MOBILIZATION IN POST-SOCIALIST SPACES:
BETWEEN IMPERATIVES OF MODERNIZATION AND THREATS OF DEMODERNIZATION

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“The time is out of joint”
Hamlet (1.5.188)

In the Fall of 2014 Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute’s Department of Sociology held a conference whose overachieving theme was centenary of the World War I beginning. This academic event proved to be something more than a pure exercise in scholarly imagination trapped in the ivory tower of the university. In a tragic Shakespearean fashion, the year of 2014 was not the time of mere remembering of bygone age of bloodshed and ferocious animosity. It witnessed the Russian occupation of Crimea as well as the beginning of protracted armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine.
The WWI formal ending was followed by the unparalleled in recorded human history outbursts of global turbulence, violence and depression. Instead of lasting peace, it inaugurated new stage of the Second Thirty Years’ War.

In a similar fashion, the year of 2018 was lesser of the World War I centenary and more of the continuation of what might become Third Thirty Years’ War. As the four-year period (2014-2018) is drawing to its close, Crimea remains occupied while information about armed clashes in eastern Ukraine has lost the status of tragic news and become a routine part of everyday life.

As it happens different aspects of mobilization in a society—societal, political and military—become a pressing issue for both academic commentators and policy practitioners. These mobilizations are taking place globally in all three worlds: in the nations of the core, semi-periphery and periphery. Alas, given geographical location and general problematique of the Ideology and Politics Journal, it is quite natural that this special issue focuses on the processes of mobilization(s) and their impact on modernization / demodernization in the post-Leninist context.

For the first generation of the students of modernization, the mobilization was at the heart of “progressive” social changes. Carl Deutsch in his classical article “Social Mobilization and Political Development” (Deutsch, 1961) linked this process to military history of post-revolutionary

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1 Alexander Etkind and Mikhail Minakov have come up with an excellent reinvention and unpacking of the notion of de-modernization which has given a strong impetus to our own treatment of the phenomenon in question (Etkind & Minakov, 2018).

2 More detailed account of Leninism and Leninist regimes can be found in pioneering work of Ken Jowitt (Jowitt, 1993), (Kyryev, 2016).
France and German “total mobilization” of 1914-1918. He also employed the notion of a military draft / mobilization to the armed forces as the metaphor for the social mobilization. He succinctly defined the mobilization as “the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken down and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior” (Deutsch, 1961: 494).

American sociologist Daniel Chirot once remarked that too many contemporary societies don’t have access to benefits of modernity, thus it makes little sense to discuss the transition to something beyond modern social order (Chirot, 2000). After the “Leninist extinction” the modernization is the order of the day for the nations of Eastern Europe and post-Soviet space (Jowitt, 1993). For theoreticians of modernization in 1950s the answer was self-evident—mobilization was their shibboleth and simultaneously synonymous with progressive and modernizing social changes (Кутяев, 2016). Yet, in the age of multiple modernities (Eisenstadt, 2004; Eisenstadt & Schluchter, 1998) and development defined as freedom (Sen, 1999) the question naturally and necessarily arises: what type of modernity/modernities we are talking about? Now purely mobilizational and Eurocentric treatment of modernity appears conceptually obsolete and politically harmful.

Ukrainian sociologist Yuriy Saveliev has recently inaugurated new discourse on modernity—embodied in a barrage of his publications—stressing the inclusion as a critically important indicator of this social formation (Савельєв, 2017; Савельєв, 2018). This inclusive reading of modernity poses new challenges for researchers and policy-makers. It is
suggested that modernity and more specific—politics of modernization and development—are to be perceived in terms of inclusion and enhancing human capabilities. How does this approach fit into traditional/habitual modes of modernization revolving around building centralized coercive authority transforming its subordinates into homogeneous and easily mobilized—in a military sense as well—members of a “national” community? Top down approach to modernization has long appeared obsolete in the West and is rather being associated with de-modernizing practices and institutions. Moreover, American sociologist Peter Evans warned us about the danger of institutional mono-cropping which he defines as “the imposition of blueprints based on idealized versions of Anglo-American institutions, the applicability of which is presumed to transcend national circumstances and cultures” (Evans, 2004: 30). Nevertheless, the EU and international institutions are often promoting these very mono-cropping practices. Such an approach contributes to resuscitating antiquated Eurocentrism, which in turn is intrinsically linked to understanding modernization of the Rest as a series of mobilizations emanating from the political center / nation state.

Overcoming straightforward definitions of modernity with their emphasis on its coercive dimension and making a transition to the conceptual framework of modernity/modernities sensitive to the democratic practices is no easy task. It is worth remembering that “full democracy” is still a distant ideal with only 5% of the global population enjoying its benefits (Economist, 2018). We should not be forgetting that Alain Touraine offered one of the most penetrating critical interpretation of modernity
viewing it as a perpetual clash of Reason and Subjectivity, in other words the conflict between discipline and liberty (Touraine, 1995). Thus, we cannot simply pontificate about the virtues of mobilization of all sorts without explaining what role the *demos* plays in these processes. In this vein, it is worth noting that this issue is going to print after the expiration of one-month imposition of the martial law in 10 out of 23 regions of Ukraine (26 November - 26 December 2018). It is more than a mere coincidence that the martial law had been introduced just before the start of presidential campaign in Ukraine. For many observers this was a move aimed at mobilizing incumbent president’s electorate and had little to do with increasing Ukraine’s military prowess vis-à-vis Russia.

The articles selected for this issue represent a vast array of social sciences disciplines and subjects. They aim at dissecting the intricate connections among military mobilization, youth attitudes towards patriotism, women’s participation in politics, issues of inequality, civil society and its role in conflict resolution and historical aspects of nationalist mobilization in the milieu of former combatants after the defeat of Ukraine’s struggles for independence in 1921.

Serhiy Choliy focuses on development of civil-military relations in Eastern Europe. Author traces the evolution of civil-military relations in a region and elaborates the typology of recruitment to armed forces. This typology includes feudal approach to the formation of armed forces, military draft (mostly the 18th century), universal and personal military conscription (mid-19th century), and volunteer armed forces (the end of the 20th century). After the Cold War, Ukrainian military development was in tune with
European tendencies. The policies of disarmament and conversion were thoroughly implemented between 1991 and February 2014. In 2013 the universal draft was supposed to be abolished. Since that time, the armed forces were to be based on contract service.

Yet 2014 brought about the dramatic reversals in military policies of Ukraine. This change was caused by the beginning of the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine and direct involvement of Russian regular troops into armed clashes. That dramatic turnabout of the circumstances forced Ukraine to re-introduced mandatory draft into armed forces. This transformation heralded the beginning of a new civil-military relations paradigm. In the new setting the threat of a large-scale war in Europe becomes a reality, thus mandatory draft into armed forces is a necessity. The author somewhat optimistically views Ukrainian evolution as being exemplary for the European nations.

Maxim Yenin’s article deals with the interplay of ideological forms and patriotic values among Ukrainian youth. His account is sophisticated theoretically and extremely rich empirically. It is based on the analysis of the moderated focus group discussions conducted by the author himself in 2017-2018. Drawing upon heavily criticized and somewhat flawed, yet perhaps still instrumentally useful distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism Maxim Yenin is arguing in favor of the former in a peculiar context of the post-Leninist transformations. Ukraine’s national statehood is facing the challenge to its very existence. At the same time, Ukraine as a political and societal community is being tasked with modernizing its economy and embarking on the road towards political development. This set of tasks and challenges was rightly defined by transitologists of 1990s as “rebuilding ship
at sea” (Elster, Offe & Preuss, 1998). Being often conflicting and sometimes mutually exclusive, these “goals of the post-Leninist development” require that state managers act swiftly in the environment characterized by uncertainty and limited information. Thus, resorting to inculcation of the patriotic values in the populace might be one of the few the survival tactics available to and pursued by the post-Leninist “power elite.” Ukrainian post-2014 experience has shown that nationalist (in Benedict Anderson’s sense) or patriotic mobilization is a double-edge sword, facilitating the rise of volunteer movement, while providing an impetus for the far-right mobilization and even more so—violence.

Yenin’s analysis in a very nuanced and detailed manner touches upon these complexities and ambiguities of the post-Leninist transformations. He rightly argues for the presence of autonomous agency in Ukrainian youth. They are capable of critical perception of the patriotic values championed by the state officialdom. The 18-year old female respondent paradigmatically captures the mood of the youth:

“We should make a distinction between notions of the country and the state. If you ask me: Are you a patriot of your country? I would respond: Yes, I am, because I love my country. At the same time, I hate the state. I can’t watch calmly what the authorities are doing to people, resources, and the country.”

While post-socialist nations under the protective umbrella of the EU and NATO can somehow claim that they focus on “post-modern/post-
material” needs\(^3\), countries like Ukraine are caught between rock and hard place. They have to fight for their very survival as political communities and sovereign nation states. This situation projects a set of societal needs and actions of a different order. Currently Ukraine has extremely limited options in terms of the political development strategies available. It takes Ukraine from the 2018—the time of multiple modernities and post-materialist values—to the world of 1968 when Samuel Huntington’s seminal volume “Political Order in Changing Societies” came out (Huntington, 1968). This is the world where societal and political actors are expected to behave in a manner of Shakespearean duke of Gloucester (future King Richard III), being able to

“…smile, and murder whiles I smile, /
...play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
Add colors to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school” (Henry VI, 3: 3: 2).

Maxim Yeniin’s study reveals what Ukrainian youth—the target audience of the government’s mobilization initiatives—think about abstract

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\(^3\) For the severe limitations of the “strategy” of excessive reliance on external institutions at the expense of the domestic / local infrastructural capacity / power employed by some new EU member-states see extremely insightful paper by Venelin Ganev (Ganev, 2005).
entities (e.g. patriotism) and down-to-earth matters (army draft which is an element of a broader societal drive towards mobilization).

Ukrainian youth considers the patriotism in terms of fulfilling their civic duties. It does not necessarily presuppose the willingness to take part in a military draft. Yenin’s data from focus group discussions show that the youth are rather indifferent to all ideological forms of patriotism (both civic and ethnic ones). The service in Ukraine’s armed forces is all but attractive and prestigious. The youth is convinced that mandatory service in armed forces fails to equip the personnel with skills relevant to real-life warfare. Thus, the military service has to become a matter of a free choice, while the army should become a contract-based force. This view is reinforced by the strong belief that the quality of training in the Ukrainian armed forces is low, with exemplary forces being the US and Israel ones. Being a professional military is the least desirable career track for Ukrainian youth since it does not increase their life chances afterwards. This view is buttressed by the deeply rooted conviction that the social security net for those who saw action is lacking. Last but definitely not least, the sizable portion of youth think in terms of Russian proverb “one man’s problem is another man’s opportunity” (кому война, кому мать родна), viewing the ruling political and business establishment as clinical manipulators who make use of war as a pretext for personal advancement and enrichment. The youth segment of Ukrainian demos appears to be critically minded and skeptical towards old-fashioned authoritarian, top-down techniques of mobilization, leaning towards liberal values and practices. Yet, the acute question remains to be addressed: How the nation—and nations still retain their status as major
Durkheimian social facts of today’s political landscape—staves off external aggression while making a viable drive towards European modernity?

This brings us to the shibboleth of champions of liberal democracy and freedoms—civil society. Andrii Baginskiy's article “Mobilization of Civil Society in the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine: Ideological Limits and Resources of Peacebuilding” strives to frame the conflict in Donbas in terms of the civil society evolution in Ukraine. The author employs Charles Tilly's concepts of mobilization as the mode of collective action aimed at amassing resources required for the advancement of group's goals (Tilly 1990). This approach is intertwined with the notion of hybridity. Hybridity explains the multifaceted nature of various social forms and life-worlds as well as hybrid orders, which combine different practices of governance and social regulations. Local social orders and practices are being juxtaposed with the ostensible “modernity.” Hybrid forms drawing upon local practices and outlooks are contradictory and elusive. Baginskiy is doing a useful service to conflict studies by placing them in a broader framework of modernity and avoiding binary oppositions “traditional / local / hybrid versus modern / global / uniform.” These locally embedded forms are capable of both resisting peace building and promoting it. The author also employs the concept of the ethos of conflict developed by Daniel Bar-Tal and his co-authors (Bar-Tal et al., 2012) and applies it to Ukraine. Maidan events of 2013-2014 gave a strong impetus to the rise of the ethos of conflict in Ukraine. Baginskiy traces the evolution of the ethos of conflict to early 2000s. Kyiv and Donbas political elites clashed over issues of identity, nation building and historical memory. National and regional power establishments in Ukraine after first
Maidan employed conflicting mode of interaction glorifying nationalist movement and Soviet/internationalist past respectively. Existing cleavages were reinforced by the Russia’s involvement—at first via indirect propaganda warfare, then with a direct military involvement into Ukrainian affairs.

Drawing upon interviews with leading civil society activists the author finds a glimpse of hope for Ukraine in their actions. At the same time, civil society initiatives can succeed only if there is an effective state with a strong capacity capable of laying down institutional prerequisites of peace. Peace building also requires classical Renan’s virtues of a given community willingness to stay together and ability to both remember and forget the past.

Denys Kiryukhin's article “Inequality and its Perception” is a cogent interpretation of the place of inequality in contemporary world. The paper's topicality has soared while this issue was being prepared for publication due to yellow vests movement in France. This movement's prime motif is the discontent, someone could even argue the disgust, with inequality in French society.

All the buzzwords of the recent decades of social sciences scholarship—globalization, liberalization, neoliberalism, etc. - are put to productive use by the author. Moreover, he skillfully frames the value of equality in terms of the modernity and its aspirations. The article's presuppositions are buttressed by countless publication both in academic press and media outlets outlining the societal ills of inequality.

Employing data from World Values Survey, Kiryukhin indicates dramatic decrease in support of income inequality in post-Leninist nations.
1990s was an epoch heralding the message of competition and thus inequality as a natural state of affairs for societies shaking off the chains of state socialism and escaping to freedom. Polls conducted in 2010-2014—in the aftermath of capitalist transition inspired by market Bolshevism of 1990s—showed much more negative attitudes to inequality.

The author is critically drawing upon the theory advanced by Vladimir Gimpelson and Daniel Treisman that there is a gulf between actual and perceived inequality (Gimpelson & Treisman, 2018). He enriches their approach by Göran Therborn's ideas, pointing out that ideologies operate with three sets of binary oppositions: “what is versus what is not,” “good versus bad” and “possible versus impossible.” Thus, the phenomenon of inequality should be perceived on terms of its legitimacy and illegitimacy. The evaluation of existing inequalities as illegitimate often fuels social protest and channels its energy into political action. The rise of right-wing militancy and anti-EU sentiments epitomized by Brexit vote all but underline the importance of inequality and its implications for societal cohesion.

Trump's tax cut counterrevolution (officially titled as “The Act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018” has also brought the debate about causes and effects of inequality into academic and media limelight. The article juxtaposes Therborn’s notions of existential, vital and resource inequalities. The former is linked to identity politics—e.g. dignity and recognition—while the latter two forms of inequality point out in a direction of resources allocation and life chances of individuals. It was Nobel laureate Amartya Sen who noted in his classics “Development as Freedom” that life
expectancy of African Americans living in Philadelphia is closer to Third World country levels than to that of white middle class members living just in a different neighborhood of the same city (Sen 1999). Thus, inequality does has the power to kill, as Therborn himself puts it. At the same time fighting existential inequality—as important as it—has an effect upon “superstructure,” while leaving the economic “basis” less affected.

Chairman Mao once famously remarked that the women are holding up half the sky meaning that females are in charge of at least half of human affairs. It is impossible to tackle issues of inclusive political development without addressing and assessing whether these processes are gender balanced. Eka Darbaidze in her article “Increasing Women’s Political Participation in Georgia” offers a very detailed and penetrating account of the female participation in political decision-making bodies. According to the recent Gender Gap Index 2018 Georgia’s performance in this respect is rather mediocre—it’s ranked just below world’s average (Report, 2018).

The author offers an overview of the major schools of thought explaining the (under)representation of females in political institutions. She herself subscribed to the newly emerging strand of thought that could be defined as political autonomy argument. In the nutshell, this approach stresses the importance of electoral rules to determining political outcomes. The importance of gender quotas is also stressed. The article provides the wealth of information based on the in-depth interviews with male and female politicians as well as analysis of Georgian legislative framework for electoral processes. The author’s formula for leveling up the political playing field is the introduction of gender quotas for female representation. It
appears to be a feasible option given that public opinion in Georgia is in favor of better representation of females in political decision-making.

Igor Sribniak addresses the national(ist) mobilization of prisoners of war held in Polish camp Strzałkowo during 1921-1922. After the defeat of the supporters of Ukrainian independence cause, some servicemen belonging to different Ukrainian armed formations were interned in Poland. Given that the armed struggles for Ukraine’s independence lasted for several years and ended in defeat, the disillusionment was widely spread among interned combatants. Nationalist activists organized cultural and athletic activities for the camp’s Ukrainian community and effectively managed to engage majority of PoWs to their initiatives. Activists were publishing newspapers; they also set up painting studio, choir and different sports activists. Voluntary associations played a crucial part in the camp’s everyday life. PoWs were participating in the humanitarian relief society tasked with collecting and redistributing funds as well as holding festivities and cultural events. The author concludes that Strzałkowo camp was an instance of successful mobilization of Ukrainian PoWs by nationalist activists during period of profound crisis. This tactic facilitated the preservation of the Ukrainian People’s Republic military organization even after its demise and was instrumental in helping former Ukrainian soldiers to adapt to new circumstances in interwar Poland.

In all articles of this issue one entity although is not entirely absent yet remains quite inconspicuous - the state. It is quite intriguing given the issue’s focus on mobilization. Needless to say mobilization of any type is hardly imaginable without the state. This semi-absence deserves our close
attention and thorough explanation. This under-emphasis on the state could be attributed the legacy of the single party rule within Leninist regimes. Under Leninism, the party occupied “commanding heights” in political realm both institutionally and symbolically. The party subjugated the state—its military institutions in particular—to a number of controlling techniques raging from censure to purges. Perhaps no less important is that the state-centrists research program in social sciences—let alone its developmental state version—has not yet taken root in post-Soviet academic communities.

The articles selected for this special issue of the Ideology and Politics Journal offer a smorgasbord of ideas to unpack different dimensions of mobilization and their implications for the modernization / de-modernization of the post-Leninist “real societies.” Perhaps, it is worth summing up the major findings of this issue with a useful truism about the contradictory nature of social changes, tectonic social changes in particular. Changes meant to bring about modernization are no exception. We should also keep in mind that no societal and political change is irreversible. Nascent institutions of new aspirants to modernity are fragile and prone to become prey of de-modernization processes. After brief intermission of optimism caused by the integration of the Central European nations—formerly belonging to the socialist camp—into the EU and NATO we are now witnessing the backslide of liberal democracy and rise of xenophobia against the backdrop of corruption, resurgence of the chiefs in political domain (Derluguian, Earle & Reno 2016: 62-86) and governmental ineptitude. All these

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4 For more detailed account of the developmental state, see (Kyrych, 2016).
5 Our usage of the term “real societies” is informed by Jeff Alexander’s discussion of real civil societies (see: Alexander, 1998).
developments—or rather tendencies towards underdevelopment and decay—make the intellectual grappling with the notion of modernity and its meanings inescapable. Is modernity just a contingent outcome of hundreds of years of cutthroat completion among militarized states? In this case the essence of modernity is its mastery over techniques of domination. The institution which was the most successful at amassing the monopoly over violence and accumulating power turned out to be the nation state. Obviously, we are talking here about Charles Tilly’s account of the state-making as organized crime and war-making (Tilly, 1985: 169ff). If we subscribe to this realist / cynical reading of the state, we have to admit that mobilization, often coercive and violent, is the essence of modernity. There is an alternative reading of “unfinished project of modernity” (Jürgen Habermas) as a formation whose differentia specifica is in its emancipatory potential. In this case, we have to accept that liberties, development of human capabilities and inclusion are criteria of this historical system. This dispute is not over, and no single journal issue can bring it to its close.

Perhaps the nature of the present tumultuous state of affairs in the region with regard to imperatives of mobilization and their potential to enhance and/or derail modernization, thus transforming promise of modernities into practices of de-modernization, could be best captured with Sophocles’ words uttered in his “Antigone”:

“I cannot say

Of any condition of human life “This is fixed,

This is clearly good, or bad.” Fate raises up,
And Fate casts down the happy and unhappy alike:

No man can foretell his Fate” (Sophocles “Antigone,” 900–905).

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