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PAGES: 193-217

ORIGINAL PDF URL: <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/355291>



## International Hierarchy and Regional Security in the Post-Soviet Region: Crises in Ukraine and Georgia

Sovyetler Sonrası Bölgede Uluslararası Hiyerarşi ve Bölgesel Güvenlik: Ukrayna ve Gürcistan'daki Krizler

Aslıhan ANLAR\*

### Abstract

Ever since the end of the Cold War, the post-Soviet countries have been dealing with internal and external problems, including territorial annexation and military confrontation. The Russian Federation's involvement in military confrontations took place prior to 1996 in the Region contributed to security, whereas in the latest two crises (in 2008 and in 2013), Russia's policy led to their escalation. Why the Russian Federation played two such extremely different roles in military conflicts occurring in the post-Soviet Region is the basic question posed by the present essay. This question will be examined through explaining how the processes of formation and transformation of hierarchic relations, between the Russian Federation and Georgia and Ukraine, have taken place. In order to find out this process: set of indicators both in security relations (deployment of military forces, membership in an alliance established by the dominant power, having another alliance membership goal, military-equipment supply, military aid) and economic relations (trade dependence, membership into an economic union, economic aid and monetary policy autonomy) are used. According to these indicators: hierarchic relations are categorized into three groups: high degree of hierarchy, low degree of hierarchy and anarchical hierarchy. The link between the hierarchical relations and the policies of the leaders of Georgia and Ukraine and the Russian Federation in the first two periods is revealed. It is argued that transformation of the hierarchic relations and questioning firstly the mutual understanding of Russian position vis-a-vis these two countries and secondly the social contract, which should take place between a dominant state and her sets of subordinates, have affected Russian Federation's different decisions on her policy regarding civil conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine. After her intervention into Georgia and Ukraine, a different regional order with a unique ordering principle – anarchical hierarchy has emerged and within this order Russia has two-fold effects on security of the post-Soviet region: providing security for her new subordinate partners while simultaneously terminating security for its former subordinates. By this analysis, security dynamics in region in which a sphere of influence of a dominant state exists is discussed and it is concluded that three interrelated factors play role in determining whether the dominant state will pursue policies that enhance or harm regional security: the position of the dominant state vis-a-vis its subordinate states (extent and intense of hierarchic relations between

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the dominant and subordinates states), domestic developments in the subordinate countries, including changes in its political elites and finally the position of other great powers vis-a-vis the dominant state.

**Keywords:** The Russian Federation, Georgia, Ukraine, International Hierarchy, Anarchical Hierarchy, Regional Security.

## Öz

Soğuk Savaşın bitiminden yirmi beş yıl geçmesine rağmen, eski Sovyet ülkeleri, işgal ve askeri çatışmalar da dahil olmak üzere birçok iç ve dış problemle uğraşmaktadır. Rusya Federasyonu'nun 1996 öncesi dönemde eski Sovyet coğrafyasında ortaya çıkan askeri çatışmalar ve iç savaşlar karşısında izlediği müdahaleci politika güvenliğe katkıda bulunurken; 2008 ve 2013'de meydana gelen krizlere müdahalesi sorunların daha da derinleşmesine sebep olmuştur. Bu çalışma Rusya Federasyonu'nun eski Sovyetler Birliği ülkelerindeki çatışmalar karşısında birbirinden farklı politikalar izlemesinin nedenlerini konu almaktadır. Bu soru, Rusya'nın Gürcistan ve Ukrayna ile olan hiyerarşik ilişkilerinin oluşum ve değişim süreci incelenerek cevaplandırılmaktadır. Bu üç devlet arasında hiyerarşik ilişkilerin oluşum sürecinin incelenmesi için askeri alanda (askeri güçlerin konuşlandırılması, egemen güç tarafından kurulan bir ittifaka üyelik, başka bir ittifaka üyelik hedefinin olması, askeri teçhizat temini, askeri yardım alınması) ve ekonomik ilişkilerde (dış ticarete egemen devlete bağımlılık, egemen devlet tarafından kurulan ekonomik birliğe üye olma, ekonomik yardım alınması ve egemen devletin para birimi karşısında izlenen para politikaları) olmak üzere yirmi iki yıllık süreçte (1992-2014) on gösterge toplamda iki yüz yirmi göstergeye bakılmıştır. Bu göstergelere göre hiyerarşik ilişkiler üç gruba ayrılmıştır: yüksek dereceli hiyerarşi, düşük dereceli hiyerarşi ve anarşik hiyerarşi. Ukrayna ve Gürcistan'da ilk iki dönemde başa gelen liderler ve izledikleri politikalar ve Rusya Federasyonu'nun bu politikalara tepkisiyle farklı hiyerarşik ilişkiler arasındaki bağlantı ortaya konmuştur. Bu çalışmada, Rusya'nın bu iki ülke ile olan hiyerarşik ilişkilerinin değişmesi, öncelikle Rusya'nın bu iki devlet karşısında, karşılıklı kabul görmüş egemen pozisyonunun ve ikinci olarak da hakim devlet ile ona bağımlı ülkeler arasındaki olması gereken sosyal sözleşmenin sorgulanması bu ülkelerdeki iç savaşlarda Rusya'nın farklı politikalar izlemesinin temel nedeni olduğu iddia edilmektedir. Rusya'nın bu ülkelere yaptığı müdahalelerden sonra değişik bir düzenleyici ilke- anarşik hiyerarşi ile farklı bir bölgesel düzen oluşmuştur. Bu düzen içerisinde Rusya bu ülkelerin güvenliğini ikili yönde etkilemektedir: Kendine bağlı yeni ortaklarının güvenliklerini garanti altına alırken, aynı zamanda eski bağımlı ülkelerin güvenliklerini tehdit etmektedir. Böylece bu çalışma ile egemen bir ülkenin etki alanını barındıran bölgelerdeki güvenlik dinamikleri tartışılmış; hakim ve egemen devletin bölgesel güvenliğini arttıran ya da zarar veren politikalar izleyip izleyemeyeceğini belirlemede, egemen devletin kendine bağlı devletler karşısındaki konumu (egemen devlet ile kendine bağlı devletler arasındaki hiyerarşik ilişkilerin derecesi ve yoğunluğu), siyasal seçkinlerindeki değişiklikler de dahil olmak üzere bağımlı ülkelerdeki iç gelişmeler ve egemen devlete karşı diğer büyük güçlerin konumları olmak üzere birbiriyle ilişkili üç faktörün rol oynadığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Rusya Federasyonu, Gürcistan, Ukrayna, Uluslararası Hiyerarşi, Anarşik Hiyerarşi, Bölgesel Güvenlik

## Introduction

Ever since the end of the Cold War, the post-Soviet countries have been dealing with internal and external problems, including territorial annexation and military confrontation. Moldavia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan all faced either civil or intra-state wars whereas Armenia

involved in a secessionist conflict after gaining their independence. As of 1996, all of these military conflicts had one-by-one been frozen rather than solved. After 12 years, in August 2008, Georgia was again confronted with military conflict; the civil war that had broken out was eventually transformed into the Russian-Georgian War, which ended in Russia's recognition of the independence of Georgia's break-away regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Five years later, in 2013, Ukraine, too, witnessed the transformation of a civil uprising into a conflict with the Russian Federation (RF) that resulted in a partial loss of territory.

Prior to 1996, the Russian Federation's involvement in military confrontations in its region contributed to security, whereas in the latest two crises, in 2008 and 2013, Russia's aggravation of internal conflicts in other nations triggered their explosion. Why the RF played two such extremely different roles in military conflicts occurring in the post-Soviet Region is the basic question posed by the present essay. This question will be examined with the help of a model developed by David Lake in a series of articles and consolidated in his book 'Hierarchy in International Relations' (2011) in which he tried to lay out hierarchic relations of the USA.

The post-Soviet Region is another example of a region composed of a dominant country and subordinate states. The fact that rather than order and safety, the region has witnessed two major security crises over the past seven years can be explained by Russia's changing position vis-à-vis Georgia and Ukraine, i.e. the change in their hierarchic relations. The specific characteristics of these hierarchic relationships and how these changed in response to internal and external developments during the period between 1991 and 2014 deserves examination.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the relationships between the RF and other regional countries remained hierarchic, although changes in these relationships in response to internal and external developments could be observed. This study aims to make sense of the construction, preservation and transformation of hierarchy in Russia's relationships with Georgia and Ukraine and how these processes affected the policy preferences of the dominant state, Russia, in dealing with military conflicts and civil uprisings in Georgia and Ukraine, two of its subordinate states, as well as the extent to which Russia continued to provide order in Georgia and Ukraine when their hierarchical relations began to change.

While there are numerous studies examining Russia's influence, especially on conflict or peace process in the post-Soviet space (Lynch, 2002; Allison, 2008, 2009, 2014; King, 2008; Asmus, 2010; Maurer and Janz, 2014; Tsygankov, 2015; Mearsheimer 2014); the literature is suffering from lack of studies on the effect of Russia's hierarchical relations with its neighbours on her policies regarding civil conflict in these countries. Therefore, this essay presents a description of Russia's hierarchic relations with Georgia and Ukraine using the model initially developed by Lake (2007). This model will be explored before presenting the cases of Russian-Georgian and Russian-Ukrainian relations. Following these case studies, changes in hierarchic relations and policy preferences of dominant and subordinate states will be discussed in relation to the exchanges in and finally disappearance of legitimate authority of the RF over its subordinates.

The final section of this article will examine how changes in a region's hierarchic relations and challenges to the dominant power dictate different policy preferences and how these preferences impact on regional security.

### **Theoretical Background: David Lake's Model**

In his article 'Escape from the State of Nature: Authority and Hierarchy in World Politics' (2007), David Lake defines a political relationship between countries as anarchic 'if the units possess no authority over one another' and hierarchic 'when one unit, the dominant state, possesses authority over a second, subordinate state' (2007, p. 50). Lake emphasizes that political authority in international relations necessitates that a unit under the political authority of another feel obliged to obey the rules of that authority because it sees them as legitimate, not because it is coerced to do so (Lake, 2007, p. 53). Lake suggests a 'relational conception of authority, based on exchange of social order for compliance' (2007, p. 55). According to him, 'all political order must include a) security against violence resulting in physical harm b) an assurance that property won't be subject to constant challenges c) an expectation that promises and agreements will be kept (...)' (Lake, 2011, p. 94). By this mutually accepted relationship composed of order and compliance begins to wane; subordinate states may start to challenge the dominant state and attempt to change the existing order.

According to Lake, in international relations, the authority exerted by dominant states over subordinate states varies in extent (2007, p. 56), making hierarchy a 'continuous variable' that can be 'defined by the number of actions over which the dominant state can legitimately issue commands' (Lake, 2007, p. 56). The four dimensions of hierarchical relations – state formation, politics, security and economic relations – may vary in degree (Lake, 2003, p. 312), with the most widespread form of hierarchy occurring in the latter two areas (Lake, 2009, p. 52).

For measuring security hierarchy, Lake defines two parameters: deployment of military forces by the dominant state and the number of independent alliances possessed by the subordinate state (Lake, 2007, pp. 62-63). With regard to alliances, Lake emphasizes that the existence of an 'outside option' for a subordinate state reduces the authority of the dominant state, with 'the larger the number of such independent alliances possessed by the subordinate, the less hierarchical the security relationship is likely to be' (Lake, 2007, p. 63), especially when subordinate states are in alliances that exclude the dominant state (Lake, 2007, p.63). For measuring economic hierarchy, monetary policy autonomy and relative trade dependence are used as indicators (Lake, 2007, p. 64-7). With regard to monetary policy autonomy, this indicator is defined according to the exchange-rate regime, which may vary from allowing currency floating on the anarchical end to using another country's currency on the hierarchical end.

In order to test the measurement of hierarchy; besides to underlining the importance of capturing authority, obligation and legitimate coercion in bilateral relations between the subordinate and dominant states, Lake attempts to establish convergent validity by examining the degree of

correlation between the security and economic dimensions of hierarchy and discriminant validity through looking whether or not each sets fail to correlate with changes in the coercive capacities or power (Lake, 2007, pp.68-69).

## Methodology

In his study, Lake makes a substantial quantitative analysis to operationalize the security and economic hierarchy of the USA throughout the world. While he included nearly all countries relations with the USA for a 50 year time period; he preferred to make quantitative analysis. In this study, while some of indicators are borrowed from his studies, case studies are different from Lake's one because of two interrelated reasons: firstly, the study focuses on two specific countries rather than looking a broad range of countries which seem to be located at the same position vis-à-vis the dominant states. Georgia and Ukraine are chosen to analyse because they are different from the other post-Soviet countries in terms of their relations with the West and their experience with the Russian Federation. Therefore, in this study, Lake's revision of the Neorealist theory by putting the concept of "international hierarchy" into analysis is benefitted and their indicators are borrowed; in contrast, his methodology is not copied because of the differences of the case countries and the aims of the two studies.

Secondly; Ukraine and Georgia, as expressed above, are different in terms of their relations with the West and this required to look their relations with the USA and the EU as an indicator of loosening of hierarchic relations with the Russian Federation.

Moreover, this study aims to explore the linkage between change in Russian policies towards these two countries and transformation of their hierarchic relations for nearly two decades; therefore it is important to find out changing/changed relations relatively to the previous and the following years rather than reaching absolute values in their hierarchic relations.

In line of with these differences; in this study, to capture security hierarchy, besides the patterns -deployment of Russian military forces and number of independent ally- membership in an alliance established by Russia, having NATO membership goal, largest military-equipment supplier (dominant power or another great power); military aid (provided by the another great power) are to be examined, as well. For economic hierarchy, this article looks at four patterns -trade dependence, membership into an economic union (established by the dominant power or another great power), economic aid (provided by another great power in a significant amount) and monetary policy autonomy. To detect whether the hierarchic relations loosened or not, a challenging policy by subordinate state will be considered.

To observe these indicators; they are coded as 1 or 0 according to their existence; indicators are coded as 1 to display hierarchic relations and as 0 when neither hierarchic nor anarchic relations are found and finally they are coded as -1 if they are expressing an element of a hierarchic relations with other great powers or an element of an anarchic relations with the Russian Federation

during the period from 1992 to 2014. Years during which Russian military forces are located in territory of these countries with their consent (such as the Commonwealth of Independent States-CIS peacekeeping force in Georgia and the Black Sea Fleet) are coded as 1 till these forces are transformed into the forces of invading country such as forces in Abkhazia and the South Ossetia after 2008, which deserves the code of -1. Years during which Georgia and Ukraine have an independent ally are coded as 0 and do not have are coded as 1. Years during which Georgia and Ukraine join to Russian initiated military alliance are coded as 1, remained out of this alliance are coded as 0, years during which Russia are perceived as an invader – she cannot be seen as an ally or a neutral country no more, it is counted as an anarchic element- are coded as -1. Years after which leaders of the subordinate country (Ukraine or Georgia) expressed their NATO membership goal or put this goal into their security policy papers are coded as -1; other years during which these countries did not have this perspective or aim is coded as 1 because this perspective or aim is considered as a negative development for Russian hierarchic relations with these countries. Years in which Russia supplied the largest military equipment (benefitting from the SIPRI Arms Transfer Database) are coded as 1, other years are coded with 0. Years in which Ukraine and Georgia are granted with military aid in significant amounts more than the amount provided to Russia by other great powers (the USA) are coded as -1, other years are coded as 0.<sup>1</sup>

Years during which Georgia and Ukraine have higher trade volume with Russia than volumes with other countries are coded as 1, otherwise as 0. If the Georgia and Ukraine joined an economic union which was initiated by Russia, then their membership years are coded as 1; if they are not member, these years are coded as 0 and finally if they became a member of an economic union, initiated by the another great power or signed an economic integration agreement with other great power, then these years are coded as -1. If they are granted by an economic aid program of the other great powers (the USA) in significant amounts more than the aid, given to Russia, they are coded as -1. For monetary policy autonomy, if they have carried out an autonomous monetary policy, these years are coded with 0; monetary regime policy considering Russian rouble; the years are coded 1 and finally a type of monetary regime policy to the US\$, these years are coded as -1. As result of these coding, years in which numbers of code 1 are more than the numbers of codes of 0 and -1, are assumed that relations between dominant and subordinate countries are more hierarchic than others. According to the numbers of indicators displaying hierarchic and anarchic relations between Russia and Georgia and Ukraine; figures 7 and 8 are formed in order to demonstrate the time periods during which these countries have different hierarchic relations.

To control results of the measurement of hierarchic relations, leadership profile and their specific policies are looked into. The leadership profiles of Georgia and Ukraine are considered to determine whether or not the high level of hierarchy observed in Russian-Georgian and

1 Regarding the military aid, granted to Ukraine in 1994; while it is more than the amount given to the Russian Federation; it was not coded as -1 because this aid was granted under the “Cooperative Threat Reduction Account, Defense” program, an assistance program for the republics of the former Soviet Union in order to eliminate nuclear, chemical and other weapons. (US Army, 2016, p. 1) Therefore, it cannot be considered s an indicator of US influence in Ukraine.

Ukrainian relations overlaps with the coming to power of pro-Russian presidents in these countries. Examining the extent to which an elected president is or is not pro-Russian is also a way of assessing the population's willingness to accept the hierarchical position of the dominant power, whereas examining the extent to which pro-Russian policy is or is not implemented by pro-Western (anti-Russian) leadership in subordinate states can help to determine whether or not the origin of such policies lies in obligation rather than consent.

## **Russia's Hierarchic Relations with Georgia and Ukraine**

### ***Security Relations***

At the time of the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Russian Armed Forces had about 1,600 bases and other military facilities located in Georgia, the vast majority of which were closed between 1997-1999 (Sokov, 2005, p. 2). The Russian Navy withdrew from Georgia completely in 1998, and all border guards were removed in 1999, after which time only four bases remained (Sokov, 2005, p. 2). In November 1999, in a joint statement signed in Istanbul, Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze agreed to a timetable for closure of the remaining Russian bases: In 2001, the Gudauta Base would be closed down, and the Vaziani Base in Tbilisi handed over to Georgia; and in 2007, the bases in Akhalkalaki would be closed down (in June) (Socor, 2007), and the base in Batumi handed over to Georgia in November (Civil Georgia, 2007) with the last of the Russian personnel garrisoned in Tbilisi expected to leave in 2006 (Socor, 2007). Despite the fact that Russia continued to operate military bases in Georgia up until 2008, considering that most Russian troops in Georgia were a holdover from the Soviet period, and the Georgian leadership had always insisted on their removal, only post-Soviet security arrangements – i.e. military bases designed according to the 1993 Status of Forces Agreement, peacekeeping troops sent to South Ossetia and Abkhazia in line with the Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and supplementary and bilateral agreements allowing for peacekeeping operations in post-Soviet countries – should be accepted as indicators of the Russian Federation's legitimate authority over Georgia and they were located in Georgian territory during the period from 1992 to 2008.

Within this framework, when military conflict first broke out in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, CIS and Russian peacekeeping forces entered Abkhazia on 26 July 1994 with the consent of the Georgian leadership (Sokolov, 1997). Later, in 2008, the CIS acceded to Georgia's request for termination of the CIS Peacekeeping Forces in Abkhazia (Soder, 2009, p. 3). After the five day war in August 2008, in South Ossetia, where trilateral peacekeeping forces were operating under the 1992 Dagomys Treaty, Georgia withdrew its consent for the peacekeeping forces (Soder, 2009, p. 3). At the end of the conflict, Russia, without the consent of Georgia, decided to transform these peacekeeping forces into military forces that would remain in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The agreements signed between these countries allowed the RF to maintain military bases in both regions for 49 years and included automatic extensions of 15 years (Kucera, 2011). After agreements, Russia constructed the 4<sup>th</sup> Military Base in South Ossetia which has been operational

since 2009 (Gerrits and Bader, 2016, pp. 302). The 7<sup>th</sup> Krasnodar military base, owned by the Russian Federation has been found in Gudauta and Ochamchire districts of Abkhazia (Egirovkaya, 2015). Thus, August 2008 marks a turning point in military presence as an indicator of security relations between the RF and Georgia; whereas the leaders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia viewed the presence of Russian troops as completely legitimate, Georgia's leadership in Tbilisi considered them to be invaders.

With regard to Ukraine, the Russian Black Sea Fleet had been located in Sevastopol since 1783. Under the 1997 Partition Treaty and Friendship and Cooperation Agreement signed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine and the RF agreed that 80 percent of the fleet would be owned by Russia, with the Ukrainian navy maintaining just a symbolic presence in Sevastopol. Under the Partition Treaty, a 20-year lease was signed, for which Russia would pay 100 million USD per year (Chudowsky, 2003, p. 107). On 21 April 2010, Ukrainian and Russian leaders signed a new agreement that foresaw the Fleet remaining in Sevastopol for a further 25 years until 2042, with certain restrictions placed on its modernization. Thus, the Black Sea Fleet maintained a legal basis for remaining in Ukraine until the Russian-Ukrainian crises of 2013/2014.

In 2002, when Russia transformed the Collective Security Treaty into the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), she did not succeed in persuading either Ukraine or Georgia, the latter of which had withdrawn from the CST in 1999, left the Council of Defence Ministers in 2006 and in August 2008, following the war with Russia in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Georgia left the CIS altogether.

Georgia, under the presidency of Eduard Shevardnadze, declared its intention to join NATO at the Prague Summit in 2002 (NATO, 2002). When Mikhail Saakashvili became president of Georgia in 2004, he made NATO membership his top priority (Cooley, 2008, p. 342). At the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit, NATO leaders issued a statement declaring that Georgia would inevitably be admitted to the NATO, and in October 2010, a NATO Liaison Office was opened in Tbilisi, and NATO-Georgia military-to-military cooperation was introduced (NATO, 2015).

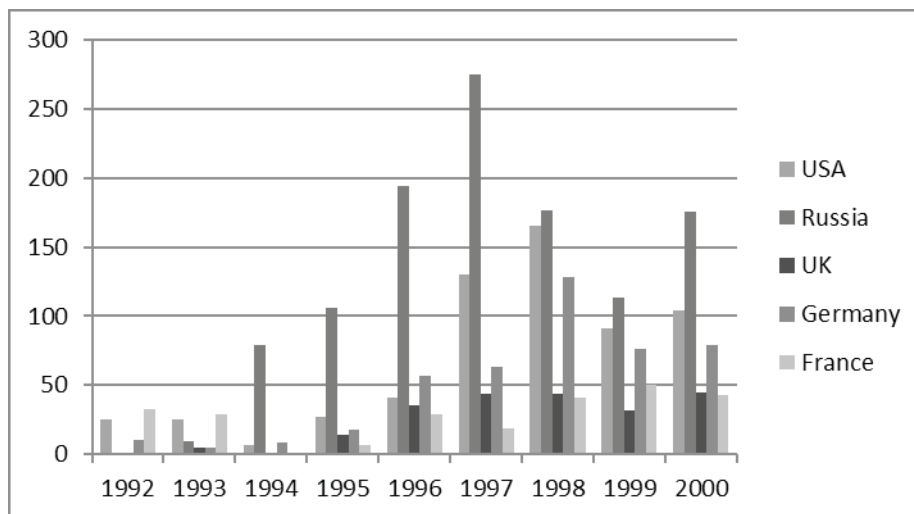
Like Georgia, Ukraine also announced its intentions of joining NATO and the European Union in the June 2004 Military Doctrine issued by Leonid Kuchma (Ukraine Presidency, 2004). However, Kuchma issued a new decree on 15 July 2004 that amended the earlier decree and disavowed any interest in NATO membership (Simon, 2009, p. 4; Konashevych, 2004). In April 2005, Victor Yushenko, who succeeded Kuchma as president, once again changed Ukraine's military doctrine to reaffirm the country's plans to join NATO (Ukraine Presidency, 2005). In 2010, Ukraine announced a new document, entitled 'Law of Ukraine on the Basis of Internal and External Policy' which reiterated Ukraine's demands for EU membership, while underlining its non-aligned status. The law reiterates that Ukraine's policy of non-alignment and neutrality implies its non-participation in political as well as military alliances and unions (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2010). Then, after 2013/2014 developments, Ukraine President issued a decree on "Strategy of National Security of Ukraine" on 26.05.2015 and abolished Ukraine's non-aligned

status (Ukraine Presidency, 2015). He also implied an eventual NATO membership goal; putting the task of “the comprehensive reform of the national security service system to a level acceptable for the membership in the European Union and NATO” into the new military doctrine (accepted on 24 September 2015) (Mission of Ukraine to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2015; President of Ukraine, 2015).

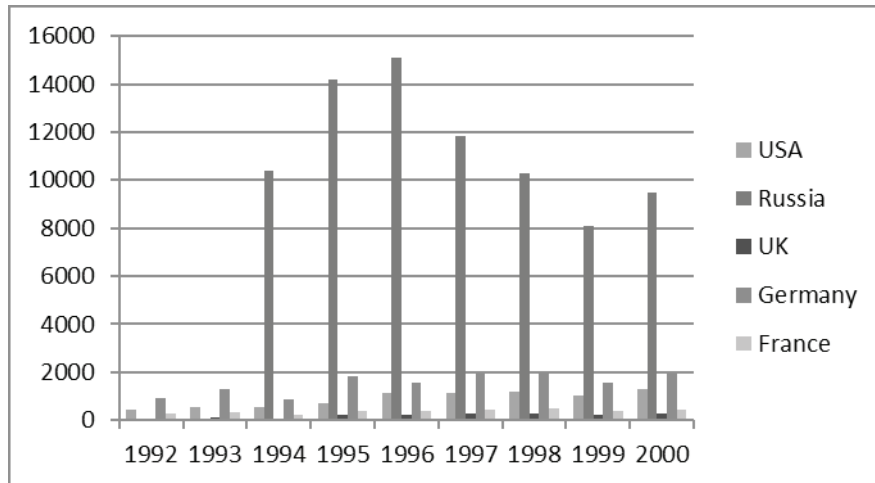
As the above chronologies make clear, while both Georgia and Ukraine have had intense relations with NATO, these relations were never transformed into a security alliance. At the same time, except for the period between 1992 and 1999, neither Georgia nor Ukraine has been a military partner of the RF. However, considering that neither Georgia nor Ukraine was allied with any independent partner that might provide a guarantee of security in the case of military attack, and considering that Russia had acted to prevent both Georgia and Ukraine from joining NATO, it may be concluded that in terms of military relations, Russia’s dominance over both countries can be considered to place Georgia (till 2008) and Ukraine (till 2014) within Russia’s sphere of influence.

### ***Economic Relations***

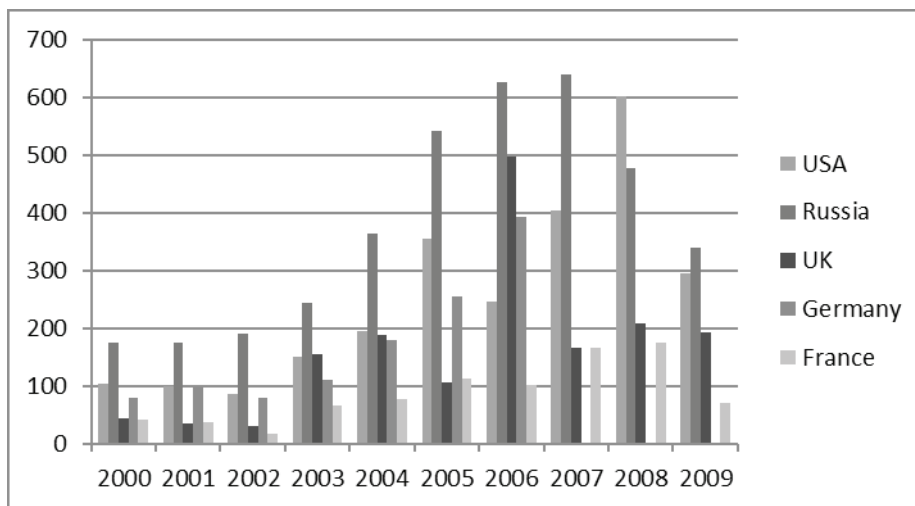
Regarding monetary policy autonomy; exchange rate regime of Georgia has mostly been floating or free floating (Dabrowski, 2013, p. 23; Johnson and Swinburne, 1999, p. 131; IMF, 2013, p. 5; IMF, 2014, p. 7); which implies no economic hierarchy (Lake, 2009, p. 46). In Ukraine, exchange rate regime has also been floating or free floating except in 2002-2007 and 2012-2013 during which she carried out conventional or stabilized peg regimes against to the US\$ (Dabrowski, 2013, p. 23; Johnson and Swinburne, 1999, p. 131; IMF, 2013; IMF 2014), which means negative economic hierarchy vis-à-vis the Russian dominance.



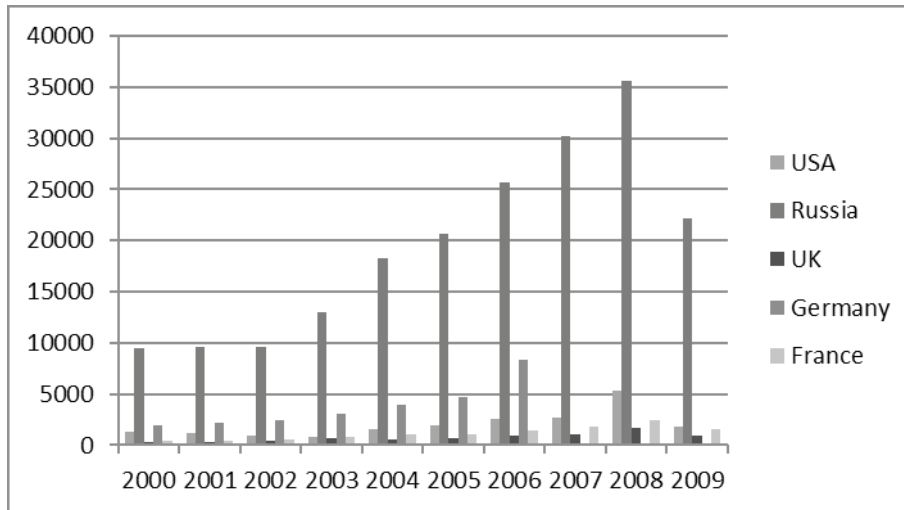
**Figure 1:** Trading Partners of Georgia (1991- 2000) (in current \$US Million) (Barbieri and Keshk, 2012)



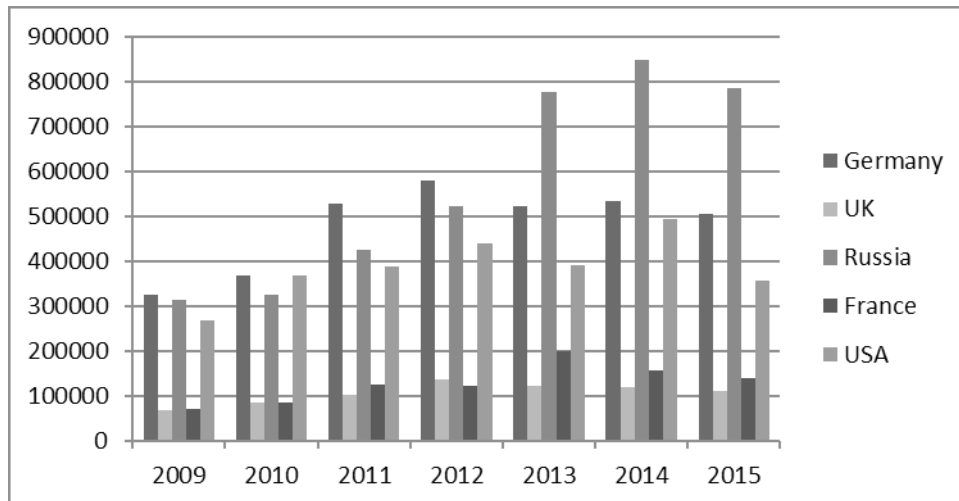
**Figure 2:** Trading Partners of Ukraine (1991- 2000) (in current \$US Million) (Barbieri and Keshk, 2012)



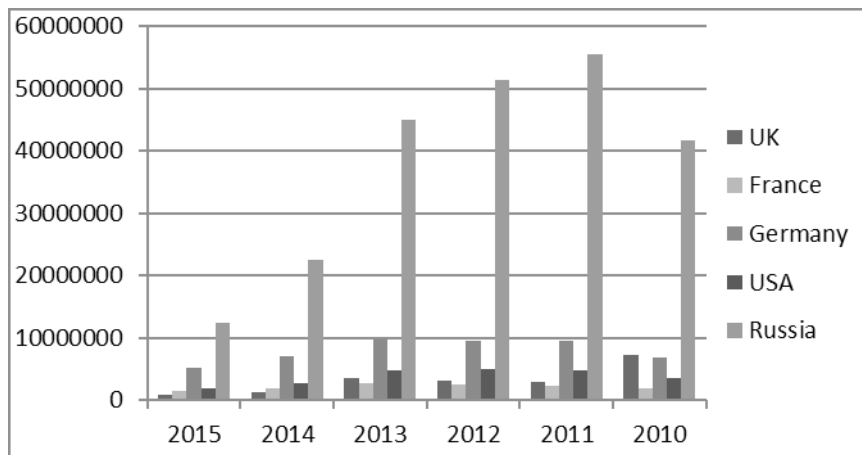
**Figure 3:** Trade Partners of Georgia (2000-2009) (in current \$US millions) (Barbieri and Keshk, 2012)



**Figure 4:** Trade Partners of Ukraine (2000-2009) (in current \$US millions) (Barbieri and Keshk, 2012)



**Figure 5:** Trade Partners of Georgia 2009-15 (Thsd. USD) (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2016)



**Figure 6:** Trade Partners of Ukraine 2010-2015 (Thsd. USD) (State Statics Service of Ukraine, 2016)

Russia has been the largest trading partner of both Georgia (except in 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012) and Ukraine (Figures 1-6).<sup>2</sup> Despite these trade relations, Georgia has made no attempt to establish any type of economic integration or customs union with Russia.

Ukraine, on the other hand, became a member of the Joint Economic Space in 2003. Although this decision was ratified by the Ukrainian Rada, Yushenko, who had newly become president, did not support this project for economic union with Russia. Conversely, when Yushenko's successor, Viktor Yanukovich, was invited to sign economic agreements with both Russia (the RF Customs Union) and the European Union (the EU Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement- DCFTA), he would have preferred to sign the Russian agreement; however, the mass protests (Euro-Maidan events), followed by his ouster from office, prevented him from doing so.<sup>3</sup> In addition to trade and economic relations, it can be expressed that RF attempted to prevent Ukraine from signing the DCFTA. Therefore, they may be considered as ones located in Russian economic zone till June 2014 in which Georgia and Ukraine signed the Association Agreements including the DCFTA with the EU (EU External Action-a; EU External Action-b).

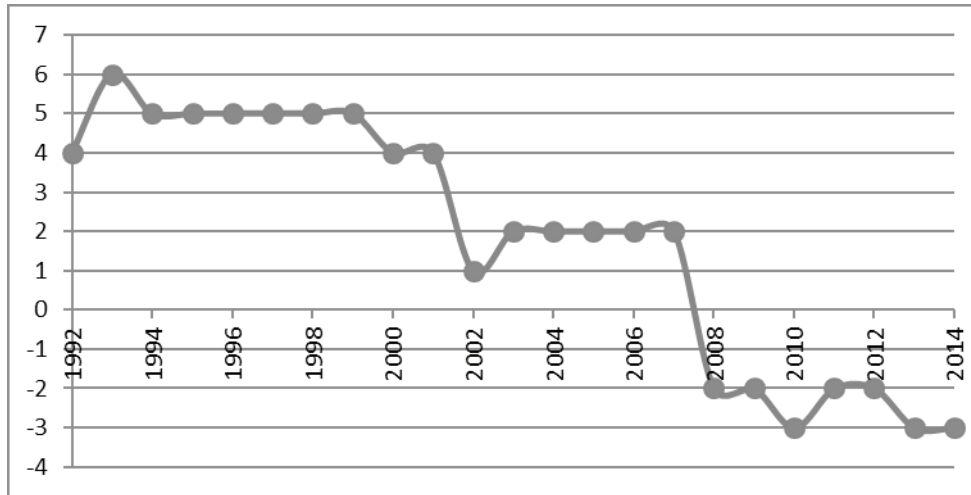
### ***Measuring Russia's Hierarchy with Georgia***

In evaluating relations between Russia and Georgia over the period between 1992-2013, six military and four economic patterns of relationships (expressed above) were assessed. Accordingly, between 1993-2000, relations between Georgia and Russia showed a high degree of

<sup>2</sup> According to the these figures, Russian position as being the greatest trade partners are coded as positive both for Ukraine and Georgia (except 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012 for the latter)

<sup>3</sup> Although Georgia and Ukraine have not been found in an Economic Union or signed a Free Trade Zone or Customs Union agreements with Russia, they have bilateral economic relations with Russia.

hierarchy<sup>4</sup> and may be defined as a sphere of influence. From 2001-2007, relations between the two countries may still be described as a sphere of influence but showed a low degree of hierarchy (due to Georgia's NATO membership goal, receiving US military (2002, 2013 and 2014) and economic aid (2009, 2010 and 2014) [USAID]); and after 2008, hierarchic relations disappeared, having been transformed into a unique form of 'anarchical hierarchy' - a term that acknowledges the simultaneous presence of both hierarchic and anarchic elements-, which will be described in detail below.



**Figure 7:** Economic and Security Hierarchy of the RF over Georgia 1992-2014

In terms of political leaders, it is difficult to label any leader as either pro-Russian or pro-Western without a careful assessment of his policies. When the profiles of the Georgian leaders are examined, it can be observed that Eduard Shevardnadze, leading the country as Speaker of Parliament from 1992 and as president from 1995-2003, appealed to Russia for assistance in 1993 (Donaldson and Noguee, 2005, p. 200), joined the CIS, and signed the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and Status of Forces Agreement with Yeltsin in order to deal with the severe economic and military conditions in Georgia. Conflicts on a number of fronts, however led to deterioration in Georgian-Russian relations during the period from 1994 to 1999; still, these should be assessed as 'friction' rather than 'a split'. Georgia's withdrawal from the Collective Security Treaty in 1999 and its expression of its wish to join NATO in 2002 were two important turning points that led

4 During the period from 1993 to 1999, there are four military indicator and one economic indicators are positive while other five indicators are neutral. In 1993, one more positive indicator can be observed because of arm sale by Russia to Georgia. While Georgia is drawing from the CST in 1999, the years of 2000 and 2001 can be considered a transition phase because Russia still preserved her position of being the greatest trade partner (as was seen in Figure 1 and 3), Russian and CIS military troops are deployed in Georgian territory and Georgia did not have any other military support from a country other than Russia and has not expressed her NATO membership goal, yet; therefore during these two years; there are four positive indicators, other six were neutral, none of them was negative.

to a reduction in the degree of Russian-Georgian hierarchy under Shevardnadze's rule. From 1992-1999, Shevardnadze's policies could be considered compliant and compatible with a high degree of hierarchy; however, after 2001, the degree of hierarchic relations between Russia and Georgia started to diminish, and Shevardnadze, although he could not prevent acquirement of the main electricity power distributor of Georgia by Russian electricity monopoly UES (German, 2009, p. 229) and obtainment of %50 shares of Sakgazi by ITERA – a Russian off-shore company (Jervalidze, 2006, p. 22), began pursuing policies that conflicted with Russian interests (or vice versa).

Mikhail Saakashvili, who became Georgia's president in 2004, was considered highly pro-Western; however, at the beginning of his presidency, he tried to pursue a policy balanced between Russia and the West (Donaldson and Noguee, 2005, p. 203). At the same time, however, Georgia intensified relations with NATO, withdrew from the CIS Council of Defence Ministers, announcing that "Georgia chose a course towards NATO and cannot be parts of two military structures at the same time (Minesashvili, 2016, p.25). Saakashvili's pro-Western, anti-Russian policies coincide with a period during which Russian dominance over Georgia was started not to be seen as legitimate and a period of direct antagonisation began. His NATO membership ambitions and operation in the South Ossetia were direct challenge against RF. In 2008, the two countries went so far as to end diplomatic relations, and Georgia and Russia's hierarchic relations came to an end, as well. Up until 2008, Georgia's leadership profile was in line with the degree of hierarchic relations between Georgia and Russia, as expected. Moreover, Saakashvili put forward no pro-Russian policies and refused to abandon any of his pro-Western ones, including advocating for NATO membership, even after Russian military intervention in Georgia.

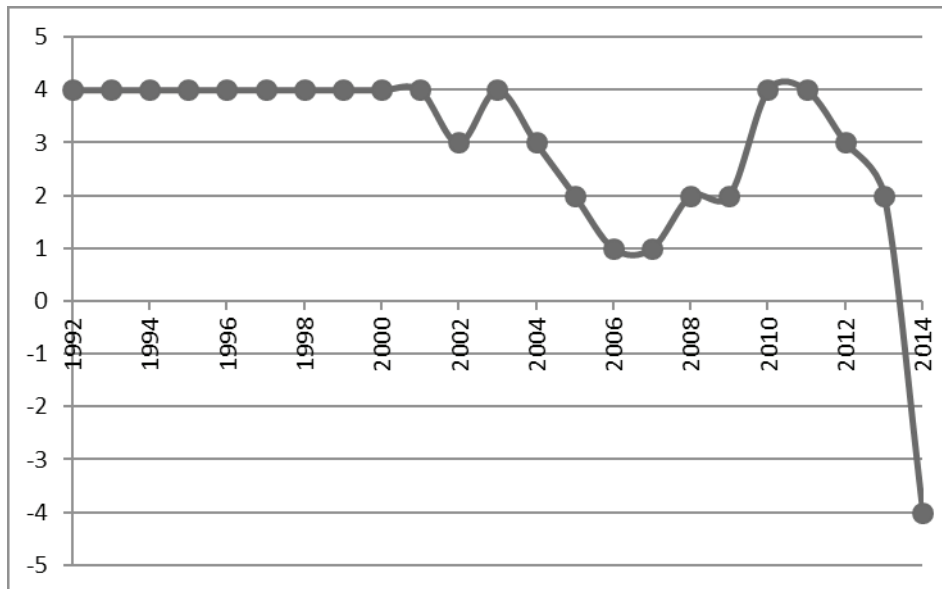
However, since August 2008, when Russia recognized the independence of the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and signed various agreements with them (Mitchell and Cooley, 2010, p. 67), a different situation has emerged vis-a-vis Georgia's relations with Russia. With these agreements, Russia provided military guarantees to the 'new states' in the event of an attack by Georgia (Başkan and Gültekin Punsmann, 2009, p. 21). Russia subsequently decided to transform the peacekeeping forces in these two separatist regions into a permanent military presence, which was codified in agreements signed by the RF, Abkhazia and South Ossetia that allowed Russia to maintain military bases in these regions for 49 years, with an automatic 15-year extension (Kucera, 2011). Both Abkhazia and South Ossetia use the Russian rouble as currency and a significant portion of the population in both regions have Russian passports (Popsecu, 2011, p. 67). Embargos against these so-called two countries leave them totally dependent on Russia economically.

An assessment of the pattern of relations described above indicates that hierarchic relations with Russia are at the highest points in these two so-called independent regions. Given Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as an important step on the way to their independence from Georgia, Russia can be accepted as a provider of 'social [and political] order', which provides a source of legitimacy with the RF, so that the de facto governments in Tskhinvali and Sukhumi

view Russia's hierarchic position over themselves as absolutely legitimate, whereas the *de jure* government in Tbilisi and its population view it as illegal. In this situation, Russia's relations with Georgia can be defined as neither hierarchic nor anarchic. Instead, they may be defined as an 'anarchical hierarchy', a term that acknowledges the simultaneous presence of both hierarchic and anarchic elements and that implies a different set of expectations than what might be found with the existence of hierarchic and anarchic relations.

### ***Measuring Russia's Hierarchy with Ukraine***

In evaluating relations between Russia and Ukraine, ten patterns of relationships (six in security and four in economic field) were examined. Accordingly, between 1992-2004, relations between Ukraine and Russia can be described as hierarchy (four out of ten hierarchic patterns existed; others are neutral, no negative indicator was found); the degree of hierarchy began to diminish after 2005 (due to Ukraine's 'NATO membership goal,' suspension of the Joint Economic Space and her monetary policy); and after 2010, the degree of hierarchy returned to its pre-2005 level. After 2014, hierarchy has been transformed into a form of 'anarchical hierarchy'.



**Figure 8:** Economic and Security Hierarchy of the RF over Ukraine 1992-2014

Evaluation of the Ukrainian leadership begins with Leonid Kuchma, who took over the position of president from Kravchuk in 1994, was perceived to be oriented towards Russia for maintaining Ukraine's ties with Russia; however, Kuchma also established ties with Euro-Atlantic institutions and was the first to join the NATO Partnership for Peace – although he later issued a Presidential

Degree negating Ukraine's expressed intentions of joining NATO (Simon, 2009, p.4), and signed the agreement to join Russia in the Joint Economic Space (Kubicek, 2007, pp. 9-10). Ukraine's third post-Soviet president, Victor Yuschenko, came to power after the 2005-2006 Orange Revolution, was widely known to be pro-Western. It was Yuschenko who attempted to intensify the EU dimension of Ukrainian foreign policy by returning the passages concerning Ukraine's intentions of securing EU and NATO membership to the Ukrainian Military Doctrine. Yanukovich later became president in 2010 again and affirmed Ukraine's non-aligned status (Verkhova Rada of Ukraine, 2010) and would not sign the EU Association Agreement.

A review of the degree of Russian-Ukrainian hierarchic relations and the political orientation of elected Ukrainian presidents indicates that Yuschenko was in power at a time that witnessed a reduction in the degree of hierarchic relations (2005-2010). Thus, it can be concluded that the political orientation of the Ukrainian leadership was in line with the degree of hierarchy during this period. On the other hand, as a pro-Western leader, Yuschenko did not remove Ukraine's NATO ambition from the Military Doctrine or reach an agreement with Russia on the Black Sea Fleet, even after the 2008 Russian-Georgian conflict. Therefore, it can be concluded that Ukrainian leader Yanukovich's policy preferences on these critical points originated out of consent rather than coercion.

One of the most important elements influencing the change in the degree of hierarchy in Ukraine, including many of the policy preferences of the leadership, is the social fragmentation in the country in general and division among the elite in particular, which has contributed to the vulnerability of the government/regime.<sup>5</sup> The general population and the ruling elites are divided, with approximately half of each pro-Russian and the other half pro-Western. Both the Orange Revolution and the crisis in 2013/14 Ukraine are direct challenges against the RF but cessation of the political process following the Orange Revolution and emergence of the anti-Maidan movement in contrast to the Euro-Maidan are results of this social fragmentation. One part of the population saw Russian-Ukrainian hierarchic relations as legitimate and the other part saw it as illegitimate; in other words, like Russian-Georgian relations, Russian-Ukrainian relations contain both anarchic and hierarchic elements and can thus be referred to as 'anarchical hierarchy'.

### **International Hierarchy and Policy Consequences**

Kenneth Waltz has defined the expected behaviours of states acting under anarchy, which, along with 'distribution of capabilities', he considered to be the two basic factors behind states' behaviours. When one of these factors (in this case, anarchy) changes, it is necessary to re-explain states' actions. For his part, Lake argues that hierarchical relations alter the behaviours of states. According to him, in order to ensure the autonomy of their subordinate states, 'dominant states

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5 Concepts of 'elite consensus/disagreement, government or regime vulnerability, social cohesion and elite cohesion' are borrowed from Randall L. Schweller. (2004, pp. 169-181).

must produce order that benefits subordinates, even when they have no immediate interest in doing so; discipline subordinates who violates rules and, especially, threaten or reject their authority; commit credibly not to abuse the authority they have been granted' (Lake, 2011, p. 93).

Just as a transformation of anarchy into hierarchy in international fora will produce changes in the policy behaviours of dominant and subordinate states, a transformation in the ordering principle from international hierarchy into anarchical hierarchy will produce changes in policy behaviour that need to be re-examined. From 1992 to 2000/2001, the policy patterns of Russia as a dominant state were in line with its hierarchical relations (Lake, 2011, p. 93). The RF performed the task of providing order and constituting and preserving the status-quo in Georgia as well as in Ukraine (and, to some extent, in other post-Soviet countries) by freezing – but not solving – intra-state and inter-state military conflicts in the post-Soviet geography. Furthermore, in line with Lake's expectations (2011, pp. 99- 114), the RF also acted to enforce rules and facilitate economic cooperation. Within this framework, Russia's position regarding nuclear weapons in Ukraine and the sale of natural gas to Ukraine and Georgia for below-market prices can be interpreted as reflections of Russia's dominant-state status.

When faced with challenges, Russia imposed penalties – against Georgia between 2002-2008 and against Ukraine between 2005-2010, such as implementing increases in natural gas prices and natural gas cuts in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 (against Ukraine) and natural gas cut-offs, trade bans targeting mineral water, wine and other foodstuffs, Georgia's main export products (German, 2009, p. 229); deporting Georgian citizens from Russian territory; cutting air and land links with Georgia in 2006 (Indans, 2007, p. 132); and doubling natural gas prices from \$100 to \$235 in 2007 (Pourchot, 2008, p. 149). Russia has also been accused of orchestrating bombing incidents in the Pankisi Gorge between 2000-2002 as a means of pressuring Georgia into taking greater measures against the Chechen rebels fighting Russia (Bercovitch and Fretter, 2004, pp. 255-256).

Finally, in 2008, the RF intervened in the conflict in South Ossetia with the assertion that it was defending Russian citizens, after which it recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and signed military-cooperation treaties with both these de-facto states. Medvedev announced that Russia had a privileged interest within the CIS based on its right to protect ethnic Russians and Russian citizens abroad (Medvedev, 2008). With Russia's recognition of Georgia's break-away regions, the legitimacy of Russian dominance disappeared for Georgians because Russia had destroyed order in Georgia. Russia, instead of strengthening her relations and re-establishing her hierarchic relations with Georgia, upon the challenge she faced there, preferred to replace her partner country in her sphere of influence with another actor- the South Ossetia and Abkhazia. On the other hand, for the leadership of the separatist regions, Russia had established a new order with a high level of hierarchic relations. Here, it should be noted that rather than playing a constraining role against the abuse of power by the RF, the United States, in contrary to Lake's assumptions (2011, p. 123) became a driving force in freeing Russia to pursue harsher policies against its subordinate

In Ukraine, since November 2013, the elite in western part of the country have viewed the RF as the destroyer of order and safety in their country, the invader of Crimea and the supporter of the break-away regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine. For western Ukraine, Russian discipline was transformed into coercion and Russia exhibited none of constraint in abusing its position of supremacy, and its legitimate position changed into an illegitimate one; which all of these developments are conflicting with Lake's suppositions regarding the dominant power (2011, p. 93). However, Russia continues to maintain its hierarchic relations in the eastern and break-away regions of Ukraine. After the latest crises of 2013-2014, Russia followed a very marginal policy, transformed the politically fragmented population into territorially dismantled country, which led to the transformation of hierarchy into anarchic hierarchy. The policies of the European Union, rather than acting as 'a constraint performed by the competitor great power' (Lake, 2011, p. 123), were transformed into 'the driving force' allowing the dominant power to free itself from constraints.

Finally, it can be concluded that if the hierarchic relationship between the dominant state and its subordinates is transformed into an anarchic hierarchic relationship, a two-fold policy will result: safety, order and discipline for new subordinates, juxtaposed with insecurity and destruction of order and coercion for old ones. Its effect on regional security will also be different from the effect of the hierarchic order.

#### ***Anarchical Hierarchy and Regional (In)Security:***

In a condition of hierarchy, regional order and safety can be observed as a result of the dominant states' policies of preserving the status-quo and providing order and the subordinate states' policies of not attempting to achieve a balance of power with the dominant state. In the post-Soviet region, after the end of the Cold War, Russia managed to establish a new status quo through its hierarchic relations with the majority of the former Soviet republics. The RF froze most of the military conflicts in the post-Soviet geography that were destroying order and creating instability in the region. Thus, regional security was re-established after 1996, when, one after another, the military conflicts in the RF's subordinate states came to an end. While Russia furtively helped the leaders of the separatist regions; she publicly supported the ruling elite in their civil war with them, as the latter was expected from the dominant state. The RF refused to allow any other power to secure influence in the post-Soviet geography and began to re-establish its domination over the region after that date. Georgia and Ukraine subsequently softened their sovereignty- and autonomy-dominated stances towards the RF, as indicated by Ukraine's acceptance of the Black Sea Fleet and Georgia's acceptance of the presence of Russian troops in areas of military conflict. Thereby; it can be accepted that the RF followed a policy of contributing to regional security up until around 2001-2003. At that time, the RF saw herself as the dominant state among the post-Soviet countries, taking on the duty of creating order and stability for them in exchange of subordinates' loyalty and termination of demands for splitting from Russia. Russia's hierarchic relations with Georgia and Ukraine were high, she was the sole power in her sphere of influence.

However, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the operation in Afghanistan in 2001 and the EU's decision to implement a 'neighbourhood policy' in 2004 increased the importance of Georgia and Ukraine, not only because of their strategic locations, but as a result of internal developments associated with the Rose and Orange Revolutions. At that time, the RF was unable to prevent these revolutions or the election of pro-Western leaderships in Ukraine and Georgia, which resulted in the loosening of Russia's hierarchic ties with Georgia after 2001 and with Ukraine from 2005 to 2010. Despite these multiple developments, Russia tried to sustain its hierarchic dyadic relations with both Georgia and Ukraine through various policies of punishment.

Towards the end of the decade; challenges to the RF by other global powers increased, NATO and EU intensified their policies to integrate Georgia and Ukraine (exemplified in the 2008 Bucharest Summit and the 2009 Eastern Partnership). The fact that Georgian and Ukrainian leadership boosted policies aiming at balancing their relations with the RF through promoting cooperation with the USA and EU and their demand for further NATO enlargement posed threat to Russia's own interests in security sectors, which put her dominant position into question.

A new state of affairs arose in which the social contract was questioned by both the dominant state and its subordinates. This new situation pushed Russia into changing the role it played in local military conflicts. Instead of supporting and helping the ruling elites of its subordinate states, Russia supported their adversaries, the separatists. In recognizing the break-away regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, Russia was exchanging one set of subordinates for another. In Ukraine; just before the crisis in 2013/2014; dyadic hierarchic relation between Russia and Ukraine had returned to its pre-2005 level; however, this time a certain part of the population of the country revolted against pro-Russian policies and the parliament voted to seize Yanukovich (known as highly pro-Russian leader). Upon this, Russia changed her policy towards Ukraine, instead of creating stability and order in the country (she may not interfere in the developments in Ukraine), she involved the situation, annexing the Crimean Peninsula, including the Black Sea Fleet home port of Sevastopol and supported the separatist military groups in Luhans and Donetsk.

Russia became highly discontent with the developments of relations of Ukraine and Georgia with the EU and the USA; especially their offer to these countries a partial integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions (NATO membership and the Association Agreement). In all these developments, Russia perceived that the social contract between herself and these countries based on exchange of an order with their loyalty was questioned; which was the driving force behind her policy change in military conflicts occurring in the post-Soviet Region.

Following this, the hierarchy in Russian-Georgian and Russian-Ukrainian relations was transformed into anarchical hierarchy, as the social contracts established between the dominant country and its subordinates disappeared. Because Russia constituted new partners with whom to sustain its hierarchic relations while simultaneously destroying the national security of its former subordinates, this new order made the region more conflict-prone than it would have

been under an anarchic system, thereby threatening the safety and stability of the post-Soviet Region as a whole.

## **Conclusion**

For any region, beyond preventing military conflicts, the preservation or establishment of an order that serves the balance of interest is required to enhance regional security. As described above, the RF followed a policy of contributing to the establishment of such an order and the enhancement of regional security up until around 2001-2003; however after 9/11 Russia faced with global and regional external challenges as well as internal challenges within its sphere of influence. Transformation of the ordering principle in the region has been the basic driving force behind the RF's policy change from one of controlling military conflicts to one of triggering them. Consequently, Russia has two-fold effects on security of the post-Soviet region: providing security for her new subordinate partners while simultaneously terminating security for its former subordinates.

Within this framework, the Russian-Ukrainian and Russian-Georgian cases enable researchers to question the effect of a great power on the countries in their regions, such as RF in the post-Soviet Region, particularly in terms of security management. Three interrelated factors play role in determining whether the dominant state will pursue policies that enhance or harm regional security: Firstly, the position of the dominant state vis-a-vis its subordinate states: If the dominant state perceives a loosening of the hierarchic ties binding it with subordinate states, it may not perform the tasks of providing order-enhancing security. Secondly, domestic developments in the subordinate country, including changes in its political elite: if new political elites, showing an interest in changing the status-quo, i.e. in transforming relations with the dominant state or looking for new partners, emerge; then the dominant state may pursue violent policies against its subordinate state in order to halt this process and restore the status quo. Finally, the position of other great powers vis-a-vis the dominant state: if another great power wishes to establish strong ties with the dominant state's subordinate as it initiates new demands or changes its political aims, the dominant state may implement aggressive policies towards the subordinate state in order to prevent the outside power from increasing its influence there.

In all these situations, the dominant state risks the possibility that its legitimate authority will be questioned. If the dominant state faces a challenge by its subordinate, it can still sustain its hierarchic relations; however, during this phase of hierarchic relations, it is possible for the policies enacted by the dominant state with the aim of strengthening its hierarchy over its subordinate may ultimately destroy its legitimate position there. If the dominant state starts to question its partnership and the loyalty of its subordinate, it is also possible that it may transform its aim from one of keeping the subordinate under its tutelage into creating a new status-quo in which it gains new, more loyal partners. If this occurs, the ordering principle of loose hierarchy will be transformed into one of anarchical hierarchy, as the dominant state may facilitate the

emergence of new partner-states in order to establish a new status-quo, limit the policies of other great powers, and support those political elites showing pro-dominant-state tendencies. Thus, in bilateral relations, the dominant state may play a double-sided role, enacting policies that enhance the security of its new partners while destroying the security of its previous ones. Regionally, the role of the dominant state is transformed from security-provider into instability-creator, as it destroys the balance of power and order in the region by creating a new order that favours newly emerging actor-countries.

As expressed above, the Russian Federation acted as an actor, preserving status-quo and order and enhancing security in the Post-Soviet Region however when facing challenges by both subordinate states as well as other great powers, it decided to establish new order, creating new partners. By establishing new order with her revisionist policies, he destructed the old one and led the formation of acute security problems for Georgia and Ukraine. Preserving order and security, cultivating economic relations, writing and enforcing rules, punishing defectors but while performing all, pursuing policies that do not involve abuse of their authority; which are assumed as roles of the dominant state are directly related to the regional structure based on great power disparity and hierarchy. When the ordering principle starts to change, anarchic elements began to appear and mutually constructed order by the dominant and subordinate states based on exchange of social order for compliance is opened to be questioned by both regional and non-regional actors; the political, economic and military policies that are attributed to the dominant state could reverse, and the advantageous position of subordinate country under the hierarchy of the dominant state may make them more vulnerable to the destructive policies of the newly emerged dominant state, such as transformation of peacekeeping forces into military base in so-called newly independent separatist regions. After establishing hierarchy between the most powerful state and others around it in a region, it could not sustain permanently. This type of transformation could take place peacefully with the consent of the dominant state such as dissolve of the Eastern Pact but also it could take place in very inconvenient way for both subordinate countries and other regional and international actors, which is determined by the will and power of the dominant state. While the former alteration may offer the subordinate states their authority over their territory and a peaceful environment, in the latter situation subordinate states get their sovereignty back but at the expense of their security.

An examination of the Russian-Ukrainian and Russian-Georgian cases indicates that the type of hierarchic relations, its transformation, their effects on regional security and the roles of the dominant and subordinate states can differ on a case-by-case basis. This necessitates a separate assessment of the ordering principle, its possible transformation and type and effect of that transformation for any particular region and for every the dominant state. In-depth, case-study analyses can be conducted in order to confirm or revise the effects and foreseen results of hierarchic relations in regions dominated by a single leader.

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