CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Azerbaijan is situated in the Caucasus region of Eurasia. The country has three important physical features: the Caspian Sea, whose shoreline forms a natural boundary to the east; the Greater Caucasus mountain range to the north; and the extensive flatlands at country's centre. Azerbaijan has a total land area of approximately 86,600 square kilometres, which is less than even 1% of the land area of the former Soviet Union. It became an independent nation in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet State. Afterwards, it started its journey of political reforms with the objective of establishing a liberal democracy. This phenomenon is called as 'wave of democratization'.

The term democratization means a transition from authoritarian regime to democratic form of governance. A democratic government indicates establishment of a system in which various democratic values such as – multi party system, individual rights, freedom of speech and expression, rule of law, free and fair elections etc are inseparable components. It simply means such development over a period of time which proceeds from less accountable to more accountable government, from less competitive elections to freer and fairer competitive elections, from severely restricted to better protected civil and political rights and a vibrant civil society. Political development shows a country’s progress on these accounts.

The present work is an attempt to dissect various aspects of political developments of Azerbaijan since 1991. Given its centrality in the discourse of political science, it becomes necessary to throw some light on political development as a theoretical construct.

The Concept of Political Development

Political development as a field of knowledge developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Political scientists realized that the post-colonial African and Asian countries' political changes could be successfully studied by analyzing their socio-economic-cultural background inherited from their colonial rulers. It was this quest for an alternative paradigm to the existing Western culture dominated perspective that encouraged the corpus of material on political development.
Some definitions of political development emphasize on structures, culture, or processes in a political system. However, the tendency has been increasingly to move away from these towards definitions in terms of output. At one time Samuel P Huntington (1965) defined political development in terms of the institutionalization of political organizations and procedures, that is, the process by which they acquire value and stability. According to Fred W. Riggs there is a shift from an earlier concern with structural aspect to an increasing emphasis on performance. Although Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell (1966), put forward ‘structural differentiation’ and ‘culture secularization’, as developmental concepts.

The earlier writers on political development were more concerned with identifying the characteristics which distinguished the developing societies of the Third World from the developed societies of the West than with a study of the stages through which societies moved towards development and accelerated the process of development. Ward and Rostow had promised to look into (a) the processes through which the advanced societies of today achieved their economic, social and political development, (b) whether any regularities or discernible stages could be seen in their developmental experiences, (c) whether they had faced in their process of development similar “problems or crisis” but did not attempt anything of the type (Ward and Rostow 1964).

In a nutshell various notions of political development can be diagrammatically illustrated as follows:
Various scholars argued initially that if a certain level of economic growth is achieved, it will gradually lead to the political development. This issue came up when the need arose to transform stagnating economies into dynamic and self-sustaining economies. These economists pointed out (Rostow 1960, Holt and Turner 1966) that political and social conditions could play a decisive role in impeding or facilitating advancement in the economic sphere and this thinking led to the conception of political development as the state of the policy which might facilitate economic growth.

Kenneth Organski, also concerned with the problem of crisis in political development, following Rostow's treatment of the stages of economic development suggested that a developing society, in order to reach the goal of development, would have to pass through four stages (1) Political unification, designed to achieve a centralization of power in the hands of the state (2) Industrialization, with a view to bring
about economic development (3) National Welfare, where the results of political and economic power gained by the state are available to the masses, and (4) Abundance, where people begin to achieve high standards of material affluence (Organski 1965). Organski’s emphasis was more on economic development than on the building of political institutions.

This leads to the objection that such a concept of political development does not focus on a common set of theoretical considerations. Rather, it generates many complicated questions. In some cases, it would involve questions related to the economic policies and performance of the state. On the other hand, in some other cases it would involve more fundamental considerations about the polity or entire performance of the society. The problems of political development would thus vary entirely from the particular economic problems (Pye 1965). Another fundamental problem with such a view of political development is that economic changes may take long course of time whereas the country may still undergo political development. In other words, a difference can easily be seen between economic development and political development.

2- Political Development as Political Modernization

Another important view considers political development as synonymous with political modernization. The advanced industrial nations are the role models in most phases of social and economic life. Therefore, the similar path of development was considered as political modernization and development as well (Black 1966). A society was regarded as more or less modernized by Levy to the extent that its membership uses inanimate sources of power and/ or use of tool to multiply the effects to their efforts (Levy 1966).

But the advocates of cultural relativism question the identifying Western practices as the universal standards for all political systems. Many of these standards do trace back to the emergence of industrial society and the rise of science and technology, but most of them have by now a dynamic of their own. Mass participation, for example, reflects the sociological realities of industrialized life, but it also has been taken to be an absolute
right in the spirit of current world views. Other ideals, such as the demand for universalistic laws, respect for merit rather than birth, and generalized concepts of justice and citizenship, seem now to hold a place above any particular culture and thus reasonably belong to some universal standards of modern political life. Besides, the problem lies in identifying what is more and what is less “developed”? Clearly the problem of political development – when thought of as being simply political ‘modernization” – runs into the difficulty of differentiating between what is “Western” and what is “Modern” (Ward1963).

3- Political Development as the State-Building

This view holds that political development consists of the organization of political life and the performance of political functions in accordance with the standards expected of a modern nation-state. In this point of view there is an assumption that, historically, there have been many types of political systems and that all communities have had their form of politics. But with the emergence of the modern nation-state a specific set of requirement about politics came into existence (Deutsch and Foltz 1963). Thus, if a society is to perform as a modern state, its political institutions, and practices must adjust to these requirements of state performance. The politics of historic empires, of tribe and ethnic community, or of colony must give way to the politics necessary to produce an effective nation-state which can operate successfully in a system of other nation-states. This involves the development of a capacity to maintain certain kind of public order.

In other words, the test of political development thus involves, first, the establishment of a particular set of public institutions which constitute the necessary infrastructure of a nation-state, and second, the controlled expression in political life of the phenomenon of nationalism (Rocker 1939). Regarding developing states adopting different patterns of political systems Shills talked of five categories: political democracy, tutelary democracy, modernizing oligarchy, totalitarian oligarchy and traditional oligarchy (Shills 1962).
On a number of Afro-Asian countries giving up democratic forms of government and taking to totalitarianism David Apter thought of two different developmental sequences for traditional societies, depending on (a) the type of government they had and (b) the value system they had inherited at the time of their entering into the process of modernization. Apter also thought of the possibilities of developing societies setting up modernizing autocracies, military oligarchies, or any other complex patterns of political modernization (Apter 1965).

4- Political Development as Administrative and Legal Development

Political development here means organization building. Indeed, the concept of political development as organization-building has a long history, and it underlies the philosophy of much of the more enlightened colonial practice. Historically, when the Western nations came in contact with the societies of the rest of the world, one of the principal sources of tension was the discovery that such societies did not share the same Western concepts about law and the nature of public authority in the adjudication of private disputes. The European response was to search for legal redress, and the absence of a recognizable legal order made life uncomfortable for these early Europeans. The western mind, naturally turned to the law as a means for achieving order and predictability; and in doing so it established the notion that political development rested upon the existence of an orderly legal process. The realization of law and order thus called for bureaucratic structures (Riggs 1964).

During the colonial period the concept of development was closely associated with the introduction of rationalized institutions of administration. But the longer history of colonialism, has demonstrated that political development involves much more than the building of the authoritative structures of government. Also when such development moves conspicuously ahead of other aspects of social and political development, it may create imbalances in the system. They become impediments to nation-building in the full sense. The strengthening of public administration is important in any program of nation-building but that political development must also cover the non authoritative institutions of polity (Riggs 1964).
5- Political Development as Mass Mobilization and Participation

In the West this dimension of political development was closely associated with the widening of suffrage and the induction of new elements of the population into the political process. This process of mass participation meant a diffusion of decision-making, and participation brought some influence on choice and decision (Dahl 1971). In some of the new states, however, mass participation has not been coupled with an electoral process, but has been essentially a new form of mass response to elite manipulation. It should be recognized that even such limited participation has a role to play in nation-building, for it represents a means of creating new loyalties and a new feeling of national identity (Hapgood 1969).

6- Political Development as Democracy Building

This view considers that the political development is or should be synonymous with the establishment of democratic institutions and practices. Assumption here is that the only form of political development worthy of the name is the building of democracies. This view holds that development can only have meaning in terms of some form of ideology, whether democracy, communism, or totalitarianism. According to this view, development only has meaning in terms of the strengthening of some set of values.

As far as identification of democracy with development is concerned, there is substantial resistance within the social sciences to such an approach. Various scholars have believed that it would be easier for them in their relations with underdeveloped countries to talk about "development" rather than "democracy". Also there are those who are equally forthright in asserting that development is fundamentally different from democracy, and that the attempt to introduce democracy can be a positive liability to development.

By late sixties the focus in political development studies shifted from the infrastructural studies to an analysis of the will and capacity of political actors and institutions. Political development, in other words, was not an end product but a continuing process. A whole group of writers- Eisenstadt (1964), Huntington(1965), Holt
& Turner(1966), Nye (1967) and others-built their arguments along this particular line of thinking.

However, it was Samuel Huntington who played the most crucial role in liberating political development from socio-economic modernization. He challenged the idea that political development could be thought in terms of stages or as an unilinear process. Huntington's another important contribution to the literature of political development was that of political decay. Institutions decay and dissolve as well as grow and mature, was his main thesis (Huntington 1965). Huntington did not treat modernization in itself as a criterion for political development. For him criteria for the political development were the institutionalization of political organizations and procedures. In view of the crucial importance of the relationship between mobilization and participation, on the one hand, and the growth of political organizations, on the other, it is useful for many purposes to define political development as the institutionalization of political organizations and procedures. This concept liberates development from modernization. It can be applied to the analysis of political systems of any sort, not just modern ones. As a concept, it does not suggest that movement is likely to be in only one direction.

Institutions, according to Huntington, decay and dissolve as well as grow and mature. Most significantly, it focuses attention on the reciprocal interaction between the on-going social processes of modernization, on the one hand, and the strength, stability, or weakness of political structures. The strength of political organizations and procedures varies with their scope of support and their level of institutionalization. Scope refers simply to the extent to which the political organizations and procedures encompass activity in the society. Institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability. The level of institutionalization of any political system can be defined by the adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and coherence of its organizations and procedures. So the level can be measured by its adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and coherence, as discussed below in more details:
a) Adaptability-Rigidity

The more adaptable an organization or procedure is, it leads to more institutionalization. Adaptability is acquired organizational characteristic. It is, in a rough sense, a function of environmental challenge and age. The more challenges which have arisen in its environment and the greater its age, the more adaptable it is. Rigidity is more characteristic of young organizations than of old ones (Huntington 1965). Old organizations and procedures, however, are not necessarily adaptable if they have existed in a static environment. Success in adaptations to one environmental challenge paves the way for successful adaptation to subsequent environmental challenges. Some changes in environment, such as changes in personnel, are inevitable for all organizations. Other changes in environment may be produced by the organizations. So long as it is recognized that environments can differ in the challenges which they pose to organizations, the adaptability of an organization can in a rough sense be measured by its age.

Organizations and individuals differ significantly in their cumulative capacity to adapt to changes. Individuals usually grow up through childhood and adolescence without deep commitments to highly specific functions. The process of commitment begins in late adolescence. As the individual becomes more and more committed to the performance of certain functions, he finds it increasingly difficult to change those functions and to unlearn the responses which he has acquired to meet environmental changes. Organizations, on the other hand, are usually created to perform very specific functions. When the organization confronts a changing environment, it must, if it is to survive, weaken its commitment to its original functions.

b) Complexity-Simplicity

The more complicated an organization is, the more highly institutionalized it is. Complexity may involve multiplication of organizational subunits. In addition, an organization which has many purposes is better able to adjust itself to the loss of any purpose than an organization which has only one purpose. The diversified corporation is
obviously less vulnerable than that which produces one product for one market. The differentiation of subunits within an organization may or may not be along functional lines. If it is functional in character, the subunits themselves are less highly institutionalized than the whole of which they are a part. Changes in the functions of the whole, however, are fairly easily reflected by changes in the power and roles of its subunits. If the subunits are multifunctional, they have greater institutional strength, but they may also, for that very reason, contribute less flexibility to the organization as a whole. Hence, a political system with parties of "social integration", in Neumann's terms has less institutional flexibility than one with parties of "individual representation" (Neumann 1956). Relatively, primitive and simple traditional political systems are usually overwhelmed and destroyed in the modernization process. More complex traditional systems are more likely to adapt to these new demands. The simplest political system is that which depends on one individual. It is also, of course, the least stable. A political system with several different political institutions, on the other hand, is much more likely to adapt. The needs of one age may be met by one set of institutions; the needs of its own renewal and adaptation.

The classical political theorists opined similarly that the simple forms of government were most likely to degenerate; the "mixed state" was more likely to be stable. Both Plato and Aristotle suggested that the most practical state was the "Polity" combining the institutions of democracy and oligarchy. A constitution is better when it is composed of more numerous elements. Such a constitution is more likely to head off sedition and revolution. Polybius and Cicero elaborated this idea more explicitly. Each of the "good" simple forms of government - kingship, aristocracy, and democracy - is likely to degenerate into its perverted counterpart - tyranny, oligarchy, and mobocracy. Instability and degeneration can be avoided only by combining elements from all the good forms into a mixed state. Complexity produces stability (Huntington 1975).

c) Autonomy-Subordination

A third measure of institutionalization is the extent to which political organizations and procedures exist independently of other social grouping and methods of behaviour. In
a highly developed political system, political organizations have an integrity which they lack in less developed systems. In some measure, they are insulated from the impact of non-political groups and procedures. In less developed political systems, they are highly vulnerable to outside influences.

At its most concrete level, autonomy involves the relations between social forces, on the one hand, and political organizations, on the other. Social forces include the groupings of men for social and economic activities: families, clans, work groups, churches, ethnic and linguistic groupings. Political institutionalization, in the sense of autonomy, means the development of political organizations and procedures which are not simply expressions of the interests of particular social groups. Political procedures, like political organizations, also have varying degrees of autonomy. A highly developed political system has procedures to minimize, if not to eliminate, the role of violence in the system and to restrict to explicitly defined channels the influence of wealth in the system. Political organizations and procedures which are vulnerable to non-political influences from within the society are also usually vulnerable to influences from outside the society. They are easily penetrated by agents, groups, and ideas from other political systems. Thus, a coup d'etat in one political system can easily "trigger", a coup d'état in other less-developed political systems (Huntington 1965).

The complexity of a political system contributes to its autonomy by providing a variety of organizations and positions in which individuals are prepared for the highest offices. Thus the political system assimilates new social forces and new personnel without sacrificing its institutional integrity. In a political system which lacks such defenses, new men, new viewpoints, and new social groups may replace each other at the core of the system with bewildering rapidity.

d) Coherence-Disunity

The more unified and coherent an organization is, the more highly institutionalized it is; the greater the disunity of the organization, the less its institutionalization. Some measure of consensus, of course, is a prerequisite for any social group. An effective organization requires, at a minimum, substantial consensus on the functional boundaries
of the group and on the procedures for resolving disputes on issues which come up within those boundaries. Non-participants or those only sporadically and marginally participant in the system do not have to share the consensus and usually, in fact, do not share it to the same extent as the participants (Huntington 1975). Autonomy becomes a means to coherence, enabling the organization to develop a spirit and style which become distinctive marks of its behaviour. Autonomy also prevents the intrusion of disruptive external forces. The problems of creating coherent political organizations are difficult.

According to Huntington, social and economic change "extends political consciousness, multiply political demands, broaden political participation. These changes undermine traditional sources of political authority and traditional political institutions; they enormously complicate the problems of creating new bases of political legitimacy and effectiveness. The rates of social mobilization and the expansion of political participation are high; the rates of political organization and institutionalization are low. The result is a political instability and disorder (Huntington 1965). In short, political stability will be harmed by social mobilization, unless the latter is accompanied by economic development. If economic development does not provide sufficient opportunities and benefits, political participation will increase in order to demand them. If political participation is not accompanied by political institutionalization, political instability will result. As long as the political system is moving in the direction of greater adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherence, institutionalization and political development are taking place. But if, on the other hand, there is the expression of rigidity, simplicity, subordination, and disunity the political system is definitely heading towards political decay. It was Pye who identified these crises as crisis of identity, legitimacy, participation, integration, and distribution on the basis of his study of England where these crises seemed to have developed and tided over, in exactly this order, but conceded that they could develop in different countries in different sequences.

7- Political Development as a Part of Multi-dimensional Social Change

According to this point of view, all forms of development are related, development is much the same as modernization, and it takes place within a historical context in which influences from outside the society impinge on the processes of social change just as
change in the different aspects of a society – the economy, the polity and social order all impinge on each other (Binder 1971).

There are other possible interpretations of political development – for example, the view common in many former colonies that development means a sense of national self-respect and dignity in international affairs, or the view more common in advanced societies agreed to by Lucian Pye that political development should refer to a post nationalism era when the nation-state will no longer be the basic unit of political life.

Lucian Pye (1965) was among the pioneers to analyse the concept of political development in depth. In his earlier writings Pye thought of political development in terms of “cultural diffusion, and adapting, fusing, and adjusting old patterns of life to new demands”. (Pye 1965). Pye was able to evolve what he regarded as “the key elements of political development”. The sign of political development could be traced, according to him at three different levels:

i) With respect to the population as a whole,

ii) With respect to the level of governmental and general systemic performance,

iii) With respect to the organization of the polity (Pye and Verba: 1965).

In other words, there is a greater involvement of the masses in a developing political system. This leads to a greater sensitivity on the part of the people to the principles of equality and a wider acceptance of universalistic laws. Secondly, with political development there develops a greater capacity in the political system to manage public affairs, control controversy, or cope with popular demands. An undeveloped political system which does not have the creative and participatory support of the masses naturally is not very effective in carrying them along with it. Finally with regard to the organization of the political system, a developing political system implies greater structural differentiation, functional specificity, and integration of the participating institutions (Pye 1965). Lucian Pye’s advice was to search for the characteristics of equality, capacity, and differentiation in a developing system and determine the degree of
their advancement. The first broadly shared characteristic which is noted is a general spirit or attitude toward equality. Pye considers that political development does involve mass participation and popular involvement in political activities. Participation may be either democratic or a form of totalitarian mobilization, but the key consideration is that subject should become active citizens. Pye's equality means that laws should be of a universalistic nature, applicable to all and more or less impersonal in their operation. Finally, equality means that recruitment to political office should reflect achievement standards of performance and not the inscriptive consideration of a traditional social system.

A second major theme which Pye ponders over is the capacity of a political system. In a sense capacity is related to the outputs of the political system and extent to which the political system can affect the rest of the society and economy. Capacity is also closely associated to governmental performance and the conditions which affect such performance. More specifically, capacity entails first of all the sheer magnitude, scope and scale of political and governmental performance. Developed systems are presumed to be able to do a lot more and touch upon a far wider variety of social life than less developed systems can. Secondly, capacity means effectiveness and efficiency in the execution of public policy. Finally Pye considers capacity as related to rationality in administration and a secular orientation toward policy.

The third important theme which runs through Pye's writings is that of differentiation and specialization. This is particularly true in the analysis of institutions and structures. Thus, this aspect of development involves first of all the differentiation and specialization of structures. Offices and agencies tend to have their distinct and limited function, and there is an equivalent of a division of labour within the realm of government. With differentiation there is also, of course, increased functional specificity of the various political roles within the system. And, finally, differentiation also involves the integration of complex structures and processes. In recognizing these three dimensions of equality, capacity, and differentiation as lying at the heart of the development process, Pye does not mean to suggest that they necessarily fit easily together. On the contrary, historically, the tendency has usually been that there are acute
tensions between the demands for equality, the requirements for capacity, and the processes of greater differentiation. Pressure for greater equality can challenge the capacity of the system, and differentiation can reduce equality by stressing the importance of quality and specialized knowledge. Pye views that development is clearly not unilinear, nor is it governed by sharp and distinct stages, but rather by a range of problems that may arise separately or concurrently. In seeking to pattern these different courses of development and to analyze the different types of problems, it is useful to note that the problems of equality are generally related to the political culture and sentiments about legitimacy and commitment to the system; the problems of the capacity are generally related to the performance of the authoritative structures of government, and the questions of differentiation touch mainly on the performance of the non authoritative structures and the general political process in the society at large.

Fred W. Riggs tried to incorporate the entire thinking on political development from Almond through Lucian Pye to Eisenstadt and Huntington in the building up of his own scheme. Political institutions, according to him, were matters of technology rather than of culture. Taking up Lucian Pye’s developmental syndrome, consisting of equality, capacity and differentiation, Riggs thought that equality, reflecting the extent to which the members of the polity had a chance to participate in the shaping of its policies and to share in the benefits secured by their implementation, and capacity, reflecting the ability of a political and administrative system to adopt collectively authorized goals and to implement them, were to move on together. However, if the polity was not sufficiently differentiated, both equality and capacity would become irrelevant (Riggs 1964).

The Princeton series on political development has a more elaborate conceptual scheme, and is hard to place in any of the categories listed above (Leonard Binder, James S. Coleman, Joseph LaPalombara, Lucian W. Pye, Sidney Verba, Myron Weiner 1971). The three developmental dimensions, equality, capacity, and differentiation, are related to five problems, or crises: identity, legitimacy, political participation, penetration, and distribution. It is difficult to see how the three developmental dimensions could be “optimized”. The notion of equality is to broadly define that it ceases to mean very much. The dimensions also differ markedly in their nature: equality indicates a demand;
capacity refers to output, or possibly to a relation between output and demand; differentiation, a structural concept, is much less directly linked to demand or output than the other two. Some of the authors are aware that capacity has claims to be considered more basic than the other two dimensions. The problems, or crises, also give rise to misgivings. Why should there be five of them instead of three, four, six, or any other number (Rostow 1960), (identity, authority, equality) (Pye 1965), (identity, legitimacy, penetration, participation, integration, distribution). Finally, as the authors admit, there may be an overlap not merely between crises but also between the crises and the dimensions; for instance it may be difficult to distinguish between the successful passing of a penetration crisis and an increase of government capacity.

As we scan the literature on political development, we find a growing emphasis being laid on the capability of the political system and effectiveness of the ruling elite. For Binder and Princeton series, political development is a multidimensional syndrome of governmental capacity, differentiation, and equality.

Notwithstanding the plethora of literature available on the term "political development" it is a tough challenge situating the ongoing process of political development in any one of the category listed above. Political development in Azerbaijan has taken place in the aftermath of the disintegration of erstwhile Soviet Union. Factors like Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, political instability, Soviet legacy, personality driven polity etc have contributed towards shaping the course of political development in Azerbaijan. Political development in Azerbaijan, in a nutshell, has been guided and influenced by the local circumstances and challenges specific to the country.

Theories of Political Development and the Case of Azerbaijan

The process of political consolidation in Azerbaijan has occurred largely under the auspices of an emerging system best described as ‘presidential monarchy’ or Semi-authoritarian regime (Ottaway 2003). This has taken place following years of political turmoil and the eventual, though gradual, re-establishment of such institutions of the state as the parliament, the bureaucracy, and the presidency. Both constitutionally and
practically, the presidency has emerged as the real fountain of power in Azerbaijani politics, and, in the process, President Heydar Aliyev became indispensable to the political system. Significant accomplishments in the fields of foreign policy and economics, as well as the elimination of actual and potential rivals in the armed forces and elsewhere greatly enhanced Aliyev's powers. He groomed his son as the country's next Chief Executive.

State-building and political consolidations are two mutually reinforcing processes. State-building is the process whereby the various institutions of the state are actually created and made operational. Political consolidation takes state-building one step further and occurs in relation to society. It is the process through which state institutions make themselves operational in relation to the different layers and groups within society. The Azerbaijani state has been able to reconstruct and consolidate itself within the context of a largely depoliticized and demoralized society that is still suffering from the effects of war with Armenia and rapidly declining standards of living. Fragile, indeed fluid, state institutions initially paved the way for the rise of powerful political personalities, one of whom, Heydar Aliyev, assumed the presidency and in turn gave shape to the emerging institutional arrangements of the state. A presidential monarchy of sorts has thus emerged, resting on a social contract according to which society's political acquiescence is guaranteed by a cease-fire with Armenia, the establishment of law and order in Baku and elsewhere, and promises of vast riches through future oil exports. Although the state is far from governing with total impunity, the difficult economic predicaments within which the Azeri people find themselves give state leaders more leeway than otherwise would have been possible. Political consolidation, meanwhile, has assumed a decidedly personality tone in Azerbaijan, with Aliyev dominating the state and personifying its larger relations with society. In Azerbaijan as elsewhere, it is a given condition that the state may not, indeed, be a single actor, with multiple internal interests and Balkanized factions pursuing more or less different agendas. Ultimately, what is important is to examine the state's ability to affect change and to exert power-rooted in its cohesiveness and relative autonomy-in relation to social actors and groups. An otherwise powerless state may still retain sufficient power to govern over a society with even less of an ability
to muster up political resistance due to its own internal predicaments. A similar situation exists in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's geopolitical and international powers may not amount to much, especially in so far as regional power-brokers such as Russia, Turkey, and Iran are concerned. But within the country itself, the state is indeed powerful, in some instances even paramount.

Internationally or even regionally, the Azerbaijani state may not have enough clout always to get its way. But in relation to Azerbaijani society, the state has indeed triumphed. It is not at all certain, of course, that the state's primacy over society will indefinitely remain in effect. For the time being, however, it is the order of the day. The potential for untold riches accruing from oil revenues is only likely to strengthen the state's hand in relation to society. It is within this context that the on-going and entwined processes of state-building and political consolidation are taking place. The collapse of the Soviet system brought significant disruptions to both social and political arena. On the one hand, it destroyed the old mechanisms of while on the other hand, it threw off the rhythm and routine to which society had become accustomed for more than seventy years. It took several years for both the state and society to rebuild and reconstitute themselves, an endeavour in which the state succeeded faster. Society had to contend first with the war in Nagorno-Karabakh (generally dated from 1988 to 1994) and its lingering effects, still readily manifest today, as far away as in Baku. Having reached a meaningful level of cohesiveness in its institutional make-up and its policy preferences (Nordlinger 1987), the state has been able to act in relative insularity from societal pressures. But anarchy followed Azerbaijan's independence. It directly shaped the course of the events that followed, the rise and fall of various contenders for power, and the basis upon which most Azeri state institutions are currently based. On August 30, 1991, Azerbaijan's Communist regime, headed by Ayaz Mutalibov, declared its independence. Only a few days earlier, Mutalibov had declared his support for the coup in Moscow that had sought to restore the dying Soviet Union. Azerbaijan's Communist Party was dissolved within a matter of days, but the presidential elections, held within a week of independence, signaled a near-complete continuation of the old political order: Mutalibov was elected as Azerbaijan's new President by 98.5% of the valid votes cast (Swietochowski 1994).
Even prior to independence, the steady disintegration of the USSR had unleashed three dynamics that greatly shaped the course of the coming events. These included a rapid rise in volatile ethno-nationalist sentiments in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and the Azeri region of Nagorno-Karabakh, whose population was made up mostly of ethnic Armenians; a concomitant and steady rise in the appeal of the newly-formed Popular Front Party (PF), around which many Azeris, especially in the middle classes and from intellectual circles, began to gather; and a relatively large scale transfer of arms and ammunition from departing, often undisciplined, Soviet troops to civilians. The combination of ethno-nationalism, a populist political party, and armed private militias proved quite inimical to the consolidation of any form of central authority. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its devastating consequences in both human lives and infrastructure was a product of, and in turn a catalyst for, the intensification of ethno-nationalist feelings on the part of all involved.

For Azeris, the human drama unfolding in Karabakh crystallized, albeit in a raw and unrefined form, a strong sense of national and ideological identity which for many decades had not been allowed to evolve. The rapid demise of the Soviet system only deepened the compelling nature of the long-dormant identity. The attack on Baku and indiscriminate killing of Azeri civilians by Soviet troops on January 20, 1990 ostensibly to protect the city's remaining Armenians from rioting mobs-only reinforced the nativist, emergent nationalism sweeping across the Republic. By the time independence came, President Mutilibov had already exhausted his legitimacy in the popular eye long ago, and his championing of Azeri nationalist interests was bought by few outside his immediate circle. In Baku, meanwhile, the streets belonged to the rising Popular Front. The PF's platform largely reflected the ideological dispositions of its founder, Abulfaz Elchibey, a proponent of pan-Turkism, with hopes of the political unity of all Turkic lands from China to the Balkans, and a typical representative of the intelligentsia (Kamrava 2001).

Elchibey was known for his closeness to Turkey, a preoccupation with Azeri compatriots in Iran, a somewhat moderate position on the conflict with Armenia, and a conciliatory attitude toward the nomenclature. With his administration paralysed by
internal bickering and simply unable to rule any longer, Mutalibov resigned from the presidency. A feeble attempt to retake the office the following May through extra-constitutional means proved fruitless, and he eventually fled to Moscow. In the June 1992 presidential elections that followed, Elchibey came out the victor; though only with 57% of the votes cast (Hiro1998). Elchibey's populist nationalism did win him important support among the intelligentsia and the middle classes, but it did not bestow him with either political common-sense or a knack for effective administration. In 1992 within a few months of his election, the new President pulled Azerbaijan out of the newly-formed Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). While catering to anti-Russian, nationalist sentiments, the pull-out from the CIS was symptomatic of Elchibey's neglect of larger, geopolitical concerns. Risking the ire of two of his powerful neighbours, Russia and Iran, Elchibey drew his country ever closer, commercially and politically, to Turkey and to other former Soviet republics. Russia now became all the more determined to lend a helping hand to Armenia, which in turn offset the modest territorial gains Azeri troops had made since Mutalibov's departure, in fact enabling Armenia eventually to occupy as much as 20% of Azerbaijan's territory.

In June 1993, Colonel Surat Husseinov, commander of one of the units in Ganje, Azerbaijan's second largest city, turned his forces away from Nagorno- Karabakh and started marching toward Baku. It did not take much for the coup to succeed. Elchibey resigned and handed power over to a care-taker civilian President long before the military column reached the capital. He had been in office barely a year. Elchibey's departure paved the way for the ascension of one of his chief rivals, Heidar Aliyev, formerly Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers. Aliyev won the new presidential elections held in October 1993, by a landslide. Colonel Husseinov became the Prime Minister. In hindsight, the elections can be seen as a means for the Azeri's to search for solutions to the seemingly insurmountable difficulties that confronted them at the time. Aliyev successfully sold his image as a problem-solver to a sizable segment of the population.

The reinforcing processes of state-building and political consolidation began in earnest with the presidency of Heidar. From October 1993, when Aliyev first came to
power, to December 1996, when the last of many attempts to kill the President was uncovered, political instability continued to wreak havoc on the Azerbaijani state. But each time there was a political crisis of some kind—whether in the form of a plot to assassinate the President or an attempted coup—Aliyev defused it and emerged stronger than before (Aliyeva 1995). By 1997, Aliyev firmly secured his hold on power. The President could now concentrate more of his attention on reforming existing state institutions to his liking or creating new ones from scratch. Aliyev appears to have pursued a three-pronged strategy to consolidate his political power. These included a series of skillful maneuvers in the areas of foreign policy, economics, and, of course, domestic politics. In the foreign policy arena, one of Aliyev’s first initiatives was to negotiate a cease-fire with Armenia in May 1994, under the auspices of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and to commit Azerbaijan to negotiations in preference over military action as the most realistic means of regaining Nagorno-Karabakh. This commitment to negotiations was based on a number of strategic and political considerations. Strategically, Aliyev realized that his army simply could not defeat the Armenians in the battlefield. Even if Azeri forces could score victories in scattered battles here and there, ultimately, Russia, with its own troublesome Muslim nationalities in Daghestan and Chechnya, would see to it that Azerbaijan’s gains were reversed. Moreover, by relying on negotiations as opposed to warfare, the potential for the emergence of a military hero with political ambitions—another Colonel Husseinov—would be minimalized. In the meanwhile, the President could purge the army of all potential or actual coup plotters— as he did extensively in 1994 and 1995—without exposing the country to further risk of military defeat. Just as important for the President must have been the economic costs of the war, with an estimated 70% of the national budget devoted to defense expenditures in 1993, the year of Aliyev’s election (Kechichian and Karasik 1995). The country’s already taxed economy could ill afford this level of spending on the armed forces for any length of time. Consistent with a commitment to negotiations with Armenia were a series of other diplomatic initiatives designed to strengthen both Azerbaijan’s strategic significance and Aliyev’s domestic position. With the backing and encouragement of the United States, Azerbaijan flung open its doors to American investors and oil companies, having determined that economic development

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21
could best be achieved through relations with the advanced capitalist economies of Western Europe and the US. A similar cultural orientation is also being subtly advocated by the government, emphasizing the European heritage of Azerbaijan, ostensibly as a mechanism to keep those with Islamic tendencies in check.

Economy closely connected with the drive to expand commercial ties with the US and Europe has been Azerbaijan's dire economic circumstances since independence, especially up until the mid-1990s. It was not until after a year in office that the President could turn his attention to the economy, initiating several measures that finally put a halt to its downward spiral. Close commercial and diplomatic cooperation between Baku and Washington serves the interests of both parties, as the United States can also use Azerbaijan as a base for keeping an eye on Iran and, to a lesser extent, Russia. On the economic front broadly, the government has sought radically to reduce the rate of monthly inflation, speed up the privatization process and to sell off public enterprises through a voucher system; enforce financial discipline on enterprises by enforcing strict financial conditions; introduce tax reform and institute new taxes, such as value added tax, personal income tax, and corporate profit tax; reform the financial sector through the establishment of accounting and auditing standards, prudential regulations, and the like; and abolish the state's monopoly over the supply of equipment and material. In 1995, Azerbaijan received what was to become the first of a number of loans from the World Bank. Through these loans, the Bank hopes to be focusing on institutional and infrastructural development aimed at broad based growth, employment creation, and poverty alleviation. The World Bank also, in collaboration with the IMF (International Monetary Fund), maintains an active macroeconomic dialogue to ensure that future oil revenues do not result in adverse production incentives or income distribution effects on the private sector led development it is supporting. Like its sister republics across the Caspian, Azerbaijan is banking on the flow of revenues accrued from the exploitation of oil into its economy in the near future.

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Domestic Politics, Foreign and Economic policy have provided the context within which the process of institution building took shape. While the Constitution is tremendously important in outlining the basic institutions of the state and their functions, its practical implementation and interpretation depends overwhelmingly on the actual balance of power among the various institutions of the state, a balance that had already begun to emerge in favour of the presidency at the time the document was drafted. To begin with, the then President himself presided over the Commission charged with drafting the Constitution, and many of the articles related to the powers of the executive (99 to 124) seem to reflect Aliyev's own preferences. At the same time, in addition to the powers officially granted to him by the Constitution, by 1995 the President had already emerged as the dominant power-broker inside the country (Ochs 1996).

With the overall framework of the state and his own actions and powers legitimized by the Constitution, he now set out to ensure that those institutions on which the state relied for power were not only pliant but, indeed, supportive of his own hold on power. The armed forces, the bureaucracy, and the legislature were the most important of such institutions. Political consolidation has taken place largely under the personal guidance and control of Heidar Aliyev. Aliyev initiated, and largely succeeded in, the process of state-building. From 1993, when he first came to power, to the end of his first term in office in 1998, Azerbaijan was transformed from quasi-state into a full-blown, viable political entity, surpassing most expectations. The President achieved this by first ending the war with Armenia. With the help of the World Bank, he then gave some order to the economy by bringing the spiraling inflation under control and stabilizing prices. He also neutralized the army and purged it of elements with their own political agendas. With the pre-conditions for political consolidation thus taken care of, the President then set out to institutionalize his rule both constitutionally and systemically through the New Azerbaijan Party and the bureaucracy.

The political process and the system that have emerged as a result have certain particular characteristics. Politics, for example, has become largely non-ideological,

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revolving instead around personality contests and the real meaning of democracy. The state, also, keeps grappling with issues of political capacity and agenda, succeeding in some areas—e.g. internal security—but not in others—the provision of utilities, for example. The political system that has thus emerged in Azerbaijan is somewhat difficult to classify. On paper, the Constitution outlines a system that is democratic, republican, has checks and balances, and a strong executive who is, nevertheless, ultimately accountable to the Constitutional Court and the legislature (Bremmer, and R. Taras 1997). In practice, however, the executive's relative constitutional strengths in relation to other branches of the state have turned into the presidency's domination of the whole system. The judiciary's independence is undermined by the President's ability to remove judges and the Prosecutor General from office.

The parliament, already dominated by the President's party and other independent supporters, embarks on few politically contentious initiatives of its own and often simply passes the bills proposed by the executive after a perfunctory debate. It is difficult not to classify such a system as some hybrid akin to a presidential monarchy. The opposition, meanwhile, has been all but shut out of the political process. The opposition has had a difficult time mounting serious challenges to the government on ideological or practical grounds. Apart from making subtle references to pan-Turkic issues, the Popular Front, like most of the rest of the opposition, has been robbed of a compelling political platform around which to gather support. Politics, in essence, has become non-ideological. Instead, it has become personal. And the only person with the opportunity, the power, and the facilities to project himself is the President. There is, of course, a direct correlation between the state's agendas and its capabilities. After years of turmoil and internal malaise, the Azeri state is only just beginning to acquire a meaningful measure of political capacity in relation to social forces and developments, and much of that is a result of the wholesale adoption of rentier economic policies (using oil as rent) and assistance from the World Bank. With state capacity only partially developed, the political agendas set have been modest and their accomplishments even more so. So far, in fact, the state has not been fully able to set new and ambitious agendas of its own. Instead, much of the state's energy has been devoted to mollifying the adverse
consequences of the circumstances into which it was born. By and large, the state's initiatives and agendas have been reactive rather than proactive. But, even in reacting to the conditions of its birth, the state has only completely succeeded in restoring law and order; there are other festering wounds that are still not fully cured. So far, the state has succeeded in fulfilling just enough of its agendas necessary to consolidating itself. With the project of political consolidation satisfactorily completed to the liking of the state's current leaders, it is unclear when and if they will tackle the remaining unfinished agendas head-on.

In the first years of independence, central authority had been weakened by a series of developments from both within and from the outside that had largely taken away its ability to rule. Internally, intensifying ethnic tensions, lawlessness, hyperinflation, and lack of a predictable pattern of civil-military relations stunted the birth of indigenous political institutions, which were themselves at the mercy of competing, ambitious politicians. Externally, the collapse of the Soviet Union and Russia's subsequent role as a regional hegemon, Armenia's occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh district, and rivalries between Iran, Turkey, and Russia only intensified the chaos that prevailed inside Azerbaijan. Among other things, the turmoil facilitated the rise of a number of ambitious individuals, one of whom, Heydar Aliyev, was able to take advantage of the unfolding events and steadily rise to the pinnacle of power once again. With the institutions of the state firmly in place, the state appears to have prioritized its agendas into three categories: economic, diplomatic, and political. Most important are a deepening of economic reforms, accruing greater benefits through economic rents, and attending to the ills that continue to plague an economy burdened with infrastructural inadequacies and a million refugees. Of secondary importance is the Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, the solution to which lies in economic power and regional clout—both long-term developments rather than military prowess. Least important is political development, however, that may be defined. The nascent political system is indeed somewhat democratic, but only very partially. There is a free press, and technically election can lead to a turn-over of office-holders. But the reality of political life is more complex. The President, Ilham Aliyev clearly dominates the state—in many ways.
The proposed study has followed historical, descriptive, analytical, and comparative methods. The study mainly depends on secondary sources in English language. However, available original sources have also been used. The study is based on several official reports, documents, government rules and regulations, books and journals, NGO reports, government agreements, and various international agency reports etc. Articles which have been published in various popular newspapers and websites have also been consulted.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter deals with the theoretical aspects of the political developments. The events of political development in Azerbaijan will be studied in the light of above theories.

This study is intended to analyse political developments in a sensitive area of Transcaucasia i.e. Azerbaijan since the collapse of Soviet Union during the period, 1991-2005. It is a known fact that the Soviet collapse has created enormous political instability on the territory of former Soviet Union. There have been multi-dimensional political developments related to new evolving political system in Azerbaijan relating to economy, security and foreign policy.

The purpose of this study is to discuss various aspects of political developments in Azerbaijan during the proposed period, which had been marked by many important phases of a newly independent state. The study aims at detailed analysis of all aspects of political developments taking place in Azerbaijan. In Azerbaijan, the political developments have already moved towards pre-Soviet situation prevailing in colonial era. Different external powers including Russia and the US are engaged in reviving their influence in Transcaucasia in general and Azerbaijan in particular due to rich economic consideration around the Caspian Sea. The economic interest is the most important component of rivalry among different powers in Azerbaijan. However, it seems that Iran, of which Azerbaijan had been an integral part about two centuries ago, has a different kind of political interest other than the economic interest in that country. Iran is already enjoying a good relation with Azerbaijan’s arch-enemy Armenia. In such a situation the Iranian political relation with Azerbaijan is more significant due to past legacy.
At the same time Turkey, which has been a close ally of the NATO, is also trying to expand its influence in Azerbaijan due to its cultural and linguistic identity. This is the reason, why the idea of Pan-Turkism had emerged on theoretical level immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Following this development, Iran had become quite scared as pan-Turkism is a historical threat to the sovereignty of Iran, because about half of the pre divided historic Azerbaijan is still an integral part of Iran.

In the prevailing situation the political development in Azerbaijan is going to be basically influenced by the development in Nagorno-Karabakh region as this conflict has been a major source of political upheavals for the last one and a half decade. At the same time in the field of foreign policy Azerbaijan’s position will depend on the developments in Russia as well as in Armenia. So far as the conceptual framework of this study is concerned, it is intended to seek the role of institutions, political parties, civil society, NGOs and media in the process of political development in Azerbaijan.

The second chapter deals with the historical background of political developments in Azerbaijan and the problem at hand. Here, the idea is to link the happenings of the distant past to the present.

The third chapter Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Its Impact on the Political Developments in Azerbaijan, 1991-2005 discusses the turbulent years of Azerbaijan’s transition from Soviet system to independence and democracy. The discussion will mainly include the flare up of Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and its impact on the political development in Azerbaijan. The focus here is to throw light on those incidents during transition that helped in the beginning of skewed political development process in Azerbaijan.

The fourth chapter Evolution of Constitutional Democracy in Azerbaijan, 1991-2005 discusses various aspects of political development in Azerbaijan. To assess the progress of political development here and put the achievements in proper perspective, following parameters will be taken up for study:

- Constitutional development
- Political institutions
• Elections and participation

• Political parties and civil society

The fifth chapter Challenges to the Political Developments in Azerbaijan outlines those factors which have marred the process of political developments in the country and continue to pose challenges for the future. The authoritarian nature of polity, shaky economic foundation, lack of mature civil society organisations, growing political apathy among common people, still unresolved Nagorno-karabakh dispute and the geopolitical dilemma of Azerbaijan, all pose potential challenges to the political development process here.

The findings and suggestions will be outlined in the form of conclusion in the last chapter. The work under consideration has portrayed the trajectory through which the process of political development has undergone since independence in Azerbaijan.