (H1) is correct, then it will be possible to process-trace the causal chain of decision-making, and to uncover evidence that people's motivations to join the 2003 protests derived from their support for democracy.

Step 1. Estimation of the Prior Probability

The first step in Bayesian process-tracing is estimation of the prior probability (or priors), which is an assessment of initial confidence in the hypothesis. As mentioned in chapter 4, one possible option for this step is simply to assign equal probabilities to all hypotheses. For this study, however, I chose to assign estimates to my priors following Beach and Pederson's (2019) guidelines. The estimation process consists of answering several probing questions.

The starting question is whether the causal mechanism linking democratic support and mass mobilisation is theoretically plausible. The literature on protest participation suggests three factors that affect individuals' decision to join the protest: the size of the protest (Kuran, 1991; Lohmann, 1994; Siegel, 2011), personal preferences (Aytaç & Stokes, 2019; Klandermans, 1984; Kuran, 1991; Opp, 2009), and the level of repression (Davenport, 2007b; Opp, 1994; Trejo, 2014). Since democratic support is a measure of personal

preferences, the proposed causal mechanism is theoretically plausible. This finding puts the prior probability for H1 at the default value of 0.5, meaning that it is either present or not in the case under consideration.

Next, it is important to recognise that protest participation is a complex phenomenon that can be caused by more than one factor. By the same token, the causal mechanism of democratic support is probabilistic, meaning that it might not occur in the entire universe of cases. Causal heterogeneity and the probabilistic nature of the causal mechanism lower the estimation for the prior by ten percent, resulting in a figure of 0.4.

Finally, what does existing case-based knowledge about the 2003 Rose Revolution tell us concerning the plausibility of the democratic-support explanation? There are several dominating narratives that explain why the Georgian people protested against the results of the fraudulent 2003 elections and, ultimately, Shevardnadze himself.

Participation in the 2003 Protests in Georgia: Alternative Explanations

Based on the literature review, I identify three alternative explanations. First, by 2003, most people were tired of Shevardnadze's rule and did not believe their country had any future under the old corrupt system (Jones, 2006; Kandelaki & Meladze, 2007; Wheatley, 2017). Second, under Shevardnadze's liberal authoritarianism (coupled with foreign support for local NGOs), Georgia developed a robust civil society that took the initiative during the 2003 protest (Angley, 2013; Hash-Gonzalez, 2012; Nodia, 2005; Tudoroiu, 2007). Finally, there was a strong anti-regime opposition that, following the 2003 elections, managed to unite their efforts in opposing Shevardnadze's regime. In particular, a pivotal role in public mobilisation has been attributed to the charismatic Mikheil Saakashvili, who managed to

gain popular support and recognition in both urban and rural regions of the country (Mitchell, 2004; Wheatley, 2017).

The Low Popularity Theory. Several months prior to the 2003 protest, Tbilisi's Institute for Policy Studies conducted a survey measuring people's support for Georgia's politicians (Sumbadze & Tarkhan-Mouravi, 2003). President Shevardnadze came in 17th place, with 13% of the respondents reporting that they liked him. By contrast, opposition figures such as Nino Burjanadze and Mikheil Saakashvili were viewed sympathetically by 61% and 36% of respondents, respectively, with these figures occupying 1st and 4th place in overall public support.

A strong public dislike for Shevardnadze and his regime in 2003 can be traced back to several causes. The first and foremost issue was the socioeconomic situation. There was a deficit of electricity and hot water even in the capital Tbilisi, not to mention poorer rural regions (Fairbanks, 2004; King, 2004). At the same time, corruption was all-pervasive, and much of the financial aid given to Georgia by foreign donors went to support the lavish lifestyles of Georgian elites (Jones, 2006; Wheatley, 2017).

Apart from the depressing economic situation, people's disappointment with Shevardnadze was also caused by the 2001 government's confrontation with *Rustavi 2*—the only opposition television channel in the country. The situation started to look especially dire for Shevardnadze's government following the suspicious murder of the popular *Rustavi 2* news anchor Giorgi Sanaia (Hash-Gonzalez, 2012). Sanaia was one of the most well-known investigative journalists in Georgia who was bold enough to talk publicly about corruption in the circle of top-ranked elites. Shortly after Sanaia's murder, Georgia's security minister

tried to shut down *Rustavi 2* by force; this attempt prompted several thousand people in Tbilisi to go into the streets to demonstrate support for the channel.

These 2001 protests in support of *Rustavi 2* had important consequences. First, Shevardnadze dismissed his entire cabinet under popular pressure. Second, the state's confrontation with *Rustavi 2* prompted the resignation of one of the opposition leaders, Zurab Zhvania, who was at the time the speaker of the parliament. Many considered the 2001 protests to be a pivotal moment when the Georgian people first realised the power of public pressure (Hash-Gonzalez, 2012; Wheatley, 2017). The *Rustavi 2* crisis also provided an opening for Georgia's emerging opposition, with Saakashvili announcing the creation of the UNM party that was presented as an alternative to Shevardnadze's rule.

By 2003, socioeconomic grievances and the *Rustavi 2* situation had caused widespread distrust and dissatisfaction with Shevardnadze's regime, with both factors later playing a role in the mobilisation of the public in November 2003.

The Civil Society Theory. Compared to the rest of the ex-Soviet states, in 2003 Georgia had a well-developed civil society (Angley, 2013). The unusual robustness of Georgia's post-independent civil society can be explained by several factors.

First, there was a factor of historical continuity, given that Georgia had a long history of civil activism under the Soviet rule (Nodia, 2005). For example, GYLA (the Georgian Young Lawyers Association), one of Georgia's oldest liberal NGOs, started as a student movement back in the 1980s (Angley, 2013).

Second, while there were no free and fair elections under Shevardnadze, there was support for liberalisation in certain policy areas due to the need to maintain a positive image in the West (Tudoroiu, 2007). In fact, Shevardnadze's party, the CUG (Civil Union of Georgia),

publicly endorsed state cooperation with non-governmental actors, and this cooperation led to a rapid increase of NGOs in Georgia. In 2000, there were more than four thousands registered NGOs in the country (Wheatley, 2017).

Finally, there was also a factor of foreign financial support that played a significant role in the development of Georgia's civil society. The largest financial aid came from George Soros's *Open Society Georgia Foundation* (OSGF). The OSGF was often named as the main source of financial support for the *Kmara (Enough)* youth movement⁴⁰ that played a principal role in mobilising the public during the 2003 protest (Anglely, 2013).

To a large extent, the 2003 mass mobilisation stemmed from the close cooperation among the three biggest Georgia's NGOs: namely, *Kmara*, the Liberty Institute, and the ISFED. Whereas *Kmara* and the Liberty Institute were mainly responsible for the mobilisation campaigns, the ISFED was the main watchdog for the 2003 parliamentary elections, with more than three thousand observers planted across entire Georgia. Georgia's civil society was undoubtedly one of main actors in the 2003 protest. It is, however, important to note that, despite a large number of registered NGOs in Georgia, in 1997, only 1.2% of the Georgian population had any awareness about the specifics of the NGOs' activities (Wheatley, 2017).

The Opposition Theory. Georgia's opposition came from the core of the regime they were opposing. In the early 2000s, Shevardnadze invited young pro-Western reformers to

⁴⁰ *Kmara*'s history can be traced back to the 2001 student protests in Tbilisi; these protests demanded reforms to Georgia's corrupt higher education system (Kandelaki, 2006). Its members received support and training from more experienced NGOs, which enabled them to continue their political activism and push for more transparency and democracy. By 2003, *Kmara* was fully prepared to start mobilising people against anticipated electoral fraud. *Kmara* is sometimes described as a "child" of the Liberty Institute, another influential liberal NGO in Georgia (Hash-Gonzalez, 2012). The Liberty Institute was established in 1996 by Giga Bokeria and Levon Ramishvili, two former journalists from *Rustavi 2*, who together with GYLA had a long history of promoting liberal legislative reforms in Georgia (Wheatley, 2017).

join his party in order to promote Georgia's economic development. Zurab Zhvania and Mikheil Saakashvili were among these next-generation politicians. However, they never had any real opportunity to introduce genuine changes under the old system (Mitchell, 2004), because their collaboration with Shevardnadze broke down in 2001 when the government tried to muzzle *Rustavi 2*. This move resulted in Saakashvili's resigning his position as minister of justice. Several months later, Zhvania followed in Saakashvili's steps, resigning from his position as speaker of the parliament. Both Saakashvili and Zhvania thus became independent political actors who represented a significant challenge to Shevardnadze's rule. Saakashvili quickly gained popularity by presenting himself as a staunch anti-Shevardnadze politician. Zhvania, however, was more of a "grey cardinal" or behind-the-scenes politician. After leaving government, he remained a member of the CUG party and tried to recruit supporters from within the party. When it became clear he would not win an inter-party struggle with Shevardnadze, he and his allies seceded, forming the United Democrats party.

The third member of Georgia's revolutionary triumvirate, Nino Burjanadze, has always been perceived as a more ambiguous opposition figure compared to Saakashvili and Zhvania. In 2001, after Zhvania left, she became speaker of the parliament and held a neutral position between "reformers" and "conservatives" (Wheatley, 2017). In the summer of 2003, it was Burjanadze, not Saakashvili or Shevardnadze, who was voted as the most popular politician in Georgia (Sumbadze & Tarkhan-Mouravi, 2003). Burjanadze's popularity explained Zhvania's decision to merge their two parties for the 2003 parliamentary elections, resulting in the emergence of the Burjanadze-Democrats bloc.

Following the falsified 2003 elections, the UNM and Burjanadze-Democrats started to mobilise people to protest against electoral fraud (Mitchell, 2004). However, Saakashvili's

activities as the leader of the opposition brought about the escalation of protest demands; these demands morphed from cancelling the election results to Shevardnadze's resignation. The presence of credible opposition figures such as Burjanadze, Zhvania, and Saakashvili was the third and final important factor in the 2003 mass mobilisation.

These alternative explanations are based on eyewitness accounts of and interviews with participants in the 2003 protests, and they largely agree with each other when it comes to telling a narrative about these events. Therefore, they have high credibility. However, because the outcome (protest participation) is not causally homogenous (does not have only one cause), rival explanations are not mutually exclusive. Given theoretical heterogeneity, the potential role of other factors should not affect estimation of the prior for the democratic-support explanation (Beach & Pederson, 2019). The prior for this explanation retains the value of 0.4.

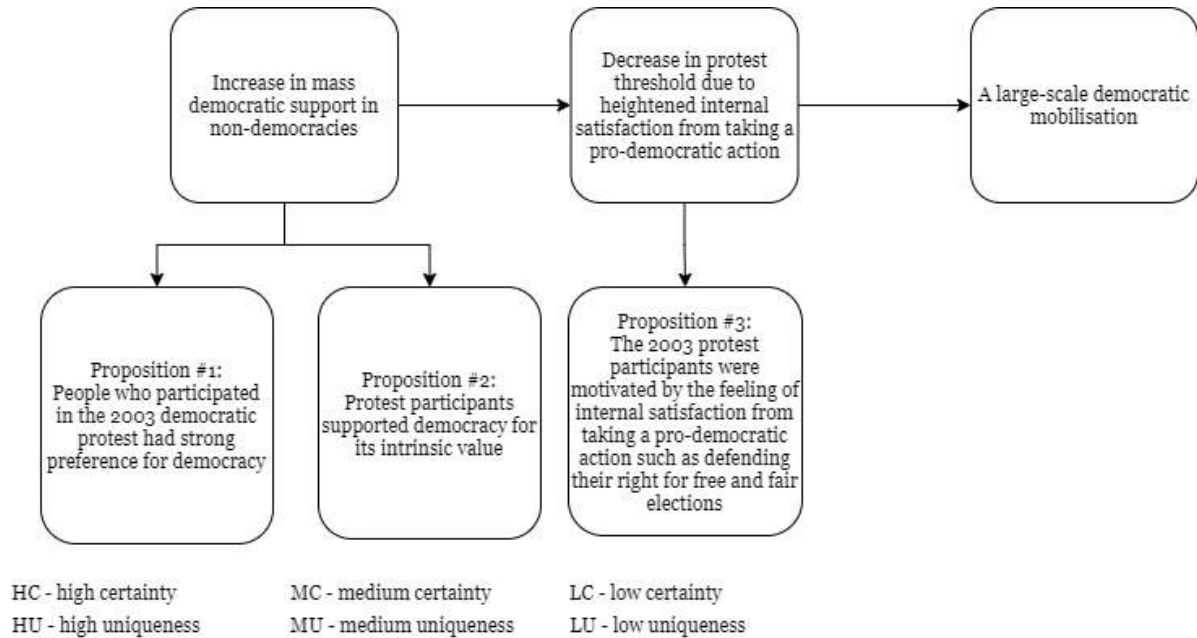
Step 2. The Argument Map and Evidence Analysis

Designing an argument map for the hypothesis in process-tracing is a key stage in Bayesianism. Its importance comes from the introduction of empirical tests (or propositions) that can be used to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis and the causal mechanism that it posits (Beach & Pederson, 2019).

H1 argues that an increase in mass democratic support increases the probability of democratic protests in non-democracies, because democratic support lowers protest thresholds by increasing the internal satisfaction and perceived benefits gained by joining the protest. A number of propositions can be introduced to confirm this causal chain (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1

The Argument Map for the Mobilising Hypothesis in Georgia



Proposition #1

Proposition #1 predicts that Georgians who took part in the 2003 protest had a strong preference for democracy as the only legitimate political system originating from Georgia's political culture (high certainty, low uniqueness). This proposition has high certainty⁴¹ and low uniqueness⁴², meaning that failure to confirm this proposition has a strong disconfirming effect for the mobilising hypothesis. A positive finding in this connection, however, does not have strong confirmatory power. In other words, proposition #1 is a necessary condition for the mobilising hypothesis to be true, but not a sufficient one.

⁴¹ In process-tracing, high certainty implies that an observation should almost certainly occur under the hypothesised causal mechanism.

⁴² Low uniqueness implies that this observation can also occur under alternative explanations.

The purpose of testing proposition #1 is to obtain empirical confirmation that people who participated in the 2003 democratic protest indeed had a strong preference for democracy, given that their participation could also have been motivated by other factors outlined in alternative explanations.

Evidence #1.1: Interviews⁴³. Two interviewees directly state that one of the reasons for the 2003 protest was people's desire to have more freedom and democracy. Ekaterina Grigalava, an NGO employee in 2003, as well as a protest participant, put the matter this way:

A strong state is not a term you use in Georgia. We would always dream about democratic freedoms and things like that, rather than a strong state. Social aspects were important [in 2003]. But if you asked anybody during the Rose Revolution what they wanted, what they were dreaming about, they would say democracy and no corruption. They wouldn't say a strong country that would protect them or anything like that. (E Grigalava 2018, personal communication, 3 November):

Along similar lines, Giorgi Meladze, co-founder of the *Kmara* youth movement in 2003, and another protest participant, remarked that

The demand for freedom and justice had always been there, and we were moving step by step. The first priority was to finish the civil war and get rid of the corrupt system, but the next priority and the reason we protested [in 2003] was to create a democracy so no one could appropriate power. (G Meladze 2018, personal communication, 9 November):

Non-NGO participants tend not to mention democracy directly, but list things that constitute a fundamental basis of democracy as main causes for the protest. In words of Lincoln Mitchell, head of the National Democratic Institute in 2003, and a protest observer, "What they (protesters) wanted was: transparent government, rule of law, fair elections. All of the things related to democracy." Sergi Kapanadze, a university student in 2003 who had

⁴³ Out of 11 interview participants in Georgia, 8 were protest participants in 2003.

also been protest participant, “The protest wave came from people. We wanted a system where everyone got saying in how state is run through proper elections”.

Furthermore, Meladze and another interviewee, Tedo Japaridze, discuss Georgia’s democratic culture and explain its origins by alluding to the country’s geographic location and its history of being subjected to European cultural influences. Meladze commented that

We had certain experiences that made us different. First, Georgia was a part of Europe. Georgians see themselves as Europe, a freedom-loving society. We do not follow orders for a long time, we are a disobedient society—that’s part of our culture.

For his part, Japaridze, who served as secretary of the Council of National Defence under Shevardnadze in 2003 and also as a protest observer, remarked that

From the very beginning, starting with Gamsakhurdia⁴⁴, all of Georgia’s political leaders in both public and private conversations and internal debates always confirmed that democracy was a part of Georgia’s foundation. How they implemented democracy is another question ... Of course, we are not a perfect democracy. Such a democracy doesn’t exist. However, Georgia is building a democratic state while trying to preserve unique cultural features that attracted people to Georgia for many centuries. (T Japaridze 2018, personal communication, 22 November)

Evidence #1.2: Literature Review. In the literature about Georgia’s political culture, the scholarly consensus is that prior to the 2003 protest Georgia was a highly traditional society whose citizens were indifferent about politics and democracy. For example, Sumbadze and Tarkhan-Mouravi (2003, pp. 6-9), from Georgia’s Institute for Policy Studies, provide the following observations on Georgia’s political culture:

Georgia can be regarded as a traditional orthodox culture with a strong collectivist component. Although families in urban areas are much smaller than in rural areas, kinship networks and mutual support continue to play a significant role ... Citizens demand responsibility from the state while largely ignoring their own responsibility or at times even expressing pride in their irresponsible behaviour. Ordinary citizens suspect material or “mafia” interest

⁴⁴ Georgia’s first president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia (1991-1992).

behind every political action. They carry the same cynical attitude toward political statements or promises as in old Soviet times.

Based on survey results from 1999 and 2000, the authors (2003, p. 41) conclude:

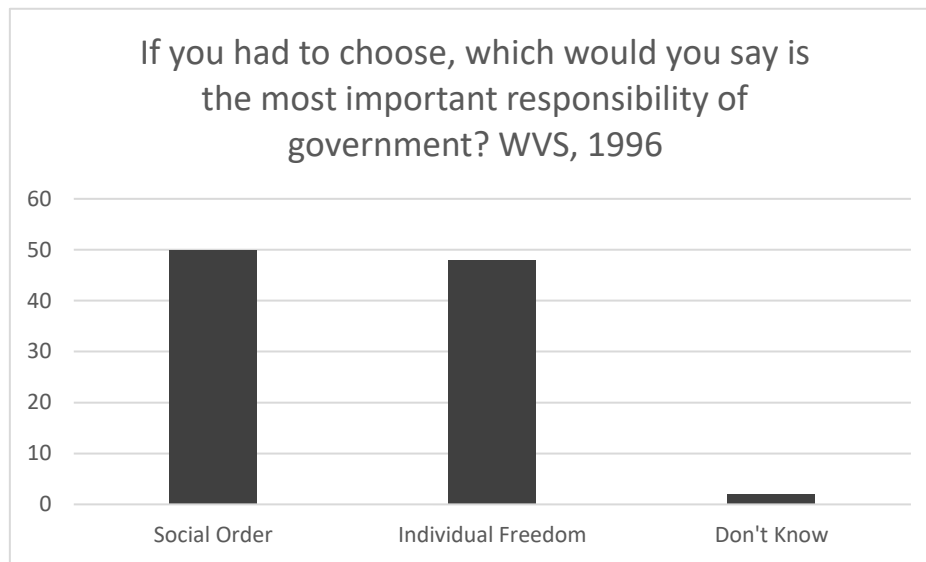
Today the trend (in Georgia) is to sacrifice democratic achievements to security, stability and minimum living standards. That is why our respondents were most unanimous in choosing order over personal freedom. This is seemingly a natural reaction to years of post-independence civil war, ethnic strife and crime, as well as to current threats to social and political stability.

Similar comments about Georgia's traditional culture are also found in the publications by foreign authors, such as Wheatley's (2017) *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution* and Mitchell's (2012) *The Colour Revolutions*. The underlying premise is that mass mobilisation in 2003 had to be carried out either by civil society or by the opposition due to the political passivity of the majority of the population. Although this narrative about Georgians' lack of political agency is quite widespread, it is supported neither by interviews nor by the WVS survey data.

Evidence #1.3: Survey Data. The 1996 WVS survey data offer another perspective on the issue of democratic attitudes amongst Georgians. On the one hand, the WVS data largely confirm the idea that, in the mid-1990s, Georgians greatly cared about political order and peace (Figure 5.2)—a finding that is not surprising given their recent experience of the civil war. However, the data do not support the assumption that Georgians were willing to “sacrifice” democracy for security and stability, given the equal support for social order (50%) and individual freedom (49%).

Figure 5.2

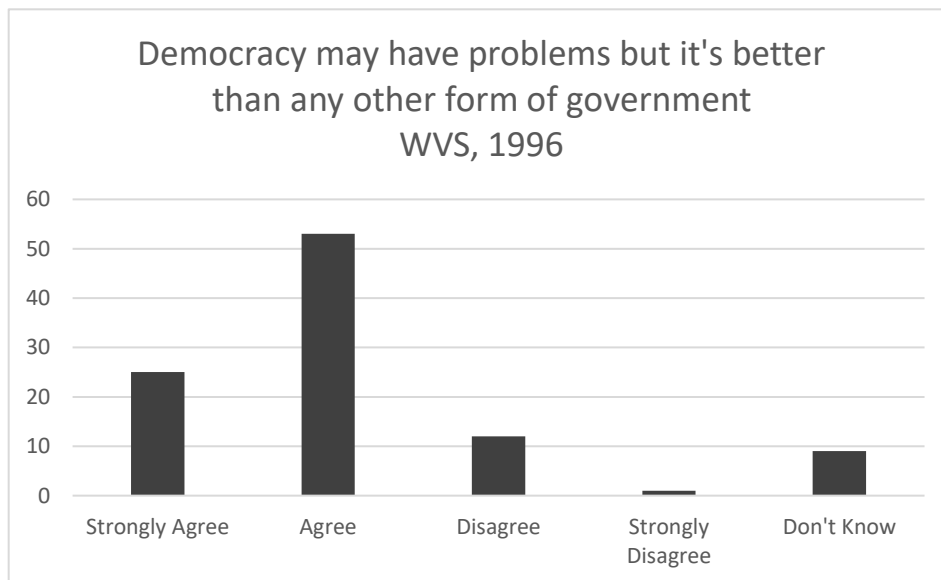
Social Order versus Individual Freedom Choice, Based on 1996 WVS Survey Data



According to both the WVS data and the Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, Georgians strongly endorsed democracy in 1996 (Figure 5.3). Not only did 75% of the respondents in 1996 say that democracy was the best form of government, despite its shortcomings, 40% of the respondents in the 1996 Eurobarometer survey expressed their satisfaction with democratic developments in Georgia to date. In that period of painful post-communist transition, Georgia showed the strongest democratic satisfaction in the entire ex-Soviet space.

Figure 5.3

Attitudes towards Democracy, Based on 1996 WVS Survey Data



Sumbadze and Tarkhan-Mouravi (2003, p. 41) explain this emerging democratic support in terms of a “generational effect”⁴⁵:

In general, secularised orientations, left materialism, postmaterialism, sexual permissiveness, ecologism, feminism, postmodernism, and libertarianism are more evident among young people and the highly educated. The younger urbanites show more democratic orientations and a more active attitude in general (this is substantiated by empirical data).

Interpretation of the Rose Revolution as “revolution of youth” is fairly pervasive in the literature (Hash-Gonzalez, 2012). This explanation implies that the 2003 mass mobilisation was predominantly the result not of an enduring “pro-democratic” culture, but rather of the efforts of young people and CSOs. In interviews, however, this interpretation is rejected by former young activists themselves. For example, Giga Bokeria, co-founder of the Liberty

⁴⁵ In the social sciences, “generational effects” refer to differences that arise from shared social and historical experiences of people who were born during the same time period.

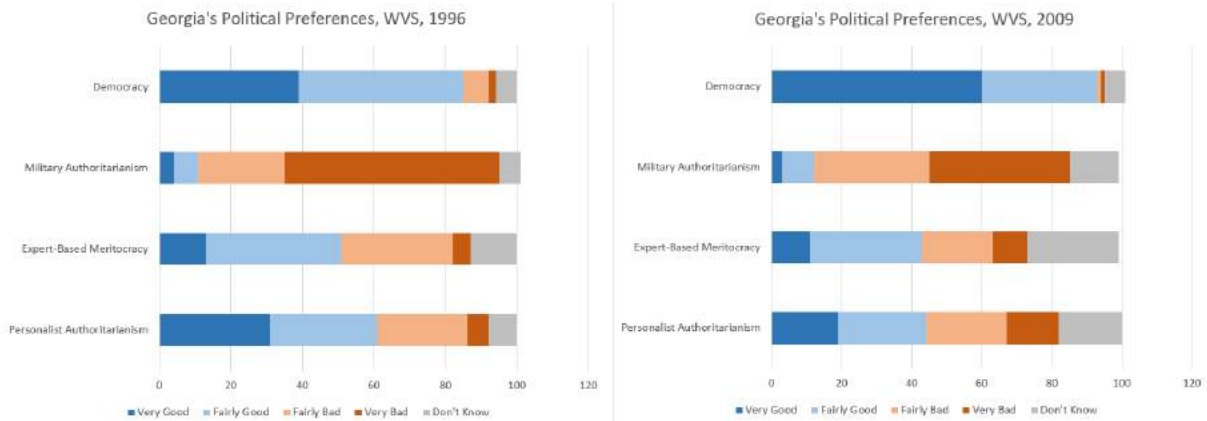
Institute NGO in 2003, and a participant in the protests, noted that “People gave us way more of a role than we had actually played. When you have status, you can impact things. That’s why *Kmara* and other youth groups had power. But it wasn’t a ‘youth’ revolution!” (G Bokeria 2018, personal communication, 20 November). Similarly, Giorgi Meladze remarked that “The movement might have been initiated by youth, but the support was across all ages. There was broad support from all the people.”

In 2003, Bokeria and Meladze represented two of the most influential civil organisations in Georgia—namely, the Liberty Institute and *Kmara*—that later became famous for their active role during the Rose Revolution. In the interviews, however, both are reluctant to attribute a central role to their organisations vis-à-vis protest mobilisation. Instead, they emphasise the widespread feelings of dissatisfaction and anger among the public following the 2003 elections. Therefore, interviews with civil society leaders do not confirm the narrative that the broad public was ignorant and indifferent to political issues, and that it thus had to be mobilised by young people and CSOs.

Moreover, survey data from 1996 and 2009 (see Figure 5.4) lends further credibility to the idea that Georgia has been characterised by a “pro-democratic” culture, with its citizens’ support for democracy remaining unchanged over a long period of time.

Figure 5.4

The WVS Data on Georgia's Political Preferences, 1996 and 2009



In sum, proposition #1 is bolstered by evidence from interviews and survey data, which confirm that a) Georgia had a “pro-democratic” culture prior to the 2003 mobilisation and regime change, and b) the 2003 protest participants endorsed democracy as the preferred type of political regime. The interviews, however, can have both sampling and endogenous biases that need to be accounted for in the final estimation of the proposition’s effect. Confirmation of proposition #1 increases confidence in the mobilising hypothesis by 7% (accounting for interviews’ bias), resulting in a 47% probability that H1 is true in Georgia’s case.

Proposition #2

Proposition #2 addresses the issue of intrinsic versus instrumental support for democracy and turns on the expectation that the 2003 protest participants endorsed democracy primarily for its normative value and not because it could deliver better socioeconomic outcomes or other benefits (high certainty, medium uniqueness). This proposition addresses important question of why people support democracy in the first place. Unlike proposition

#1, which has low uniqueness, proposition #2 has medium uniqueness and stronger confirmatory power for the mobilising hypothesis, because it confirms that support for democracy is not a proxy for better governance or economic development.

Evidence #2.1: Interviews. The observations from interviews largely support the idea that Georgians endorsed democratic freedoms independent of questions about state capacity and quality of governance. For example, the interviewees frequently mentioned that Saakashvili rapidly lost popularity and the trust of the people because of his post-2003 authoritarian turn. Although Saakashvili oversaw impressive economic development⁴⁶, his post-revolutionary concentration of power and civil rights abuses led to a significant erosion of public support. If protest participation in 2003 had been motivated by instrumental support for democracy—for example, support for democracy as a means to more effective governance—we would expect protesters not to care about Saakashvili’s misdeeds in 2007. But the interviewees’ responses tell a different story.

Thus, Grigalava comments:

The biggest hit [for Saakashvili’s reputation] was 7 November 2007, when there were demonstrations, and he used military force. There were special forces in the streets to dismantle the protests. People couldn’t believe it was happening. The man who came into power through street demonstrations was using power against people in the streets. I remember the day it happened. I had already left the NDI, and we all watched the TV not believing our eyes ... By that time it had already been four years since the revolution, and he had done so much. He had solved the electricity problem, combatted corruption on all levels, and started big economic projects.

Japaridze makes a similar remark: “Saakashvili came to power and his first two-three years were very impressive with great reforms. But then he forgot about democracy itself.” Mari

⁴⁶ More details about Georgia’s economic “miracle” can be found in the work of Burakova & Lawson (2014).

Chokheli, an NGO employee in 2003, as well as a protest participant, continues this line of comment:

If [during Saakashvili's period of rule] we organised some protests with a slogan of *No Violence*, only 10-15 people would join because everyone became afraid. I can't explain why. It was a specific system of pressure. It was informal, but pressure was real and dangerous, and people were afraid. During Saakashvili's period, he had all the power. (M Chokheli 2018, personal communication, 21 November)

Likewise, Kapanadze says that

96% of the people voted for him [Saakashvili]. He had huge trust. I personally think he transformed the country in a big way, which was impossible to do without certain costs. But certain things that they [Saakashvili and his party] did ... they should not have done these things. (S Kapanadze 2018, personal communication, 22 November):

Another telling observation from the interviews relates to how Georgian politicians understand the "rules of the game" and their role in a democratic system. The elite discourse suggests the importance of democratic procedures and constitutional norms for a considerable part of Georgia's political actors. This commitment to democratic principles caused a major conflict within the ruling UNM party after the 2017 parliamentary elections, when Saakashvili tried to push for his party's victory no matter what the costs. Former members of the UNM strongly imply that, for them, following democratic procedures is more important than preserving political power.

Thus, David Darchiashvili, a professor at the Tbilisi State University in 2003, as well as a protest observer, notes that

After we [the UNM party] lost that election, he [Saakashvili] called for boycotting these results and not taking seats in the parliament. We disagreed, although; we felt that there were manipulations but not on a mass scale. We simply couldn't convince people to vote for us and we had to accept whatever seats we got. And for the future we had to fight for the hearts and minds of supporters of the ruling party, figure out how to attract them, find ways to

approach them. And Saakashvili's supporters said it was betrayal. (D Darchiashvili 2018, personal communication, 8 November)

Zurab Tchiaberashvili, head of the main election monitoring NGO ISFED in 2003, as well as a protest observer, comments along similar lines:

In 2016, we as the UNM lost parliamentary elections, and there was a debate inside the party about how to continue. One idea was not to enter the parliament, but we opposed that plan. We believed in constitutional democracy and that change of government has to happen through elections. Some people in the UNM were saying that we could not accept the results of elections conducted by oligarchs, but that didn't make sense.

2012 was the first case in Georgia's history when a party lost elections and there was a peaceful transition of power within the constitutional framework. This was the first case and a good opportunity for Georgia to move ahead. Despite political persecutions and revenge, there was a chance. Despite this [i.e., being personally politically persecuted after the opposition's victory in 2012], I consider the 2012 transfer of power as a positive step in our history. I don't judge history by what happened to me but by the chance that was given to the country. (Z Tchiaberashvili 2018, personal communication, 17 November)

Finally, Giga Bokeria offers his own take:

The challenge that we had after the revolution was that we were the only force left. That allowed us to make reforms, but our big mistake was not pushing for things that weren't in our own interest but important for checks and balances, like the judicial system. As the time went on, the lack of check and balances inside and outside had bad results for all of us ... Overall, those nine years of reforms ended up in a peaceful transfer of power. You know what I always said to people who hated Saakashvili and us, and who were saying that it was tyranny in Georgia? I said, well, tyrants don't lose elections. As critical as I am towards him now, he managed to re-build functional institutions and people's trust in these institutions from the ruins of the failed state and then end with a peaceful transfer of power through a constitutionally mandated election. This is success."

Admittedly, these sources' reliability and independence can be questioned, given that Darchiashvili, Tchiaberashvili, and Bokeria now belong to the pro-Western *European Georgia* party. Moreover, Bokeria is a popular contemporary politician, who may be using democratic discourse to maintain his public image. Yet Darchiashvili and Tchiaberashvili

have both retired from politics and are working as academics. They do not have a public image to uphold, but their interpretation of the 2017 split with Saakashvili is almost identical to Bokeria's. All three interviewees emphasise the importance of maintaining an ideological disagreement with Saakashvili over the principles of democratic political competition. The 2017 split also put all three figures into a politically disadvantaged position, given that they lost the support of many Georgian voters who sympathised with Saakashvili and the UNM. Therefore, in their role as politicians, they did not gain anything from their split with the UNM.

Both these observations and the post-2007 public disenchantment with Saakashvili have medium uniqueness because similar kinds of discourse could in principle be observed under other explanations. Taken together, however, they add confidence in the proposition that the Georgians who participated in the 2003 protests had a substantive understanding of democracy that went beyond its instrumental meaning (i.e., whether it implied a better life for the broader public or a power gain for political elites).

Evidence #2.2: Literature Review. Observations about people's disappointment with Saakashvili because of his illiberal turn are supported by survey data from the Institute of Policy Studies (Sumbadze, 2009). Thus, Sumbadze (2009, p. 186) observes that the violent dispersal of protesters in 2007 had the strongest impact on Saakashvili's public support rating: "2008 was strongly influenced by what happened in 2007—the forceful dispersal of a mass public anti-government rally on 7 November and shortly afterward the raid on the Imedi TV station by government forces."

To sum up: the interviews confirm that Georgians cherished democratic principles on their own merits rather than as a promise of better political outcomes. However, since there

is no opportunity to cross-check interviews with other data sources, proposition #2 adds small confidence in the mobilising hypothesis by 3% (accounting for interviews' bias and lack of triangulation), resulting in a 50% probability that H1 is true in Georgia's case.

Proposition #3

Finally, proposition #3 states that Georgians who took part in the 2003 protest were motivated by the feeling of internal satisfaction from their support of democratic principles, such as the right for free and fair elections (high certainty, high uniqueness).

Proposition #3 is the only proposition with high uniqueness, because it incorporates the core suggestion of the mobilising hypothesis: namely, that cognitive benefits such as internal or moral satisfaction played a role in people's decision to participate in the protest. In the case of Georgia, internal satisfaction from protest participation is linked to the state's violation of people's right for free and fair elections. Thus, public support for electoral integrity can be interpreted as a proxy for support for democracy, given that free and fair elections constitute a foundation for democratic regimes.

Evidence #3.1: Interviews. The majority of the interviewees cite the 2003 electoral fraud as the main trigger for participation in the large-scale protests, noting that the public felt indignant about such blatant vote stealing and fraud. As Grigalava puts it, "The fraudulent elections played the biggest role. If Shevardnadze had been smarter, he could have avoided this revolution by simply not interfering with elections. I don't know why he did." Darchiashvili makes a similar comment:

Shevardnadze could have reached the end of his second term peacefully if he did not rig the elections. The opposition might still have taken first place, but without enough of a mandate to form the government. Altogether they had something like 30% of the vote ... The electoral stations were empty all day, but then we suddenly got figures showing that an overwhelming majority voted for Shevardnadze. That was the beginning of the end for Shevardnadze.

People also recall the emotions the participants experienced, and many describe an intrinsic knowledge that participants had about “doing a right thing”. The description of this feeling closely corresponds to the “cognitive benefits” proposition. Grigalava says:

It (mass mobilisation) was quite spontaneous. Nobody knew how things would develop or whether we would succeed. When Saakashvili stormed and entered the parliament, nobody was sure we wouldn't be shot. So it (mobilisation) was a surprise, not a calculated move. All of us, we were feeling we were doing a right thing for our country. That was the most important thing.

Similarly, Japaridze adds, “I wouldn't call 2003 “revolution” because it wasn't a destructive event. People did not want violence. They went out because they felt it was a right thing to do – to support democracy.”

The public's frustration with electoral fraud contradicts one of the alternative explanations for the protests: namely, that socioeconomic issues and state corruption were the main triggers for protest participation. Kapanadze alludes to this alternative explanation:

There were a lot of social issues in 2003. We did not have electricity or gas, and we had light only in the evening. The average salary was 4-5\$. The pensions were the same. If a pension was 5\$, then they promised that in few years it would be 7\$. The social background was very tense. All of these factors caused the revolution, not the political actors. The youth did not have any opportunities. The corruption was everywhere. I was young myself and felt I had no future. There was no hope.”

Tchiaberashvili makes a similar remark:

The main reason was corruption. Georgia at that time was almost a failed state. The corruption was huge. The government was collecting only part of the taxes, and 70% of the national economy was operating in the shadows. Electricity was available for only four hours per day in Tbilisi. In the rural areas, there was no electricity for weeks. These living conditions led protesters to the street.

The majority of the interviewees agree that poverty and social issues played a significant role in the 2003 mass mobilisation. However, there is no conclusive evidence that these factors were the most influential factor.

Ghia Nodia, head of the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD) in 2003 as well as a protest observer, remarks that

People were angry, and everything was mixed together: democracy, lack of electricity, bad government. Government had to go. The discontent with the government had been building up for some time. It was corrupted and could not provide anything to the people. But the final straw was that the public wanted the government to go, and it was already a clear-cut democratic issue. (G Nodia 2018, personal communication, 19 November)

As one of the interviewees, Ekaterina Grigalava, suggests, a disastrous socioeconomic situation had existed in Georgia since 1991. However, a large-scale anti-regime protest occurred only in 2003: “By 2003, we had lived in a very poor state—huge electricity shortages, low salaries, no public transportation, poverty, et cetera. For almost thirteen years we had lived like that, but there were no revolutions.”

Evidence #3.2: Literature Review. The literature review also supports the idea that the 2003 elections and electoral fraud were the main trigger for the protest. Hash-Gonzalez’s (2012, p. 53) research on mass mobilisation in Georgia highlights the unusual importance of, and the unusually high turnout for, the 2003 elections:

On the one hand, the belief had strengthened over time that Georgia was a democracy in which people showed what they wanted by voting. Some saw voting as an obligation: you can’t complain about things if you don’t vote. In support of this, a GORBI/Gallup poll conducted in August 2003 found that, had the elections been held that day, 72 percent of respondents would have voted. Just over 21 percent said they would probably not or definitely not vote.

She also provides support for the “cognitive benefits” assumption when describing the feeling of solidarity among protesters (p. 67):

There were certain factors that overrode the protestors' fears. One was the powerful feeling of community. While some protestors might have been there to pursue personal goals, others said they thought in more collective terms, as did one young man. He remembered feeling "surprising fear" during November, and what stood out to him was the fact that he hadn't tried to protect himself even though he had felt he was in danger.

For his part, Fairbanks (2004, p. 116) describes observing voters' disappointment with election results in Tbilisi in 2003:

The OSCE and other monitors had already issued damning reports, and modest-sized protests had begun in Tbilisi (involving no more than ten thousand people), when word came of the insultingly ludicrous "results" from Ajaria. Thereafter, matters came quickly to a head. Ordinary citizens in Georgia, like their counterparts in other ex-Soviet republics, will grudgingly tolerate a certain amount of fraud—but this was far too much. Georgians, witnessing the vigorous foreign and domestic monitoring effort, had dared to dream of a clean and free election. They had put up with years of deprivation and failed reforms, hoping for improvement after Shevardnadze retired. Now they had been forced to watch as he had scraped his "party of power" back together and attempted a managed succession—the mess, it seemed, would never end.

In sum, the interviews and literature review reveal that public indignation over electoral fraud and internal satisfaction with taking a pro-democratic action were a substantive part of the motivation for protest participation in Georgia in 2003. This strong public response to improper electoral conduct also demonstrates an existing preference for democracy given that competitive, free, and fair elections are a must for any genuine democratic regime. Proposition #3, therefore, has a strong confirmatory power vis-à-vis the mobilising hypothesis. However, similar to previous propositions, Proposition #3 should be accounted for the reverse causality bias when success of protest and not support for democracy can have effect on emotional satisfaction from protest participation. Therefore, Proposition #3 increases confidence in H1 by only 7% to 0.57.

Step 3. Findings

Bayesian process-tracing establishes empirical support for the three key propositions that follow from the hypothesised causal mechanism of the mobilising hypothesis. These are: a) protesters had a strong preference for democracy; b) their support for democracy was intrinsic rather than instrumental; and c) one of the main reasons for protest participation was frustration with electoral fraud.

Table 5.1 represents the results of process-tracing in the case of Georgia’s 2003 mass mobilisation.

Table 5.1

Process-Tracing Results for the Mobilising Hypothesis in Georgia

	PROPOSITION	CERTAINTY	UNIQUENESS	INTERVIEWS	LITERATURE	SURVEY DATA	CONFIRMATION
1	The 2003 protest participants strongly supported democracy as the only desirable political system	high	low	positive	negative	positive	yes
2	People’s support for democratic change was not linked to expectations of better policy outcomes but to normative preference for democracy	high	medium	positive	no data	no data	yes
3	People who took part in the 2003 protest were motivated by their support for democratic principles such as the right to hold free and fair elections	high	high	positive	positive	no data	yes

Proposition #1 is not highly unique but it establishes the presence of the cause (support for democracy) in the case study. Proposition #2 has a more substantial impact on estimation of the hypothesis probability, because it establishes intrinsic support for democratic principles over alternative preferences, such as better economic development or stronger leadership. Proposition #3 plays the most significant role in hypothesis

confirmation insofar as it directly addresses the “cognitive benefit” explanation of protest participation.

The evidence allows us to establish an above-average level of confidence in all three propositions. Interviews and a literature review corroborate the first proposition about strong democratic support amongst the 2003 protesters. People’s disapproval of Saakashvili’s authoritarian turn after the revolution, despite his successful economic reforms, adds confidence to the second proposition that Georgians valued democratic freedoms independent of regime performance. Finally, both a literature review and interviews confirm that having an opportunity to express frustration with electoral fraud during the 2003 election was a prominent trigger for protest participation, demonstrating, in turn, Georgians’ preference for fundamental democratic institutions such as free and fair elections.

Process-tracing also discovers disconfirming pieces of evidence for alternative explanations focused on the role of civil society and socioeconomic factors. While CSOs and the disastrous economic situation undoubtedly played a role in the 2003 mass mobilisation, they clearly were not the only considerations. The 2003 protest participants wanted to see a democratic Georgia without fraudulent elections. This vision motivated them to take the risk of participating in anti-government protests.

According to my data and estimations, there is approximately 57% probability that in Georgia in 2003 people joined the protests because of their support for democracy. This finding is significant because, first of all, it highlights the role of ordinary people as key actors in democratic change. Second, it provides new empirical support for the old idea that political culture matters when it comes to democratisation. In 2003, Georgia became a

democracy without the benefit of any special structural factors that distinguished it from the other ex-Soviet states. There is, however, the issue of a particular cultural setting—an issue that is mentioned in several interviews as the main cause of Georgians’ endorsement of democracy. This research does not test for a broad cultural theory of democracy, according to which certain cultures are more susceptible to democratisation. However, it does provide evidence that, at the very least, national-level attitudes about democracy matter for participation in democratic protests.

3. Process-Tracing the Moderating Effect of Democratic Support in Georgia in 2003

In this section, I propose two explanations for Shevardnadze’s decision not to use force in response to the 2003 democratic protests that called for his resignation. The moderating hypothesis (H2) explains Shevardnadze’s peaceful exit in terms of the influence of a “pro-democratic” political culture that decreased the desirability of using violence. As an alternative explanation to H2, I introduce the military-defection hypothesis (H3), which interprets Shevardnadze’s decision as the outcome of a military defection that occurred when the country’s military forces no longer viewed the regime as legitimate. Unlike with mobilising hypothesis, where alternative explanations are not explicitly tested against each other, I want to subject H2 and H3 to the same procedure of systematic testing and assessment. In the case of mobilising hypothesis, literature review contains systematic accounts for alternative explanations of the 2003 mobilisation⁴⁷. There are, however, no works fully dedicated to the explanation of regime response in both Georgia and Armenia’s

⁴⁷ For example, the role of civil society organisation and media in protest mobilisation is explored by Anable (2006), Angley (2013), Chikhladze & Chikhladze (2005), Hash-Gonzalez (2012), Kandelaki (2006); socioeconomic grievances by Fairbanks (2004), King (2004), Mitchell (2012); role of opposition elites by Wheatley (2017).

cases. Therefore, systematic Bayesian analysis of both moderating and military defection hypothesis presents a meaningful contribution to the existing literature on the 2003 Rose Revolution.

H3 builds on the literature about authoritarian survival. The role of the military in the preservation of authoritarian regimes is crucial (Albrecht, 2019). If an authoritarian regime finds itself in the “dictator’s endgame”⁴⁸ situation, then its last hope for survival is the military. Once military support is withdrawn, the regime is doomed. This dynamic has been observed in multiple contexts, from the 1997 anti-Suharto revolt in Indonesia to the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the 2011 people’s movements in Egypt and Tunisia (Nepstad, 2019). As Croissant et al. (2018, p. 192) put it:

Even though military reactions to mass mobilizations are shaped by a complex concurrence of different factors, the dictator’s political survival ultimately hinges on his ability to enforce the military leadership’s loyalty and link their physical and economic well-being to his remaining in office.

According to the authors, 40 “endgame” situations occurred between 1946 and 2014. In 19 cases, the military defended the regime, but in 15 cases they defected.⁴⁹ Therefore, the relationship between the military and authoritarian leadership is always complicated by the issue of loyalty: the military might defend the regime, but it also might defect and join anti-regime forces.

Step 1. Estimation of the Prior Probability

⁴⁸ Croissant et al. (2018, p. 175) define this “endgame” as a “situation of primarily nonviolent mass mobilization, in which the dictator’s political survival depends on the loyalty of military leaders and their willingness to disperse protests.”

⁴⁹ The remaining six cases resulted in military coups.

As with the mobilising hypothesis, estimation of the prior probabilities for H2 and H3 is performed in three steps. The first stage is estimation of the probability of the causal mechanisms in both hypotheses.

H2 is estimated as theoretically plausible but having relatively low prior probability based on the existing literature about the beliefs of elites as well as the broader public. H2 rests on the assumption that a pro-democratic political culture affects both the public and elites and shapes worldviews of the latter. However, the existing research suggests that the elite's beliefs and values often differ from those of the broader public (Pye & Verba, 1965). Therefore, H2's causal mechanism is estimated to have a lower-than-average probability; it is assigned a value of 0.4.

H3 has a slightly stronger prior likelihood based on the substantial body of theoretical literature about why a country's military defects. Overall, as with authoritarian elites, military leaders act as rational actors who want to maximise their own survival and benefits (Bellin, 2004; Carey, 2010; Croissant et al., 2018). The dilemma they face when they are ordered to use violence against people is enormous. The costs of executing such an order can be high due to potential legal prosecutions, whereas the rewards of staying loyal are uncertain since the dictator's survival is not guaranteed (Albrecht, 2019). In addition, because the regime is not monolithic, a protest might be not as threatening to the military as it is to the political elites (Salehyan et al., 2014). More generally, a range of factors can affect the military's behaviour. On the one side, material interests can affect whether the military stays loyal to the regime (Bellin, 2004; Pion-Berlin et al., 2014). On the other side, there are non-material considerations, including the military's affiliation with protesters, the composition of the protest, the military's dissatisfaction with the regime, the military's past

record of human rights violations, the existence of parallel security forces, and perceptions of a regime's legitimacy (Barany, 2016; Brooks, 2013; Frisch, 2013; Gaub, 2013; Hazen, 2019).

The factor of a regime's legitimacy is particularly relevant, given that democratic protests question the legitimacy of non-democratic regimes. Barany (2016) argues that perceptions of the regimes' legitimacy was a crucial factor in securing the military's loyalty in the revolutions in China and Bahrain, and also a key reason for the military's defection in the cases of Romania and Tunisia. All in all, the military's leadership is likely to remain loyal to the regime when its survival is closely tied to the survival of dictator, when the protest is violent and not broadly representative, when the military has committed gross human rights violations in the past, and when there is significant external support for the regime (Barany, 2016; Croissant et al., 2018; McLauchlin, 2010; Pion-Berlin et al., 2014). In such situations, the preferences of the regime and the military converge (Chenoweth & Perkoski, 2017).

The implication is that if there is a large-scale non-violent protest that represents the interests of diverse groups within the population, and there is no special control mechanism that the state has over the military to ensure its loyalty, then there is a high likelihood the military's leadership will defect due to regime's low legitimacy and high vulnerability (Chenoweth et al., 2017; Makara, 2013; Nepstad, 2013). Being aware of the military's potential for defection, many non-violent movements try to get the military to defect by peaceful means, i.e., by reminding them they are also a part of the community (Binnendijk & Marovic, 2006). This tactic was observed during 1989 East European protests, the Eurasian "Colour" Revolutions, and the Arab Spring protests. In some cases, like Egypt and Tunisia, the tactic worked; however, in Libya and Yemen, it did not succeed (Hazen, 2019).

Accordingly, the existing knowledge about military defections during mass non-violent protests allows us to establish a prior probability for H3 at 0.5, meaning that defection may or may not occur in a given case study.

In addition, since the authoritarian use of violence is both causally heterogenous and probabilistic, there should be further adjustments to the priors. These further adjustments leave H2 at 0.3 and H3 at 0.4.

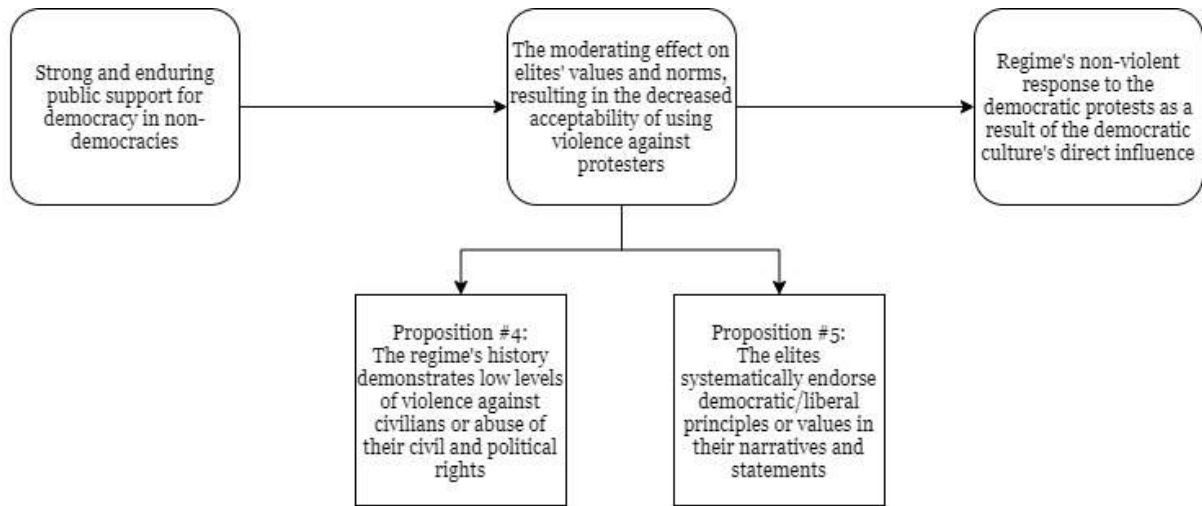
Finally, I add the factor of case-based knowledge to estimation of the priors. The case of Georgia offers empirical support for both hypotheses. In his post-2003 interview, Shevardnadze claimed he did not use force in 2003 because it was morally unacceptable to him to use violence against people. However, another explanation for Shevardnadze's peaceful resignation suggests that he lost standing with army's command in 2003. As there are empirical grounds for both hypotheses, I increase the estimates for both priors and assign final values of 0.4 for H2 and 0.5 for H3.

Step 2. The Argument Maps and Evidence Analysis

H2 (Figure 5.5) states that strong and long-lasting public support for democracy has a moderating effect on non-democratic elites when their worldviews are affected by a pro-democratic culture. The widespread embrace of democratic culture results in the decreased acceptability of using violence against protesters.

Figure 5.5

The Argument Map for the Moderating Hypothesis in Georgia



HC - high certainty

MC - medium certainty

LC - low certainty

HU - high uniqueness

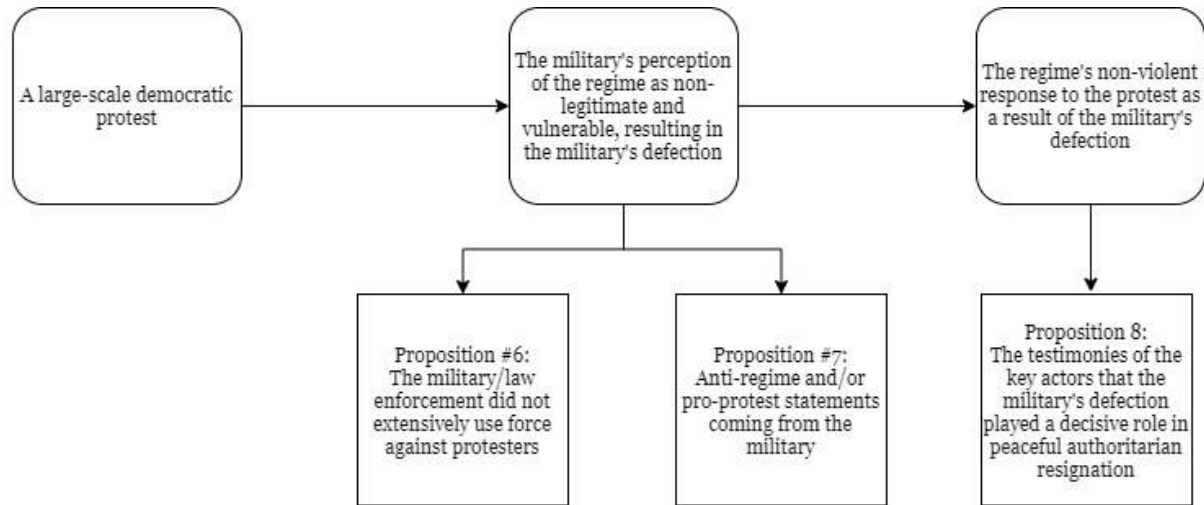
MU - medium uniqueness

LU - low uniqueness

H3 (Figure 5.6), on the other hand, suggests that when a large-scale democratic protest occurs, the military will defect, because it perceives the regime as non-legitimate and vulnerable. Military defection effectively excludes violence from autocrats' response range.

Figure 5.6

The Argument Map for the Military-Defection Hypothesis in Georgia



HC - high certainty
HU - high uniqueness

MC - medium certainty
MU - medium uniqueness

LC - low certainty
LU - low uniqueness

These two hypotheses produce five supporting propositions that can be investigated via process-tracing.

Proposition #4

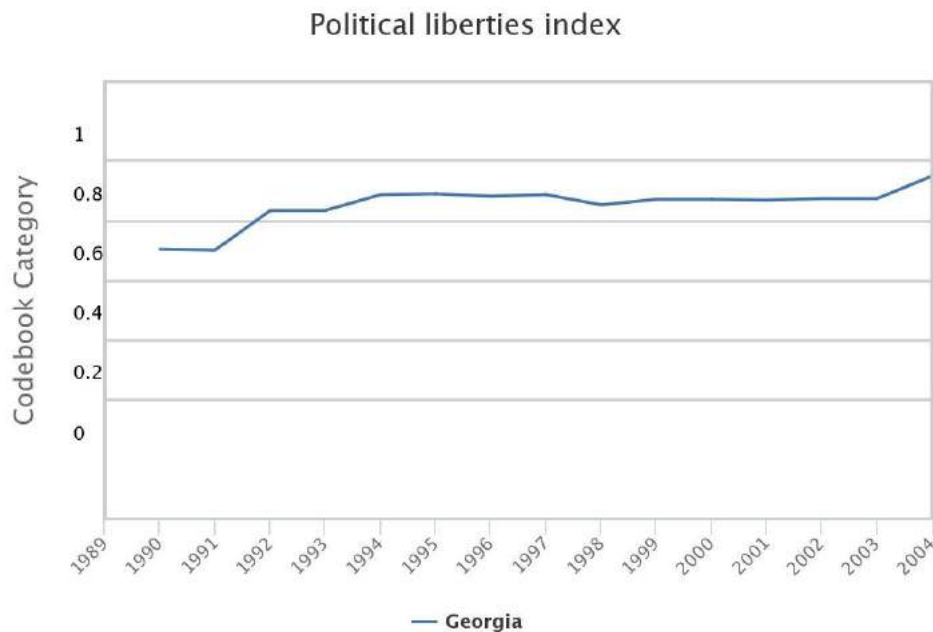
Proposition #4 predicts that Shevardnadze's regime would use low levels of violence against civilians and avoid abuse of their civil and political rights (high certainty, low uniqueness). If there was any type of moderating effect on authoritarian elites in Georgia in 2003, then a predicted observation is systematically low levels of state violence against citizens and limited abuse of their civil rights under Shevardnadze's regime. This proposition has high certainty but medium uniqueness, because low state violence can also be observed under non-cultural explanations.

Evidence #4.1: Indicators of State Repression and Violence in Georgia. I use several indicators from the Varieties of Democracy dataset to assess whether there was a systematic abuse of political and civil rights under Shevardnadze's regime. The V-Dem's Political Liberties index⁵⁰ (Figure 5.7) shows to what degree freedom of speech and association were protected in Georgia during Shevardnadze's reign. This index is an aggregate of a number of indicators, such as government censorship, harassment of journalists, freedom of academic expression, opposition parties' entry into elections, and bans placed on political parties. Georgia under Shevardnadze performed above 0.5, indicating that there was considerable state protection for political liberties at the time.

⁵⁰ The index is based on indicators that reflect government repression but that do not directly refer to elections. The question here is: to what extent are political liberties respected? Political liberties are understood as freedom of association and freedom of expression. Higher values correspond to stronger liberties.

Figure 5.7

The Political Liberties Index in Georgia, 1989-2003



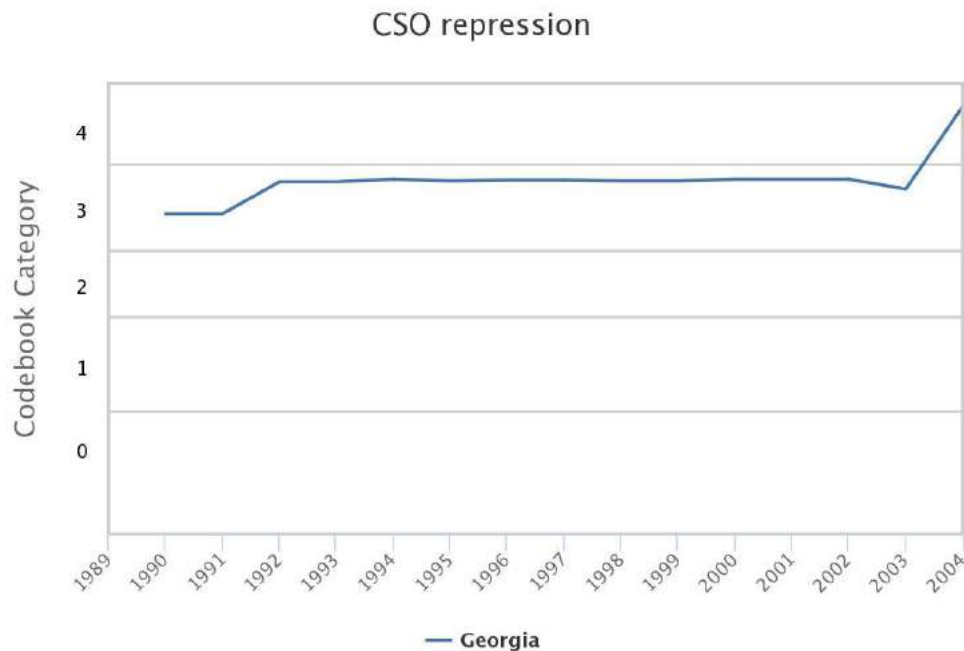
The CSO repression indicator (Figure 5.8) shows whether the government systematically persecuted civil society organisations (CSOs). In Georgia, this indicator fluctuated between 3⁵¹ and 4⁵², demonstrating low levels of state repression in regard to CSOs. CSOs under Shevardnadze were allowed to function without any significant obstacles.

⁵¹ I.e., there was weak repression. The government used material sanctions (fines, firings, denial of social services) to deter oppositional CSOs from acting or expressing themselves. They may have also used burdensome registration or incorporation procedures to slow the formation of new civil society organisations and side-track them from engagement.

⁵² I.e., there was no repression. Civil society organisations were free to organise, associate, strike, express themselves, and criticise the government without fear of government sanctions or harassment.

Figure 5.8

The CSO Repression Index in Georgia, 1989-2004

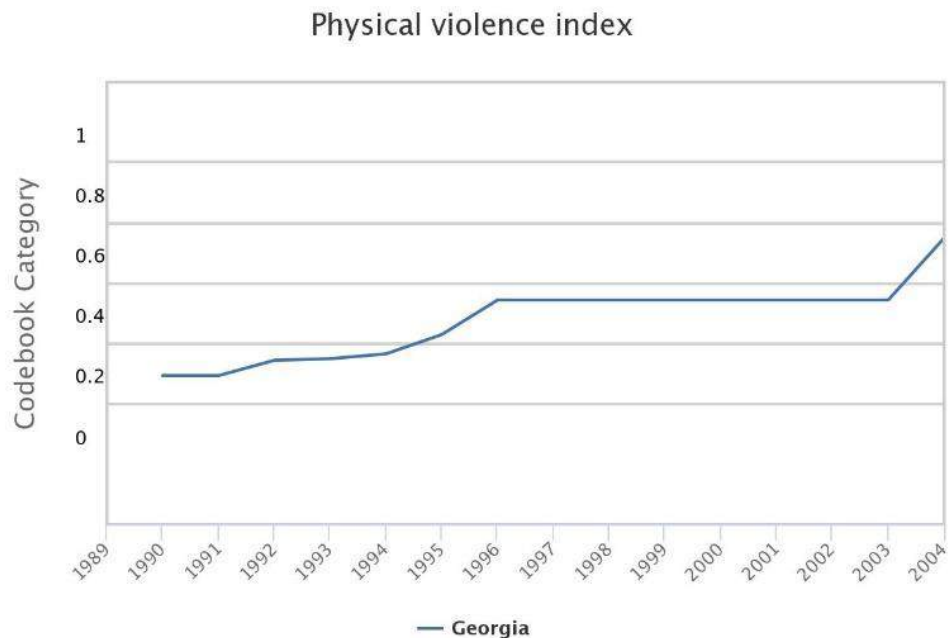


Finally, the Physical Violence index⁵³ (Figure 5.9) reflects whether Georgians enjoyed freedom from torture and killings at the hands of the government. Here, Georgia's performance turns out to be considerably worse than with the other two indicators. From 1990 to 2003, the level of physical security provided by the government remained at 0.5, implying that Georgians did not have genuine physical security under Shevardnadze.

⁵³ Physical integrity is understood as freedom from political killings and torture by the government. The index is based on indicators that reflect violence committed by government agents but that do not directly refer to elections. Higher values represent higher levels of physical security.

Figure 5.9

The Physical Violence Index in Georgia, 1989-2004



Analysis of the V-Dem data for the period of Shevardnadze's rule shows that although Shevardnadze allowed for substantial activity by civil society organisations and for people's exercise of political and civil liberties, the regime did not refrain from at least the occasional use of violence against its citizens.

Evidence #4.2: Literature Review. The literature review largely confirms the conclusion based on the V-Dem data: namely, that Shevardnadze's regime acted peacefully, at least in large part, when it came to the functioning of civil society. Kandelaki (2006) explains that Shevardnadze had to allow civil freedoms in order to support his democratic image abroad and to consolidate the nation after the civil war. As Kandelaki (2006, p. 3), puts it:

Shevardnadze had good reasons to support and foster such freedoms. On returning to Georgia from exile in 1992, he needed support for his struggle with paramilitary “warlords.” Independent media and other organizations were permitted to function to create political space and pressure the warlords. After this objective was fulfilled in 1995, Shevardnadze aspired to cultivate his democratic image abroad. Before 1998, Shevardnadze’s regime consolidated an unjustified reputation among many western observers and governments as a success story of post-Soviet democratization. Allowing certain liberal freedoms was more of a political calculation than a commitment to an open society. Nevertheless, it led to the development of a civil society that did not accept the rules and practices of the ruling oligarchy at face value.”

In his report, Welt (2006) states that although Shevardnadze’s government did not use systematic repression, there were prominent episodes of violence, such as the murder of journalist Giorgi Sanaia and attempts to close *Rustavi-2* TV channel. However, on the whole, Welt (2006, pp. 16-17) argues, Georgia was a society that was not used to state violence:

Whatever its faults, the Georgian government was strongly conditioned against the use of force to prevent or disperse peaceful protests. Police brutality, official complicity in kidnapping crimes, and the unresolved murder of Rustavi-2 television anchor Giorgi Sanaia in 2001 did point to the regime’s ability to engage or tolerate isolated instances of violence. And in the two years before parliamentary elections, the government had made some effort to pressure critics—lawsuits against the media, a tax raid on Rustavi-2, a hardening of the libel law, and proposed reviews of foreign-sponsored organizations. But the Georgian political scene was not characterized overall by repression—criticism freely emanated from a number of sources, including political parties across the spectrum, NGOs such as the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association and Liberty Institute, and print and broadcast media. Anti-government demonstrations had never been dispersed, and no leading opposition figure had ever been arrested or seriously harassed. It was also taken for granted that the memory of April 9, 1989, when Soviet (Russian) troops forcibly dispersed pro-independence demonstrators on Tbilisi’s central Rustaveli Avenue, served as a powerful restraint against the participation of government officials and members of the security forces in efforts to prevent or suppress protest.

Evidence #4.3: Interviews. The interviewees’ statements largely agree with the findings of the literature review and the V-Dem data. The consensus is that Shevardnadze’s

regime was extremely corrupt and used extensive electoral fraud to preserve his monopoly on political power. At the same time, the regime was not an overtly repressive one due to the specifics of Shevardnadze's personality.

In Darchiashvili's words,

Yes [there were certain freedoms] because Shevardnadze counted very much on the support of his Western friends. But the actual fabric of Georgia was run by clans and organized crime bosses, so Shevardnadze failed to combat corruption. And when NGOs and opposition and media outlets became too critical, then elite groups reciprocated and retaliated, and we had cases of journalists being beaten up and talk of how NGOs were Western spies. But Shevardnadze was not repressive. The animosity and anxiety in the society were so high, he couldn't deal with it.

Tchiaberashvili makes a similar point:

In 1995, the free press and NGOs were already there, so the jinn was already out of bottle. Despite my critical view of Shevardnadze, I have to give him a credit as he didn't try to put this jinn of freedom back to the bottle. Of course, there were political cases against journalists and physical violence against NGOs, including Liberty Institute that I was a part of. But, generally, the corrupt government didn't care, and later this became one of the decisive factors leading to the Rose Revolution.

Finally, Japaridze remarks that

When Shevardnadze was a president, there were regular protests whose participants included members of the Mkhedrioni squads, which consisted of semi-military protesters and criminals. One day we told Shevardnadze that he had to use force against these people, because democracy was not only about freedoms but also about the rule of law. He said that if he used force against the protesters, it would degrade the perception of democracy amongst Georgians. So for him democracy was about freedoms, and I think that this trait can be explained by his Soviet past. He was the first secretary [of Georgia's Communist Party] for a long time, so he was afraid people would interpret his actions as the consequences of his Soviet background. I remember when Karimov [Islam Karimov, then President of Uzbekistan] once visited, he was surprised that Shevardnadze had never used force to disperse protesters.

In sum, proposition #4 has confirming pieces of evidence from three independent sources—namely, the V-Dem data, the interviews, and a literature review—that corroborate

each other. All three confirm that the use of repression in Shevardnadze's Georgia was limited due to Shevardnadze's personality and his unwillingness to spoil the country's "democratic" image abroad. Confirmation of this proposition allows us to upgrade confidence in the moderating hypothesis from 0.4 to 0.5.

Proposition #5

Proposition #5 predicts that discourse analysis of Shevardnadze's statements will reveal a systematic endorsement of democratic/liberal values and principles (high certainty, medium uniqueness). This proposition, too, has only a medium level of uniqueness, given that pro-democratic narratives can occur under alternative explanations because of democracy's strong normative power.

Evidence #5.1: Literature Review. In regard to the existing records of Shevardnadze's statements, there is only one interview, from 2005, in which he expresses a clear commitment to democratic principles and values (Karumidze, 2005). In this post-revolutionary interview, he clearly presents himself as a liberal who was trying to build a "market economy and democratic state" (p. 30). He interprets the Rose Revolution as a conspiracy foisted upon the country by Russian and American organisations. He states that "the opposition was very well aware that Shevardnadze would never fire on them", and repeats several times during the interview that he "would never allow bloodshed to happen" (pp. 29-30). He also argues that he made his decision to peacefully resign in order "to avoid bloodshed", even though he had the option of using troops and declaring a state of an emergency (p. 31).

In sum, proposition #5 has only one corroborating piece of evidence, which is an interview that Shevardnadze gave after his 2003 resignation. In this interview, he portrays

himself as a pro-democratic leader who does not use violence against his own people. I, however, did not identify systematic endorsement of democratic principles and values in Shevardnadze's earlier speeches and statements (despite his democratic image). Therefore, in the absence of further supporting evidence, proposition #5 remains unconfirmed. I do not, however, downgrade the overall confidence into the hypothesis since confirmation of the proposition was heavily dependent on my access to materials in Russian language. It is probable there is discourse material in Georgian language that can corroborate or disconfirm this proposition.

The V-Dem data, interviews, and literature review show that there was no systematic state violence in Shevardnadze's Georgia. At the same time, there is no conclusive discursive evidence that Shevardnadze's decision to peacefully step down in 2003 was influenced by a genuine and systematic commitment to democratic or liberal norms. Due to the lack of confirming evidence, confidence in H2 remains at the level of 0.5, meaning that it is an unlikely explanation for Shevardnadze's behavior.

Proposition #6

Proposition #6 turns on the expectation that during the 2003 protests, the military (law enforcement) did not use force against the protesters (high certainty, medium uniqueness). If the military had sympathy or support for democratic protesters, the expectation is that they would not have used force against them. This proposition has high certainty but medium uniqueness, given that the non-use of force can be observed under other explanations, such as simply following superiors' orders or not wanting to escalate the conflict.

Evidence #6.1: Literature Review. Both a review of the literature and accounts by observers and participants confirm there was no use of force on the part of law enforcement officials or the military during the 2003 protests. Thus, Fairbanks (2004, pp. 116-17) reports that

On November 22, as Shevardnadze was formally opening the new Parliament, Saakashvili led a crowd into the chamber and disrupted the session. The legislators dispersed as Shevardnadze's bodyguards hustled him off the rostrum and out of the building, unfinished speech in hand. Although police were present, not a shot was fired.

Similarly, Kandelaki (2006, p.10) comments:

The Georgian revolutionaries were not pacifists, despite the fact that both Kmara and National Movement activists underwent intense training in nonviolent techniques. Police and security forces might have been expected to use force when protesters occupied the parliament and other government buildings, but they chose to do nothing. The crowd was perfectly aware that the risk of violence was real throughout, but many believed that if bloodshed was inevitable, so be it.

Along the same lines, Hash-Gonzalez (2012, p. 67) remarks that

Over 800 armed interior troops, guardsmen, and policemen were sent to protect the Chancellery ... People were giving food and flowers to the police and praying with them so that it would be hard for them to use force. A member of the National Movement told me that some of the troops and police were receptive to this and that "by the end, it was the government alone on the one side, and whole population on the other. Not like a civil war situation with a divided public. The regime had some authority over troops, but it was very weak. I think the armed forces people saw themselves more as a part of society than part of the authorities."

To sum up: proposition #6 is empirically confirmed by eyewitness accounts reported in the literature; these accounts unanimously agree that the military and police did not attempt to use force at any stage of the protest.

Proposition #7

Proposition #7 turns on the expectation that military (law enforcement) actors expressed anti-regime or pro-protest statements during the 2003 protest (high certainty, medium uniqueness). Given that any anti-regime statements incurred significant risks, it is unlikely that the military would make such statements if they believed that the regime had a chance for survival. At the same time, anti-regime statements could have also occurred under other explanations, such as a power struggle between the regime and the military leadership. Accordingly, this proposition, too, has only a medium level of uniqueness.

Evidence #7.1: Literature Review. A review of the literature confirms that soldiers expressed their support for protesters and did not want to stop them. Thus, Kandelaki (2006, p. 11) writes:

As for the police and military, the fact that their leaders agreed to negotiate showed their realization that with virtually the entire country involved in the protest movement, any use of force would result sooner or later in self-destruction. By November 22, opposition leaders knew that some security units would not intervene, although the risk of violence was still great with no word from a number of special forces units loyal to the president. The significant factor for the police was that “critical mass” had been achieved. This was the number of protestors (120,000) necessary to give the revolution legitimacy and overwhelm the police at key moments, such as the takeover of government buildings.

Likewise, Hash-Gonzalez (2012, p. 76) reports that

On the afternoon of the 22nd, the protestors moved to the Chancellery. To do so, they had to break through police cordons. A protestor described how smoke grenades were thrown at them and then thrown back at the soldiers and police. Some fistfights broke out, and then everything changed: All of a sudden the soldiers stood apart and said to us, “go in.” I remember hugs and kisses all the way through to the Chancellery. The soldiers were hugging us, or giving us their shields, telling us to go in and do our thing. We were crying, couldn’t stop crying. When we came closer to the building, the U.S. trained battalion [presidential bodyguards] were there. They had masks and machine guns. I remember their faces. They were so scared and didn’t know what to do. They couldn’t shoot us, there were so many of us. And they didn’t want to. They were backing up, didn’t want to hug us, but they all said finally, “we won’t do

anything.” We went inside and took control of the building where government sat.

In sum, proposition #7 confirms that the soldiers supported the protesters, although the number of sources used as evidence is rather small. Together with proposition #6, proposition #7 confirms that the military did not use violence against the protesters, and even expressed their support for the protesters’ cause. This confirmation allows us to increase confidence in the military-defection hypothesis by 10%⁵⁴, resulting in an overall estimate of 60%.

Proposition #8

Finally, proposition #8 states that there should be discursive evidence from credible sources that the military’s defection played a significant role in Shevardnadze’s decision to peacefully exit (high certainty, high uniqueness). A credible primary source that can confirm that the military’s defection was a determining factor in Shevardnadze’s decision to resign peacefully can be interpreted as a piece of highly unique evidence for the military-defection hypothesis.

Evidence #8.1: Literature Review. There are three important pieces of evidence for proposition #8 from independent sources: two post-revolutionary interviews with opposition leaders (Zhvania and Burjanadze) who had direct contact with Shevardnadze on the day of his resignation, and one interview with Shevardnadze’s former chairman of the National Security Committee, Tedo Japaridze, who also stayed with him until the last moment. All three interviewees provide valuable information about Shevardnadze’s decision-making in connection with his peaceful resignation.

⁵⁴ Since I cannot cross-check the sources used as evidence for propositions #6 and #7, I upgrade the confidence level for each proposition by 5%.

In his interview, Zhvania states that Shevardnadze was not planning to negotiate with the opposition during their last meeting on Shevardnadze's day of resignation. However, in the end, Shevardnadze did not have a choice, because almost all of the army and the police defected. As Zhvania puts it (quoted in Wertsch, 2005c, p. 38),

They [the army and the police] did this because there was not a single police officer or army officer who wanted to isolate themselves from the people. Everyone was speaking in one voice, demanding the resignation of Shevardnadze.

Zhvania also claims that prior to his resignation Shevardnadze said his biggest mistake was to allow too much democracy in Georgia (Wertsch, 2005c, p. 40). Being in the opposition, Zhvania had personal reasons to portray Shevardnadze in a non-flattering light; however, his statements are largely corroborated by those of Nino Burjanadze and Tedo Japaridze, who had much more trusting relationships with the former president.

In the interview with Burjanadze (Wertsch, 2005a, p. 47), she explains that at some point,

police began to say they would not answer to Shevardnadze but only to Burjanadze ... people in the army and police understood that we were fighting not only for political positions or offices or our political future ... we were fighting for the Georgian future.

Burjanadze claims that Shevardnadze did not want to admit this reality, and that prior to his decision to resign "he was ready to fight, ready to defend a system that was really a disaster for Georgia."

Finally, in the interview with Japaridze (Wertsch, 2005b, p. 54), he reveals that on 22 November 2003 (Shevardnadze's resignation day), he was approached by Shevardnadze's chief of staff, Petre Mamradze, who asked him to write a decree announcing a state of emergency on behalf of Shevardnadze. Japaridze replied that it was simply impossible to

declare a state of emergency because there was no one to carry out that order. Neither the police nor the army would take this order from Shevardnadze. Following Japaridze's refusal, Shevardnadze fired Japaridze as chairman of the National Security Committee and appointed a military commander, in a move that was interpreted as part of his preparation to use force to repress the protests.

Evidence #8.2: Interviews. The interviews largely confirm the military-defection hypothesis. Thus, Bokeria remarks that

He did try [to use force] but nobody listened to him. It is a myth that, at the end of the day, he peacefully left. He declared a state of emergency and said that demonstrations were an illegal coup d'état and ordered troops to clear Rustaveli [avenue]. But there was no force left, and when his orders were not followed, he resigned.

Likewise, Nodia reports that

He did not really control his armed forces and we heard from the Minister of Defense at the time that the army would stay neutral and not interfere. And he could not rely on the police anymore.

Finally, Lincoln Mitchell offers this comment:

Shevardnadze famously tried not to violently disperse protests and that was an important thing that he did for a peaceful transition here. Some of the Georgians said he tried to [disperse the protests], but the state was so weak. Police and law enforcement were making their own calculations, and it's a small country, remember. Everyone knows everybody. So, to call out Georgian troops to shoot at Georgian people, there has to be immense loyalty to this leader. And Shevardnadze did not command such loyalty, not least because he did not pay people enough money. (L Mitchell 2018, personal communication, 31 October)

To sum up: proposition #8 is the key piece of evidence for the military-defection hypothesis, and it is also the most empirically supported proposition of the five propositions just considered. Several key actors confirm that Shevardnadze did consider using force against the protesters, but had to abandon this idea as the military stopped following his

orders. Confirmation of this proposition allows confidence in the military-defection hypothesis to be upgraded to 0.7.

Step 3. Key Findings

The results of the process-tracing of the moderating hypothesis in the case of Georgia are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Process-Tracing Results for the Moderating Hypothesis in Georgia

Proposition		Certainty	Uniqueness	Interviews	Literature Review	Survey Data	Confirmation
The Moderating Hypothesis							
4	Shevardnadze's regime had low levels of violence against civilians and/or abuse of their civil and political rights	high	medium	positive	mixed	positive	yes
5	The discourse analysis of Shevardnadze's statements demonstrates a systematic endorsement of democratic/liberal values and principles	high	medium	no data	positive	no data	no
The Military-Defection Hypothesis							
4	The military (law enforcement) did not use force against the protesters	high	medium	no data	positive	no data	yes
7	The military (law enforcement) actors expressed anti-regime or pro-protest statements during the 2003 protest	high	medium	no data	positive	no data	yes
8	There is a discursive evidence from the credible sources that military's defection played a significant role in Shevardnadze's decision to peacefully exit	high	high	positive	positive	no data	yes

H2's assumption that a pro-democracy culture had a moderating effect on Shevardnadze receives moderate empirical support. Two key findings are confirmed by independent sources: a) Shevardnadze's regime did not substantially abuse civil rights and had only episodic instances of state violence, and b) the literature review and interviews (including one with Tedo Japaridze, who worked closely with him for a long time) reveal that Shevardnadze was personally opposed to state repression. These pieces of evidence, however, do not confirm Shevardnadze's long-term commitment to liberal or democratic

values. In terms of personal testimonies and narratives, there is only one 2005 interview in which Shevardnadze explicitly links his decision to resign peacefully to the commitment to democratic principles. This self-interpretation, however, could be explained by other factors, such as Shevardnadze's desire to preserve his positive image abroad. Due to the lack of confirming evidence, the final probability for the moderating hypothesis remains at 0.5, meaning that it is an unlikely explanation for Shevardnadze's behaviour.

By contrast, the military-defection hypothesis receives robust empirical support. The military's unwillingness to interfere with protesters is confirmed by a literature review as well as interviews. Moreover, both opposition leaders and Shevardnadze's advisor confirm that Shevardnadze was prepared to use troops to disperse protesters, but then discovered the military would not follow his orders. Therefore, with 70% probability, H3 can be viewed as the primary explanation for Shevardnadze's peaceful resignation.

4. Conclusion

In the case study of Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution, Bayesian process-tracing confirms the mobilising hypothesis and disconfirms the moderating hypothesis. The mobilising hypothesis receives robust empirical support from several independent sources (interviews, survey data, and a review of the relevant literature) that the 2003 protesters had a normative commitment to democracy and an appreciation for democratic freedoms that prompted them to take on the risk of protest participation, even though they were potentially facing state repression.

The moderating effect, however, is disproven in the Georgian case study, because the alternative explanation (the military-defection hypothesis) received stronger empirical support. There is evidence that Shevardnadze did not personally condone the use of violence,

and there was no systematic state repression in Georgia under his rule. However, these outcomes could have also occurred under other explanations, such as Shevardnadze's attempt to preserve his democratic reputation abroad. With a high degree of certainty (according to the testimony of eyewitnesses from both the opposition and from Shevardnadze's government), we can say that it was the military's defection and not Shevardnadze's democratic beliefs that influenced his decision to resign from office peacefully. There is also credible evidence that Georgia's soldiers sympathised with the protesters.

CHAPTER 6. ARMENIA IN 2018

In 2018, in Armenia, the stars aligned.

Giragosyan (personal communication, 2018)

The quick and peaceful success of the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia came as a surprise not only to external observers but also to the protesters themselves (A. Manukyan, personal communication, 12 December 2018). As of early 2021, several regime changes have occurred in the post-communist space; but to my knowledge there are only two post-Soviet leaders who publicly admitted their mistakes before stepping down, with the former Armenian president being one of them. The first such leader was the Russian president Boris Yeltsin (1991-1999), who said in his famous speech from 31 December 1999:

I made a different decision. I am leaving. I am leaving earlier than the set term. I have understood that it was necessary for me to do this. Russia must enter the new millennium with new politicians, with new faces, with new, smart, strong, energetic people. And we who have been in power for many years already, we must go. I want to ask for your forgiveness. I did all I could—not according to my health, but on the basis of all the problems. A new generation is relieving me, a generation of those who can do more and better. (“Yeltsin resigns”, 2000, para. 12)

Almost two decades later, on 23 April 2018, Sargsyan’s resignation speech had a strong resemblance to Yeltsin’s:

Nikol Pashinyan was right, and I was wrong. I know I still have other options, but I am not going to choose any of them. This is not my way. I resign from the position of the Prime-Minister. People on the street do not want me as the leader, so I fulfil your demands. (Krutov, 2018, para. 8)

It is quite unusual to hear political leaders in ex-communist states admit that they made mistakes. The former Armenian president acted against the autocrats’ rulebook, according

to which one attributes anti-regime protests and people's frustration with the regime to the malevolent influence of external forces. The Velvet Revolution thus introduced two puzzles for regional experts. First, how did such a large-scale mobilisation occur in a country where protests for a long time were a local phenomenon spearheaded primarily by civil society organisations? Second, why did Sargsyan not use the army to stay in power?

At the end of 2018, these questions led me from Tbilisi to Yerevan to witness the aftermath of Armenia's peaceful revolution and assess the ongoing political and social changes. My fieldwork in Yerevan turned out to be quite different from the time spent in Tbilisi. Both cities have a remarkable cultural vibe and historical legacy; however, Yerevan and its residents feel distinctly different from vibrant pro-European Tbilisi and its inhabitants. On the one hand, the atmosphere in Yerevan produces a feeling known to any ex-Soviet resident, who will experience a peculiar sense of familiarity when observing typical Soviet buildings and architecture that remain the same from country to country in the ex-Soviet sphere. On the other hand, people's attitudes in Yerevan are different from those of the residents in other typical ex-Soviet cities. Instead of displaying a widespread political apathy, Armenians are actively interested in everyday politics and do not deem themselves to be outsiders to the affairs of the state. These are people who have realised that they have power in their country. These are citizens.

In other words, I was fortunate enough to arrive to Armenia during the "honeymoon" period when people still felt empowered and invigorated by the results of their protest participation. The *Economist* had just named Armenia "country of the year" where "autocracy died quietly" ("The Economist's country of the year 2018", 2018). To be fair, everyone recognised enormous challenges that the new regime had to face, such as all-pervasive

corruption, a lack of economic growth, and, most importantly, a shortage of government employees competent enough to manage with these challenges. But the general sentiment was that if citizens were able to make Sargsyan resign after ten years of the undisputed rule, then nothing was impossible. This nationwide feeling of accomplishment and pride in what Armenians had achieved turned out to be quite helpful when I asked for interviews. Even the actors who “lost” during the revolution, such as members of the RPA (Republican Party of Armenia)⁵⁵, were willing to meet and discuss Armenia’s social and political transformations.

An important research design difference between my investigation of the Armenian and Georgian case studies is that, for the Velvet Revolution, interviews provide the main and sometimes the only source of evidence, due to a scarcity of information about the 2018 protests in Armenia in the existing literature. As I write these words in late 2020, the first genuinely comprehensive research published about the Velvet Revolution—namely, Anna Ohanyan and Lawrence Broers’s edited volume on *Armenia’s Velvet Revolution: Authoritarian Decline and Civil Resistance in a Multipolar World*—is only now being prepared for publication. In part, the time factor explains the lack of substantive work in this area: it has been only three years since the revolution. At the same time, however, I wonder whether there may also be a certain fatigue with Eurasian Colour revolutions, following the dramatic events of the 2013 Ukrainian Maidan revolution and Russia’s annexation of Crimea. Armenia, however, is not like Georgia or Ukraine. It is a small, ethnically homogeneous country that does not look to the West nor to the East. It has close economic and cultural ties with Russia,

⁵⁵ The Republican Party of Armenia was the party in power prior to the 2018 revolution; the party’s membership included all the important government officials and influential business elites. It is a right-wing party with a conservative ideology that was founded around the concept of *tseghakronutyun*, which refers to the sacred value of the Armenian state and the national identity of each Armenian (Ghaplanyan, 2018).

but it rejects Russia's political model. It welcomes a close relationship with the European Union, but remains a dedicated member of the Eurasian Economic Union.⁵⁶

What makes Armenia different, too, is that post-revolutionary Armenia has not experienced the kind of polarisation between the broader society and the elites that Georgia experienced following the Rose Revolution. Nikol Pashinyan did prosecute some of the top-ranking officials from the former regime, but the process never turned into a "witch hunt". The RPA, the political party that had monopolised power for a decade before the revolution, was allowed to take a part in the post-revolutionary elections. Moreover, I had no trouble getting RPA members to meet with me, and during interviews they openly shared their opinions about the revolution. All in all, Sargsyan's resignation felt more like a national achievement than a loss of the RPA elites at the hands of the opposition.

In terms of the structure of my analysis, the organisation of this chapter mimics that of the previous chapter. First, I furnish context for the 2018 Velvet Revolution, providing a brief overview of main events. I then move to my use of Bayesian process-tracing to test the mobilising and moderating hypotheses in the Armenian context. The chapter concludes with a review of the main findings and what they suggest about the role of democratic support in the mass mobilisation and non-violent authoritarian exit that occurred in Armenia in 2018.

⁵⁶ The EEU (Eurasian Economic Union) is an economic and political union that includes Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Armenia.

1. Background for the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia

In 2014, Evert van der Zweerde wrote that “Azerbaijan is a consolidated dictatorship ...; Georgia’s parliamentary and presidential elections have set it on a ‘European’ road; while Armenia can still go either way” (p. 39). In 2018, it seems, Armenia finally made its choice. The 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia was a month-long protest movement that lasted from the end of March to early May 2018. Participants in the protests demanded the resignation of then President Serzh Sargsyan (2008-2018). On first blush, it seems that Armenia’s protest movement resembles Georgia’s Rose Revolution and other Colour Revolutions in Eurasia. Indeed, the protest movements in Georgia and Armenia share some important characteristics, such as the public’s fatigue with corrupt government, a well-developed and autonomous civil society, and opposition movements that were able to unite the protesters’ efforts (Grigoryan, 2019).

However, there are also some important differences. First, Armenia’s state resources and coercive capacity in 2018 were considerably stronger than Georgia’s in 2003. According to the BICC (Bonn International Centre for Conversion) GMI (Global Militarization Index)⁵⁷, Armenia in 2017 ranked third globally in terms of its expenditures on the military and the importance of the military’s apparatus in society. Further, by this same metric, Armenia ranked as the most militarised country in Europe (Mutschler, 2017). Therefore, Sargsyan definitely had the military resources needed to suppress the protest movement. Second, the Velvet Revolution seemed to be less conflict-oriented than the Rose Revolution. Nikol

⁵⁷ The GMI consists of three categories: expenditure, personnel, and heavy weapons. The expenditure category measures military spending in relation to GDP and health spending. The personnel category measures the number of military personnel in relation to the total population and physicians. Finally, the third category measures the number of heavy weapons possessed by the military in relation to the country’s total population.

Pashinyan, the leader of the opposition, did not exclude Sargsyan and the RPA (Republican Party of Armenia) from negotiations, and in the aftermath of the revolution, RPA members were allowed to take part in parliamentary elections (Ohanyan, 2018). It is quite difficult to imagine a similar meeting of the minds between Mikheil Saakashvili and Eduard Shevardnadze's party, For a New Georgia, after the Rose Revolution in 2003. Finally, the Velvet Revolution's organisers themselves made an effort to demonstrate that their movement was different from the Colour Revolutions per se (Grigoryan, 2019). As Alexander Iskandaryan (2018, p. 466) observes, "the name of the Armenian revolution was carefully selected to avoid references to flowers or colors so as to preclude uncomfortable analogies with the revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine."

It also has to be said that post-independence Armenia had a long history of protest movements. Prior to 2018, the most significant episode of mass mobilisation happened in 2008, and was met with a violent state response under the orders of then president Robert Kocharyan (1998-2008). The protests followed the 2008 presidential elections, when the first President of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosian (1991-98), ran against Serzh Sargsyan, a candidate supported by Kocharyan (he himself could not participate in the elections since his second term was about to end). After an announcement of Sargsyan's victory in the first round, the opposition, led by Ter-Petrosian, occupied Yerevan's Freedom Square and denounced the election's results as fraudulent. It was, however, difficult to assess the extent of electoral fraud in 2008. Local observers struggled to gain an access to elections, and international observers, such as the OSCE, at first endorsed the official results but then released a more critical statement following the protests (Lanskoy & Suthers, 2019).

Kocharyan violently responded to the protesters' demands: the police used firearms against the protesters and also drove vehicles into their midst. Ten people were killed, and dozens were injured and hospitalised. 2008's *Marti Mek* (*March First*) protests had a long-lasting influence on Armenia's opposition and civil society activists (Lanskoy & Suthers, 2019). Nikol Pashinyan himself participated in the 2008 protest, escaping the initial arrests but then surrendering to the authorities and going to prison for three years. In 2015, he established the *Civic Contract* party, which later became a platform for the 2018 mass mobilisation. Most importantly, 2008 left a shadow on Sargsyan's rule, reminding people of how he came to power and causing them to question the legitimacy of his presidency (Zolyan, 2018).

The decade between 2008 and 2018 in Armenia was a paradoxical period. On the one hand, it seemed that the majority of people made their peace with Sargsyan's semi-authoritarianism (Lanskoy & Suthers, 2019). Most of the population remained politically passive and skeptical about the possibility for social change (Ishkanian, 2015). On the other hand, Armenia's opposition and civil society started to gain more influence, as a new generation of young activists reignited the protest movement (Grigoryan, 2019; Ishkanian, 2015). They purposefully did not get involved in the politics of the day, but instead tried to focus their activities on socioeconomic issues. Between 2013 and 2018, there was a series of public protests in Yerevan, including campaigns against the increase in bus fares and in favor of preserving a city park; protests also grew out of an environmental movement to shut down a Russian mining concern, as well as the 2015 Electric Yerevan campaign against the rise in electricity prices (Lanskoy & Suthers, 2019). From the beginning these movements distanced themselves from the politics of the day; nonetheless, they provided valuable lessons about

an active citizenship and political participation to the younger generations (Ishkanian, 2015).

The 2018 protest in Armenia, unlike most protests in Eurasia, was not an electoral revolution. Its actual origins can be traced back to 2015, when Sargsyan introduced constitutional amendments that moved Armenia from a semi-presidential to a parliamentary republic, and that transferred most executive powers from the president to the prime minister.⁵⁸ The constitutional changes were necessary because Sargsyan's two-term limit was up in 2018; therefore, he could no longer run for president. In April 2018, the parliament predictably voted to appoint Sargsyan as the new prime minister, effectively electing him for a new round of political leadership (Atanesian, 2018).

The re-appointment of Sargsyan caused a strongly negative reaction among the opposition as well as civil society. Nikol Pashinyan took decisive action by launching his *Take a Step* campaign; this campaign involved a 200 km walk from Gyumri to Yerevan, with Pashinyan calling for people to join him along the way (Gabrielian, 2018). Pashinyan and his supporters arrived in Yerevan in mid-April in 2018; they then merged with other civil society and opposition actors, starting a nationwide civil-disobedience campaign. Their principal demands were formulated as "Take a step, reject Serzh" (Iskandaryan, 2018).

As many of my interviewees observe, there were several factors that ensured a large-scale mass mobilisation in 2018. First, people had been unhappy with the regime for a long time (Iskandaryan, 2018). Economic stagnation and the dominance of oligarchs in the

⁵⁸ The 2015 constitutional amendments in Armenia represent an interesting parallel with Russia, given that Russia initiated a similar referendum on constitutional amendments in the summer of 2020 to "annul" the previous terms of President Vladimir Putin and allow him to be re-elected. However, unlike in Armenia, there have not yet been wide-scale protests in Russia against the elites' monopolisation of power.

Armenian economy had led to high inequality and extensive poverty (Griffin et al., 2002; Ishkanian, 2015). In 2013, over 35% of Armenians lived in poverty, making less than 3\$ per day (World Bank, 2013). At the same time, Armenia's long-standing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijan erupted in the Four-Day War in 2016, causing hundreds of casualties on Armenia's side (Iskandaryan, 2018). The government was perceived as too weak in its response to the conflict, and also as responsible for the poor condition of military (Mikaelian, 2018). In 2017, the Caucasus Barometer's survey showed that 66% of the participants "distrusted" the president, whereas only 18% had any trust in the head of state (Caucasus Barometer, 2017).

Second, a large-scale youth participation in the 2018 protests has been described as crucial. As Zolyan (2018) puts it, "middle-aged Armenians were skeptical about protest precisely because they had seen so many unsuccessful attempts before, but the new generation was free of that psychological burden".

Third, an external factor played an important role in the quick and peaceful resolution of the protest movement in Armenia. This factor was Russia's lack of interest in Armenia's revolution. There were legitimate expectations that Moscow would be interested in the situation in Armenia, because Russia's 102nd military base, along with several Russian FSB (Federal Security Service) units, is situated in Gyumri, near the borders with Turkey and Iran (Grigoryan, 2018). The official reaction from Moscow, however, was that Russia hoped that the protest would be resolved peacefully in accordance with the law and constitutional norms, and that the bilateral relationship between the two countries would continue to be productive and cooperative ("V Kremle nadejutsja na sokhranenie soyuznicheskikh otnosheniy", 2018). The spokesperson for Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maria

Zakharova, was even more expressive on her Twitter account, writing: “Armenia, Russia is always with you!” (MacFarquhar & Perez-Pena, 2018).

Lastly, as Miriam Lansky and Elspeth Suthers (2019) aptly note, “the protest looked good on Instagram” (p. 93). Social media, and especially Facebook, played an enormous role in the mass mobilisation in Armenia (Grigoryan, 2019). There was no censorship of social media; therefore, the opposition was able to live broadcast their actions via Facebook, spreading their message directly to people. Social networks and the WhatsApp messaging service allowed people to self-organise protests without any centralised command. There was no one principal location for the protests, with people gathering in various parts of Yerevan. This tactic dispersed the protests, making the police’s efforts to contain protests more difficult. Pashinyan himself was eventually arrested after his brief meeting with Sargsyan, in which he boldly demanded that Sargsyan resign. However, his arrest did not have any effect on protest participation, because the protests had already gained momentum and were even joined by priests and peacekeepers (“Armenia Soldiers Join Anti-Government Protests”, 2018). Finally, on 23 April 2018, Serzh Sargsyan officially resigned with now-famous words, “Nikol Pashinyan was right, I was wrong” (MacFarquhar & Perez-Pena, 2018).

2. Process-Tracing the Mobilising Effect of Democratic Support in Armenia

Armenia’s unexpected revolution suggests that it would be unwise to discount the persistent public appetite for democracy in other countries where democratic movements have arisen repeatedly only to be defeated and marginalized.

Lansky & Suthers (2019, p. 87)

My explanation for the large-scale mass mobilisation that occurred during the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia links it to high levels of democratic support that Armenian citizens have consistently demonstrated since the collapse of the Soviet Union (time-series data on Armenia's democratic attitudes are provided below). As with Georgia, I use the case of Armenia to process-trace the mobilising hypothesis (H1). In other words, I explore whether there is compelling evidence that strong support for democracy on the individual level lowers individuals' threshold for participating in protests, by increasing their internal satisfaction and net benefit from taking part.

Step 1. Estimation of the Prior Probability

The process-tracing starts with the estimation of the prior probability (or prior), which reveals the level of initial confidence in the mobilising hypothesis given existing knowledge about democratic protests in general and Armenia's case specifically. Because we already know that individual-level factors (such as individuals' worldviews and normative beliefs) play a significant role in protest participation (Oliver & Johnston, 2005; Opp, 2009; Snow et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 1992), the proposed causal mechanism is theoretically plausible. Therefore, I assign H1 a default prior probability of 0.5 (meaning that it may or may not be present in a given case study). This number is further downgraded to 0.4 given the causal heterogeneity of mass mobilisations, and given, too, the availability of potential alternative explanations, such as socioeconomic grievances or the role of civil society in mobilising people.

The next step is adjustment of the prior based on contextual knowledge about the case of Armenia. Unlike in the case of Georgia's Rose Revolution, there are fewer competing narratives about why people went out to the streets in 2018 in Armenia. Two alternative

explanations can be summarised as poverty and generational change theories. The poverty explanation pays attention to the disastrous socioeconomic situation in Armenia rather than political conditions, and emphasises the role of corruption and economic inequality in triggering the revolution. The generational change theory focuses on the significance of the young civil activists who have revived Armenia's protest culture over the past decade. The economy in Armenia had been in decline for a long time before 2018, and the new generation of civil society activists started their protest activities in the early 2010s. However, prior to 2018 and Sargsyan's "re-election" as the prime minister, none of these factors gave rise to an unprecedented mass mobilisation of the sort that occurred during the Velvet Revolution. Therefore, it seems that Sargsyan's non-democratic behaviour and his attempt to maintain power by avoiding elections and dismissing constitutional term limits hold considerable explanatory power. With this in mind, prior confidence in the mobilising hypothesis can be upgraded from 0.4 to 0.5.

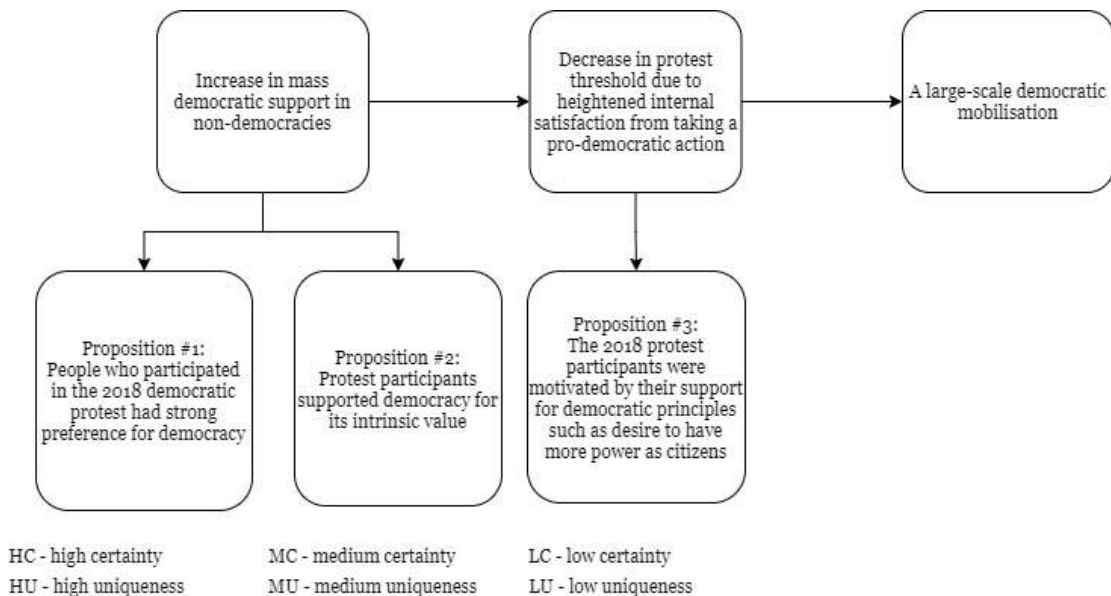
Step 2. Argument Map and Evidence Analysis

The argument map and propositions for H1 (Figure 6.1) are the same as they were in the previous chapter. If people's motivations to protest are influenced by their democratic preferences, there should be empirical evidence to confirm the following propositions. First, there should be clear and unambiguous evidence that individuals who took part in the protest have a strong preference for democracy as the only legitimate political system. Second, there should be evidence supporting the conclusion that, for the protesters, the desirability of regime change is not linked to the expectations of material benefits or more effective government performance. In other words, the origin of democratic support has to be intrinsic and not instrumental. Finally, there is an expected causal relationship between

protest participation and individuals' feelings of internal or moral satisfaction caused by taking action in support of democratic change. This third proposition needs to be contextualised differently in Armenia's case compared to Georgia's. In the case of Georgia, the internal satisfaction that arose from taking an action in support of democracy is related to support for competitive, free, and fair elections. The case of Armenia, however, does not involve an electoral revolution. Accordingly, the prior expectation is that internal satisfaction for Armenia's participants is linked to non-electoral elements of democracy, such as a regular leadership rotation, government accountability, and the importance of the separation of powers and institutional checks and balances.

Figure 6.1

The Argument Map for the Mobilising Hypothesis in Armenia



Proposition #1

Proposition #1 turns on the expectation that Armenians who took part in the 2018 protest had a strong preference for democracy as the only legitimate political system (high certainty, low uniqueness). Evidence for strong democratic preferences among the 2018 protest participants is considered to be a necessary condition for the confirmation of the mobilising hypothesis, but not a sufficient one.

Evidence #1.1: Interviews. The interviewees proposed several recurrent explanations for the 2018 protest. Valentina Gevorgyan, the Civil Society Program coordinator at Open Society Foundations Armenia in 2018, and a protest participant, remarked that “People were really tired of what had been going on during the past ten years; they wanted more accountable government and other things, including democracy”. Likewise, Aren Manukyan, a media and political consultant in 2018, and another protest participant, commented that

People went to the streets because the situation got to the point when they could not tolerate the regime anymore. We had a lot of political prisoners, no freedom, corruption, monopolisation of the economy, and all the large businesses and mass media belonged to Sargsyan and his circle. Corruption was everywhere, to the point that you could not even get your kid into a kindergarten school without a bribe.

Protest participant Hovhannes Hovhannisyan, who was in 2018 a lecturer at the American University of Armenia and co-founder of the Public Policy Institute of Research Centre, put forward a similar explanation:

I believe justice was the biggest concern in Armenia. If you spoke to people about democracy, human rights, and democratic values, very few understood what they meant. But people understood injustice. They saw it every day, on the street, in the court, in the police. It was injustice and inequality that drove people to the street. For example, oligarchs’ children could kill a person and they would be released in court. So the gap between the elites and ordinary people was huge.

According to Hayk Mamijanyan, Chairman of the RPA Youth Organisation and Executive Head of the RPA Political School in 2018, as well as a protest observer,

It was a regime change, a non-violent one. On the side of the opposition, there was a lot of hate speech that divided people into two camps, black and white. And their rhetoric was very populist. But I am not saying that the mass mobilisation was a result of the opposition's manipulation, and that everyone was happy with the RPA and our rule. There were many people who were unhappy with the situation in the country, and they had objective reasons to feel this way.

Three of these four interviewees name the lack of justice and political accountability as the main reasons for people's frustration and protest mobilisation. Most of the participants do not explicitly mention democracy. One of the interviewees, Hovhannes Hovhannisyan (who was appointed as Deputy Minister of Education following the revolution), is even sceptical of the public demand for democracy in Armenia. Yet the interviewees strongly imply that people desired to see a radical systemic change that would foreground the accountability of politicians, the separation of powers, and an independent judiciary. All three of these practices are the basic characteristics of a democratic system; therefore, in this context, their discourse can be interpreted as an expression of support for democratic change.

It is also worth singling out Hayk Mamijanyan's statements, given that he was one of the top-ranking figures in Sargsyan's RPA party. Although one of his arguments is that the 2018 protest partly succeeded due to the use of smart mobilisation "strategies" by the opposition, he admits that to a large extent people participated because of their dissatisfaction with how the RPA and Sargsyan ran the country.

This nationwide frustration with the existing political system is confirmed by observations that the 2018 protest was the first protest since 2008 in which people went out into the streets with explicitly political demands. Thus Valentina Gevorgyan noted that

We had many waves of mobilisation prior to 2018, but this one was truly special. All previous protests were issue-based, not politically oriented. 2018 was a different story. We showed that we did not want to become Russia or Central Asia; rather, we wanted a democracy.

Similarly, Philip Arzumanyan, a board member of the Heritage Party of Armenia in 2018, and a protest participant, commented that

2018 was different because it showed people had learnt from previous mistakes. During earlier protests, there was always one message spread by the regime—“do not politicise the protest”. And people obeyed this requirement, not understanding that it was impossible to get real results and not politicise the movement. Take, for example, the Electric Yerevan protests in 2015. How was it possible not to “politicise” the protest if the company that had controlled electricity prices belonged to another country and agreed on its prices with our government?

Another protest participant, Davit Petrosyan, a student of Yerevan State University in 2018, stated that

When we started our student movement, we were only focused on specific areas where we could make a difference, such as the army, education, and universities. We wanted to bring more equality and academic freedom, and to fight against corruption. Then the 2018 revolution started. We were invited by the opposition and, at first, we said we were an educational project and did not want to take part in the politics. But then each of us individually took part in opposition meetings and discussions and, in the end, we all joined the protest.

As previously mentioned, Armenia had a rich history of social protests going back to the early 2010s. However, all of these protests were non-politicised. There was no challenge to the existing regime except for demands to address some particular socioeconomic grievance, such as bus fares or electricity prices. Some of these issue-based protests were quite large, such as the Electric Yerevan protest in 2015. However, since the core participants

in these protests were young activists from various civil society organisations, there was no broad public mobilisation.

In regard to the inclusiveness of the protests, the 2018 movement was an exception because it was able to mobilise people who had no previous experience with protest activities and who were not members of civil society organisations. The case of Armenia thus demonstrates that the cause behind the protest has a huge impact on protest participation, given that socioeconomic factors alone did not mobilise a broad segment of the Armenian public. At the same time, the demand for regime change (the revolution started with the “Reject Serzh” campaign initiated by Pashinyan in March 2018) spoke to the large number of ordinary people who went out into the streets to support the opposition.

Evidence #1.2: Literature Review. The media coverage is the main source for the literature review in Armenia’s case, because media reports contain most of the direct accounts of protest participation.⁵⁹ By contrast, academic publications about Armenia’s revolution are more oriented towards the analysis of macro-level factors that explain the 2018 regime change.

Following are typical excerpts from media reports about the 2018 protests in Armenia:

The coffee place *Jazzve* is located on Abovyan street in a highly popular place near the Freedom Square. But today the place is closed; only the owner and his friends enjoy their coffee. The owner explains: “All of the staff left for the protest, so we are closed today”. “But you are losing a lot of money”. “We only care about what is good for Armenia and its people”. (Azar, 2018, para. 20)

That slogan (“Deny Serzh”) was not about one person; it was about a whole system, which was symbolized by this person. But people were not really interested in this politician, that politician. It was more about ourselves. It was

⁵⁹ The media analysis was carried out after the interviews were completed. Therefore, my analysis of the interviews was not influenced by the media’s interpretations of the 2018 protests.

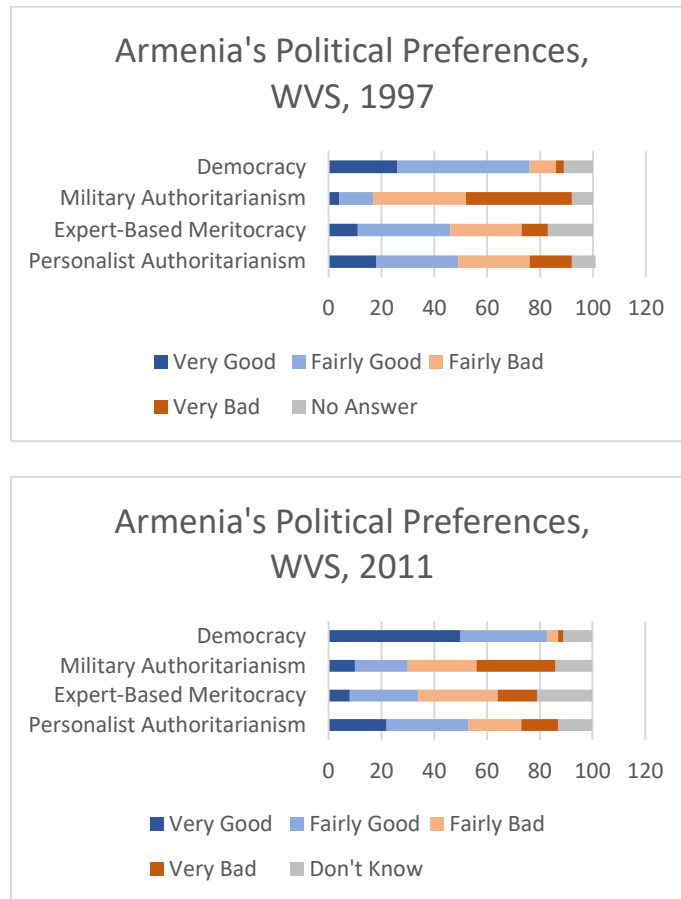
more about a better life, it was more about regaining our self-dignity, I guess, regaining our rights, regaining our self-confidence. What was amazing was that this outburst of positive energy came from the students. And we had thought that students were really hopeless because the previous government made sure to politicize all the universities around Armenia. The Republican Party was the only way to the top. So obviously in this kind of atmosphere, it's really hard to find freedom of speech and so on. And actually to find freethinking students who are ready to fight for their rights and so on—it turned out they were already there, we just hadn't broken through the gates to reach them. But they turned out to be in the front of the revolution. (Interview with Eduard Aghajanyan, Pashinyan's chief of staff, in Cooper, 2018, para. 28)

Media sources thus confirm observations drawn from the interviews. They, too, show that the 2018 protests involved a nationwide mobilisation, and that participants desired a radical transformation of the political system that would include protection of individuals' rights and broader popular participation and representation in politics.

Evidence #1.3: Survey Data. On the national level, the WVS results (Figure 6.2) demonstrate a strong and stable support for democracy from 1997 (76%) to 2011 (83%) in Armenia.

Figure 6.2

Armenia's Political Preferences, 1997 and 2011



As in Georgia, preferences for individual freedom versus social order in Armenia in 1997 were more or less equally divided (Figure 6.3), although Armenians favoured individual freedoms (50%) slightly more than the social order (46%). In the same year, the majority of Armenians agreed that democracy with all its flaws was still better than any other type of government (Figure 6.4). Finally, the 2011 survey demonstrates that for 56% of the participants, it was “absolutely important” to live in democracy (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.3

Armenians' Ranking of Individual Freedom versus the Social Order (1997)

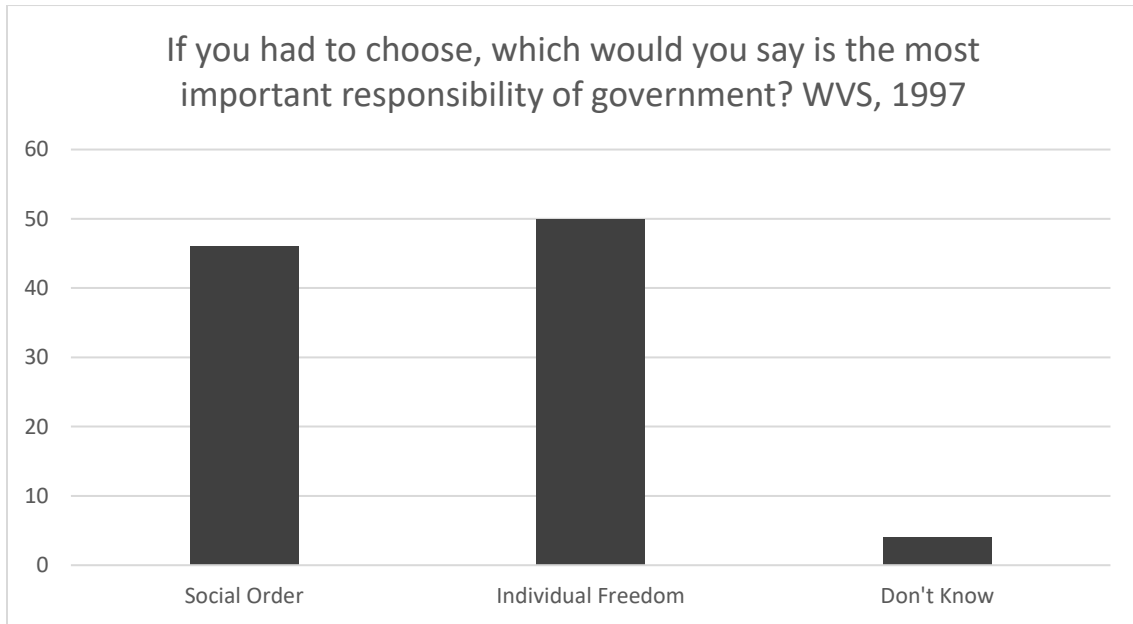


Figure 6.4

Armenians' Preferred Type of Government (1997)

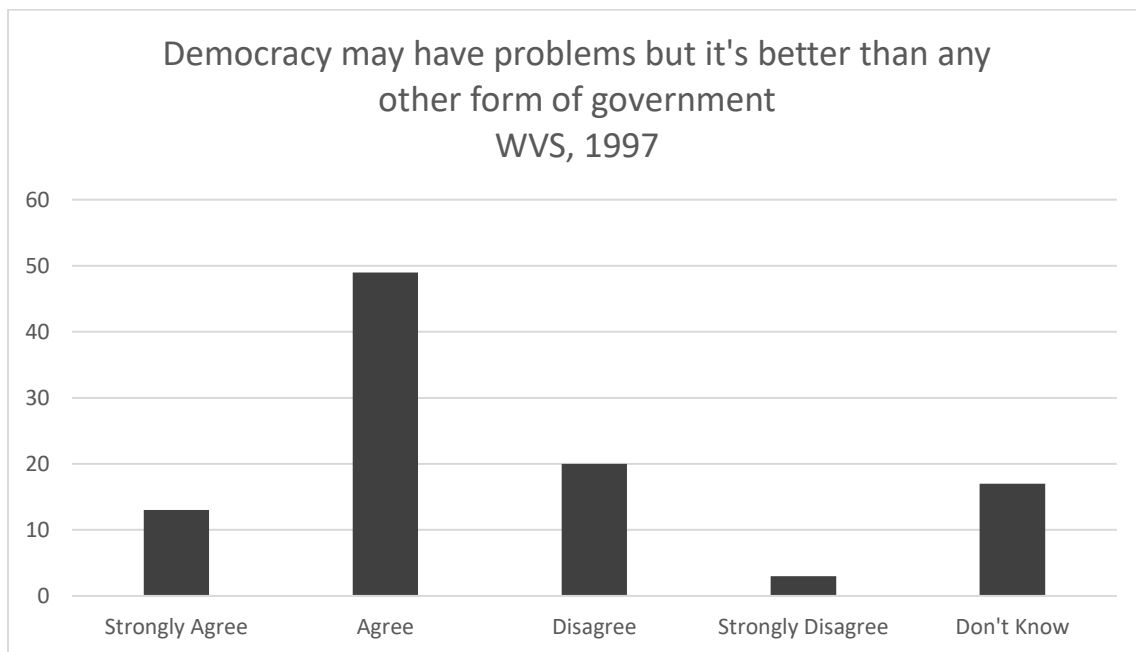
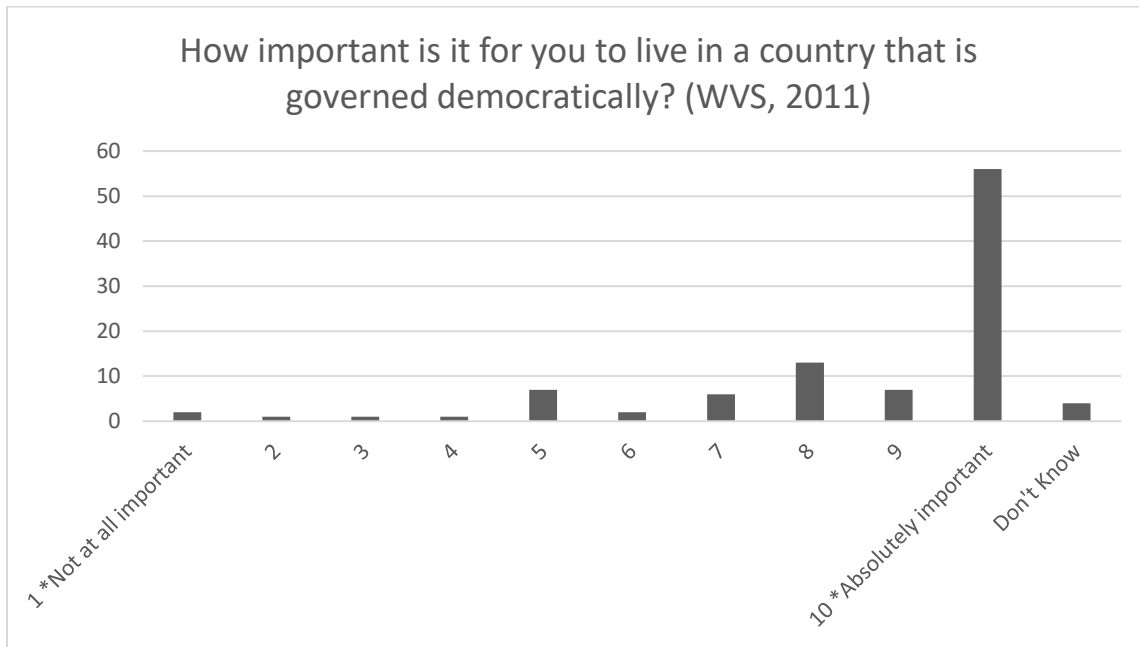


Figure 6.5

The Importance of Democracy for Armenians (2011)



The WVS results are quite remarkable, demonstrating that support for democracy has been an enduring and stable dimension of Armenia’s cultural attitudes for more than twenty years.

To sum up: with a high degree of certainty, the evidence shows that during the 2018 protests Armenians had a strong preference for democracy on both the national and the individual levels. Moreover, the data from the WVS demonstrate that Armenians have endorsed democracy at least since the late 1990s. Therefore, it is not a generational effect, i.e., the influx of young activists, that led to a strong approval of democratic values in the 2010s. Since public approval for democracy in Armenia has remained stable even during challenging economic times, this attitude is evidence of Armenia’s pro-democratic culture.

The interviews, however, can have both sampling and endogenous biases that need to be accounted for in the final estimation of the proposition's effect. Confirmation of proposition #1 increases confidence in the mobilising hypothesis by 7% (accounting for interviews' bias), resulting in a 47% probability that H1 is true.

Proposition #2

Proposition #2 turns on the expectation that the 2018 protest participants supported democratic regime change not because they sought better socioeconomic outcomes but because they believed that democracy is preferable to non-democracy on a normative level (high certainty, medium uniqueness). Proposition #2 confirms that protest participation was caused by people's normative commitment to democracy and not only their dissatisfaction with the current government and its socioeconomic policies.

Evidence #2.1: Interviews. The interviews provide details about what participants expected from regime change and what outcomes they were prioritising. Valentina Gevorgyan comments,

It is true that a lot of people in a new government do not have any experience, but it is also a good thing. What was the experience of the former elites—Soviet experience, *Komsomol* experience, KGB experience? We need new people who do not have this kind of background, even if it means they will not deliver the most effective results in the near future.

Davit Petrosyan concurs:

Although we support our new government, we have been well aware of the problems with their competence. Our current satisfaction with the Minister of Education is about 10%. But we all knew it would be difficult to quickly implement changes. The main thing is that now we at least have the freedom to speak openly about our grievances.

Philip Arzumanyan makes a similar point: “Everyone understood there would be no quick changes. And, although the current government still does not have a clear idea which direction the country should follow, it is still much better than the regime we had before”. However, one of the interviewees, Hovhannes Hovhannisyian, voices his scepticism about whether people will tolerate the ineffectiveness of the government for an extended period: “If the economic situation continues to go down, people will not worry about democracy and human rights. We would prefer autocracy or strong but effective government to ineffective democracy that can’t deliver on its promises”.

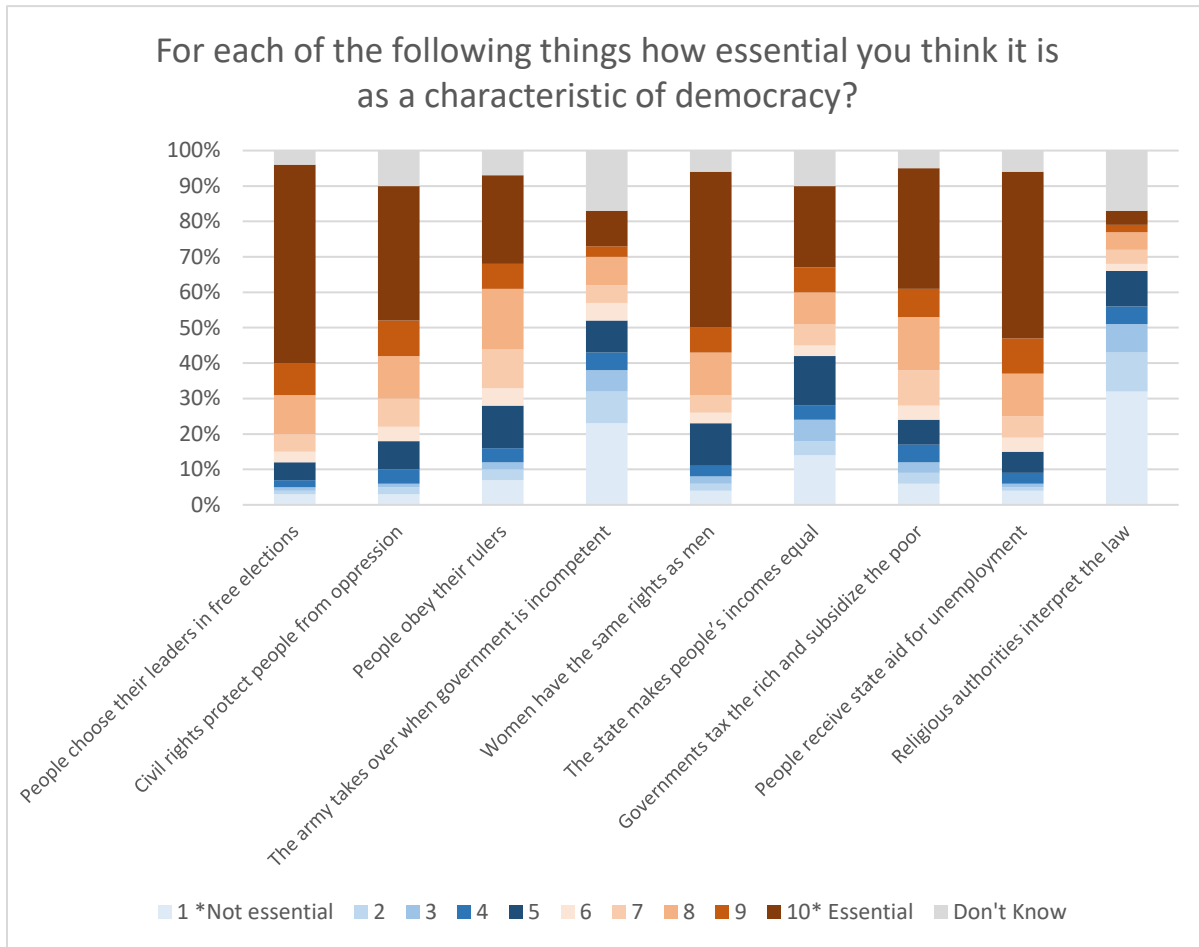
Almost all the participants express awareness that the new regime is not going to improve their quality of life in the near future. In fact, many of the interviewees are downright sceptical about the competence of the new government when it comes to implementing reforms, fighting corruption, and promoting economic growth. As noted by Richard Giragosyan, director of the Research Studies Centre and one of the best known political analysts in Armenia, “In Pashinyan’s first cabinet, one minister is a DJ. Another is an activist. They all are unexperienced boys, with no government or life experience”⁶⁰. Despite these low expectations about the government’s performance, however, the interviewees believe that democratic regime change is a positive development for the country. This finding suggests that protest participation cannot be explained purely in terms of dissatisfaction with the socioeconomic situation in Armenia, because people were willing to take on the costs of the transition period and a new, inexperienced government.

⁶⁰ In referring to the minister who is a DJ, Giragosyan has in mind Pashinyan’s chief of staff Eduard Aghajanyan (known as DJ Ed Ward), whose interview with Cooper (2018) was cited previously. The “activist minister” is likely a reference to Arsen Togosyan, who was appointed Minister of Health even though he had little previous public visibility, except for his participation in the 2018 protests (Babayan, 2018).

Evidence #2.2: Survey Data. One of the questions included in the WVS survey in 2011 provides a more detailed understanding about what Armenians prioritise in democracy (Figure 6.6). For Armenians, the most important political features of democracy are: fair elections, the protection of civil rights, gender equality, state aid for unemployment, and high taxation for the wealthy. These results confirm that, overall, Armenians' understanding of democracy corresponds to the traditional Western concept of democracy as a system that allows people to elect their leaders regularly and that affords state protection for individuals' freedoms.

Figure 6.6

The Essential Features of Democracy for Armenians



In sum, based on the evidence from the interviews, there is a high confidence in proposition #2, i.e., that Armenians supported the 2018 regime change for normative reasons and not because of their hopes to have a better government. On the national level, the WVS data confirm that Armenians' understanding of democracy prioritises such fundamental characteristics as free and fair elections and the protection of individual rights. The interviews, however, can have both sampling and endogenous biases that need to be

accounted for in the final estimation of the proposition's effect. Confirmation of proposition #2 increases confidence in the mobilising hypothesis by 7% (accounting for interviews' bias), resulting in a 54% probability that H1 is true.

Proposition #3

Proposition #3 turns on the expectation that internal satisfaction from protest participation played an important role in mass mobilisation in Armenia in 2018, and that this feeling was linked to people's democratic preferences, such as the desire to have more political power as citizens (high certainty, high uniqueness).

Proposition #3 addresses the central assumption of the mobilising hypothesis: namely, that people's protest threshold is strongly influenced by the feeling of internal satisfaction that derives from taking part in meaningful political action, such as anti-regime protests. In the case of a country with strong democratic preferences, this satisfaction comes from people's normative beliefs that they have the right to elect their leaders, participate in everyday politics, and hold politicians accountable to the rule of law.

Evidence #3.1: Interviews. There are two important observations from interviews that can be interpreted as an evidence in the support of the third proposition. The first observation is that the protest participants were not actively mobilised or coordinated by individuals or organisations during the 2018 protests. The Velvet Revolution in Armenia owed a large part of its success to its decentralised character, whereby people took the initiative without much guidance from the leaders of the opposition or from authoritative figures in civil society. Thus, in the words of Valentina Gevorgyan,

The civil society organisations, of course, played some role in mobilising people for the revolution. However, I want to clarify that they mostly just

spread the information through social media. They did not organise the protests; rather, people did it themselves.

Similarly, Hovhannes Hovhannisyan remarks that

The protest was absolutely decentralised, with police running from one place to another. In 2008, there were protest leaders who were in charge, but in 2018 Pashinyan asked people to create the revolution on their own. People realised that it was actually they who were accomplishing the revolution. They were not soldiers with a commander. Pashinyan told people, “Do whatever you can, peacefully, and within the law”.

This observation about self-organisation is pertinent, because it underscores that the people who participated in the protests had their own agency and were not following a charismatic leader or the opposition. They realised they could produce a meaningful change in their country, and this realisation made them participate despite the potential costs of state repression. This conclusion is confirmed by another set of observations concerning the strongly empowering effect of protest participation—an empowering effect that caused people to join the protests. For example, according to Richard Giragosyan, “The real revolution was a psychological one; it happened when people saw they had made a real change, that they mattered”. Along similar lines, Philip Arzumanyan comments that “Under the old regime, the most effective technology they used was to make people feel hopeless, powerless, constantly saying that going to the streets did not change anything. They had mocked the opposition and protests”. Or, as Aren Manukyan puts it,

In 2018, even the people who were previously afraid went out into the streets. For example, our neighbours are absolutely apolitical people, but even they blocked streets because they felt it was a decisive moment for the future of the country. The revolution became an all-national phenomenon.

Manukyan’s remarks are seconded by those of Davit Simonyan, a student of Yerevan State University in 2018 as well as a protest participant:

On the first day of the protest there were around 20 students. By the end of the protest, there were 7,000 students. Taking part in the revolution brought us a lot of positive emotions. It made us understand our power. We used to think we could not change anything. Now we know we can change everything.

The sense of empowerment and awakening that was mentioned by almost every interviewee shows how much the psychological state of the protest participants mattered for their decision to participate. Even the most apolitical people, as Aren Manukyan observed, felt that they had to join the protest. They did not get any practical benefit from participating, and many of the protesters did not expect their life to change for the better. Still, they supported the revolution because they felt that doing so was their moral obligation. Therefore, the proposition that people participated in the protest primarily because of the internal satisfaction they derived from it receives strong positive confirmation.

Although the link between internal satisfaction and democratic preferences is not explicitly mentioned by the interviewees, it can be inferred from many of the interviewees' statements that people came to realise that they were citizens and not just subjects of the state. They wanted to see a broader representation and participation and they wanted to know that their input mattered for the state affairs. All of these grievances are effectively a demand for more inclusive, egalitarian, and fair political system such as democracy.

Finally, with respect to people's experiences of the revolution and protest participation, I have to mention one special interview that I conducted with Nuard Minasyan, who was a gender researcher and member of civil society in 2018 as well as an active protest participant:

I had participated in the protest but also had my personal reservations. Of course, I wanted changes, and I wanted the revolution to succeed. But there were always moments when men told me what to do and how to protest. For example, at one point I was standing in the street with a protest poster when a man came and took this poster from me, saying that he would hold it because

he was taller. It really frustrated me—this instance of male domination during the revolution. It also disappointed me because my actions were not valued as much as men’s actions were. Women were excluded from the decision-making process even during the revolution. So, gender hierarchy and inequality exist even in the streets. Because of that, I stopped protesting in the streets.

This interview reveals that, even though protest participation was a positive, empowering experience for the overwhelming majority of the participants, Armenia is still a society with traditional values, especially when it comes to gender relationships.

Evidence #3.2: Literature Review. The media coverage provides more support for the emancipating effect of protest participation in 2018. As Demytrie (2018, para. 4) writes,

For many Armenians this is the first time since independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 that they are able to believe in a better future. When a barman in your hotel opens a cupboard and pulls out the national flag to show that he supports the protest movement, you know something is fundamentally changing. So too for the 17-year-old school student skipping class to attend two weeks of rallies, because he wants access to a better education; the villagers in remote areas who feel that their voices are finally being heard; and the 12-year-old children blocking roads in an act of nationwide civil disobedience.

Likewise, Krutov (2018, para. 14) writes:

One of protest participants, Stepan Grigoryan [said]: “This was a nationwide struggle, not just the opposition against the regime. Do you know the moment it became clear to me [that] Sargsyan will lose? When I saw kids carrying the posters that read “Step down, Serzh!” all over town. Imagine, kids!”

In sum, evidence from the interviews and media coverage afford a high confidence in proposition #3: namely, that protest participation was primarily triggered by people’s sense of moral obligation that they had to take part in the protest, because it was a defining moment for the democratic future of their country. However, similar to previous propositions, Proposition #3 should be accounted for the reverse causality bias when success of protest and not support for democracy can have effect on emotional satisfaction from protest participation. Therefore, Proposition #3 increases confidence in H1 by only 7%.

Confirmation of all three propositions updates confidence in the mobilising hypothesis from 0.5 to 0.71, meaning that it can be estimated with 71% probability that the 2018 mass mobilisation in Armenia was caused by mass support for democracy.

Step 3. Key Findings

Table 6.1 presents key findings from the process-tracing of the mobilising hypothesis in the case of Armenia’s Velvet Revolution.

Table 6.1

Process-Tracing Results for the Mobilising Hypothesis in Armenia

Proposition		Certainty	Uniqueness	Interviews	Literature Review	Survey Data	Confirmation
1	The 2018 protest participants strongly supported democracy as the only desirable political system	high	low	positive	positive	positive	yes
2	People’s support for democratic change was not linked to expectations of better policy outcomes but to normative preference for democracy	high	medium	positive	positive	no data	yes
3	People who took part in the 2018 protest were motivated by their support for democratic principles such as desire to have more power as citizens	high	high	positive	positive	no data	yes

While youth movements and the disastrous economic situation were important factors in the 2018 mass mobilisation, they clearly were not the only considerations since participants expressed strong support for democratic preferences. Confirmation of the mobilising hypothesis in Armenia’s case relies on three main observations. First, the

protesters had a strong preference for democracy. Second, their support for democracy was not dependent on perceived material gains from regime change. Third, the principal benefit they got from the protest participation was the feeling of internal satisfaction that derived from exercising their citizens' rights and contributing to Armenia's democratic future. Of these three propositions, the second and third propositions are the most important ones, because they establish, first, that people's support for democracy was not a proxy for support for effective government or economic development; and second, that the main benefit from protest participation was a psychological satisfaction related to individuals' democratic preferences.

The main source of the evidence for H1 is the interviews, though whenever possible this evidence is supplemented by the results of the WVSs conducted in 1997 and 2011, and by media coverage of Armenia's protests. All three propositions receive strong empirical confirmation. The argument for strong democratic support among the protesters is supported both by interviews and by survey data. Although the interviewees do not explicitly say that they participated in protests because of their democratic preferences, they frequently mentioned their support for key democratic attributes such as government accountability, the rule of law, institutional check and balances, and the separation of powers. The interviewees also suggest that people did not expect any immediate improvements to their life when they decided to participate. They did not have confidence in the management capabilities of the opposition, or in their ability to solve socioeconomic problems. Still, they did believe that a democratic regime was preferable because it would be more transparent, fair, and accountable to the people. Therefore, their support for new regime was based on their normative beliefs and not expectations of any material gains.

Finally, the principal benefit that came from protest participation was the feeling of empowerment and internal satisfaction that people got when they took action as citizens.

3. Process-Tracing the Moderating Effect of Democratic Support in Armenia

My wildest dream is to have Armenians from all over the world gather in Armenia. When Armenians get together, they cannot agree on anything. But it is their home. We are only strong when we are together.

Sargsyan (“Serzh Sargsyan: U nas voobshe net problemnyh voprosov s Rossiei”, 2016)

In the second part of this chapter, I test how well the moderating hypothesis H2 can explain why Serzh Sargsyan did not use force against the protesters in 2018, despite having the required military resources to do so. H2 predicts that in non-democratic countries, a high level of public democratic support reduces the probability that state repression will be used against protesters, because pro-democratic culture has a moderating⁶¹ effect on autocrats.

Step 1. Estimation of the Prior Probability

Based on the existing literature about the effects of political culture and the frequently observed gap between the values of the mass public versus the elites (Pye & Verba, 1965), the moderating hypothesis is estimated as theoretically plausible but as having a lower-than-average prior probability of 0.4. Furthermore, given the existence of rival

⁶¹ The effect is moderating because it leads to the decreased desirability and acceptability of the use of violence against protesters.

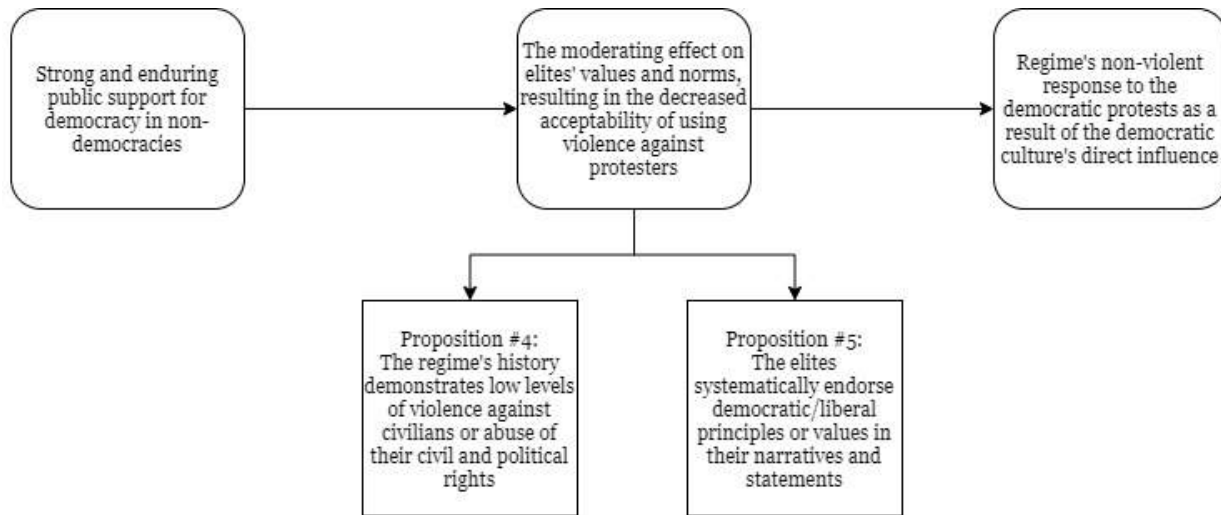
explanations for peaceful authoritarian exits, such as the military-defection theory, and given too the heterogeneous nature of decision-making about the use violence, a further adjustment is necessary, bringing the prior for H2 down to 0.3. However, in moving from general theoretical knowledge to the case-specific context, the case of Armenia offers empirical support to the theory that Sargsyan's peaceful resignation was influenced by his normative beliefs. Such support derives from, for example, Sargsyan's public admission of his faults and his promise not to use force against protesters to maintain his power. Based on this evidence, the final prior for the moderating hypothesis is estimated as 0.4.

Step 2. The Argument Map and Evidence Analysis

The moderating hypothesis (Figure 6.7) rests on the assumption that elites' response to protests is influenced by their understanding of which options are acceptable and which are taboo. If the elites in question possess liberal/democratic orientations, I expect two principal observations. The first is that level of state violence used in a regime of this sort should be low. The second is that there should be discursive evidence confirming the authoritarian government's commitment to liberal/democratic values. Both of these propositions are tested below.

Figure 6.7

The Argument Map for the Moderating Hypothesis in Armenia



HC - high certainty
HU - high uniqueness

MC - medium certainty
MU - medium uniqueness

LC - low certainty
LU - low uniqueness

Proposition #4

Proposition #4 turns on the expectation that Sargsyan’s regime would use low levels of violence against civilians and avoid abuse of their civil and political rights (high certainty, low uniqueness). If the democratic culture had a moderating effect on Sargsyan, then the levels of state violence during his rule from 2008 to 2018 should have been systematically low.

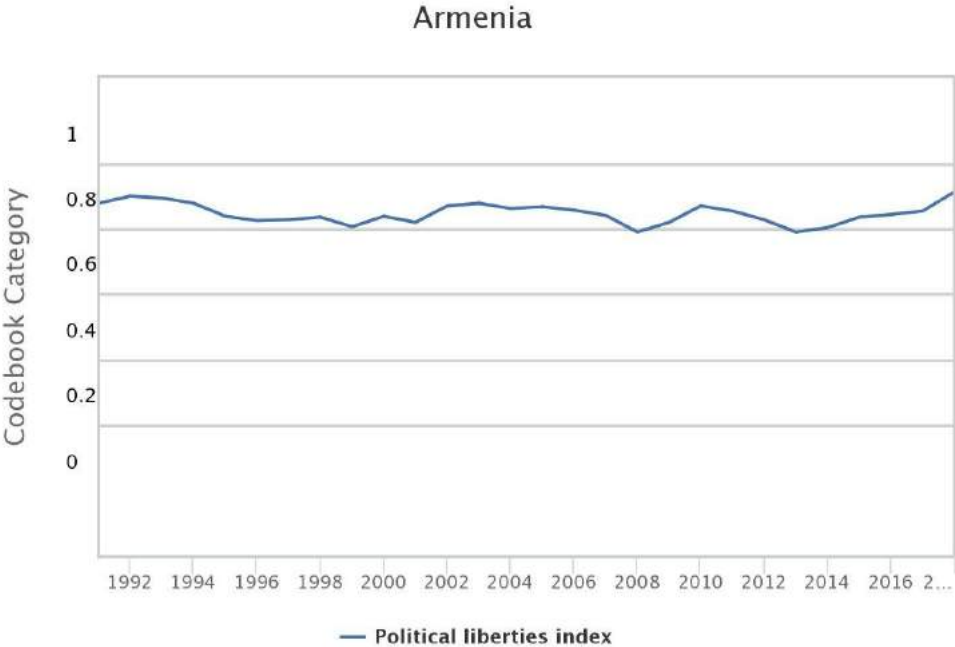
Evidence #4.1: State Repression Indicators in Armenia. The V-Dem Political Liberties Index⁶² (Figure 6.8) indicates the degree to which freedom of speech and

⁶² The index is based on indicators that reflect government repression, but that do not directly refer to elections. It is an aggregate of a number of separate indicators, such as government censorship, harassment of journalists, freedom of academic expression, opposition parties’ entry into elections, and bans placed on political parties. Higher scores on the index correspond to more political liberties.

association were protected by the state in Armenia. This indicator shows that Armenia had a consistently strong performance in terms of freedom of expression, scoring above 0.7 since the country gained its independence in 1991. There is no observable difference between the rule of Sargsyan and that of previous presidents, i.e., Levon Ter-Petrosian (1991-98) and Robert Kocharyan (1998-2008).

Figure 6.8

The V-Dem Political Liberties Index in Armenia

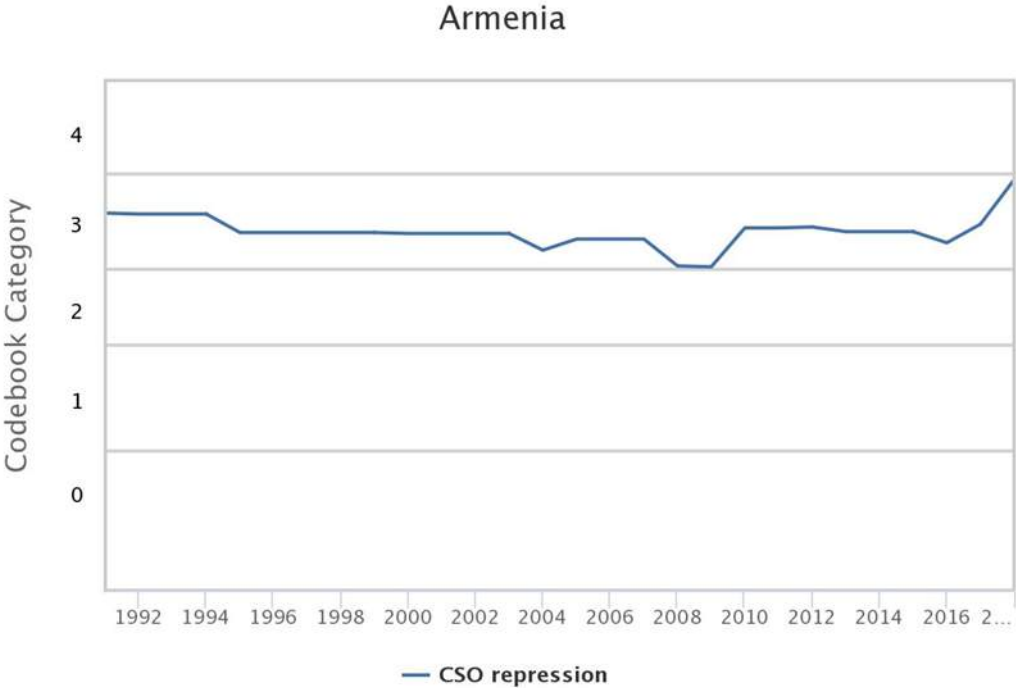


The second indicator—namely, the CSO (civil society organisations) Repression Index (Figure 6.9)—shows whether governments have systematically persecuted members of civil

society. The CSO Repression Index has assigned Armenia values between three⁶³ and four⁶⁴, indicating low levels of state repression. The values went down during the last years of Kocharyan’s presidency, and in particular during the 2008 protests, but they returned to the previous levels under Sargsyan.

Figure 6.9

The CSO Repression Index, Armenia 1991-2018



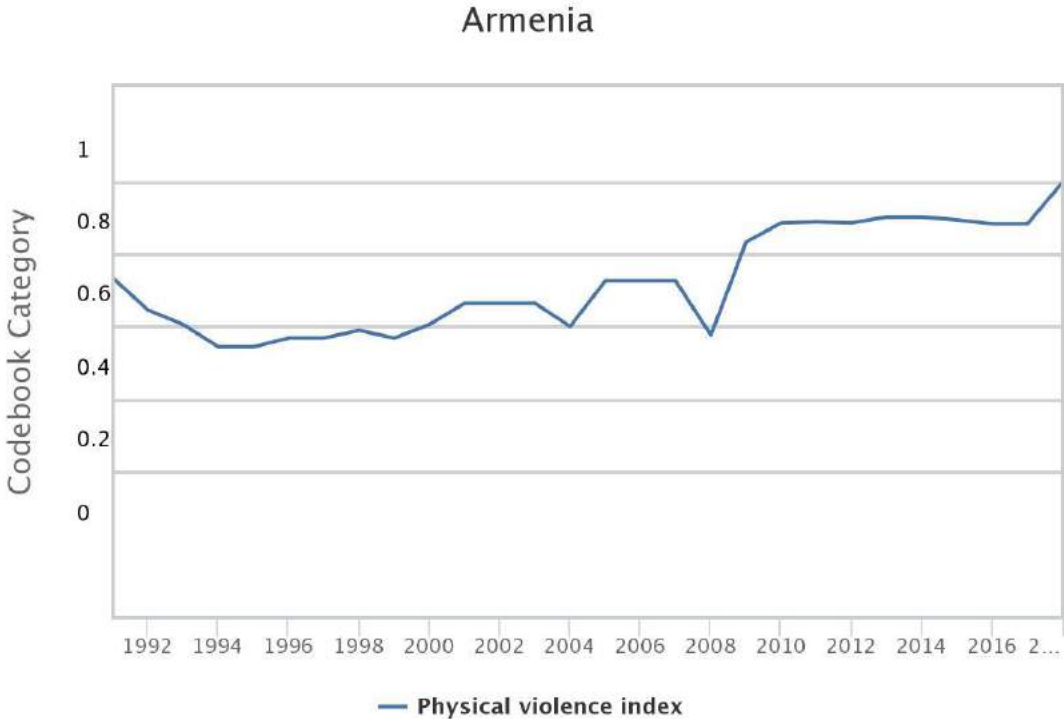
⁶³ A value of three indicates weak repression. The government used material sanctions (fines, firings, denial of social services) to deter oppositional CSOs from acting or expressing themselves. They may have also used burdensome registration or incorporation procedures to slow the formation of new civil society organisations and sidetrack them from engagement.

⁶⁴ A value of four indicates no repression. Civil society organisations were free to organise, associate, strike, express themselves, and criticise the government without fear of government sanctions or harassment.

Finally, the Physical Violence Index⁶⁵ (Figure 6.10) shows whether Armenians have enjoyed freedom from torture and killings at the hands of the government. Here, Sargsyan performed significantly better than his two predecessors: people’s physical integrity was the most protected during his rule. Overall, the V-Dem data indicate that under Sargsyan’s regime, the state did not systematically violate political and civil rights like the freedom of expression and association; nor did it systematically use violence against citizens.

Figure 6.10

The Physical Violence Index, Armenia 1991-2018



⁶⁵ Physical integrity is understood as freedom from political killings and torture by the government. The index is based on indicators that reflect violence committed by government agents; these indicators do not directly refer to elections. Higher values represent higher levels of physical security.

Evidence #4.2: Interviews. The interview participants confirmed that Sargsyan's regime was a relatively non-violent one. Many participants link the limited use of force to the tragic events of 1 March 2008. On that day, on the orders of then President Robert Kocharyan, police opened fire at protesters, and ten people were killed. Some of the interviewees also mention Sargsyan's personality as a constraining factor when it came to the use of violence. Aren Manukyan remarks that "The state violence during the 2008 protest still has a lot of influence. People and international organisations remember 2008. It would be difficult for the state to use violence once again after 2008". Similarly, Hovhannes Hovhannisyanyan comments, "2008 was the time of [Robert] Kocharyan, who was very cruel and could kill people. Ten people were killed in 2008, so Sargsyan's government knew that another March 1 would bring a different reaction. People would get angry". For his part, Philip Arzumanyan suggests that "Unlike Kocharyan, Sargsyan is not the kind of a person who would shoot at people. He is not Nazarbayev, Lukashenko, or Putin". Hayk Mamijanyan states:

Why did the regime not use violence? Starting from the first day, the RPA representatives and Sargsyan himself promised they would be tolerant and not use force. Our party [the RPA] believes that our citizens have the right to self-expression. Law enforcement did not even use legal means to reinstate order. This was the order from the top. I have always said that the freedom of expression was the most important achievement of the RPA and Sargsyan's rule.

It is not surprising that the strongest pro-Sargsyan statement comes from the top RPA executive, who believes that the bloodless revolution of 2018 was one of Sargsyan's signal achievements. Since there is an obvious reason for bias in this instance, this statement on its own does not provide much support for the theory that Sargsyan did not use force because of his personal beliefs. It does, however, provide a convenient opening for the next

proposition, which involves an analysis of Sargsyan’s statements to see whether there is evidence of his commitment to democratic/liberal values.

Proposition #5

Proposition #5 predicts that the analysis of Sargsyan’s statements will demonstrate his endorsement of democratic/liberal values and principles (high certainty, medium uniqueness). The discursive analysis of Sargsyan’s statements provides a “hoop test” for the moderating hypothesis: if pro-democratic culture influenced Sargsyan, there should be evidence of his democratic/liberal views in his interviews and speeches.

Evidence #5.1: Literature Review. In Sargsyan’s earlier statements, the most definitive characteristics that stand out are patriotism and a commitment to Armenia’s national interests. One of the most important interviews with him was conducted in 2000 by Thomas de Waal; the interview focused on the military conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the territory of Nagorno Karabakh. At the time, Sargsyan was serving in the role of minister of defense. In the interview, he firmly positions himself as a patriot who has gained the freedom to express his national identity following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and who does not intend to make any territorial concessions to Azerbaijan:

Serzh Sargsyan: Levon [Ter-Petrosian] believed that it was time for concessions. We [Serzh Sargsyan, Kocharyan, and Vazgen Sargsyan] believed that we still had fighting capacity and could get more territory. Do you think we were not sick of this war? That we did not want to live a peaceful life? But we could not concede. Levon was president, but we were the ones who led people into combat. We had losses. I have lost almost all of my friends, my 18-year old nephew. So, returning to the status quo and putting our trust in the Azerbaijanis and some intermediaries was out of the question. What if the Azerbaijanis made promises and then changed their minds? We did not have any guarantees.

Thomas de Waal: It is a rather strange twist of fate—all of you [i.e., Azerbaijanis and Armenians] worked together [during the tenure of the Soviet

Union], but now you are fighting each other. One country became two states. Do you have any regrets about how things have turned out?

Serzh Sargsyan: No, I do not have any regrets. It was necessary.

Thomas de Waal: Even if it has resulted in the deaths of thousands people?

Serzh Sargsyan: What can you do? Yes, thousands people are dying. But what were we supposed to do? What would you do if a stranger came to your house and said it was his home?

Our problem was not only with Azerbaijanis, it was the Soviet system itself. I will tell you some very simple things. Why could I not speak my own language? Why was I supposed to speak in Russian? Why not Armenian? Why there were not one Armenian letter in my passport? Why was I an outsider just because I went to the university in Yerevan?

The Soviet system had different people. There were good people as well as those who went down on their knees to get certain career opportunities. But there were good people too. You know, my experience of the military command is similar to my work in *Komsomol*. In *Komsomol*, too, you have no rights, only duties.

Eighteen years later, in April 2018, following Sargsyan's surprising resignation, de Waal had the following reaction:

Speaking about the resignation of Serzh Sargsyan, he [de Waal] stressed that this step is worthy of respect. "He is not Yanukovich," de Waal said. He also draws parallels between the resignation of Sargsyan and the resignation of Ter-Petrosyan in 1998, to which Sargsyan himself contributed. "The first president of Armenia said that he does not want to repeat the example of Gamsakhurdia and wants to leave peacefully. So did Sargsyan," the expert recalled. (Mshetsyan, 2018, para. 4)

Unfortunately, I could not locate any statements by Sargsyan about the 2008 protests and the subsequent use of violence by Kocharyan.

The next important set of statements by Sargsyan go back to 2015, when he initiated a controversial referendum about constitutional amendments that turned Armenia into a parliamentary republic. That year he strongly emphasised his support for democracy in

Armenia, promising that constitutional amendments would help in advancing democratic future:

There will never be a “strong fist” rule in Armenia. It is unacceptable for me. Armenia needs democracy. We cannot afford not to have a democracy. Some of our neighbours have such resources that they can arrest the opposition. There will be some international reaction, but their rule will continue, and they will get 90% of the votes in the next election. We cannot do that. (“Sargsyan: Variant s ‘silnoi rukoi’ v Armenii ne proidet”, 2015, para. 3)

During his later interview with an Armenian television program, Sargsyan explained that the reasons for the constitutional changes were the weakness of the semi-presidential system and a desire to create more institutional opportunities for the opposition to impose checks and balances on the ruling party:

Serzh Sargsyan: I am quite sincere: if our country had a pure presidential system of governance, I would probably not initiate these changes—possibly because, although the parliamentary system has its advantages, the presidential system, too, has its advantages ... It is this semi-presidential system which is not viable. Israel has a parliamentary system, which means that in Israel it is the parliament which governs. Doesn't Israel face threats? Another example, much closer to us. What do you think was the governing system in Karabakh during the war? Certainly, it was a parliamentary system. (“Interview of President Serzh Sargsyan with the representatives of the Armenian TV Companies”, 2015, para. 12)

Nver Mnatsakanian: Among the arguments of the “No” movement is the argument that in this case there would be a little too much authority concentrated in the hands of prime minister.

Serzh Sargsyan: What does it mean, a little too much? In general, in my opinion, a little and much is very relative. If the responsibilities are too many, why there should be little authority? I watch all the news on the TV channels, no matter how fruitless it may be sometimes. I watch the commentators nevertheless, and I see that too many are talking about the reform and asking, “who will believe that these changes are made to give more power to the opposition?” We are introducing changes not to give more power to the opposition, but to bring things into greater balance. On one hand, there is a strong executive body. Thus, we need, on the other hand, an opposition with the necessary power to impose checks and balances on the executive. This is the bottom line: there is no other way to create the mechanism of checks and balances. This is

the mechanism. (“Interview of President Serzh Sargsyan with the representatives of the Armenian TV Companies”, 2015, para. 14)

In 2018, Sargsyan’s initial response to the opposition’s “Reject Serzh” campaign was to dismiss it, because he did not take their demands seriously. However, even then, he brought back the memory of 2008, promising not to use any force against protesters. As he put it at the time (Harutyunyan, 2018, para. 3),

Everything should have a purpose. What do they want? Do they want to rule the country? Who will recognise them? Will they become a legitimate power? There is no logic to their actions, and I am having a hard time understanding them. Unfortunately, we went down this path once. It seems that they want to do it the second time. But we also remember this tragic experience and do not want to repeat it. We will never try to constrain their freedoms.

Shortly after making this comment, Sargsyan realised that the protest was a serious threat. He published his resignation letter on 23 April 2018:

Dear compatriots,

I appeal to all citizens of the Republic of Armenia, the elderly and my beloved young people, women and men. I am addressing those who have been standing in the streets night and day with the “No to Serzh” slogan, as well as those who kept going to work with difficulty and doing their office duties without complaint. I appeal to those who followed live news reports for many days, and those who maintained the public order day and night. I appeal to our brave soldiers and officers standing at the border, I address my comrades-in-arms, I turn to my fellow party friends, all political forces and politicians.

I am addressing you for the last time as the country’s leader. Nikol Pashinyan was right. I was mistaken. There are a number of solutions in the current situation, but I will not resort to any of them. That is not my working style. I am giving up the post of the country’s prime minister. The movement in the streets is against my tenure. I comply with your demand. I wish peace, harmony, and common sense to our country. (“Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan’s statement”, 2018)

The analysis of Sargsyan’s discourse reveals a person with a strong military background, who is committed to Armenia’s national interests, and who does not particularly like it when his decisions are questioned or argued with (as can be observed

from his interview responses to questions about the constitutional amendments). Although there are occasional references to democracy in his speeches, his priorities lie with national security and ensuring that Armenia remains a strong state. His 2018 resignation statement, with his admission that he made mistakes and his concession to the opposition's demands, stands apart: this statement is not a typical discourse that reflects enduring traits of his character. Therefore, the discourse analysis does not provide compelling evidence that liberal or democratic values played a role in Sargsyan's key decisions, including his decision to resign.

To sum up: unlike with Shevardnadze, the case of Serzh Sargsyan's resignation is complex, resisting straightforward interpretation. There are credible data indicating that Sargsyan did not systematically abuse people's political and civil rights, and that he did not use violence against the opposition or civil society during his rule. This conclusion is also supported by the interviewees, none of whom saw Sargsyan as a violent person. At the same time, there is indirect evidence that although Sargsyan had an opportunity to use law enforcement officials or even the military to suppress the protests, he never made this choice.

Process-tracing, however, does not provide conclusive evidence that Sargsyan's decision not to use force was linked to his commitment to liberal or democratic principles. Sargsyan was a professional soldier who fought in the violent Nagorno-Karabakh war and who was not shy about using non-democratic methods such as amending the constitution to retain power. Even though the government tried to justify the constitutional amendments as "democratic", the fact is that in 2018, following two presidential terms, Sargsyan was re-elected as prime minister by his ruling party. It is therefore likely that Sargsyan's personality

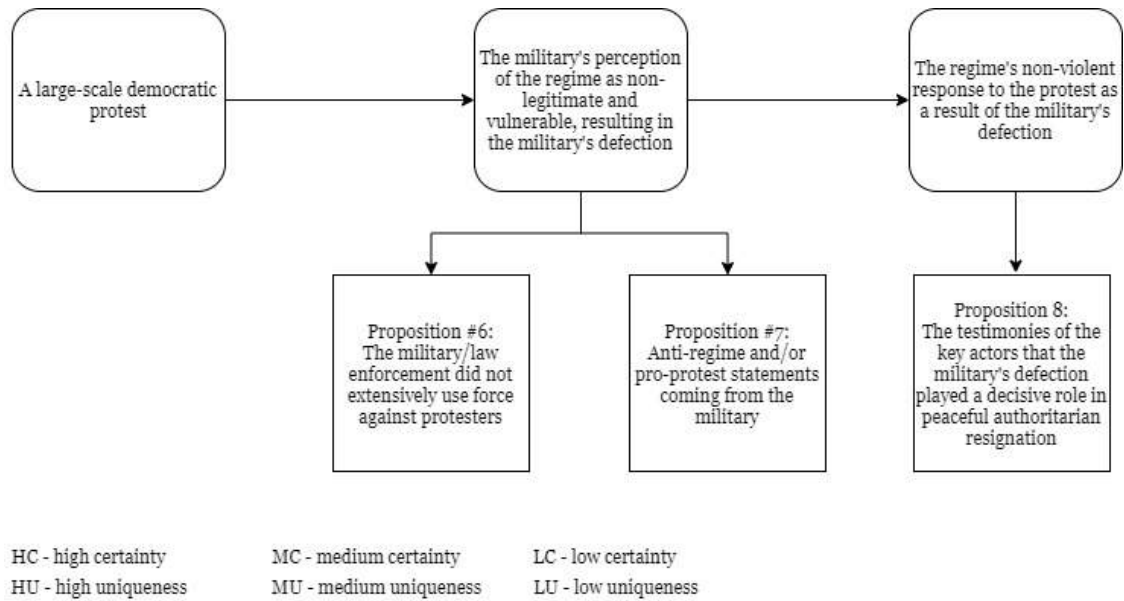
was a key factor in the decision not to use force against the protesters. These considerations bring the final probability of the moderating hypothesis to 0.5. However, there is insufficient evidence to confirm whether Sargsyan's decision was due to his democratic principles. Accordingly, confidence in the moderating hypothesis does not receive any further increase.

Testing for the Military-Defection Hypothesis

As in the case of Georgia, the principal rival explanation for facts explained by the moderating hypothesis is the military-defection hypothesis (Figure 6.11). This hypothesis suggests that in a situation involving large-scale democratic protests, the military is likely to perceive the current regime as vulnerable, with little chance to survive. This state of affairs then leads to military defection, which excludes the option of using violence from the autocrats' response range. The military-defection hypothesis has strong explanatory power vis-à-vis peaceful authoritarian exits, given the numerous studies that show military cooperation is crucial for successful state repression (Chenoweth & Perkoski, 2017; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Nepstad, 2011; Schock, 2005). This previous research allows us to put the prior probability for the military-defection hypothesis at 0.5.

Figure 6.11

The Argument Map for the Military-Defection Hypothesis in Armenia



There are three propositions that can be used to test whether the military was disloyal to the regime, and whether this disloyalty became the main factor in the state's non-use of violence. First, if there is evidence of the military's/law enforcement officials' support for the protesters, the primary expectation is that they would use a minimal level of force against protesters. Second, there is also an expectation that anti-regime statements would be made by the police or the army to demonstrate their support for the protest. Finally, the most compelling evidence would come from sources close to the regime who confirmed that the military's defection was a large factor in the state's non-use of violence.

Proposition #6. This proposition predicts that in 2018 in Armenia the military/law enforcement officials did not use significant force against the protesters (high certainty, medium uniqueness). In other words, if the police sympathised with the protesters, then the

first expectation is there should be evidence that law enforcement official refrained from using violence.

Evidence #6.1: Interviews. The interviewees provide strong confirmation that in 2018 (unlike in previous years, and in particular in 2008) police behaved peacefully towards the protesters and did not use violence. Thus, Aren Manukyan reports that

Many were concerned about the police, but nothing was going on. That also showed that at least some people in the regime supported our movement. Because before 2018, the police always tried to control the protests. And in 2018, there were almost no police. It was also different from 2008. A lot of elites had defected during 2008 protests, and Kocharyan announced a state of emergency—which is the basis for his trial now. The entire army was in Yerevan with tanks and APCs [Armoured Personnel Carriers], and they did not support the people. In 2008, no one expected that the army would be mobilised against the people. According to the constitution, the army should not intervene. The army and military commanders in 2008 were loyal to Kocharyan; only two generals had defected, and they were put under house arrest. The Deputy General Prosecutor had also rebelled, but then the OMON [Special Purpose Mobile Unit] surrounded his car and opened fire.

Hovhannes Hovhannisyan provides additional testimony along these lines:

The government was calm; there were no arrests in the beginning. They did not feel any threat from our movement. There was also the influence of Facebook and social media. Police knew all their actions would be online. Social media played an enormous role. But, of course, we all thought about the police and possible violence. They tried to arrest people who were blocking the streets, but the police stations quickly became full. And it had zero effect, because even more people filled the street. The regime also tried using *titushki*⁶⁶ to provoke the protesters, but people quickly recognised that they were not part of the movement.

Richard Giragosyan remarks,

It was not hard to recruit young policemen who were unwilling to use force against the people. Armenia is so small that many of the police had relatives on the other side. In 2008, there was military and a deployment of *Spetznaz* [Special Forces] from the Nagorno Karabakh. They were loyal to Kocharyan, who was also from Karabakh.

⁶⁶ The term *titushki* refers to state-sponsored military groups who are hired to provoke in-crowd conflicts during protests.

Finally, Philip Arzumanyan comments that

There was a brief period in March when Sargsyan had not yet assumed his position as the prime minister, so the chief of police was in charge. He made the decision not to use force when the protests happened. Armenia always had a liberal approach towards protests. Our police force also depends on U.S. grants, which is a constraining factor. Whenever we were detained in the past, it was always in a friendly way without any rude behaviour. So in Armenia, we are not afraid of our police like people are in other countries, such as Russia.

Evidence #6.2: Literature Review. The media reports confirm that police behaviour was non-violent, and that there were no hostilities between protesters and the police. Moreover, the reports provide independent confirmation of one interviewee's statement that the chief of police ordered his forces to stay calm and not use violence against protesters. This observation supports the idea that at least some top-ranking officials in law enforcement supported the protest. Grigoryan (2018, para. 2) reports:

It seems the authorities never gave an order to launch a massive offensive, possibly because it may have caused a split within the police forces. On April 25, the chief of police, Vladimir Gasparyan, issued a statement asking police personnel not to support any political ideology. Moreover, he ordered the traffic police to cancel all fines issued between April 13 and April 25 for participation in road-blocking actions.

Azar (2018, para. 14) provides a similar report:

While walking with protesters, I noticed that the Armenian police headquarters were guarded by only ten policemen. The protesters did not pay any attention to them and passed a yellow bus with dozens of policemen inside. The latter gave us a friendly wave but did not join us. Despite reports about the police frequently joining the protests, I had yet to see any of them amongst the participants. On Wednesday, I saw an occasional policeman next to the protesters, but they did not demonstrate any signs of support.

- Why won't you join? Do you really support the people, as many say?
- No comment.
- Will you shoot at people or beat them?
- No.
- Never, his colleague in sunglasses added.

Meanwhile, the protesters were having a friendly chat with other policemen. "They are still our children, and we love them," a middle-aged woman clarified.

Proposition #7. This proposition predicts that the military/law enforcement officials will express anti-regime or pro-protest statements during the 2018 protests (high certainty, medium uniqueness). We can expect to discover anti-regime statements from the military/law enforcement officials if the military was on the side of the protesters. The interviewees do not recall such episodes, but a literature review provides evidence that at least some military troops openly demonstrated their solidarity with protesters and supported anti-regime protests.

Evidence #7.1: Literature Review. In the case of Armenia, at least some peacekeepers joined the protests. Their actions were interpreted as a significant positive development, showing that the people had the support of the military. As Grigoryan (2018, para. 4) reports,

Armenian military personnel also generally refrained from involvement in the events of recent weeks, with the exception of a few dozen soldiers from an elite peacekeeping brigade stationed in Yerevan, who left their barracks and joined a demonstration hours before Sargsyan’s resignation.

Likewise, Krutov (2018, para. 13) suggests that

The main breakthrough happened when the military had joined. But not just the military—these were the peacekeepers. People who fought in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kosovo. Around a thousand people put down their weapons and said, “We are with the people”. This was a decisive moment for the protest’s success.

Proposition #8. This proposition predicts that there will be discursive evidence from credible sources that the military’s defection played a significant role in Sargsyan’s decision to resign peacefully (high certainty, high uniqueness).

In contrast with my case study from Georgia, there is no information that Sargsyan lost the support of the army—neither in my interviews, nor in the literature review. As the previous observations show, some in the military supported the protests; however, it is

almost certain that Sargsyan still had enough loyal troops to suppress the protests. Sargsyan himself has an extensive military background and originally comes from Nagorno Karabakh; thus, if nothing else, he could have moved troops from this highly militarised region to Yerevan—as Kocharyan did in 2008. In his resignation letter, Sargsyan actually hinted that he had this option, but that exercising it was not his way.

In sum, the military-defection hypothesis does not hold up to scrutiny as the main explanation of Sargsyan’s peaceful resignation. Undoubtedly, a lot of police had sympathy for the protest, and it is very likely that Yerevan’s law enforcement officials would not have used force against people. However, since Armenia is the most militarised country in Europe and Sargsyan made his career in the army, it is highly unlikely that he did not have the option of moving loyal troops from other parts of Armenia such as Nagorno Karabakh to suppress the protest. Given the strong disconfirming evidence, the posterior probability for the military defection-hypothesis is estimated as 0.3.

Step 3. Key Findings

The results of the process-tracing of the moderating hypothesis are presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2

Results of the Process-Tracing of the Moderating Hypothesis in Armenia

Proposition		Certainty	Uniqueness	Interviews	Literature Review	Survey Data	Confirmation
The Moderating Hypothesis							
4	Sargsyan's regime had low levels of violence against civilians and/or abuse of their civil and political rights	high	medium	positive	positive	no data	yes
5	The discourse analysis of Sargsyan's statements demonstrates a systematic endorsement of democratic/liberal values and principles	high	medium	no data	mixed	no data	no
The Military-Defection Hypothesis							
6	The military (law enforcement) did not use force against the protesters	high	low	positive	positive	no data	yes
7	The military (law enforcement) actors expressed anti-regime or pro-protest statements during the 2018 protest	high	medium	no data	positive	no data	yes
8	There is a discursive evidence from the credible sources that military's defection played a significant role in Sargsyan's decision to peacefully exit	high	high	no data	no data	no data	no

In contrast with the situation in Georgia in 2003, there is no explanation for the peaceful resignation of Serzh Sargsyan that is strongly confirmed by the evidence. The moderating hypothesis, which focuses on the importance of a non-democratic leader and his or her decision-making, receives partial confirmation. There is evidence from interviews and the literature review supporting the claim that the decision to step down peacefully was Sargsyan's own initiative, and there is no evidence that other factors forced him to do that. There is, however, no convincing evidence that Sargsyan was genuinely committed to liberal or democratic principles. A detailed analysis of his discourse across years reveals a person

who projects the image of a strong leader, a military man, and a patriot. Although he does often mention democracy as his agenda, his actions, such as amending the Constitution in 2015, contradict these claims. Therefore, it is highly probable it was Sargsyan's personality that influenced his response to the 2018 protest. However, there is insufficient evidence that his attitude and beliefs were influenced by Armenia's pro-democratic culture. This lack of an attested relationship between Sargsyan's attitude and democratic culture leaves H2 at 0.5, meaning that although democratic culture could have been a factor in Sargsyan's decision-making, in practice there is not enough evidence to confirm or disconfirm it.

In regard to the military-defection hypothesis, military disloyalty was not a factor in Armenia's peaceful authoritarian exit. Although the lack of evidence does not necessarily imply that such evidence does not exist, there is no mention of the military as a relevant factor in the interviews, nor in the literature review. Moreover, given Sargsyan's military background and his close ties with the army command, it is highly unlikely he did not have the military resources needed to suppress the 2018 protest in Yerevan, if he had wanted to.

4. Conclusion

Bayesian process-tracing in the case of Armenia results in the positive confirmation of the mobilising hypothesis but the lack of a definitive conclusion vis-à-vis the moderating hypothesis. With respect to the mobilising hypothesis, there is strong positive confirmation of all three main propositions, both from interviews and from the literature review. The protesters did demonstrate support for the basic features of democracy, such as the accountability of the government, check and balances, transparency, and more inclusive political participation and representation. Their democratic support was not contingent on

their expectations of better, more efficient government or improved socioeconomic outputs. To the contrary, many expected their quality of life to deteriorate before any improvements would be made. The interviews and literature review also indicate that the most immediate benefit the participants got from their participation was the feeling of empowerment that came from exercising their rights as citizens of Armenia. This observation confirms the main expectation associated with the mobilising hypothesis: namely, that individuals' democratic preferences affect their protest threshold, by increasing the internal or moral satisfaction derived from participating in anti-regime protests.

In regard to the moderating hypothesis, there is insufficient data to make a definitive claim about why Sargsyan peacefully resigned. Compared to the case of Georgia, there is a much higher probability that this decision was influenced by Sargsyan's normative beliefs, not the military's behaviour. One of the key details about Armenia's case is that it has a highly developed military due to its long-standing military conflict with neighbouring Azerbaijan; therefore, Sargsyan (being a military commander in the past) could have used the troops to suppress the protests. His decision to resign peacefully, however, seems to have been influenced by his personal convictions and his belief that he could not use violence against the Armenian people. This being said, there is no substantial evidence that Sargsyan was committed to democratic/liberal principles—evidence that should have been uncovered if he had been influenced by pro-democratic culture. Analysis of his speeches and interviews reveals a strong leader with a military background who is committed both to the territorial integrity of Armenia and to the maintenance of his own rule—but not necessarily to democracy.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

This research starts with a simple question: do people's attitudes matter when it comes to democratisation; and if they do, in what way? More specifically, if people support democracy in authoritarian countries, does that mean that they will go into the streets demanding democracy or some of its elements? And if there is strong support for democracy in authoritarian countries, does that support make elites' behaviour less violent?

These two questions are at the centre of the present study. The first question asks whether support for democracy helps people overcome their fear of authoritarian regimes and join democratic protests if an opportunity to do so arises. Protest participation is still something of a puzzle from the perspective of collective-action theory, because people, conceived as rational actors, should not participate in an action that has the high individual costs that protests and revolutions do (Klandermans, 1984; Opp, 2009). But people do participate in protests because a) they respond to macro-level factors such as the state of the economy, and b) they have individual political preferences—preferences that can make them see public opposition to an authoritarian regime as a desirable and satisfying course of action (Kuran, 1991; Opp, 1994, 2009). Since individuals' preferences matter when it comes to their decision to join protests, it likewise matters whether a person believes that democracy is the most desirable form of rule. This “democracy preference” assumption is a foundation for the mobilising hypothesis, which implies that strong support for democracy makes people more likely to join democratic protests in non-democracies.

The second question asks whether the existence of a pro-democratic political culture (defined by high levels of public democratic support that persist over time) has any cognitive

impact on autocrats—more specifically, whether it makes them less likely to use violence against protesters. The assumption that pro-democratic culture does indeed have this sort of impact informs the moderating hypothesis, which implies that public democratic support has a moderating cognitive effect on authoritarian decision-making. The main observable effect of this kind of cultural influence manifests itself as an authoritarian ruler's belief that using violence against citizens is an undesirable option, even if his or her regime's survival depends on it.

Key findings and implications from the investigation of both questions are summarised in this last chapter. The chapter consists of three parts, which outline different levels on which the present study makes a contribution to the field. I start with a brief summary of the study's empirical findings and what they imply when it comes to confirming or disconfirming the mobilising and moderating hypotheses. I can pre-emptively state that, in both of the case studies explored in this thesis, democratic support does matter for mobilisation. In both the 2003 protests in Georgia and the 2018 protests in Armenia, such support plays a key role in motivating people to join democratic protests when the risks are high and the benefits are unclear. As for the moderating hypothesis, although it is disconfirmed in the case of Georgia, my analysis of Armenia's Velvet Revolution suggests that the moderating hypothesis remains open to further investigation. Next, after discussing these empirical findings and their implications, I turn to the theoretical contribution made by my research. Here I focus on what my study suggests about the causal mechanisms underlying the mobilising and moderating effects. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of how my results contribute to the study of protest movements in the region

corresponding to the former Soviet Union. I also explore future research directions for the study of democratic mobilisation in this geographical area.

1. Empirical Contribution: Key Findings

1.1 The Mobilising Hypothesis

The process-tracing of the mobilising hypothesis investigates three propositions that should be substantiated if the causal mechanism linking democratic support and protest participation is theorised correctly. The first proposition predicts that protest participants will have strong support for democracy as the only desirable political system. The second proposition establishes that their support for democratic change is intrinsic, rather than being linked, instrumentally, to expectations of better policy outcomes. The third proposition postulates that the main benefits from protest participation are cognitive ones: e.g., a feeling of internal satisfaction that derives from supporting a democratic change, and that makes the potential cost of protest participation more tolerable for participants.

Georgia

The results of process-tracing the 2003 mass mobilisation in Georgia provide supporting evidence for all three propositions. The presence of democratic support among protest participants is confirmed both by interviews and by the WVS survey data. Moreover, survey results indicate that democratic support in Georgia is probably not the result of a change of generations, because it has remained at a consistently high level during the period 1996-2009. The persistence of democratic support is an important finding, providing evidence that the endorsement of democracy is a part of Georgia's long-term political culture. The presence of intrinsic versus instrumental democratic support in Georgia is confirmed by interviews with political elites and other participants. In this connection, it is important to

clarify that the interviewees do not directly say that they support democracy because of its norms and principles. Instead, they elaborate on various non-democratic developments that occurred in the post-revolutionary Georgia, such as unlawful arrests and the persecution of the regime's critics by Mikheil Saakashvili. Those involved in the revolution, both elites and members of the broader public, express their disappointment in and gradual shifting of support away from Saakashvili, despite his effectiveness in introducing rapid economic reforms and stimulating economic growth. The discourse strongly indicates that, following the 2003 regime change, people prioritised democratic procedures and institutions over the government's performance and outcomes.

The "cognitive benefits" argument finds support in participants' numerous references to feelings of anger and indignation vis-à-vis electoral fraud and unfair elections. The violation of electoral procedures is the most frequently cited cause for mobilisation in the interviews; this finding shows that people's preferences for proper democratic elections were a stronger mobilisation factor than their long-standing frustration with Eduard Shevardnadze and the all-pervasive corruption of his regime. As one of the participants puts it, "If Sheva [Shevardnadze] had been smart enough, he could have avoided this entire situation by simply not interfering with the elections" (Mitchell, 2018).

Armenia

The results of the mobilising hypothesis vis-à-vis Armenia are also strongly positive. The first proposition about the prevalence of democratic support among protest participants is confirmed by survey data, a literature review, and interviews. Like the Georgian protesters, the Armenian protesters who were interviewed do not directly speak about their demand for "democracy". Instead, they talk about a transformation of Armenia's political

system, such that they can hold their leaders accountable through regular elections, ensure the separation of powers, and maintain the rule of law. The interviewees' statements about democratic change are supported by Russian and Armenian mass media outlets.

There is also convincing evidence from the interviews that Armenians have an intrinsic, rather than instrumental, commitment to democracy. This conclusion can be drawn from the interviewees' comments about their post-revolutionary expectations. Since Armenia's post-revolutionary government was made up of people who had little or no experience with state service, people's expectations about the new government's performance were extremely low. However, they still strongly supported the new government because it was "elected by the people". The situation in Armenia can be compared with the results of the 2019 Ukrainian presidential election, in which an outsider and a professional entertainer, Volodymyr Zelensky, achieved a victory despite his lack of experience as a politician (Troianovski, 2019). In both cases, people invested a significant level of trust in non-professional politicians, because they were perceived to possess a stronger democratic legitimacy.

Further, testing of the "cognitive benefits" proposition reveals a close relationship between protest participation in 2019 and people's desire to have more political power as citizens. The majority of the participants refer to a sense of empowerment, or a realisation of their own efficacy as citizens, as one of the main reasons that prompted them to join street protests. This discourse is supported by a review of the literature published via mass media outlets; this literature confirms people's demands for more inclusive political representation. Overall, if the interviewees in Georgia most frequently mentioned indignation about electoral fraud as their reason participating in the 2003 protests, the

interviewees in Armenia most frequently cited a sense of empowerment as political citizens as the main reason why they decided to join the 2018 democratic protests. A primary source of satisfaction for both groups of protest participants derived from these emotions, affording convincing evidence that the “cognitive benefits” proposition holds in both cases.

Alternative Explanations

In both of my case studies, the mobilising hypothesis is tested against several other hypotheses that could explain how mass mobilisation was triggered. By including alternative explanations in the process-tracing, one can recognise the role of other factors and test whether democratic support is indeed the most pertinent explanation for protest participation in the two case studies.

In Georgia’s case, anger about the regime’s poor performance in managing the state is the second most frequently cited reason for people’s mobilisation in 2003. However, there are two reasons why frustration with fraudulent elections and a lack of political representation can be viewed as a stronger mobilising factor. First, this factor is the most frequently mentioned concern in both the interviews and the literature reviewed for my analysis (Fairbanks, 2004; Hash-Gonzalez, 2012; Tucker, 2007). Second, the timing of the protest is relevant. As one of participants (Grigalava, 2018) observes, corruption and poverty had existed in Georgia for some thirteen years before the 2003 protest happened. The contribution of civil society organisations is also recognised in the literature about the Georgian protests (Hash-Gonzalez, 2012; Kandelaki & Meladze, 2007); however, none of the participants whom I interviewed, and who are not directly affiliated with CSOs, mentions these organisations when discussing their decision to join the protests. Similarly, while participants recognise the significant role played by the opposition (Wheatley, 2017), the

interviewees insist that they went out to protest following their own agenda and not because of Saakashvili or other opposition figures.

My research does not imply that the aforementioned factors did not matter for the 2003 mass mobilisation in Georgia. All of these factors (an organised opposition, a well-trained civil society, and an unpopular regime) might have been required for the emergence of these nationwide democratic protests. However, my aim is to assess the role of these factors compared to the role of democratic support vis-à-vis people's decisions to join the protests. Based on the evidence that I gathered, people's motivations to join the protests in Georgia in 2003 came primarily from their indignation about stolen votes and their desire to change a semi-authoritarian system into a democratic one.

The case of Armenia is similar to Georgia with respect to the low quality of life and the strong activity of young people in the civil society sector. A number of interviewees cited low quality of life as an explanation for the protests; however, participants place a much heavier emphasis on structural flaws with the previous system, such as a lack of political accountability and a weak rule of law. The interviewees do not indicate that their decision to join the protest in 2018 was influenced by the role of CSOs, which, it should be pointed out, have been quite active in Yerevan since early 2010s. To the contrary, many interviewees stress that the protest participants had to organise themselves, because the protests had neither a centralised organisational structure nor official leaders.

1.2 The Moderating Hypothesis

In both case studies, the moderating hypothesis is investigated using two primary propositions. The first proposition is related to the practices of authoritarian regimes. If democratic support has any sort of moderating effect on authoritarian elites, then the

expectation is that the regime will demonstrate consistently low levels of violence against civilians and refrain from abusing their civil and political rights. The second proposition is related to the analysis of authoritarian discourse, and to the degree and consistency of elites' expressed commitment to pro-democratic/liberal values over time.

Georgia

In Georgia's case, available evidence allows us confidently to disconfirm the moderating hypothesis as a primary explanation for Shevardnadze's peaceful resignation. Shevardnadze's regime was not an overtly repressive one, based on a range of indicators such as the V-Dem Political Liberties Index and the CSO Repression Index. That said, however, the V-Dem Physical Violence Index and a literature review reveal significant individual episodes of state violence against journalists and opposition figures. Therefore, overall confidence in the first proposition—namely, that Shevardnadze's regime was averse to using repressive practices against civilians—remains below average.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, Shevardnadze had an established reputation of being a pro-Western leader who supported democratic ideas and played a major role in the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Kandelaki, 2006). In a post-revolutionary interview conducted with him in 2005, he insisted that the reason why he would have never used force against the protesters in 2003—even though this option was available to him—was to avoid bloodshed (Karumidze, 2005). His account of the decision not to use force is, however, contradicted by an alternative account of events coming from several independent sources—sources associated with the opposition as well as sources aligned with Shevardnadze's side. They confirm that the main reason why force was not used in 2003 was that Georgia's military stopped following orders from Shevardnadze, despite his intent to

declare a state of emergency and use troops to disperse the protests (Karumidze, 2005). Therefore, in Georgia's case, despite the use of pro-democratic discourse by an authoritarian leader, there is not a single medium- or highly unique piece of evidence demonstrating that the country's pro-democratic culture had a pacifying effect on the authoritarian response to 2003's democratic protests.

Armenia

In Armenia's case, the findings are less decisive. The moderating hypothesis ultimately proved to be neither fully confirmed nor fully disconfirmed. There was no systematic state violence during Sargsyan's regime. This observation is confirmed by the interviewees, some of whom attribute the "softness" of Sargsyan's regime to the tragic legacy of the 2008 protests that ended in the death of several participants. Meanwhile, from the perspective of discourse analysis, Sargsyan's discourse projects the image of a strong leader with a military background who prioritises his country's national interests.

At the same time, there is strong evidence suggesting that the decision not to use the military in response to the 2018 protests was Sargsyan's personal call. As he writes in his resignation letter: "There are a number of options in the current situation, but I will not resort to any of them. This is not my style" (The Prime-Minister of the Republic of Armenia, 2018). There is, however, no convincing discursive evidence (except for the aforementioned resignation letter) that demonstrates a link between Armenia's pro-democratic culture, Sargsyan's endorsement of pro-democratic and/or liberal values, and his decision to peacefully step down. Therefore, in Armenia's case, it can be concluded that the presence or absence of the moderating effect on an authoritarian leader's decision to step down peacefully needs to be investigated further.

Alternative Explanations

In both case studies, the moderating hypothesis is tested against the military-defection⁶⁷ hypothesis, because it affords the most likely alternative explanation for an authoritarian leader's non-use of force against protesters. The military-defection hypothesis is tested using three propositions. The first proposition concerns whether there is an extensive use of force by the military or law enforcement officials during the protest. The second proposition checks whether the actors affiliated with the military or law enforcement made any public anti-regime or pro-protest statements. Finally, the third proposition looks for direct evidence from interviews and from a review of the relevant literature indicating that military defection played a role in the regime's decision not to use force.

In Georgia's case, the military-defection explanation and its supporting propositions receive a significant amount of empirical support. As both the interviews and a literature review demonstrate, in 2003, law enforcement officials and members of the military did not actively engage with protesters or use force to disperse them. There are also multiple accounts in the literature review describing how the police and the army openly supported protesters. In addition, as previously indicated, the most crucial piece of evidence in support of the military-defection explanation comes from interviews with opposition leaders and with Shevardnadze's security advisor, who confirm that in the final days of the protest the military stopped taking orders from Shevardnadze (Japaridze, 2018; Wertsch, 2005b). As

⁶⁷ The military-defection hypothesis suggests that in a situation involving large-scale democratic protests, the military is likely to perceive the regime as vulnerable and having little chance for survival. This situation eventually results in military defection, which excludes violence as an option for autocrats. The military-defection hypothesis has strong explanatory power vis-à-vis peaceful authoritarian exits, since the military's loyalty is known to be a crucial factor for the success of state repression of mass movements (Chenoweth & Perkosi, 2017; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Schock, 2005).

Giga Bokeria (2018) summarises the situation, “it was a myth that at the end of the day he [Shevardnadze] peacefully left ... He ordered the military to clear the Rustaveli avenue, but there were no troops left. When his orders were not followed, he resigned”.

In Armenia’s case, the military-defection explanation is strongly rejected based on multiple pieces of evidence. In 2018, Sargsyan was in a much more advantageous situation than Shevardnadze, and he commanded sufficient resources to bring troops from other regions of Armenia (such as Nagorno Karabakh) to Yerevan to suppress the protests. Unlike Shevardnadze, Sargsyan was not simply being optimistic in his resignation letter when he mentioned alternative “options” for dealing with the protests.

2. Theoretical Contribution

2.1 The Mobilising Hypothesis

The mobilising hypothesis explains the phenomenon of protest participation from the perspective of individuals’ regime preferences and how they affect their cost-benefit calculation of whether or not to join a protest. Using the framing theory⁶⁸ that derives from the study of the psychology of social movements, I suggest that participation in a large-scale democratic protest is essentially a result of a successful alignment between participants’ “frames” and the protest’s goals (Oliver & Johnston, 2005; Opp, 2009; Snow et al., 1986). The empirical findings from both case studies demonstrate the validity of framing theory and the importance of individual-level cognitive factors such as regime preferences when it comes to protest participation.

⁶⁸ The concept of “frame” here refers to a certain mental model of the world that is based on the individual’s beliefs and judgements, such as approval of democracy.

To start with, there is a positive confirmation of the existence of pro-democratic frames among protest participants. The majority of the interviewees confess to sharing a similar worldview emphasising the desirability of key features of democratic political systems and a need for democratic change at the time of protest. The lack of adherence to democratic procedures—such as electoral fraud in Georgia in 2003 and the extension of the leader’s term without elections in Armenia in 2018—is identified as a primary trigger for people’s disappointment and anger, with this trigger making them take on the risk of going out into the streets.

Furthermore, in the case of Armenia, it is important to note that many protest participants had not taken part in any of the multiple protests and social movements that occurred in Armenia prior to 2018. Together with the other observations, this fact presents compelling evidence in support of the frame-alignment theory, which suggests that a high level of protest participation occurs when there is a close fit between individuals’ worldviews (e.g., support for democracy) and the protest’s objectives (e.g., change from an authoritarian to a democratic regime).

The results from the two case studies also introduce further opportunities for research into the mobilising effect of democratic support. For example, a key part of the causal mechanism associated with the mobilising effect assumes that democratic protests present a high-resonance frame that is positively received by protest participants, because they already have a prior commitment to democracy. It would, however, be important to test this proposition in countries with moderate levels of democratic support that also had anti-regime protests, to see how people justify their protest participation/non-participation in these cases. In particular, it would be instructive to learn whether the “cognitive benefits”

proposition is still valid in these countries, by exploring whether people explain their protest participation in terms of the cognitive benefits/moral satisfaction they get from participating in the cause they support.

2.2 The Moderating Hypothesis

The moderating hypothesis introduces a non-trivial assumption: namely, that in a context where there is enduring mass democratic support, authoritarian elites, too, might develop certain “democratic” attitudes, such as a reluctance to use violence against people. The origin of these attitudes lies in a pro-democratic culture that has a moderating effect on autocrats’ worldviews, making them less likely to use violence against protesters. In general, cultural environments should matter for decision-making, given that such environments shape an entire process of cognition—in this case, how authoritarian elites analyse, interpret, and respond to highly challenging situations such as a large-scale democratic protest.

The empirical findings partially confirm the existence of cultural democratic effects in the case of Georgia. Evidence from process-tracing demonstrates that Shevardnadze’s public commitment to democracy did not prevent him from attempting to use force against the protesters in 2003. However, setting Shevardnadze aside, a substantial number of Georgia’s political elites demonstrated support for democracy, as demonstrated by the emergence of a strong democratic opposition to Shevardnadze from inside of regime in 2002-2003. Three of the leaders of the 2003 protests (Burjanadze, Saakashvili, and Zhvania) ended up aligning themselves with the opposition for different reasons; however, all three were convinced that the only path for Georgia was a democratic one. The presence of democratically oriented elites in a non-democratic regime headed by Shevardnadze

provides compelling evidence that Georgia's freedom-loving political culture had a cultural impact on its political elites. In Shevardnadze's case, the moderating effect did not take hold as predicted, given that his initial plan was to use the army against the protesters and not peacefully step down. Although Georgia's pro-democratic culture did not, in accordance with the moderating hypothesis, produce a peaceful authoritarian exit in 2003, the presence of the moderating effect can be still observed in the worldviews and discourse of Georgia's opposition.

In Armenia's case, Sargsyan did not systematically use pro-democratic discourse prior to speaking the language of democracy in his 2018 resignation letter, in which he yields to the demands of protesters. At the same time, it seems that the main reason why he chose to step down peacefully in 2018 was his personal reluctance to use force against people. There was no external pressure on Sargsyan, and he enjoyed both the loyalty of his supporters and extensive military resources. Therefore, the expectation was that he would put up at least some violent resistance. Sargsyan's non-use of force is an important observation even if it is not supported by the prior use of pro-democratic discourse. It seems plausible to suggest that there had been cognitive shifts in Sargsyan's worldview during the decade stretching from 2008 (when Sargsyan was a key part of Robert Kocharyan's regime, which did resort to violent force against protesters) to 2018. In the end, these shifts resulted in Sargsyan's peaceful resignation. However, it is important to emphasise that there is not enough supporting evidence convincingly to demonstrate a causal link between a political culture that had grown increasingly pro-democratic since 2008 and Sargsyan's peaceful resignation in 2018.

The data gaps in the case of Armenia highlight the need for further investigation of the moderating effect of pro-democratic culture on authoritarian violence. It would be particularly useful to undertake a comparative analysis of elites' behavior in non-democracies with high versus moderate or low democratic support to establish whether authoritarian elites in the former category demonstrate systematically more "democratic" or "peaceful" behaviour. However, the most prominent challenge for the moderating hypothesis remains that of designing highly-unique empirical tests that can demonstrate the presence (or absence) of causal links between nation-level political attitudes and elites' behaviour, such that it becomes possible to identify whether and under which conditions authoritarian elites are more susceptible to the influence of mass democratic values.

3. Contribution to Regional Studies

Last but not the least, I want to summarise the implications of this thesis for the study of the former Soviet Union (FSU) states and the specifics of mass mobilisation and protest movements in this region. To start with, my cases introduce new data and expand our understanding of anti-regime protests (conventionally known as Colour Revolutions) in the FSU. Much of the existing literature on this subject focuses on macro-structural factors that can explain patterns of regime change; such factors include the type of the authoritarian regime, state capacity, linkages to the West, economic factors (Bunce & Wolchik, 2018b; Nikolayenko, 2007; Radnitz, 2010; Way, 2008), and the role of diffusion in spreading protests across countries (Beissinger, 2011; Weyland, 2019). My work, however, contributes to a still relatively small sub-field that narrows the focus to individuals' motivations in joining protests. The present study thus builds on research such as Beissinger's (2013) work on the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine, Chaisty and Whitefield's (2013) analysis of

protest participation in Russia in 2011, and Tucker's (2007) collective-action explanation for Colour Revolutions more generally.

My findings add depth and nuance to all of this prior research, especially to the survey results from Ukraine and Russia indicating that protest participants in these countries did not have strong democratic commitments. In the case of Ukraine, Beissinger (2013) shows that the mass mobilisation in 2004 was mainly a result of a strong public antipathy towards President Leonid Kuchma and his regime, rather than shared democratic attitudes and values. In regard to Russian protests against fraudulent parliamentary elections in 2011, survey results show that people who exercised support for democracy as the best form of government were no more likely to participate in the protest than people who did not support democracy (Chaisty & Whitefield, 2013). Instead, ethno-nationalist attitudes were a strong predictor of protest participation in Russia. These two well-known case studies involving individuals' motivations and protest participation suggest that democratic attitudes are not a main mobilisation trigger in the FSU region.

By contrast, my findings show not only that protest participants in Georgia and Armenia have strong democratic preferences, but also that these preferences were a significant part of their motivation to join the protests. This observation is supported by data from interviews that confirms support for democracy is a significant predictor for protest participation in both countries. Therefore, one of this study's central implications is that in the former Soviet space, people protest not only because of their identity affiliations or negative attitudes towards regimes, but also because they genuinely care about democracy. In general terms, I agree with Bunce and Wolchik's (2011) argument that in the "structure vs. agency" debate, the research on protest participation should favour agency-oriented

explanations. However, in contrast with their “electoral” model, the focus of my research is not on the opposition’s impact in shaping public attitudes and perceptions, but on attitudes and perceptions people already have prior to the start of mobilisation. In this regard, Armenia is a critical case. The 2018 protest in Armenia was not related to electoral outcomes, and it emerged without a clearly defined opportunity structure or active efforts by the opposition. Pashinyan was a prominent figure during the 2018 protest, but in reality, people self-organised during the protests. In this sense, the protesters were part of a decentralised, grassroots movement, which proved that protests in the region can extend beyond issues of electoral fraud.

Future Research Directions for Studies of the Region

I conclude by touching upon two potential directions for future studies in the FSU region that follow from my research. In regard to research on protest participation, another non-democratic country in the area deserves closer attention. Specifically, it is possible that a large-scale democratic protest movement will develop in Kazakhstan.

The 2018 WVS results show that 71% of the Kazakhstani population endorse democracy⁶⁹, while 63% of the respondents report that it is “very/absolutely important” for them to live in democracy (Haerpfer et al., 2020). Even though some authoritarian attitudes persist (68% of population believe that it is good to have a strong leader), support for democracy can quickly turn into a problem for the regime. Pro-democratic attitudes coupled with public criticism of the Kazakh government’s weak and inconsistent response to the 2020 coronavirus crisis, state manipulation of coronavirus statistics, economic stagnation,

⁶⁹ These respondents recorded an answer of “very good” or “fairly good” to the question “Having a democratic political system is...”.

and rising unemployment may result in a protest scenario in Kazakhstan (Serikpayev, 2020; Volkov, 2020). Given the rise in democratic attitudes and an ongoing period of political transition, I would cautiously predict that Kazakhstan may be the next FSU country where people will demand democratic changes from their leadership, despite the widespread assumption that this Central Asian country has a distinctly authoritarian culture (Niyazbekov, 2018).

Neighbouring Russia, which for a long time has been an object of regional hopes for democratisation, witnessed, in 2021, several episodes of large-scale mass mobilisation in support of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny (“Hundreds detained in protests”, 2021). This being said, in 2018, only 50% of Russian respondents to the WVS described living in democracy as “very/absolutely important”. This response, coupled with a comparatively low percentage of the respondents endorsing democracy (67%), suggests that a nationwide democratic protest movement is not likely to occur in Russia’s immediate future (Haerpfer et al., 2020).

Another interesting research direction involves further investigation of the effects of the state repression that has been observed during the 2020 Belarusian protests as well as the 2021 Russian protests. Repression of the 2020 Belarusian protests has been notorious because of its brutality, featuring the widespread use of torture by law enforcement officials (Lokshina, 2020). Testimony from a large number of witnesses confirms that the Belarusian police systematically attacked unarmed citizens and ordinary bystanders. Police behaviour during the 2021 Russian protest has also been unusually brutal (Troianovski et al., 2021). In both cases, however, state brutality failed to intimidate protesters. Indeed, following these episodes of violence, the Belarusian protest rapidly grew in numbers (Sivtsova, 2020). This

“boomerang effect” of state repression was described in the literature review section: state violence does not always suppress protests. The 2020 Belarusian and 2021 Russian cases provide further evidence that when protests reach a certain threshold, even extreme levels of state repression might not be enough to discourage mass mobilisation.

The 2020 Belarusian case is important for another reason: Lukashenka and his regime obviously do not have any moral reservations about using violence against protesters. Therefore, if my moderating hypothesis is true, it means that pro-democratic culture has not had an impact on Lukashenka’s regime, despite a significant rise in public democratic attitudes. Although the Belarusian situation requires further investigation, a potential explanation for state brutality is the role of external actors such as Russia. This is not the first time that Russia has interfered with the domestic politics of neighbouring countries to support a friendly authoritarian regime, and most likely it is not the last time. In the case of Ukraine’s Euromaidan revolution in 2013, Russia provided considerable public and financial support to the regime of Victor Yanukovich; this support laid the groundwork for a long-lasting territorial and cultural conflict in Ukraine, considerably weakening prospects for Ukraine’s democratic consolidation (“Putin: Russia helped Yanukovich to flee Ukraine”, 2014). In the case of Belarus, Russia similarly supports Lukashenka, one of Russia’s key strategic allies out of the few that remain, such that Russia’s approval might have influenced Lukashenka’s calculations when it came to using extensive violence against protesters (Walker, 2020). The role of non-democratic external actors (Way 2015 calls them “black knights”) in supporting fellow autocrats has received a lot of attention in the past decade following the emergence of China and Russia as global powers (Ambrosio, 2009, 2010; Bader et al., 2010; Burnell & Schlumberger, 2010; Jackson, 2010; Lankina et al., 2016;

Obydenkova & Libman, 2015; Toslstrup, 2009, 2019). This sort of external support, however, is a “wild” card that I did not take into account when testing my hypotheses, because neither Georgia nor Armenia has received special attention from their northern neighbour. In hindsight, this “neglect” has been a blessing for both countries.

REFERENCES

- Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2006). *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Acharya, A. (2004). How ideas spread: Whose norms matter? Norm localization and institutional change in Asian regionalism. *International Organization*, 58(2), 239–275.
- Albertus, M., & Menaldo, V. (2012). Coercive capacity and the prospects for democratization. *Comparative Politics*, 44(2), 151-169.
- Albertus, M., & Menaldo, V. (2018). *Authoritarianism and the elite origins of democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Albrecht, H. (2019). Military insubordination in popular mass uprisings. *Political Science Quarterly*, 134(2), 303-328.
- Alemán, J., & Yang, D. D. (2011). A duration analysis of democratic transitions and authoritarian backslides. *Comparative Political Studies*, 44(9), 1123-1151.
- Almond, G. A., & Verba, S. (1963). *The civic culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ambrosio, T. (2009). *Authoritarian backlash: Russian resistance to democratization in the former Soviet Union*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Ambrosio, T. (2010). Constructing a framework of authoritarian diffusion: Concepts, dynamics, and future research. *International Studies Perspectives*, 11(4), 375-392.
- Ambrosio, T. (2010). Constructing a framework of authoritarian diffusion: Concepts, dynamics, and future research. *International Studies Perspectives*, 11, 375-392.
- Amna, E., & Zetterberg, P. (2010). A political science perspective on socialization research: Young Nordic citizens in a comparative light. In Sherrod, L. R., Torney-Purta, J., & C. A. Flanagan (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth* (pp. 43-67). Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.

- Anderson, C. J., & Guillory, C. A. (1997). Political institutions and satisfaction with democracy: A cross-national analysis of consensus and majoritarian systems. *American Political Science Review*, 91(1), 66–81.
- Angley, R.E. (2013). Escaping the Kmara box: Reframing the role of civil society in Georgia's Rose Revolution. *Studies of Transition States and Societies*, 1, 42-57.
- Annis, R. C., & Corenblum, B. (1987). Racial identity and preference in Native and White Canadian children. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue Canadienne des Sciences du Comportement*, 19(3), 254-265.
- Ansell, B. W., & Samuels, D. J. (2014). *Inequality and democratization: An elite-competition approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Armenia soldiers join anti-government protests in Yerevan. (2018, April 24). *Al Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/armenia-soldiers-join-anti-government-protests-yerevan-180423103106657.html>
- Aslund, A., & McFaul, M. (Eds.). (2006). *Revolution in orange: The origins of Ukraine's democratic breakthrough*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Atanesian, G. (2018, April 17). Armenia's Sargsyan appointed PM as protestors declare "velvet revolution". *Eurasianet*. <https://eurasianet.org/armenias-sargsyan-appointed-pm-as-protestors-declare-velvet-revolution>
- Aytaç, S. E., & Stokes, S. C. (2019). *Why bother?: Rethinking participation in elections and protests*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Aytaç, S. E., Schiumerini, L., & Stokes, S. (2017). Why do people join backlash protests? Lessons from Turkey. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 62(6), 1205-1228.
- Azar, I. (2018, April 27). 'On dazhe kruche i miloserdnee chem Che Guevara'. *Novaya Gazeta*. <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2018/04/26/76316-on-dazhe-kruche-i-miloserdnee-che-gevary>
- Babayan, E. (2018, May 16). Parni s ulitsy. *Lenta*. https://lenta.ru/articles/2018/05/16/format_armenia/

- Bader, M. (2014). Democracy promotion and authoritarian diffusion: The foreign origins of post-Soviet election laws. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 66(8), 1350-1370.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Barany, Z. (2016). *How armies respond to revolutions and why*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bartels, L. M., & Jackman, S. (2014). A generational model of political learning. *Electoral Studies*, 33, 7-18.
- Batiashvili, N. (2019). Power/Memory: New elite, old intelligentsia, and fixing of the Georgian mind. *Nationalities Papers*, 47(6), 1083-1099.
- Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2019). *Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Beck, N. (2006). Is causal-process observation an oxymoron? *Political Analysis*, 14(3), 347-352.
- Beissinger, M. R. (2007). Structure and example in modular political phenomena: The diffusion of bulldozer/rose/orange/tulip revolutions. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(2), 259-276.
- Beissinger, M. R. (2013). The semblance of democratic revolution: Coalitions in Ukraine's Orange Revolution. *American Political Science Review*, 107(3), 574-592.
- Bellin, E. (2004). The robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in comparative perspective. *Comparative Politics*, 36(2), 139-157.
- Bellin, E. (2012). Reconsidering the robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring. *Comparative Politics*, 44(2), 127-149.
- Bennett, A. (2015). Disciplining our conjectures: Systematizing process-tracing with Bayesian analysis. In Bennett, A. & J. T. Checkel (Eds.), *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytical Tool* (pp. 276-298). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Bennett, A., & Checkel, J. T. (Eds.). (2015). *Process tracing: From metaphor to analytical tool*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bermeo, N. (1997). Myths of moderation: confrontation and conflict during democratic transitions. *Comparative Politics*, 29(3), 305-322.
- Bernburg, J. G. (2015). Economic crisis and popular protest in Iceland, January 2009: The role of perceived economic loss and political attitudes in protest participation and support. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 20(2), 231-252.
- Bieber, F. (2018). Patterns of competitive authoritarianism in the Western Balkans. *East European Politics*, 34(3), 337-354.
- Binnendijk, A. L., & Marovic, I. (2006). Power and persuasion: Nonviolent strategies to influence state security forces in Serbia (2000) and Ukraine (2004). *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 39(3), 411-429.
- Bogaards, M. (2019). Case-based research on democratization. *Democratization*, 26(1), 61-77.
- Boix, C. (2003). *Democracy and redistribution*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Boix, C., & Stokes, S. C. (2003). Endogenous democratization. *World Politics*, 55(4), 517-549.
- Boix, C., & Svoboda, M. W. (2013). The foundations of limited authoritarian government: Institutions, commitment, and power-sharing in dictatorships. *The Journal of Politics*, 75(2), 300-316.
- Booth, J. A., & Seligson, M. A. (2009). *The legitimacy puzzle in Latin America: Political support and democracy in eight nations*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Borzel, T. A., & Risse, T. (2012). From Europeanisation to diffusion: Introduction. *West European Politics*, 35(1), 1-19.
- Brady, H. E. (2004). An analytical perspective on participatory inequality and income inequality. In K. M. Neckerman (Ed.), *Social Inequality* (pp. 667-702). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

- Brady, H. E., & Collier, D. (2004). *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Brancati, D. (2016). *Democracy protests*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Brancati, D., & Lucardi, A. (2019). Why democracy protests do not diffuse. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63(10), 2354-2389.
- Bratton, M. (2009). *Democratic attitudes and political participation*. Michigan: Michigan State University. http://paperroom.ipsa.org/papers/paper_1542.pdf
- Bratton, M., & Mattes, R. (2001). Support for democracy in Africa: Intrinsic or instrumental?. *British Journal of Political Science*, 31(3), 447-474.
- Bratton, M., & van de Walle, N. (1997). *Democratic experiments in Africa: Regime transitions in comparative perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brinks, D., & Coppedge, M. (2006). Diffusion is no illusion: Neighbour emulation in the third wave of democracy. *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(4), 463-489.
- Brooks, R. (2013). Abandoned at the palace: Why the Tunisian military defected from the Ben Ali regime in January 2011. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 36(2), 205-220.
- Brownlee, J. (2007). *Authoritarianism in an age of democratization*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Buechler, S. M. (2004). The strange career of strain and breakdown theories of collective action. In Snow, D. A., Soule, S. A., & K. Hanspeter (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (pp. 47-65). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Buhaug, H., Cederman L-E., & Gleditsch K. S. (2014). Square pegs in round holes: Inequalities, grievances, and civil war. *International Studies Quarterly*, 58(2), 418-431.
- Bunce V. J., & Wolchik, S. L. (2013). Bringing down dictators: waves of democratic change in communist and postcommunist Europe. In M. K. Dimitrov (Ed.), *Why Communism Did Not Collapse* (pp. 123-148). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bunce, V. (2000). Comparative democratization: Big and bounded generalizations. *Comparative Political Studies*, 33(6-7), 703-734.

- Bunce, V. (2003). Rethinking recent democratization: Lessons from the postcommunist experience. *World Politics*, 55(2), 167-192.
- Bunce, V. J., & Wolchik, S. L. (2006). Favorable conditions and electoral revolutions. *Journal of Democracy*, 17(4), 5-18.
- Bunce, V. J., & Wolchik, S. L. (2011). *Defeating authoritarian leaders in postcommunist countries*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bunce, V. J., & Wolchik, S. L. (2018a). Introduction: Mass mobilization in comparative perspective. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 26(2), 111-147.
- Bunce, V. J., & Wolchik, S. L. (2018b). Modes of Popular Mobilizations against Authoritarian Rulers: A Comparison of 1989, the Color Revolutions, and the MENA Uprisings. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 26(2), 149-171.
- Burnell, P., & Schlumberger, O. (2010). Promoting democracy – Promoting autocracy? International politics and national political regimes. *Contemporary Politics*, 16(1), 1-15.
- Burnell, P., & Schlumberger, O. (2010). Promoting democracy – promoting autocracy? International politics and national political regimes. *Contemporary Politics*, 16(1), 1-15.
- Butcher, C., Gray, J. L., & Mitchell, L. (2018). Striking it free? Organized labor and the outcomes of civil resistance. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 3(3), 302-321.
- Butcher, C., & Svensson, I. (2016). Manufacturing dissent: Modernization and the onset of major nonviolent resistance campaigns. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 60(2), 311-339.
- Camacho, L. A. (2019). Understanding support for democracy in new and old democracies in the Americas: the role of democratic experience. *Democratization*, 26(6), 1047-1069.
- Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E., & Stokes, D. E. (1960). *The American voter*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

- Cantoni, D., Chen, Y., Yang, D., Yuchtman, N., & Zhang, Y. (2017). Curriculum and ideology. *Journal of Political Economy*, 125(2), 338–392.
- Carey, S. C. (2010). The use of repression as a response to domestic dissent. *Political Studies*, 58(1), 167-186.
- Castaldo, A. (2020). Back to competitive authoritarianism? Democratic backsliding in Vučić's Serbia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 72(10), 1617-1638.
- Caucasus Barometer. (2017, December 19). *Public perceptions on political, social, and economic issues in the South Caucasus countries. Some findings from the CRRC 2017 data*. Yerevan.
http://www.crrc.am/hosting/file/_static_content/barometer/2017/CB2017_ENG_presentation_final_.pdf
- Cederman, L. E., Weidmann, N. B., & Gleditsch, K. S. (2011). Horizontal inequalities and ethnonationalist civil war: A global comparison. *American Political Science Review*, 105(3), 478-495.
- Celestino, M., & Gleditsch, K. (2013). Fresh carnations or all thorn, no rose? Nonviolent campaigns and transitions in autocracies. *Journal of Peace Research*, 50(3), 385-400.
- Chacko, P. (2018). The right turn in India: Authoritarianism, populism and neoliberalisation. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 48(4), 541-565.
- Chaisty, P., & Whitefield, S. (2013). Forward to democracy or back to authoritarianism? The attitudinal bases of mass support for the Russian election protests of 2011–2012. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 29(5), 387-403.
- Checkel, J. (1997). International norms and domestic politics: Bridging the rationalist-constructivist divide. *European Journal of International Relations*, 3(4), 473–495.
- Chenoweth, E., & Perkoski, E. (2017). *How risky is nonviolent dissent? Nonviolent uprisings and mass killings*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Chenoweth, E., & Stephan, M. J. (2011). *Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

- Chenoweth, E., & Ulfelder, J. (2017). Can structural conditions explain the onset of nonviolent uprisings? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(2), 298-324.
- Chenoweth, E., Perkoski, E., & Kang, S. (2017). State repression and nonviolent resistance. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(9), 1950-1969.
- Chikhladze, G., & Chikhladze, I. (2005). The Rose Revolution: A chronicle. In Karumidze, Z. & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *"Enough!" The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia* (pp. 1-20). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Cho, Y. (2014). To know democracy is to love it: A cross-national analysis of democratic understanding and political support for democracy. *Political Research Quarterly*, 67(3), 478-488.
- Chong, D. (1991). *Collective action and the civil rights movement*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Chu, Y. H., Diamond, L., Nathan, A. J., & Shin, D. C. (Eds.). (2008). *How East Asians view democracy*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Claassen, C. (2020). Does public support help democracy survive? *American Journal of Political Science*, 64(1), 118-134.
- Clarke, H. D., Dutt, N., & Kornberg, A. (1993). The political economy of attitudes toward polity and society in Western European democracies. *Journal of Politics*, 55(4), 998-1021.
- Cohen, J. (1999). Trust, voluntary association and workable democracy: the contemporary American discourse of civil society. In M. Warren (Ed.), *Democracy and Trust* (pp. 208-248). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Collier, D., & Levitsky, S. (1997). Democracy with adjectives: Conceptual innovation in comparative research. *World Politics*, 49(3), 430-451.
- Collier, R. B. (1999). *Paths toward democracy: The working class and elites in Western Europe and South America*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Collier, R. B., & Mahoney, J. (1997). Adding collective actors to collective outcomes: Labor and recent democratization in South America and Southern Europe. *Comparative Politics*, 29(3), 285-303.
- Conrad, C. R., & Moore, W. H. (2010). What stops the torture?. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(2), 459-476.
- Cooper, M. (2018, December 7). Armenia's revolution: A flickering light in a darkening Europe. *The Nation*. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/armenia-revolution-elections/>
- Corning, A. F., & Myers, D. J. (2002). Individual orientation toward engagement in social action. *Political Psychology*, 23(4), 703-729.
- Croissant, A., Kuehn, D., & Eschenauer, T. (2018). The “dictator’s endgame”: Explaining military behavior in nonviolent anti-incumbent mass protests. *Democracy and Security*, 14(2), 174-199.
- Dahl, R. A. (1989). *Democracy and its critics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Dahlum, S., & Knutsen, C. H. (2017). Democracy by demand? Reinvestigating the effect of self-expression values on political regime type. *British Journal of Political Science*, 47(2), 437-461.
- Dahlum, S., & Wig, T. (2019). Educating demonstrators: Education and mass protest in Africa. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63(1), 3-30.
- Dahlum, S., & Wig, T. (2021). Chaos on Campus: Universities and Mass Political Protest. *Comparative Political Studies*, 54(1), 3-32.
- Dalton, R. J. (2000). Value change and democracy. In Pharr, S. J. & R. D. Putnam (Eds.), *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* (pp. 252–269). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Dalton, R. J., Shin, D. C., & Jou, W. (2007). Understanding democracy: Data from unlikely places. *Journal of Democracy*, 18(4), 142-156.

- Daniel, J. (2012). *Sampling essentials: Practical guidelines for making sampling choices*. London: Sage Publications.
- Darden, K., & Grzymala-Busse, A. (2006). The great divide: Literacy, nationalism, and the communist collapse. *World Politics*, 59(1), 83–115.
- Davenport, C. (1995). Multi-dimensional threat perception and state repression: An inquiry into why states apply negative sanctions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(3), 683-713.
- Davenport, C. (2007a). State repression and political order. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10, 1-23.
- Davenport, C. (2007b). *State repression and the domestic democratic peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davenport, C. (2010). *Media bias, perspective, and state repression: The Black Panther party*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge.
- Davenport, C., & Armstrong, D. (2004). Democracy and the violation of human rights: A statistical analysis from 1976–1996. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(3), 538–554.
- Davenport, C., & Inman, M. (2012). The state of state repression research since the 1990s. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24(4), 619-634.
- De Mesquita, B. B., & Smith, A. (2010). Leader survival, revolutions, and the nature of government finance. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(4), 936-950.
- De Waal, T. (2000, December 15). Transcript of interview by Thomas de Waal with Serzh Sarkisian, then Minister of Defense of Armenia (now President of Armenia) 15 December 2000. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/DeVaalinterview_r.pdf
- Della Porta, D. (2014). *Mobilizing for democracy: Comparing 1989 and 2011*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Delli Carpini, M. X. (2004). Mediating democratic engagement: The impact of communications on citizens' involvement in political and civil life. In L. L. Kaid (Ed.),

- Handbook of Political Communication Research* (pp. 395-435). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- DeMeritt, J. H. (2012). International organizations and government killing: Does naming and shaming save lives?. *International Interactions*, 38(5), 597-621.
- Demytrie, R. (2018, May 1). Why Armenia 'Velvet Revolution' won without a bullet fired. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43948181>
- DeNardo, J. (1985). *Power in numbers: The political strategy of protest and rebellion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Diamond, L. (1999). *Developing democracy: Toward consolidation*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Diamond, L. J., Linz, J. J., & Lipset, S. M. (Eds.). (1989). *Democracy in developing countries: Latin America (Vol. 4)*. London: Rienner.
- Dinas, E., & Northmore-Ball, K. (2020). The ideological shadow of authoritarianism. *Comparative Political Studies*, 53(12), 1957-1991.
- Droz-Vincent, P. (2014). Prospects for “democratic control of the Armed Forces”? Comparative insights and lessons for the Arab world in transition. *Armed Forces & Society*, 40(4), 696-723.
- Earl, J. (2003). Tanks, tear gas, and taxes: Toward a theory of movement repression. *Sociological Theory*, 21(1), 44-68.
- Earl, J., & Soule, S. A. (2010). The impacts of repression: The effect of police presence and action on subsequent protest rates. *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, 30, 75-113.
- Easton, D. (1965). *A systems analysis of political life*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Ekiert, G., & Kubik, J. (2001). *Rebellious civil society: Popular protest and democratic consolidation in Poland, 1989-1993*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Elkins, Z., & Simmons, B. (2005). On waves, clusters, and diffusion: A conceptual framework. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 598, 33-51.

- Epstein, D. L., Bates, R., Goldstone, J., Kristensen, I., & O'Halloran, S. (2006). Democratic transitions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), 551-569.
- Erzow, N., & Frantz, E. (2014). *Dictators and dictatorships: Understanding authoritarian regimes and their leaders*. New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Escribà-Folch, A. (2013). Repression, political threats, and survival under autocracy. *International Political Science Review*, 34(5), 543-560.
- Esen, B., & Gumuscu, S. (2016). Rising competitive authoritarianism in Turkey. *Third World Quarterly*, 37(9), 1581-1606.
- Fails, M. D., & Pierce, H. N. (2010). Changing mass attitudes and democratic deepening. *Political Research Quarterly*, 63(1), 174-187.
- Fairbanks, C.H. (2004). Georgia's Rose Revolution. *Journal of Democracy*, 15(2), 110-124.
- Fairfield, T. (2015). *Private wealth and public revenue*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Fairfield, T., & Charman, A. E. (2017). Explicit Bayesian analysis for process tracing: Guidelines, opportunities, and caveats. *Political Analysis*, 25(3), 363-380.
- Finnemore, M., & Sikkink, K. (1998). International norm dynamics and political change. *International Organization*, 52(4), 887-917.
- Fiorina, M. P. (1981). *Retrospective voting in American national elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Fortin, J. (2012). Is there a necessary condition for democracy? The role of state capacity in postcommunist countries. *Comparative Political Studies*, 45(7), 903-930.
- Franklin, J. (2019). Protest waves and authoritarian regimes: repression and protest outcomes. In H. Johnston (Ed.), *Social Movements, Nonviolent Resistance, and the State*. New York: Routledge.
- Frantz, E. (2018). *Authoritarianism: What everyone needs to know*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Frisch, H. (2013). The Egyptian army and Egypt's 'spring'. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 36(2), 180-204.
- Fuchs, D. (2007). The political culture paradigm. In Dalton, R. J. & H-D. Klingemann (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior* (pp. 161-185). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Fuhrmann, M. (2006). A tale of two social capitals: Revolutionary collective action in Kyrgyzstan. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 53(6), 16-29.
- Gabrielian, S. (2018, April 2). Armenian opposition group starts walking tour in regime change bid. *Azatutyun*. <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/29140104.html>
- Galletta, A. (2013). *Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond: From research design to analysis and publication*. New York: New York University Press.
- Gandhi, J. (2008). *Political institutions under dictatorship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gandhi, J., & Lust-Okar, E. (2009). Elections under authoritarianism. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12, 403-422.
- Gaub, F. (2013). The Libyan armed forces between coup-proofing and repression. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 36(2), 221-244.
- Geddes, B. (1999). What do we know about democratization after twenty years?. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2(1), 115-144.
- Geddes, B., Wright, J., & Frantz, E. (2014). Autocratic breakdown and regime transitions: A new data set. *Perspectives on Politics*, 12(2), 313-331.
- Geertz, C. (1973), *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gerring, J. (2007). *Case study research: Principles and practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ghaplanyan, I. (2018). *Post-Soviet Armenia: The new national elite and the new national narrative*. New York: Routledge.

- Gill, G. (2000). *The Dynamics of democratisation. Elites, civil society and the transition process*. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan.
- Gleditsch, K. S., & Ward, M. D. (2006). Diffusion and the international context of democratization. *International Organization*, 60(4), 911-933.
- Goertz, G. (2017). *Multimethod research, causal mechanisms, and case studies: An integrated approach*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Goldstone, J. A. (1994). Is revolution individually rational? Groups and individuals in revolutionary collective action. *Rationality and Society*, 6(1), 139-166.
- Gould, R. V. (1991). Multiple networks and mobilization in the Paris Commune, 1871. *American Sociological Review*, 56, 716-729.
- Granovetter, M. (1978). Threshold models of collective behavior. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(6), 1420-1443.
- Greenstein, F. I. (1975). The benevolent leader revisited: Children's images of political leaders in three democracies. *American Political Science Review*, 69(4), 1371-1398.
- Griffin, K., Kelly, T., & McKinley, T. (2002). *Growth, inequality and poverty in Armenia: A Report commissioned by the Poverty Group*. Bureau for Development Policy, United Nation Development Programme. New York: UNDP.
- Grigoryan, A. (2018, May 7). Armenian revolution aided by restraint of military, security services. *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 15(69), <https://jamestown.org/program/armenian-revolution-aided-by-military-security-services-restraint/>
- Grigoryan, A. (2019). Armenia's path to democratization by recursive mass protests. *Caucasus Survey*, 7(2), 157-175.
- Guney, A., & Tekin, A. (2015). *The Europeanization of Turkish public policies: A scorecard*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Gurr, T. R. (1970). *Why men rebel*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Haber, S., & Menaldo, V. (2011). Do natural resources fuel authoritarianism? A reappraisal of the resource curse. *American Political Science Review*, 105(1), 1-26.

- Hadenius, A., & Teorell, J. (2005). Cultural and economic prerequisites of democracy: Reassessing recent evidence. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 39(4), 87-106.
- Hadenius, A., & Teorell, J. (2007). Pathways from authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 18(1), 143-157.
- Haerpfer, C., Inglehart, R., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano J., M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin & B. Puranen et al. (Eds.). (2020). *World Values Survey: Round seven – Country-pooled datafile*. Madrid, Spain & Vienna, Austria: JD Systems Institute & WWSA Secretariat.
- Hafner-Burton, E. M. (2005). Right or robust? The sensitive nature of repression to globalization. *Journal of Peace Research*, 42(6), 679-698.
- Hafner-Burton, E. M., & Tsutsui, K. (2005). Human rights in a globalizing world: The paradox of empty promises. *American Journal of Sociology*, 110(5), 1373-1411.
- Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. R. (1995). *The political economy of democratic transitions*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. R. (2016a). Democratization during the third wave. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19, 125-144.
- Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. R. (2016b). *Dictators and democrats: Masses, elites, and regime change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hale, H. (2005). Regime cycles: democracy, autocracy, and revolution in post-Soviet Eurasia. *World Politics*, 58(1), 133-165.
- Hale, H. (2011). The myth of mass Russian support for autocracy: The public opinion foundations of a hybrid regime. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 63(8), 1357-1375.
- Hall, P. A. (1999). Social capital in Britain. *British Journal of Political Science*, 29(3), 417-461.
- Hanley, S., & Vachudova, M. A. (2018). Understanding the illiberal turn: democratic backsliding in the Czech Republic. *East European Politics*, 34(3), 276-296.

- Harutyunyan, S. (2018, April 20). Serzh Sargsyan: “K sozhaleniju, my odin raz proshli etot gorkiy put”. *Azatutyun*. <https://rus.azatutyun.am/a/29182426.html>
- Hash-Gonzalez, K. (2012). *Popular mobilization and empowerment in Georgia's Rose Revolution*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Hathaway, O. A. (2007). Why do countries commit to human rights treaties?. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 51(4), 588-621.
- Hazen, T. A. (2019). Explaining Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) military responses during the 2011 - 2012 Arab uprisings. *Democracy and Security*, 15(4), 361-385.
- Hechter, M., Friedman, D., & Appelbaum, M. (1982). A theory of ethnic collective action. *International Migration Review*, 16(2), 412-434.
- Hess, D., & Martin, B. (2006). Repression, backfire, and the theory of transformative events. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 11(2), 249-267.
- Hess, S. (2010). Protests, parties, and presidential succession: Competing theories of Color Revolutions in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 57(1), 28-39.
- Hess, S. (2016). Sources of authoritarian resilience in regional protest waves: The post-communist colour revolutions and 2011 Arab uprisings. *Government and Opposition*, 51(1), 1-29.
- Higley, J., & Gunther, R. (Eds.), *Elites and democratic consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hill, D. W., & Jones, Z. M. (2014). An empirical evaluation of explanations for state repression. *American Political Science Review*, 108(3), 661-687.
- Hobson, C., & Kurki, M. (2012). Introduction: the conceptual politics of democracy promotion. In Hobson, C. & M. Kurki (Eds.), *The Conceptual Politics of Democracy Promotion* (pp. 1-17). London, UK: Routledge.
- Howson, C., & Urbach, P. (2006). *Scientific reasoning: the Bayesian approach*. Chicago, IL: Open Court Publishing.

- Humphreys, M., & Jacobs, A. M. (2015). Mixing methods: A Bayesian approach. *American Political Science Review*, 109(4), 653-673.
- Hundreds detained in protests as Kremlin critic Navalny jailed. (2021, February 2). *Al Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/2/russian-court-jails-alexey-navalny-over-alleged-parole-violations>
- Huntington, S. P. (1984). Will more countries become democratic?. *Political Science Quarterly*, 99(2), 193-218.
- Ilyushina, M., Regan, H., & John, T. (2020, August 10). Protests in Belarus as disputed early election results give President Lukashenko an overwhelming victory. CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/08/10/europe/belarus-election-protests-lukashenko-intl-hnk/index.html>
- Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, cultural change, and democracy: The human development sequence*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
- Inglehart, R., Haerpfer, C., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano, J., Lagos, M., Norris, P., Ponarin, E., B. Puranen, et al. (Eds.). (2014). *World values survey: Round three – Country-pooled datafile 1995-1998*. Madrid: JD Systems Institute.
- Inozemtsev, V., & Dutkiewicz, P. (2013). *Democracy versus modernization: A dilemma for Russia and for the world*. New York: Routledge.
- Interview of President Serzh Sargsyan with the representatives of the Armenian TV Companies. (2015, December 3). *The President of the Republic of Armenia*. <https://www.president.am/en/interviews-and-press-conferences/item/2015/12/03/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-interview/>
- Ishkanian, A. (2015). Self-determined citizens? New forms of civic activism and citizenship in Armenia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 67(8), 1203-1227.
- Iskandaryan, A. (2018). The Velvet Revolution in Armenia: How to lose power in two weeks. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 26(4), 465-482.
- Jackman, R. W., & Miller, R. A. (1998). Social capital and politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1(1), 47-73.

- Jackson, N. J. (2010). The role of external factors in advancing non-liberal democratic forms of political rule: a case study of Russia's influence on Central Asian regimes. *Contemporary Politics*, 16(1), 101-118.
- Jacobs, A. (2015). Process-tracing the effect of ideas. In Bennett, A. & J. T. Checkel (Eds.), *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytical Tool* (pp. 41-73). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Jamal, A., & Kensicki, A. (2016). A theory of critical junctures for democratization: A comparative examination of constitution-making in Egypt and Tunisia. *Law & Ethics of Human Rights*, 10(1), 185-222.
- Jasper, J. (2005). Culture, knowledge, politics. In Janoski, T., Alford, R., Hicks, A. & M. Schwartz (Eds.), *Handbook of Political Sociology* (pp. 115-134). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jasper, M. J. (1997). *The art of moral protest. Culture, biography, and creativity in social movements*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Jennings, M. K. (1989). The crystallization of orientations. In Jennings, M. K., & J. van Deth (Eds.), *Continuities in Political Action: A Longitudinal Study of Political Orientations in Three Western Democracies* (pp. 313-348). Walter de Gruyter.
- Jennings, M. K., & Markus, G. B. (1984). Partisan orientations over the long haul: Results from the three-wave political socialization panel study. *American Political Science Review*, 78, 1000-1018.
- Jervis, R. (2017). *Perception and misperception in international politics: New edition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Johnston, H. (2019). Analysing social movements, nonviolent resistance, and the state. In H. Johnston (Ed.), *Social Movements, Nonviolent Resistance, and the State*. New York: Routledge.
- Jones, S. F. (2006). The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without revolutionaries?. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 19(1), 33-48.

- Jost, J. T., Barberá, P., Bonneau, R., Langer, M., Metzger, M., Nagler, J., Sterling, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2018). How social media facilitates political protest: Information, motivation, and social networks. *Political Psychology, 39*(S1), 85-118.
- Kadivar, M. A., & Ketchley, N. (2018). Sticks, stones, and Molotov cocktails: Unarmed collective violence and democratization. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World, 4*.
- Kalandadze, K., & Orenstein, M. A. (2009). Electoral protests and democratization beyond the color revolutions. *Comparative Political Studies, 42*(11), 1403-1425.
- Kandelaki, G. (2006, July). *Georgia's Rose Revolution: A participant's perspective*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
- Kandelaki, G., & Meladze, G. (2007). Enough! Kmara and the Rose Revolution in Georgia. In Forbig, J. & P. Demes (Eds.), *Reclaiming Democracy: Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 101-125). Washington, DC: The German Marshall Fund.
- Karakaya, S. (2018). Globalization and contentious politics: A comparative analysis of nonviolent and violent campaigns. *Conflict Management and Peace Science, 35*(4), 315-335.
- Karatnycky, A., & Ackerman, P. (2005). *How freedom is won: From civic resistance to durable democracy*. Washington, DC: Freedom House.
- Karumidze, Z. (2005). Eduard Shevardnadze: Interview. In Karumidze, Z. & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *"Enough!" The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia* (pp. 29-35). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Kellstedt, P. M., & Whitten, G. D. (2018). *The fundamentals of political science research*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kendall-Taylor, A., & Frantz, E. (2014). How autocracies fall. *The Washington Quarterly, 37*(1), 35-47.
- Kendall-Taylor, A., Lindstaedt, N., & Frantz, E. (2020). *Democracies and authoritarian regimes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Kern, A., Marien, S. & Hooghe, M. (2015). Economic crisis and levels of political participation in Europe (2002–2010): The role of resources and grievances. *West European Politics*, 38(3), 465–490.
- Kim, N. K. (2017). Anti-regime uprisings and the emergence of electoral authoritarianism. *Political Research Quarterly*, 70(1), 111-126.
- King, C. (2004). A Rose among thorns – Georgia makes good. *Foreign Affairs*, 83, 13-18.
- Kirsch, H., & Welzel, C. (2019). Democracy misunderstood: Authoritarian notions of democracy around the globe. *World Values Research*, 9(1), 1-29.
- Kitcher, P. (2002). Scientific knowledge. In P. K. Moser (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology* (pp. 384-408). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Klandermans, B. (1984). Mobilization and participation: Social-psychological expansions of resource mobilization theory. *American Sociological Review*, 49(5), 583-600.
- Klandermans, B. (1997). *The social psychology of protest*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Klein, G. R., & Regan, P. M. (2018). Dynamics of political protests. *International Organization*, 72(2), 485-521.
- Krain, M. (2014). The effects of diplomatic sanctions and engagement on the severity of ongoing genocides or politicides. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 16(1), 25-53.
- Krosnick, J. A., & Alwin, D. F. (1989). Aging and susceptibility to attitude change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(3), 416–425.
- Krutov, M. (2018, April 23). 'Narod vstaet na nogi'. V Armenii pobedila 'barkhatnaja revolutsia'. *Radio Svoboda*. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/29187373.html>
- Kubicek, P. (2013). *Regime transitions and variation in post-communist Europe*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Kuran, T. (1991). Now out of never: The element of surprise in the East European revolutions of 1989. *World Politics*, 44(1), 7-48.
- Kuran, T. (1997). *Private truths, public lies: The social consequences of preference falsification*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Kurer, T., Häusermann, S., Wüest, B., & Enggist, M. (2019). Economic grievances and political protest. *European Journal of Political Research*, 58(3), 866-892.
- Kuzio, T. (2006). Civil society, youth and societal mobilization in democratic revolutions. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 39(3), 365-386.
- Lacy, T. (2013). *The dream of a democratic culture: Mortimer J. Adler and the Great Books idea*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lankina, T., Libman, A., & Obydenkova, A. (2016). Authoritarian and democratic diffusion in post-communist regions. *Comparative Political Studies*, 49(12), 1599-1629.
- Lanskoy, M., & Suthers, E. (2019). Armenia's Velvet Revolution. *Journal of Democracy*, 30(2), 85-99.
- Larson, J. M., Nagler, J., Ronen, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2019). Social networks and protest participation: Evidence from 130 million Twitter users. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(3), 690-705.
- Lavenex, S., & Schimmelfennig, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Democracy promotion in the EU's neighbourhood: From leverage to governance?*. Routledge.
- Leamer, E. E. (2010). Tantalus on the road to asymptopia. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 24(2), 31-46.
- Levitsky, S., & Way, L. (2020). The new competitive authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 31(1), 51-65.
- Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2010). *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lichbach, M. I. (1994). Rethinking rationality and rebellion: Theories of collective action and problems of collective dissent. *Rationality and Society*, 6(1), 8-39.
- Lieberman, E. S. (2005). Nested analysis as a mixed-method strategy for comparative research. *American Political Science Review*, 99(3), 435-452.

- Linares, F. (2004). Hawks, zealots and hypocrites, but not free riders: The logics of cooperation in Llano del Beal: A qualitative case study. *Rationality and Society*, 16(4), 437-476.
- Linz, J. J., & Stepan, A. (1996). *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and post-communist Europe*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- Lipset, S. M. (1959). Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy. *American Political Science Review*, 53(1), 69-105.
- Lipset, S. M. (1963). *Political man: The social bases of politics*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Lipset, S. M., & Lakin, J. M. (2004). *The democratic century (Vol. 9)*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- Lohmann, S. (1994). The dynamics of informational cascades: The Monday demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989–91. *World Politics*, 47(1), 42-101.
- Lohmann, S. (2000). Collective action cascades: An informational rationale for the power in numbers. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 14(5), 655-684.
- Lokshina, T. (2020, September 16). Justice is needed for Belarus: International scrutiny is the way to get it. *The Moscow Times*.
<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/09/16/justice-is-needed-for-belarus-international-scrutiny-is-the-way-to-get-it-a71454>
- Lührmann, A., & Lindberg, S. (2019) A third wave of autocratization is here: what is new about it? *Democratization*, 26(7), 1095-1113.
- Lührmann, A., & Rooney, B. (2020). Autocratization by decree: States of emergency and democratic decline. *Comparative Politics*.
- MacFarquhar, N., & Perez-Pena, R. (2018, April 23). 'I Was Wrong': Armenian leader quits amid protests. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/23/world/europe/armenia-prime-minister-protests.html>

- Madestam, A., Shoag, D., Veuger, S., & Yanagizawa-Drott, D. (2013). Do political protests matter? evidence from the tea party movement. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 128(4), 1633-1685.
- Maerz, S. F., Lührmann, A., Hellmeier, S., Grahn, S., & Lindberg, S. I. (2020). State of the world 2019: autocratization surges—resistance grows. *Democratization*, 27(6), 909-927.
- Magaloni, B. (2006). *Voting for autocracy: Hegemonic party survival and its demise in Mexico*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Magaloni, B. (2008). Credible power-sharing and the longevity of authoritarian rule. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(4-5), 715-741.
- Magaloni, B., & Kricheli, R. (2010). Political order and one-party rule. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 13, 123-143.
- Mahoney, J. (2010). After KKV: The new methodology of qualitative research. *World Politics*, 62(1), 120-147.
- Mahoney, J. (2012). The logic of process tracing tests in the social sciences. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 41(4), 570-597.
- Mahoney, J., & Barrenechea, R. (2019). The logic of counterfactual analysis in case-study explanation. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 70(1), 306-338.
- Mainwaring, S., & Perez-Linan, A. (2013). *Democracies and dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, survival, and fall*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Makara, M. (2013). Coup-proofing, military defection, and the Arab Spring. *Democracy and Security*, 9(4), 334-359.
- Malesky, E., & Schuler, P. (2008, August). *Why do single-party regimes hold elections? An analysis of candidate data in Vietnam's 2007 National Assembly contest*. Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Boston, MA.
- March, J. H., & Simon, H. (1958). *Organizations*. New York: Wiley.
- March, J.G., & Olsen, J.P. (2008). The logic of appropriateness. In R.E. Goodin et al. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy* (pp. 689-708). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Martin, B. (2007). *Justice ignited: The dynamics of backfire*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Marwell, G., & Oliver, P. (1993). *The critical mass in collective action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maseland, R., & Van Hoorn, A. (2011). Why Muslims like democracy yet have so little of it. *Public Choice*, 147(3-4), 481-496.
- Mattes, R., & Bratton, M. (2007). Learning about democracy in Africa: Awareness, performance, and experience. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(1), 192-217.
- Mazgaj, M. S. (2010). *Church and state in communist Poland: A history, 1944–1989*. McFarland.
- Mazumder, S (2018) The persistent effect of U.S. civil rights protests on political attitudes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(4), 922–935.
- McAdam, D. (1986). Recruitment to high-risk activism: The case of freedom summer. *American Journal of Sociology*, 92(1), 64-90.
- McAdam, D., & Tarrow, S. (2010). Ballots and barricades: On the reciprocal relationship between elections and social movements. *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(2), 529-542.
- McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Dynamics of contention*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(6), 1212-1241.
- McFaul, M. (2005). Transitions from postcommunism. *Journal of Democracy*, 16(3), 5-19.
- McLauchlin, T. (2010). Loyalty strategies and military defection in rebellion. *Comparative Politics*, 42(3), 333-350.
- Mechkova, V., Lührmann, A., & Lindberg, S. I. (2017). How much democratic backsliding? *Journal of Democracy*, 28(4), 162-169.
- Merkel, W. (2004). Embedded and defective democracies. *Democratization*, 11(5), 33-58.
- Mestvirishvili, N., & Mestvirishvili, M. (2014). Emancipative values in Georgia: An individual level analysis. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 47, 71-80.

- Metternich, N. W., Dorff, C., Gallop, M., Weschle, S., & Ward, M. D. (2013). Anti-government networks in civil conflicts: How network structures affect conflictual behavior. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(4), 892-911.
- Mikaelian, H. (2018, March). Perceptions of prerequisites for long-term peace in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. *Caucasus Institute Policy Brief*. http://c-i.am/wp-content/uploads/Karabakh_Policy-Brief_final-1.pdf
- Miller, A. H., Hesli, V. L., & Reisinger, W. M. (1997). Conceptions of democracy among mass and elite in post-Soviet societies. *British Journal of Political Science*, 27(2), 157-190.
- Miller, M. K. (2017). The strategic origins of electoral authoritarianism. *British Journal of Political Science*, 1-28.
- Miller, R. W. (1987). *Fact and method: Explanation, confirmation and reality in the natural and the social sciences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Mishler, W., & Rose, R. (2001a). Political support for incomplete democracies: Realist vs. idealist theories and measures. *International Political Science Review*, 22(4), 303-320.
- Mishler, W., & Rose, R. (2001b). What are the origins of political trust? Testing institutional and cultural theories in post-communist societies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 34(1), 30-62.
- Mitchell, L.A. (2004). Georgia's Rose Revolution. *Current History*, 103(675), 342-348.
- Mitchell, L.A. (2012). *The Color Revolutions*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Møller, J., & Skaaning, S. E. (2013). The third wave: Inside the numbers. *Journal of Democracy*, 24(4), 97-109.
- Montesquieu. [1752]. (1914). *The spirit of the laws*. London: Bell & Sons.
- Moreno, A., & Méndez, P. (2002). Attitudes toward democracy: Mexico in comparative perspective. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 43(3-5), 350-367.
- Moreno-Alvarez, A., & Welzel C. (2014). Enlightening people. In Dalton, R. J. & C. Welzel (Eds.), *The Civic Culture Transformed* (pp. 59-90). New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Morgan, S. L., & Winship, C. (2015). *Counterfactuals and causal inference: Methods and principles for social research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mshetsyan, A. (2018, April 24). Thomas de Waal: Serzh Sargsyan`s step is worthy of respect. *Arminfo*. https://arminfo.info/full_news.php?id=30895&lang=3
- Mueller, T., & Neundorf, A. (2012). The role of the state in the repression and revival of religiosity in post-Socialist societies. *Social Forces*, 91(2), 559–582.
- Muller, E. N. (1985). Income inequality, regime repressiveness, and political violence. *American Sociological Review*, 50(1), 47–61.
- Muller, E. N., & Seligson, M. A. (1994). Civic culture and democracy: The question of causal relationships. *American Political Science Review*, 88(3), 635–652.
- Murtin, F., & Wacziarg, R. (2014). The democratic transition. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 19(2), 141-181.
- Mutschler, M. (2017). *Global Militarization Index 2017*. Bonn International Center for Conversion. https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx_bicctools/GMI_2017_EN.pdf
- Nagel, J. H. (1987). *Participation*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Nepstad, S. E. (2011). *Nonviolent revolutions: Civil resistance in the late 20th century*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Nepstad, S. E. (2013). Mutiny and nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring military defections and loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria. *Journal of Peace Research*, 50(3), 337-349.
- Nepstad, S. E. (2019). Defections or disobedience? Assessing the consequences of security force collaboration or disengagement in nonviolent movements. In H. Johnston (Ed.), *Social Movements, Nonviolent Resistance, and the State*. New York: Routledge.
- Nepstad, S., & Bob, C. (2006). When do leaders matter? Hypotheses on leadership dynamics in social movements. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 11(1), 1-22.
- Neundorf, A., & Pop-Eleches, G. (2020). Dictators and their subjects: Authoritarian attitudinal effects and legacies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 53(12), 1839-1860.

- Nikolayenko, O. (2007). The revolt of the post-Soviet generation: Youth movements in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine. *Comparative Politics*, 39(2), 169-188.
- Niyazbekov, N. (2018). Is Kazakhstan immune to color revolutions? the social movements perspective. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 26(3), 401-425.
- Noakes, J. A., & Johnston, H. (2005). Frames of protest: A road map to a perspective. In Johnston, H. & J. A. Noakes (Eds.), *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective* (pp. 1-29). London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Nodia, G. (2005). Breaking the mold of powerlessness: The meaning of Georgia's latest revolution. In Karumidze, Z. & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *"Enough!" The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia* (pp. 95-104). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Norris, P. (2011). *Democratic deficit: Critical citizens revisited*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, P. (Ed.). (1999). *Critical citizens: Global support for democratic government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ó Beacháin, D. (2009). Roses and tulips: dynamics of regime change in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 25(2-3), 199-226.
- O'Donnell, G. (1994). Delegative democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 5, 55-69.
- O'Donnell, G., & Schmitter, P. C. (1986). *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Tentative conclusions about uncertain democracies*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Obydenkova, A., & Libman, A. (2015). Modern external influences and the multi-level regime transition: Theory-building. In Obydenkova, A., & A. Libman (Eds.), *Autocratic and Democratic External Influences in Post-Soviet Eurasia* (pp. 7-47). Surrey: Ashgate.
- Oganesyan, A. (2020, August 18). Lukashenko na zavode tjugatshei vystupil, pozhalui, so svoei samoi provalnoi rechju. *Meduza*.
<https://meduza.io/feature/2020/08/17/lukashenko-na-zavode-tyagachey-v-minske-vystupil-pozhaluy-so-svoey-samoy-provalnoy-rechyu-my-pogovorili-s-rabochimi-etogo-predpriyatiya-o-tom-chto-tam-proishodilo>

- Ohanyan, A. (2018, November 7). Armenia's democratic dreams. *Foreign Policy*.
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/11/07/armenias-democratic-dreams/>
- Oliver, P. E., & Johnston, H. (2005). What a good idea! Ideologies and frames in social movement research. In Johnston, H. & J. A. Noakes (Eds.), *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective* (pp. 185-204). London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Olson, J. M., & Hafer, C. L. (2001). Tolerance of personal deprivation. In Jost, J. T. & B. Major (Eds.), *The Psychology of Legitimacy: Emerging Perspectives on Ideology, Justice, and Intergroup Relations* (pp. 157–175). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Olson, M. (1965). *The theory of collective action: Public goods and the theory of groups*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ondetti, G. (2006). Repression, opportunity, and protest: explaining the takeoff of Brazil's landless movement. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 48(2), 61-94.
- Onuch, O., & Sasse, G. (2016). The Maidan in movement: Diversity and the cycles of protest. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 68(4), 556-587.
- Opp, K. D. (1989). *The rationality of political protest: A comparative analysis of rational choice theory*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Opp, K. D. (1994). Repression and revolutionary action: East Germany in 1989. *Rationality and Society*, 6(1), 101-138.
- Opp, K. D. (2009). *Theories of political protest and social movements: A multidisciplinary introduction, critique, and synthesis*. London: Routledge.
- Opp, K. D., Voss, P., & Gern, C. (1995). *Origins of a spontaneous revolution: East Germany, 1989*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Oskamp, S. (1977). Methods of studying social behaviour. In L. S. Wrightsman (Ed.), *Social Psychology*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Parkinson, S. E. (2013). Organizing rebellion: Rethinking high-risk mobilization and social networks in war. *American Political Science Review*, 107(3), 418-432.

- Payne, R. (2001). Persuasion, frames and norm construction. *European Journal of International Relations*, 7(1), 37–61.
- Pearlman, W. (2016). Moral identity and protest cascades in Syria. *British Journal of Political Science*, 48, 877-901.
- Pearlman, W. (2011). *Violence, nonviolence, and the Palestinian national movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Peffley, M., & Rohrschneider, R. (2007). Elite beliefs and the theory of democratic elitism. In Dalton, R. J. & H.-D. Klingemann (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior* (pp. 66-79). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pevehouse, J. C. (2002). Democracy from the outside-in? International organizations and democratization. *International Organization*, 56(3), 515-549.
- Pietsch, J. (2015). Authoritarian durability: Public opinion towards democracy in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties*, 25(1), 31-46.
- Pinard, M. (1968). Mass society and political movements: A new formulation. *American Journal of Sociology*, 73(6), 682-690.
- Pion-Berlin, D., Esparza, D., & Grisham, K. (2014). Staying quartered: Civilian uprisings and military disobedience in the twenty-first century. *Comparative Political Studies*, 47(2), 230-259.
- Pop-Eleches, G., & Robertson, G. (2014). After the revolution: Long-Term effects of electoral revolutions. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 61(4), 3-22.
- Pop-Eleches, G., & Robertson, G. B. (2015). Structural conditions and democratization. *Journal of Democracy*, 26(3), 144-156.
- Pop-Eleches, G., & Tucker, J. (2017). *Communism's shadow: Historical legacies and contemporary political attitudes*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan's statement. (2018, April 23). *The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*. <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2018/04/23/Prime-Minister-Serzh-Sargsyans-statement/>

- Przeworski, A. (2019). *Crises of democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Przeworski, A., Alvarez, R. M., Alvarez, M. E., Cheibub, J. A., & Limongi, F. (2000). *Democracy and development: Political institutions and well-being in the world, 1950-1990 (Vol. 3)*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Putin: Russia helped Yanukovich to flee Ukraine. (2014, October 24). *BBC*.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29761799>
- Putnam, R. D. (1976). *The comparative study of political elites*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Putnam, R. D. (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Pye, L. W., & Verba, S. (1965). *Political culture and political development*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Qi, L., & Shin, D. C. (2011). How mass political attitudes affect democratization: Exploring the facilitating role critical democrats play in the process. *International Political Science Review*, 32(3), 245-262.
- Radnitz, S. (2010). The color of money: privatization, economic dispersion, and the post-Soviet "revolutions". *Comparative Politics*, 42(2), 127-146.
- Rasler, K. (1996). Concessions, repression, and political protest in the Iranian revolution. *American Sociological Review*, 61(1), 132-152.
- Regan, P. M., & Henderson, E. A. (2002). Democracy, threats and political repression in developing countries: are democracies internally less violent?. *Third World Quarterly*, 23(1), 119-136.
- Risse, T., & Sikkink, K. (1999). The socialization of international human rights norms into domestic practices: Introduction. In T. Risse et al. (Eds.), *The Power of Human Rights:*

- International Norms and Domestic Change* (pp. 1-38). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, O. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 11*(1), 25-41.
- Rohlfing, I. (2012). *Case studies and casual inference: An integrative framework*. New York: Palgrave.
- Rose, G. (2008). Is Democracy Dying? *Foreign Affairs*.
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-04-16/democracy-dying>
- Rose, R., Mishler, W., & Haerpfer, C. (1998). *Democracy and its alternatives: Understanding post-communist societies*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Rosenberg, A. (2012). *Philosophy of science: A Contemporary introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Rosenstone, S. J. (1982). Economic adversity and voter turnout. *American Journal of Political Science, 26*(1), 25-46.
- Ross, M. L. (2001). Does oil hinder democracy?. *World Politics, 53*(3), 325-361.
- Ross, M. L. (2013). *The oil curse: How petroleum wealth shapes the development of nations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rossi, F., & Della Porta, D. (2009). Social movement, trade unions and advocacy networks. In Haerpfer, C. W., Bernhagen, P., Inglehart, R. & C. Welzel (Eds.), *Democratization* (pp. 172–186). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Rothstein, B. (2001). Social capital in the social democratic welfare state. *Politics & Society, 29*(2), 207-241.
- Rüdiger, W., & Karyotis, G. (2014). Who protests in Greece? Mass opposition to austerity. *British Journal of Political Science, 44*(3), 487-513.
- Rustow, D. A. (1970). Transitions to democracy: Toward a dynamic model. *Comparative Politics, 2*(3), 337-363.

- Sarbahi, A. K. (2014). Insurgent-population ties and the variation in the trajectory of peripheral civil wars. *Comparative Political Studies*, 47(10), 1470-1500.
- Sabucedo, J. M., Dono, M., Alzate, M., & Seoane, G. (2018). The importance of protesters' morals: Moral obligation as a key variable to understand collective action. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 418.
- Salehyan, I., Hendrix, C. S., Hamner, J., Case, C., Linebarger, C., Stull, E., & Williams, J. (2012). Social conflict in Africa: A new database. *International Interactions*, 38(4), 503-511.
- Salehyan, I., Siroky, D., & Wood, R. M. (2014). External rebel sponsorship and civilian abuse: A principal-agent analysis of wartime atrocities. *International Organization*, 68(3), 633-661.
- Sargsyan: Variant s 'silnoi rukoi' v Armenii ne proidet, nam nuzhna demokratija. (2015, December 3). *News Armenia*. <https://newsarmenia.am/news/armenia/sargsyan-variant-s-silnoy-rukoy-v-armenii-ne-proydet-nam-nuzhna-demokratiya/>
- Schedler, A. (2013). *The politics of uncertainty: Sustaining and subverting electoral authoritarianism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schimmelfennig, F., & Sedelmeier, U. (2005). *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Schmitter, P. C. (2018). Democratization: The role of elites. In Best, H. & J. Higley (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Political Elites* (pp. 593-610). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schneider, C. Q., & Rohlfing, I. (2016). Case studies nested in fuzzy-set QCA on sufficiency: Formalizing case selection and causal inference. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 45(3), 526-568.
- Schock, K. (2005). *Unarmed insurrections: People power movements in non-democracies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Schumpeter, J. (1943). *Capitalism, socialism, and democracy*. London: George Allen.
- Sears, D. O., & Funk, C. L. (1999). Evidence of the long-term persistence of adults' political predispositions. *Journal of Politics*, 61(1), 1-28.

- Sears, D. O., & Levy, S. (2003). Childhood and adult political development. In Sears, D. O., Huddy, L. & R. Jervis (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (pp. 60-109). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sears, R. R. (1975). Your ancients revisited: A history of child development. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Review of Child Development Research* (Vol. 5, pp. 1-73). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Seawright, J., & Gerring, J. (2008). Case selection techniques in case study research: A menu of qualitative and quantitative options. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2), 294-308.
- Sedelmeier, U. (2012). Is Europeanisation through conditionality sustainable? Lock-in of institutional change after EU accession. *West European Politics*, 35(1), 20-38.
- Seligson, M. A. (2002). The impact of corruption on regime legitimacy: A comparative study of four Latin American countries. *Journal of Politics*, 64(2), 408-433.
- Serikpayev, D. (2020, August 17). Eto yeshe ne dno. Eksperty o situatsii v ekonomike Kazakhstana. *Forbes Kazakhstan*.
https://forbes.kz/process/expertise/natsfond_za_neskolko_let_sokratilsya_na_16_mlrld_a_ekonomika_stranyi_tak_i_ne_vyiroslo/
- Serzh Sargsyan: U nas voobshe net problemnyh voprosov s Rossiei. (2016, November 17). *RIA Novosti*. <https://ria.ru/20161117/1481524273.html>
- Shadmehr, M. (2014). Mobilization, repression, and revolution: Grievances and opportunities in contentious politics. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(3), 621-635.
- Shellman, S. M. (2006). Process matters: Conflict and cooperation in sequential government-dissident interactions. *Security Studies*, 15(4), 563-599.
- Shin, D. C., & Cho, Y. (2010). How East Asians understand democracy: From a comparative perspective. *Asien*, 116, 21-40.
- Siegel, D. A. (2011). When does repression work? Collective action in social networks. *The Journal of Politics*, 73(4), 993-1010.
- Simon, H. (1947). *Administrative behavior*. New York: Free Press.

- Sivtsova, A. (2020, August 13). Otstupat nikto ne nameren. Meduza. <https://meduza.io/feature/2020/08/12/otstupat-nikto-ne-nameren>
- Skaaning, S. E. (2020). Waves of autocratization and democratization: a critical note on conceptualization and measurement. *Democratization*, 27(8), 1533-1542.
- Smith, P. B. (2019). Dimensions of cultural variation. In Matsumoto, D. & H. C. Hwang (Eds.), *The Handbook of Culture and Psychology* (pp. 67-93). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Snow, D. A., & Benford, R. D. (1992). Master frames and cycles of protest. In Morris, A. D. & C. M. Mueller (Eds.), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (pp. 133-155). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Snow, D. A., Rochford Jr, E. B., Worden, S. K., & Benford, R. D. (1986). Frame alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement participation. *American Sociological Review*, 51, 464-481.
- Snyder, R. C., Bruck, H. W., & Sapin, B. (1954). *Decision-making as an approach to the study of international politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Solt, F. (2015). Economic inequality and nonviolent protest. *Social Science Quarterly*, 96(5), 1314-1327.
- Somer, M. (2011). Does it take democrats to democratize? Lessons from Islamic and secular elite values in Turkey. *Comparative Political Studies*, 44(5), 511-545.
- Staniland, P. (2014). *Networks of rebellion: Explaining insurgent cohesion and collapse*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Stapnes, T., Carlquist, E., & Horst, C. (2020). Responsibility to protest: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of motives for protest participation in Myanmar. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*.
- Steenekamp, C., & Du Toit, P. (2017). The evolution of support for democratic regime principles and its alternatives. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 17(1-2), 1-12.

- Stegmueller, D. (2011). Apples and oranges? The problem of equivalence in comparative research. *Political Analysis*, 19(4), 471-487.
- Stevens, D., Bishin, B. G., & Barr, R. R. (2006). Authoritarian attitudes, democracy, and policy preferences among Latin American elites. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), 606-620.
- Sullivan, C. M., Loyle, C. E., & Davenport, C. (2012). The coercive weight of the past: Temporal dependence and the conflict-repression nexus in the Northern Ireland "Troubles". *International Interactions*, 38(4), 426-442.
- Sullivan, J. L., Walsh, P., Shamir, M., Barnum, D. G., & Gibson, J. L. (1993). Why politicians are more tolerant: Selective recruitment and socialization among political elites in Britain, Israel, New Zealand and the United States. *British Journal of Political Science*, 23(1), 51-76.
- Sumbadze, N. (2009). Saakashvili in the public eye: What public opinion polls tell us. *Central Asian Survey*, 28(2), 185-197.
- Sumbadze, N., & Tarkhan-Mouravi, G. (2003). *Public opinion in Tbilisi, in the aftermath of the parliamentary elections of November 2, 2003*. NISPAcee.
- Sutton, J., Butcher, C. R., & Svensson, I. (2014). Explaining political jiu-jitsu: Institution-building and the outcomes of regime violence against unarmed protests. *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(5), 559-573.
- Svolik, M. W. (2012). *The politics of authoritarian rule*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Talmazan, Y. (2019, February 20). Maidan massacre anniversary: Ukraine remembers bloody day of protests. *NBC News*. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/maidan-massacre-anniversary-ukraine-remembers-bloody-day-protests-n973156>
- Tannenwald, N. (2007). *The nuclear taboo: The United States and the non-use of nuclear weapons since 1945* (Vol. 87). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, M. (1988). Rationality and revolutionary collective action. In M. Taylor (Ed.), *Rationality and Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Teorell, J. (2010). *Determinants of democratization: Explaining regime change in the world, 1972–2006*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- The Economist's country of the year 2018. (2018, December 22). *The Economist*. <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2018/12/22/the-economists-country-of-the-year-2018>, accessed April 20, 2020
- The European Commission. (1997). *Central and Eastern Eurobarometer No. 7*. Brussels: European Commission.
- The World Bank. (2013). *Armenia data*. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/armenia>, accessed April 20, 2020
- Thyen, K., & Gerschewski, J. (2018). Legitimacy and protest under authoritarianism: Explaining student mobilization in Egypt and Morocco during the Arab uprisings. *Democratization*, 25(1), 38-57.
- Thurber, C. (2019). Social ties and the strategy of civil resistance. *International Studies Quarterly*, 63(4), 974-986.
- Tilly, C. (1978). *From mobilization to revolution*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Tilly, C. (2004). *Contention and democracy in Europe, 1650-2000*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Tilly, C. (2006). *Regimes and repertoires*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tocqueville, A. (2000). *Democracy in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tolstrup, J. (2009). Studying a negative external actor: Russia's management of stability and instability in the "Near Abroad". *Democratization*, 16(5), 922-944.
- Tolstrup, J. (2009). Studying a negative external actor: Russia's management of stability and instability in the 'Near Abroad'. *Democratization*, 16(5), 922-944.
- Tolstrup, J., Seeberg, M. A., & Glavind, J. G. (2019). Signals of support from great power patrons and the use of repression during nonviolent protests. *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(4), 514-543.

- Treisman, D. (2012). Twenty years of political transition. In G. Roland (Ed.), *Economies in Transition: Long-Run View* (pp. 109-133). London: Palgrave.
- Trejo, G. (2014). The ballot and the street: An electoral theory of social protest in autocracies. *Perspectives on Politics*, 12(2), 332-352.
- Troianovski, A. (2019, April 22). Comedian Volodymyr Zelensky unseats incumbent in Ukraine's presidential election, exit poll shows. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/as-ukraine-votes-in-presidential-runoff-a-comedian-looks-to-unseat-the-incumbent/2019/04/21/b7d69a38-603f-11e9-bf24-db4b9fb62aa2_story.html
- Troianovski, A., Kramer, A. E., Nechepurenko, I., & Higgins, A. (2021, January 31). Russia protesters defy vast police operation as signs of Kremlin anxiety mount. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/31/world/europe/russia-protests-navalny-live-updates.html>
- Tucker, J. A. (2007). Enough! Electoral fraud, collective action problems, and post-communist colored revolutions. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(3), 535-551.
- Tudoroiu, T. (2007). Rose, orange, and tulip: The failed post-Soviet revolutions. *Communist and Post-communist Studies*, 40(3), 315-342.
- Ulfelder, J. (2005). Contentious collective action and the breakdown of authoritarian regimes. *International Political Science Review*, 26(3), 311-334.
- V Kremle nadejutsja na sokhranenie soyuznicheskikh otnosheniy Rossii i Armenii. (2018, May 3). *RIA Novosti*. <https://ria.ru/20180503/1519813224.html>
- Valentino, B. A. (2004). *Final solutions: Mass killing and genocide in the 20th century*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Van Antwerp, A. C., & Brown, N. J. (2018). The electoral model without elections?: The Arab Uprisings of 2011 and the Color Revolutions in comparative perspective. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 26(2), 195-226.

- Vilas, X., & Sabucedo, J. M. (2012). Moral obligation: A forgotten dimension in the analysis of collective action. *Revista de Psicología Social: International Journal of Social Psychology*, 27, 369–375.
- Volkov, V. (2020, August 13). Kak izmenila Kazakhstan vtoraja volna koronavirusa?. *Deutsche Welle*. <https://www.dw.com/ru/kak-izmenila-kazahstan-vtoraja-volna-koronavirusa/a-54559893>
- Walker, S. (2020, September 15). Russia to lend Belarus \$1.5bn as Lukashenko tells Putin 'a friend is in trouble'. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/14/alexander-lukashenko-vladimir-putin-sochi-belarus-russia>
- Way, L. (2008). The real causes of the color revolutions. *Journal of Democracy*, 19(3), 55-69.
- Way, L. A. (2015). The limits of authoritarian promotion: the case of Russia in the 'near abroad'. *European Journal of Political Research*, 54, 691-706.
- Weber, M. (1958). *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. New York: Scribner's.
- Welt, C. (2006). *Regime vulnerability and popular mobilization in Georgia's Rose Revolution*. CDDRL Working Paper #67.
- Welzel, C. (2006). Democratization as an emancipative process: The neglected role of mass motivations. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45(6), 871-896.
- Welzel, C. (2007). Are levels of democracy affected by mass attitudes? Testing attainment and sustainment effects on democracy. *International Political Science Review*, 28(4), 397-424.
- Welzel, C. (2013). *Freedom rising*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Welzel, C., & Klingemann, H. D. (2008). Evidencing and explaining democratic congruence: The perspective of 'substantive' democracy. *World Values Research*, 1(3), 57-90.
- Wertsch, J. V. (2005a). Nino Burjanadze: Interview. In Karumidze, Z. & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *"Enough!" The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia* (pp. 43-53). New York: Nova Science Publishers.

- Wertsch, J. V. (2005b). Tedo Japaridze: Interview. In Karumidze, Z/ & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *"Enough!" The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia* (pp. 53-61). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Wertsch, J. V. (2005c). Zurab Zhvania: Interview. In Karumidze, Z. & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *"Enough!" The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia* (pp. 35-43). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Weyland, K. (2012). The Arab Spring: Why the surprising similarities with the revolutionary wave of 1848?. *Perspectives on Politics*, 10(4), 917-934.
- Weyland, K. (2019). Why some democracy protests do diffuse. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63(10), 2390-2401.
- Wheatley, J. (2017). *Georgia from national awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed transition in the former Soviet Union*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Whitehead, L. (1996). Three international dimensions of democratization. In L. Whitehead (Ed.), *The international dimensions of democratization: Europe and the Americas* (pp. 3-24). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wiener, A. (2008). *The invisible constitution of politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, R. H. (2004). The cultural contexts of collective action: Constraints, opportunities, and the symbolic life of social movements. In Snow, D. A., Soule, S. A. & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (pp. 91-116). Maiden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Wood, E. J. (2000). *Forging democracy from below: Insurgent transitions in South Africa and El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wood, E. J. (2003). *Insurgent collective action and civil war in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yeltsin resigns. In Boris Yeltsin's words: 'I have made a decision'. (2000, January 1). *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/01/01/world/yeltsin-resigns-in-boris-yeltsin-s-words-i-have-made-a-decision.html>

- Zavadskaya, M., & Welzel, C. (2015). Subverting autocracy: emancipative mass values in competitive authoritarian regimes. *Democratization*, 22(6), 1105-1130.
- Zaller, J. R. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zolyan, M. (2018). The inevitable miracle: What makes Armenia's revolution unique. *Regional Post*. <https://regionalpost.org/en/articles/the-inevitable-miracle.html>, accessed April 20, 2020.
- Zweerde, E. (2014). Democratic repertoires – The South Caucasus case(s). In Agadjanian, A., Jodlicke, A. & E. Zweerde (Eds.), *Religion, Nation and Democracy in the South Caucasus* (pp. 38-56). New York: Routledge.