

Defining Contexts of the Postcolonial, the Post-Soviet, and the Peripheral – The Case of Georgia

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Abstract

The present article is an attempt to avoid the hyper-definitions produced by the terms *post-Soviet* and *postcolonial*, by defining the term *peripheral* as a secondary component, which is always in bipolar antagonism with its' center. The autonomous character of the term *peripheral* is shown in studies of the postcolonial and post-Soviet. The case of Georgia, which is mainly studied under the general contextual definition of *post-Soviet* and *postcolonial*, represents ambiguously defined particularity. In some approaches, the *post-Soviet* condition is comparable to *postcolonial*, yet another approach defines the *post-Soviet* as a general context and studies its peripheral conditions. Within the article, we are reviewing several definitions of relevant terms and their application to Georgia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Consequently, this article aims at reviewing the definitions of the terms *postcolonial*, *post-Soviet*, and *peripheral* and their influence in the Georgian context.

Keywords: Peripheral, post-soviet, postcolonial, Georgia, conceptualisation

Postkolonyal, Post-Sovyet ve Periferi Kavramlarının Çerçevesini Tanımlamak

Özet

Bu makale, periferi terimini her zaman merkezle iki kutuplu bir karşıtlık içinde olan ikincil bir bileşen olarak tanımlayarak, post-Sovyet ve postkolonyal terimlerinin ürettiği tireli tanımlardan kaçınma girişimidir. Periferi teriminin özerk karakteri, postkolonyal ve post-Sovyet

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çalışmalarda gösterilmiştir. Esas olarak post-Sovyet ve postkolonyal genel bağlamsal tanımı altında incelenen Gürcistan örneği, muğlak bir şekilde tanımlanmış tikelliği temsil eder. Bazı yaklaşımlarda, post-Sovyet durumu postkolonyal durumla karşılaştırılabilir, yine başka bir yaklaşım post-Sovyet'i genel bir bağlam olarak tanımlar ve çevre koşullarını inceler. Makalede, ilgili terimlerin çeşitli tanımlarını ve bunların Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonra Gürcistan için kullanımlarını gözden geçiriyoruz. Sonuç olarak, bu makale postkolonyal, post-Sovyet ve periferi terimlerinin tanımlarını ve bunların Gürcistan bağlamındaki etkilerini gözden geçirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Periferi, post-Sovyet, postkolonyal, Gürcistan, kavramlaştırma

Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, political, economic, cultural, urban, and other sectors have been studied through the prism of various theoretical frameworks. For example, various terms have been used to describe and study the reality after the dissolution of the Soviet Union: *postcommunist* (Bunce, "Comparing East and South", 88); *post-communist* (Åslund et al., 219); *postsocialism* (Bunce, "The Political Economy of Postsocialism", 785); *post-socialist* (Kay et al., 56); *post-colonial* (Tiffin, 176); *Postcolonial* (Spivak et al., 2006, 829) and *post-Soviet* (Kaganovsky and Salazkina, p. 3a). Every above-mentioned contextual definition refers to a specific reality that has its own distinct characteristics, yet they share a common ground which can be defined by geographical and historical backgrounds. The common past shared by the former Soviet republics enables the discussion of commonalities among culturally, linguistically, economically, and politically distinctive societies. Under these diverse circumstances, every contextual definition is legitimate and needs its own specific research.

In this context, some scholars set *postsocialism* on a global scale, defining it as an anti-neoliberal term that emphasizes neoliberal hegemony (Dupuy and Fraser, 7. Gille, 27), while the term *post-Socialist* is used to define the *post-Soviet* space, i.e., the countries with a Soviet socialist past (Stenning and Hörschelmann, 326). In an ideologically defined context, the term *postcommunist*

refers to the countries of the former Soviet Union (R. D. Anderson et al., 8). The same condition applies to the term *post-communist* which additionally emphasizes the transitional period to the capitalistic economic system (Ekiert et al., 19). The terms *postcolonialism* and *post-colonialism* have certain differences in contextualizing an after-colonial state within the previously colonized countries. Both terms refer to a neocolonial situation (Sartre, 20). They do not refer to only a *post-Soviet* past but deal with colonization in general, by an application of concepts such as *center-periphery, cultural, economic, and political dependence*.

The term *post-Soviet*, as well as *postcolonial*, has various definitions. In some cases, *the post-Soviet* is mentioned as identical to *postcolonial*, whereas in other contexts it has its own autonomous historical and cultural meaning (Bassin and Kelly, 86). In contradiction to the *post-Soviet*, the *postcolonial* is based strictly on a cultural axis (Bhabha, 360). While *periphery* is generally seen as a *postcolonial* term, in the *post-Soviet* space, the *periphery* has its specific meaning affiliated with a strong center. The periphery in the *post-Soviet* context always has an antagonistic and dependent relationship with its center (Khalvashi, 75; Spivak et al., 2006, 830). In other cases, the periphery is considered to be an independent analytical entity that has a base that is defined geographically, historically, and economically (Martinez-Vela, 4; I. M. Wallerstein, 28).

If the term *post-Soviet* is defined as a historical momentum, then it has its affiliations with a specific, selective, and problematic past, while including the notion of the periphery in bipolar opposition. The same applies to the *postcolonial*, which includes a bipolarity between the center and the periphery, while a *post-Soviet* center shares similarities with the peripheral entity. Without any additional contextual framework, the term *peripheral* includes specific political, cultural, economic, and other objective conditions of a particular country. It underlines the relation of dependence, contradiction, antagonism, and autonomy as such (I. M. Wallerstein, 189).

To this extent, a particular case of Georgia connects general conceptual terms to a certain case and is used to avoid degreeism,

misclassification, and conceptual stretching. The application of this specific case outlines the difference between fragmented, hyper defined and sometimes ambiguous general concepts. A Georgian case enables the study to reduce terms *post-Soviet*, *postcolonial* and *peripheral* to a certain place - *topos* - without outlining any systemization or articulation of meaningless hierarchical comparison between different cases. Meanwhile, a refrain from parochialism can be achieved through the establishment of a connection of general conceptual terms to a case study. General concepts of the *post-Soviet*, *the postcolonial*, and the *peripheral*, constitute the possibility of a particular case to be represented in an extended frame without ignoring unique elements of a case as such.

Methodology

In order to establish the methodological frame, it is necessary to outline the differences between the categorization and the classification. This comparison enables one to create a more accurate methodological framework that will focus on a comparative study of the notions of the *post-Soviet*, *the postcolonial*, and the *peripheral*. The classification and the categorization differ from each other in several ways, but both are methods for systematization that create the possibility to structure information in a particular way. Categorization and classification both have different structures and semantics, they create a different informational environment, influencing the functions of activities and their constitution.

Classification forms a system of items that are ordered in accordance with a predetermined set of principles while it is also used to organize a set of entities; it can be said that classification enables the use of a group or class. Classification is a process of assigning entities to classes, while categorization entails division of the world into groups of entities, whose components are in some way similar to each other. Categorization makes order possible in a complex environment (Jacob, 528). Classification, in this regard, shows the uniformity of different entities. The difference between the categorization and the classification in a

comparative methodological context makes it possible to speak about a world-system theory, where the world is divided at least into three classes. According to various authors, including Martinez-Vela, Manning, and Wallerstein, those classes are defined as core, semi-periphery, and periphery. In this case, the classification does establish uniformity. In order to compare two entities, they should be classified. In itself, a class does not establish genuine uniformity, rather it establishes actual similarities. In the case of a class, different uniformities occur; under the tag of a class, different entities are represented in one structural unit (Jacob, 524).

The differentiation between classification and categorization represents a form of a reasonable comparative methodology, where comparison is actualized through objective factors. For example, fruits can be compared to each other by the consistency of vitamins. The vitamins in a fruit represent an objective factor that is necessary for a reasonable comparison to be established (Lyrintzis, 103-111). The epistemology of a comparative method in political science aims to differentiate the comparable from the non-comparable. As Giovanni Sartori explains, comparing cats to dogs, or monkeys to rocks creates an understanding of the non-comparable state (Sartori, 245). In this case, parochialism, misclassification, degreeism, and conceptual stretching should be avoided (Collier and Mahon, 282). In order to compare things to each other, different properties of the subjects that are under comparison should be respected. First, a thing should be used in comparison before it becomes non-comparable (Sartori, 245). In short, comparative methodology in the political sciences represents a specific multilevel methodological tool.

Georgia between *the postcolonial*, *the post-Soviet*, and *the peripheral*

The case of Georgia, in this regard, is represented as a case study in connection with particular “meso”, or “macro” contextual definitions (Serpa and Ferreira, 122), while the terms *post-Soviet*, *postcolonial*, and *the peripheral* are represented as general, autonomous analytical or terminological entities that share

similarities, differences, connections, disconnections, continuities, and discontinuities among them. Mainly, the case of Georgia is contextualized in terms of the *postcolonial* and the *post-Soviet*. In this regard, the term *periphery* has a secondary meaning. In some cases, the coarticulation of the *post-Soviet* and the *postcolonial* is followed by the differentiation between imperialisms. According to this reasoning, Russian imperialist politics differ from other empires (Tlostanova, 135). The Soviet Empire, i.e., a manifestation of different kinds of imperialistic power, had different types of peripheries (Kuzio, 241). Based on this reasoning, we can discuss regional and ethnic conflicts in Georgia, where *postcolonialism* can be defined as the antithetical unity between *Tsarism* and the *Soviet* past, which has a direct influence on the *de-facto* Republic of Abkhazia, and *de-facto* Republic of South Ossetia (Broers, “‘David and Goliath’ and ‘Georgians in the Kremlin’: A Post-Colonial Perspective on Conflict in Post-Soviet Georgia”, 99).

Georgia, as an object of a postcolonial study, is categorized in the same context as African states, where similarities can be found in the existence of private, paramilitary organizations. The existence of a private militia, or a military organization is caused by the absence of a state in the postcolonial space (Reno, 839). In the case of Georgia, the dissolution of the Soviet state meant the collapse of the Georgian state apparatus as well. The *post-Soviet* state is an unreliable state. It had no practice of power monopolization or monopoly on the use of force, it shared this monopoly with other actors such as paramilitary groups, organized crime, local warlords, and so on. Once strong, the centralized state’s dysfunction makes the *post-Soviet* context possible due to the fact that dysfunction is a result of the Soviet past. In contradiction with *postcolonial* countries, the *post-Soviet* state took its place back again (Nodia, 434).

The similarity between *post-Soviet* Georgia and *postcolonial* countries can be defined by a collapse of the state. The *post-Soviet* represents the duration of the process of state collapse, whereas the *postcolonial* represents the permanent absence of state apparatuses. The *post-Soviet* and the *postcolonial* have similarities in the absence of democracy as well. The *post-Soviet*

consists of a type of authoritarianism within its center, the state “Nomenklatura”, a particular type of bureaucratic elite that has roots in the Soviet past (Nisnevich and Ryabov, 544).

In this context, Georgian nationalism is viewed through the prism of an empire and a periphery. Peripheral nationalism has its contradictory properties, at the same time contradicting and supporting Russian imperialism. Colonial nationalism reproduces relations of a core and periphery in a bipolar, contradictory way (Batiashvili, xvi). At the same time, post-Soviet nationalism in countries of the ex-Soviet Union and particularly in Georgia is mostly characterized by anti-Soviet sentiments. Those nationalistic feelings are related to global and anti-global movements (Mayerchyk and Plakhotnik, 3; Darchiashvili, 113).

Representation of the *postcolonial* as a synonymous term to the *post-Soviet* can be seen in religious studies. Here religion is discussed in contrast and connection with Georgian nationalism (Chelidze, 121; Chkhaidze, 46; Broers, “Post-Coloniality and the Politics of Language in Post-Soviet Georgia”, 19). It is characterized as *post-Soviet* due to the fact that it has informal social tactics of negotiation, like those of the Soviet period (Gurchiani, 527). Here religion is represented as a new type of construct, or more correctly an old construct in a new after-Soviet context. It is represented as an example of subjective history, or in other words, objective historical facts can be narrated in a certain manner that includes an anti-Soviet sentiment that is a reproduction of an old Soviet reality. In short, the term *post-Soviet* reinstates the contradictory existence of human beings in countries of the former Soviet Union always in connection with the problematic Soviet past. This contradictory historicity can be characterized as a *postmodernist* interpretation of a problematic, unneeded, and refused historical past. A negatively defined construct is represented as the base of the *post-Soviet* condition as such (Jarosz, 235).

The Georgian *post-Soviet* context is expressed in straight historical, spatial terms, where the attitude towards the past is expressed in the architecture. In the Georgian case, the *post-Soviet* can be seen as a total denial, refusal, of every kind of Soviet

element. Architectural construction is also refused, even though it exists in its very material expression. Urban and rural spatial development are not contextualized under the common frame (Holland and Derrick, 27). If in some cases, the term *post-Soviet* means a connection of the Soviet past to the current state, the *post-Soviet* changes its meaning while dealing with spatial, architectural, urban, and planning contexts. In this case, the *post-Soviet* differs from the Soviet past, because spatial *post-Soviet* is positioned between chaotic and regulated buildings in the market economy that includes good and bad cases (Becker et al., 3).

The objectivity of the sound can be considered a subjective cultural construct. The same applies to *post-Soviet* Georgian art, culture and, cinema. In this regard, the *post-Soviet* can be defined as the specificity of a sound in cinema. To generalize this statement, the *post-Soviet* can be considered in the context of cultural commonalities among culturally different countries and societies. If the Soviet is related to the meaning of the modern, the *post-Soviet* can be considered in connection with *postmodern*, *post-modern*, and *post-industrial* (Kaganovsky and Salazkina, 14). The *post-Soviet* Georgian culture differs from the Soviet in attitudes toward art because the Soviet has an ideologically restricted stance towards art as such. Art in the *post-Soviet* condition as an entity of an academic study is represented as a liberated space that partly corresponds with global and local realities (Sharikadze, 97-98).

In collation with the art, global and local realities also are important and relevant for local politics. Georgia, as a historically defined *post-Soviet* state, due to the *de-facto Republics* (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), presents extreme peripheralization. Their non-recognition, isolation from the world system, and their absolute dependence on the Russian factor cause their extreme peripheralization (Minakov, 50). In this bipolar frame another regional and autonomous formation of Georgia, Adjara, is also studied. Here the bipolarity is caused by internal centralization and peripheralization that on the one hand causes antagonisms, and on the other hand marginalized regional, or peripheral unity (Khalvashi, 77). In bipolar peripheral-center relations, the

periphery is considered a needless extension of a center that should be in a condition of constant shame.

Post-Soviet and *postcolonial* as contextual definitions have their own similarities and differences, and these terms are not identical. They express different historical momentum and altogether different socioeconomic relational structures. In the case of Georgia, these terms have ambiguous contextual meanings, while analyzing through the prism of the *post-Soviet*, the *postcolonial*, or both, there is always the meaning of a periphery. The *peripheral* is meant to be a component of a *post-Soviet* or *postcolonial* context. Representation of the *peripheral* is obvious in those contexts, yet it is discussed as an internal as well as an external bipolar construct, which existed always in parallel with a certain center. Georgia as a peripheral construct can be considered in relation to the countries of the Western World. In this context, a three-level classification of the world system is introduced. Here Western developed countries are considered as idealized material, geographical entities. The goal – that is being more uniform with a center, and less of a semi-periphery - is presented as a necessity (Fluri and Cole, 293). This reproductive logic can be considered a break from the *postcolonial* and *post-Soviet* context. Discussing those terms in a historical frame, the *postcolonial* loses its connection with the Georgian context considering that the state regained its functions, and monopoly of power (Jones, 269).

In the historical contextualization, the attempt to break away from the Soviet past and lose connection with materialized *post-Soviet* causes the unfulfilled need for democracy. Here undefined Georgian context, as such, also means to have an abstract, fragmented but uniquely existing context (Fluri and Cole, 188). Finally, the term *post-Soviet* reproduces a problematic Geographical concept when it connects the specific case of Georgia with the geographical term *Caucasus* (King, 248). In this case, strict geographical terminology reproduces the meaning of a periphery or a region as well as the notion of a regional entity without any mandatory historicity.

The examination of the Georgian case shows that the *post-Soviet* or the *postcolonial* are mutually exclusive contextual definitions. The periphery in the case of Georgia is regarded as internal and extreme. Also, the Georgian peripheral condition is always considered to be in a context of a problematic reproduction in a bipolar context of the center and the periphery. In this case, any kind of reproductive action is represented as a falsified type of history, while history itself has fragmented characteristics and is reduced to a narrative that is void of objective factors. If the periphery is considered as an autonomous entity, then the *peripheral* can be represented through particular political, economic, cultural, social, and other characteristics. The *peripheral* autonomy exists always in dependence and antagonistic relationship with the core and a semi-periphery. This does not mean that the periphery is a static entity since it contains internal antagonisms as well. In some cases, those antagonisms are a reproduction of the Soviet past in a post-Soviet manner, in others, antagonisms are based on certain objective matters. Like *post-Soviet* and *postcolonial*, the term *peripheral* also includes external antagonism and dependence relations that are represented not in the context of a particular regional power but in a more centralized world system.

The post-Soviet in case studies

It is obvious that the *post-Soviet* context or even *post-Soviet* condition is directly related to the idea of a state. In this agenda, the functions of the state are problematic due to corruption and clientelism. In some cases, this is considered a *postcolonial* phenomenon (Rubin and Snyder, 14), whereas in other cases, it is studied as the *post-Soviet* type of rent-seeking behavior that is produced by a misruled social and welfare system. It is important to mention internal marginalization as a part of the *post-Soviet* condition. In this case, the same social strata and regional actors are marginalized within the country, while producing their own independent economic, cultural, or even political relations (Collier and Way, 282; Stoner-Weiss, 107). The phenomenon of the *post-Soviet* can be associated with the notion of a post-trauma, where

the Soviet past is represented as a trauma, which means that the notion of the *post-Soviet* has post-traumatic characteristics for these societies (Wakamiya, 135).

The term *post-Soviet* in an imperial context is mainly related to the Russian Federation. Besides the characterization of Russia as an empire or peripheral empire or peripheral power (Kagarlitsky, 143), it can be called a semi-peripheral regional power that has its own cultural, political, economic, and military agenda toward neighboring countries. The latter ones are thought to be connected with Russia through the Soviet past. Russia implements a center–peripheral attitude towards those countries creates and supports local conflict and uses regional conflicts and weaknesses that are caused by bipolarization, hyper-centralization, or even peripheralization of those countries (Solchanyk, 53).

At the same time, the Russian Federation as a *post-Soviet* state shares the same characteristics with other *post-Soviet* countries. These common characteristics include universal or fragmented ideology, which is represented as a connection with the Soviet past and as a conceptualization of the non-Soviet, or current reality (Etkind and Minakov, 12). Besides ideological commonality, Russia, with other post-Soviet countries shares a selective but objective historical past, as well as an objective geographical location (Musteață et al., 186).

The post-Soviet specificity can be determined by the reasoning of the World System Theory. In addition to the three-degree system, the *de-facto* states, parts of the ex-semi-periphery of the former Soviet countries that are directly controlled and occupied by the Russian Federation, are represented as an example of an extreme periphery. The extreme peripheral condition can be described as the condition, where a state/actor is heavily dependent on one particular state; in the *post-Soviet* space, this role is ascertained by the Russian Federation. In this context, Russia is represented as an absolute core (Minakov, 48) and the extremely peripheral, *de-facto* countries are in a condition of isolation from other countries, and from the world in general.

The phenomenon of nationalism in the former Soviet states undermines the term *post-Soviet* and more specifically, its terminological unity. The term *post-Soviet* is defined by different types of nationalism represented as the fragmented reality that has a common historical past but a different linguistic present. Nationalisms in the peripheral post-Soviet space mainly are anti-Russian and therefore anti-Soviet (Gamsakhurdia). In the post-Soviet space, various types of nationalism are connected with the need for effective nation-states and are divided into ethnic and civic nationalisms. At the same time, those types of nationalism remain above social, economic classes and patronage groups (Snyder, 7). *Post-Soviet* nationalisms are also a reaction towards economic reforms, social needs, and democracy. The *post-Soviet* nation-based state tries to correspond to the requirements of a globalized world, while also breaking its ties with the old internal center.

Post-Soviet additionally can be described by the return of religion, or religious domination of public space. De-secularization is crucial for the *post-Soviet* space, while religion becomes a public and political matter (Zviadadze). That is why the *post-Soviet* can be defined as a space where the Soviet authoritarian Leninist ideology was replaced with religion (Shishkov and Kyrlezhev, 5). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the *post-Soviet* context, religion regains its historical function and becomes the dominant spatial entity (Kazmina and Filippova, 1072; Pankhurst, 3).

The Soviet centralized authoritarian state simultaneously produced mass culture for both the center and the periphery. This cultural equity is far from being imperial, it is rather connected to cultural and economic modernization. In this case, culture is produced in the core, as well as in the semi-periphery and the periphery. In the context of a globalized world, the periphery has the same cultural influence as the core. Culture as such is not a part of the centralized system, and it is more fragmented (Robertson and Lechner, 114). The fragmented or centralized culture represents its own independent entity that stands above the issue of division between the core, the semi-periphery, and the periphery. In this context, culture is idealized and represents

an unclassified, uncategorized entity. Here, culturally affiliated Soviet bilingualism is seen as an imperial construct, where the dominant language is considered a method of oppression (Coombs, 60).

The internal conflict between the center and the periphery articulated in literature is represented in a *postcolonial* context where an imperial center dictated its own trends, and artists from peripheries were trying to connect with other literature cycles (Spivak et al., 346). It is known that the Soviet period had a particular, mandatory style of realism that was forced on writers within its center and periphery. Due to this, it is assumed that the cultural symbolism produced cultural autonomy in the periphery of the Soviet Union (Felcher, 17). So, in the *post-Soviet* context, Soviet mandatory realism is presented in a form of surrealism, or in a form of anti-realism.

The construct of an internal periphery can also be identified in the contexts of culture and politics. The internal periphery has the same characteristics as the extreme periphery, but it differs from the latter in degrees of obedience, dependence, and reproductive relationship with its center. The internal periphery is objectified by geographical and cultural affiliations to the bipolar world of the center-periphery dichotomy (Khalvashi, 56). In all cases, the definition of the bipolar opposition between the center and the periphery is based on the *post-Soviet* and *postcolonial* contexts. This results in the establishment of the meaning of the hyper-defined context of a peripheral condition. Here, the periphery is the controversial entity that represents simplicity, the object of shame, while at the same time, it is considered as an actor in a three-level definitional framework of the *post-Soviet*, the *postcolonial*, and the *peripheral*. In this case, the term peripheral constitutes terminological objectification by being a regional factor in contradiction with the subjective term *postcolonial* and the abstract term *post-Soviet*.

The postcolonial, the post-Soviet, and the peripheral

The term *postcolonial* is seen as an integral part of regional studies, or as regional historiography which has its specific

socioeconomic order (Fischer-Tiné and Framke, 108). The same definition covers the context of the *post-Soviet* states (Bunce, "The Political Economy of Postsocialism", 786), in cases when it is discussed as an emotional subject. The *post-Soviet* can be considered as a nostalgia toward the Soviet past, as an individual's reminiscence of his/her childhood memories (Bassin and Kelly, 115). The *post-Soviet* is represented as a postmodern narrative where the future becomes the past and the bourgeois past takes the place of the present or the future; it is seen as the return of imperial Tsarism in a new form of neo-imperialism. In opposition to the *postcolonial*, *post-Soviet* Russia is represented as an occupier, not as a colonizer (Buckler, 255). An occupation not only represents a context that is defined in a bipolar contradiction of the center-periphery, but it also has additional implications connected with the meaning of justice, marginalization, refusal, etc.

The term *post-Soviet* can be dissociated from the term *postcolonial* because it includes the imperial core as a part of a general contextual definition. In other words, the *post-Soviet* sees the center and the periphery in the same contextual definition unlike the *postcolonial*, where a regional, colonized entity and the center are represented as the post-imperial structures. In the same climate of differentiation and comparison of the *post-Soviet* and the *postcolonial*, the general political aspect of both realities should be discussed. Here, a crisis of the state regarding the *post-Soviet* can be compared to the *postcolonial* states. In the case of a weak state, this comparison shows ranges of associations and dissociations. In this regard, the *post-Soviet* shares fewer similarities with the *postcolonial*, but it is comparable. Due to its economic, cultural, and other complexities, the *post-Soviet* remains an autonomous analytical entity (Beissinger and Young, 413-445).

The *post-Soviet* can also be considered a historical moment that occurred after Soviet rule. It is a selective historical reading that focuses on a certain part of history, while it is also represented as a linear or fragmented phenomenon. The hyphen in this term can be considered as a repetition of the Soviet past in

a new socio-economic system. The connection of the *postcolonial* with the *post-Soviet* can be determined in a context of a Soviet center and periphery, where Russia is represented as an imperial center or a core and other former Soviet countries as colonized peripheries. In a cultural context, the connection between the *post-Soviet* and the *postcolonial* can be described through the lenses of the re-Europeanization process (Spivak et al., 829). Here, a war for independence is represented as a war for decolonization, while the Soviet Union harbors a contradiction of internal imperialism and external anti-imperialism. Anti-imperialism is represented in the discourse as a desire to rid the world of imperialism, while imperial exploitation takes place in the context of a specific Soviet-type globalized world.

The *post-Soviet* remains to be a regional definition that can be seen as *postcolonial* while it uses other terms, like Eurasia, near abroad, etc. In this case, articulated rhetoric by the Russian Federation represents the rhetoric of an imperial center. The reasoning of an internal contradiction is expressed in anti-imperialist imperialism which is defined by the imperial and the Soviet past. In this political framework, the *post-Soviet* has an internal imperial center and an imperial periphery, both of which are represented as a whole, *postcolonial* construct. At the same time, a colonial power is considered in the same context as its colonies under the term *post-Soviet*. If Russia is not *postcolonial* and it is seen as an empire, then the term *postcolonial* describes the countries of a Soviet periphery. In the *post-Soviet* context, peripheral countries, even those of a colonial origin, share common historical, political, economic, or even cultural ground with the imperial center (Åslund et al., 308). In this case, the *post-Soviet* loses its connection with the term *postcolonial*, while maintaining classificatory and categorical similarities with it. Here, the *post-Soviet* can be seen as a post-modern, post-industrial historical phrase, while *postcolonial* represents a postmodern condition.

The term *postcolonial* can be used in cultural, political, historical, philosophical, and other fields (Tiffin, 176). The term *postcolonial* deals with the condition after colonial rule in

countries that were previously colonized by imperial powers. Therefore, the use of the term includes a negative connotation towards colonialism and imperialism. Scholars of the *postcolonial* world have described the autonomy of the postcolonial space by the term orientalism (Said, 242). In this regard, the term postcolonial acquires cultural characteristics, where culture is based on consent and maintains its association with the colonizers. To put it in another words and simplify the issue, the language towards a colonizer and the culture of a colonial center is of crucial importance for an anti-colonial, or postcolonial perspective (Thiong'o, 4). The culturally defined *postcolonial* condition has controversial characteristics, where refusal of a culture of an imperial center creates relations of negation and obedience towards its own culture. Cultural reproduction is one of many aspects of the *postcolonial* context.

Political aspects of the *postcolonial* context can be explained as a confrontation with the imperial conquerors (Fanon, 42). Anti-imperialism is an essential factor for *postcolonial* theory and practice. Fighting for self-determination, revolutionary sentiment, and anti-colonial nationalism is the main core of postcolonial theory. Anti-colonialism is defined as a refusal of being a part of a great imperial system. In many cases regarding Africa and Asia, anti-colonialism allows the possibility of *postcolonial* socialism. In various cases, socialist ideology is represented within an anti-colonial rhetoric (Imlay, 1109). *Anti-colonialism* can be represented in a number of ways. It can be seen as an opposition to being part of a great system (1), as well as a chance for flourishing socialist ideology (2); a multidimensional struggle (3). The anti-colonial struggle always aspires on a global scale, and it is not an economic struggle, but rather a political one. Revolution is presented as a way to cut ties with a colonial power or imperial center (Mishra and Hodge, 409).

Postcolonial can be defined as a term with various meanings. If postcolonial is written with a hyphen, there is no cultural unity under post-colonial exploitation, and the term changes its meaning (Haddour, 243). At the same time, *post-colonial* is one variety of the term *postcolonial*, and it includes the meaning

attested by postmodernism, underlining the discursive forms and practices in a particular historical momentum. In colonialism or postcolonialism, there is no middle space, there is only a core, i.e., a center, and a periphery. In the process of discussing *post-Soviet* and *postcolonial*, it should be noted that the term *post-colonial* also has important implications on the context. Despite this, the definitions and contextual applications of *postcolonial* and *post-colonial* contain significant similarities. Therefore, within the scope of this article, with the view to avoid any overload and spillover between the definitions and consequent confusion, we opted to abstain from further discussion of *post-colonial*.

In the hyper-defined context of the *postcolonial*, the *post-Soviet*, and *peripheral* art and spaces play a crucial role in decolonization (Tlostanova, 141). The term decolonization has a different meaning for states and societies in Africa, Asia, and South America. In some cases, the struggle against the Soviet heritage entails a total marginalization of the Soviet past. In other cases, the former Soviet spaces are renovated, gentrified, or even remade according to a new reality and immediate necessities (Kay et al., 58). Because of a particular, Sovietic spatial and aerial developmental heritage, the term *post-Soviet* also deals with specific urban and developmental contexts while representing historical phrases connected with its material, or aerial expression (White et al., 133).

In the cases of the *post-Soviet* and the *postcolonial* opposition between a metropolitan and colonial center, the periphery is represented as an undivided, unified entity. In *colonialism* and *postcolonialism*, the core and the periphery have exploitative and interdependent relations amongst each other (Goldgeier and McFaul, 478). This multilevel method includes a multidisciplinary approach including, but not limited to economy, geography, politics, and other fields (A. R. Anderson et al., 3; van der Hoek, 423; Chase-Dunn and Grimes, 388). In the case of an autonomous analytical entity of a peripheral, the opposition between bipolarity and multipolarity would be brought under question due to the division of the world into three antagonistic spaces. In this approach, the World is divided into classes, or groups of a core, a

semi-periphery, and a periphery (Chirot and Hall, 85). The nation-state is not solely an analytical unity, it is considered to be part of a hierarchically divided world.

The idea of the bipolar contradiction between center-periphery, caused by the specific socio-economic, historical, and geographical characteristics, disconnects the term *post-Soviet* from the term *postcolonial*. A less problematic and controversial subject would be the relationship between the *post-Soviet* and the *peripheral* discussed in a frame of a three-degree system of a core, a semi-periphery, and a periphery (I. Wallerstein, 63). In this case, the *post-Soviet* is considered at least an autonomous entity that has its internal struggles and relations of obedience. The *post-Soviet* is based on common historical background and represents a unison of the *post-Soviet* in fields of economy, history, geography, politics, culture, linguistics, and so on. E.g., in this regard, similarly to the concept of region, the periphery is represented as a geographical entity. This regionalization of an idea of the periphery objectifies the meaning of a periphery as such. It reduces abstract *peripheral* meaning to the specific, material entity that can be studied in the multidimensional context (Stoner-Weiss, 107; Nesvetailov, 859).

Conclusion

In the present article, various topics regarding general concepts or contextualization of *postcolonial*, *post-Soviet*, and *peripheral* were discussed. To understand those general conceptual terms, a multilevel methodological approach, namely a comparative methodology, was applied. Within the methodological framework, differentiation between *classification* and *categorization* was outlined. Consequently, the *postcolonial* and the *post-Soviet* were represented as entities of categorization, and the *peripheral* was placed within a classificatory system. This differentiation is based on a repeated re-definition of the meanings of *postcolonial*, *post-Soviet*, and *peripheral*. Concepts such as the *postcolonial*, *post-Soviet*, and *peripheral* were discussed separately, in comparison with each other, and in the context of a particular case. This approach opened the possibility

to carry out a critical analysis of comparison of those three subjects. It is noteworthy that the *post-Soviet* and the *postcolonial* were compared more intensively.

The term *postcolonial* has various definitions and represents a set of social, political, cultural, economic, and other relational and structural characteristics. Similar to the *postcolonial*, the *post-Soviet* can be defined as a historical period. If the *postcolonial* is related to the colonial past, then the *post-Soviet* represents a detachment from that specific past. Unlike the *post-Soviet*, the *postcolonial* is represented as a linear, continuous historical momentum, while the *post-Soviet* represents a collision with the problematic past. Neither of those two terms can be defined strictly, as they are multidimensional entities and concepts. If the *postcolonial* is negatively defined after colonial rule, the *post-Soviet* can be defined as a reproduction of a Soviet past in a different conceptual frame. Both of these terms have affiliation with the notion of strong center-periphery relations. If we assume that the *post-Soviet* represents the meaning of a marginal internal periphery, then the center-periphery relations represented in the *postcolonial* context are fragmented and at the same time are seen as a whole. In other words, in both cases, the bipolar constructs of the center-periphery are typified, and they exist in a contradictory dependence and antagonistic perspective.

As it is represented in this article, the term *post-Soviet* can include the notion of *postcolonial* and vice versa. Comparison between those two contextual terms shows that besides obvious similarities these terms have particular differences that make them incomparable. The *postcolonial*, like the *post-Soviet*, represents a specific but abstract notion, neither of them can be defined strictly in a form of a minimal definition, which can reduce the meaning of general term to a specific, narrow, not contradictory definition (Angle, 108). In all cases, the term *peripheral* represents the objectification of terms *post-Soviet* and *postcolonial*. The *peripheral* as a classificatory entity is included in the terminological definition of the *post-Soviet* and the *postcolonial*. Both of those subjects of a category are represented as fragmented entities that are produced based on a selective

narrative. Despite its generality, if used autonomously from the notion of the *post-Soviet*, or the *postcolonial*, the *peripheral* has its independent meaning. This particularity is not necessarily explained in historical terms, but rather in objective terms of geography, demography, culture, economics, linguistics, politics, etc. *Post-Soviet* is represented as the main historical, spatial construct that has connections with the specific past. At the same time, the *post-Soviet* also refers to the hyper definition of a common context by adding to itself terms like *postcolonial* and *peripheral*. If the *peripheral* is considered the main analytical entity, then hyper-definition is avoidable by simplification and objectification of the general contextual frame.

Finally, if the *peripheral* is not analyzed in the context of the *post-Soviet* and the *postcolonial* or in a bipolar antithetical categorization of a center and a periphery, it can be defined in a three-level world system, where the periphery, the semi-periphery, and the core are in antagonistic and dependent relations with each other. In this case, the term periphery represents classification, it is not a secondary category of an abstract formation and contains the notion of internalization. The notion of the periphery is structured towards external agents, as well as internal towards e.g., regions, suburbs, and objectively defined noncentral parts of a country. In the context of classification, the *post-Soviet* and the *postcolonial* can be discussed as secondary contextual terms that are falsely represented as the main contextual definitions.

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