

The Devil is in the Details: Framing in Ethnic Conflicts

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I use frame analysis to compare two de facto states, Kosovo and Abkhazia. Frame analysis has been used to study social movements and can be used to evaluate mobilization in ethnic conflicts but they have not been used to examine ethnic conflicts in de facto states, particularly Kosovo and Abkhazia. However, Kosovo's independence is recognized by the international community while Abkhazia's is not. I will use frame analysis to examine the micro-processes of the two de facto states' ethnic conflicts in order to examine the how actors mobilize and demobilize the masses, to identify those actors and the constraints they face when mobilizing.

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INTRODUCTION

Lately there has been more discussion in regards to de facto states and their international recognition. This is due to the events that have been taking place over the past several months between Russia and Ukraine in regards to Crimea, an autonomous republic. This has the international community in a flurry and is in no way a new discussion. It has brought up past discussions about self-determination and territorial integrity in regards to autonomous republics turned de facto states. Whether or not a de facto state is deemed a case of self-determination for the de facto state or a breach of the territorial integrity of the state the de facto state is breaking away from, affects its recognition by the international community. Who is the international community? There is no concrete answer to this question since describing it as the members of N.A.T.O. or U.N. Security Council or even the Allied Powers of WWII does not suffice. For the sake of this text, when mentioning the so-called international community, I am referring to United States, the more influential European Union states, and their allies. Recognition from them legitimizes a de facto state.

De facto states more often than not have been involved in violent conflict with the state they broke away from. Their stories are also often not viewed on their own and are lumped in with the narrative of the state they broke away from. De facto states have their so-called *ten minutes of fame* in the media and then the world forgets about them, some do not even have the luxury of those *ten minutes*. Even worse is that de facto states are often located in already struggling areas and their de facto status does not improve these already difficult conditions. It is especially worse for those who are unrecognized by the international community who end up in isolation. They often have to rely on support from patron states in order to survive. De facto states that are isolated from the rest of the world, are stuck in the purgatory of the international system of states, striving for recognition from the international community. The “hope of achieving international recognition” has an

impact on “the kinds of statehood that emerge” and this motivates them to build infrastructure and attempt some semblance of a free and recognized state.¹ This is often interrupted by other states interfering in their elections and foreign relations.

In this paper I will use frame analysis in order to compare two de facto states, Kosovo and Abkhazia. Kosovo is located in the Western Balkans and is recognized by the international community and the majority of E.U. states as being independent from Serbia even though the Serbian government does not. The international community argues it is a case of self-determination. However, the international community perceives Abkhazia as violating the territorial integrity of Georgia and therefore it is unrecognized. Abkhazia is only recognized as independent from Georgia by Russia, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Both had had varying degrees of autonomy over the years and through various governments. They were both also involved in ethnic conflict and wars with their former governing states, both of which drew support from other countries during the wars.

Frame analysis has been used to study social movements and to evaluate mobilization in ethnic conflicts but have not been used as often to examine ethnic conflicts in de facto states, particularly Kosovo and Abkhazia. I will use frame analysis to examine the micro-processes of mobilization in the ethnic conflicts that had taken place during the 1990s in two de facto states. I would like to examine the how actors mobilized and demobilized the masses in the context of the two conflicts, to identify those actors and the constraints they face in mobilizing. Frame analysis is used to look at episodes that have already happened and is not often used to examine current events.

First I will examine at how frame analysis was developed and how it has evolved into a tool for examining mobilization and particularly ethnic conflicts. Second I will compare the historical backgrounds of Kosovo and Abkhazia and identify who makes “frames” and

¹Nina Caspersen, *Unrecognized States: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Modern International System* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), Kindle Location 1684.

how it is determined that should be the ones making them. In the final chapter I will apply the frame analysis tools to the cases of Kosovo and Abkhazia in order to look at the mobilization processes of the two conflicts. My limitations are that I am not a native speaker of the region and do not have access to speeches from that era so I must depend on historical texts from experts on the region. This analysis strives to understand the micro-processes of ethnic conflicts involving de facto states. I strive to answer the following: how are the actors who make the “frames” determined, how actors in ethnic conflicts organize consensus, how people in violent ethnic conflicts are driven to take arms, and whether there is any connection between these factors and whether a de facto state is recognized by the international community.

CHAPTER 1: FRAME ANALYSIS

1.1 Origins

The earliest use of “frames” was during the 1950s in order to analyze “epistemology and animal behavior.”² Their usage has since evolved and is now used in other “areas of social inquiry” such as “linguistics, social psychology, media studies, and policy studies.”³ The use of ‘frames’ has expanded since its first usage and has been further developed in order to analyze social movements. ‘Frames’ are concepts that are not static, but fluid and can be manipulated by actors, which is why they are important to understanding mobilization and demobilization in ethnic conflicts. Frame analysis can be used to examine the details and the “impacts of specific frames on international policy and state relations,” that other types of analysis overlook.⁴ ‘Frames’ have been used to analyze social movements and to evaluate conflicts but have not been used as often to examine ethnic conflicts in de facto states, particularly Kosovo and Abkhazia. In this section I will discuss how frames are developed and by whom, and how frame analysis can be used to study ethnic conflicts.

Sociologists David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, define the term ‘frame’ as being “an interpretative schema that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action.”⁵ In other words ‘frames’ give value to experiences, even everyday ones, and create perceptions. In 1974 sociologist Erving Goffman, had further developed ‘frames’ for studying social behavior and referred to them as “frameworks” of perceptions.⁶ He argued

²John A. Noakes and Hank Johnston, "Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective," *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective*, Hank Johnston and John A. Noakes, eds. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), Kindle Location 48-816.

³Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest*, Kindle Location 89.

⁴Marie-Eve Desrosiers, "Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies." *Ethnopolitics* 11 (2012): 1-23.

⁵Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest*, Kindle Location 90

⁶Erving Goffman. *Frame Analysis: An Essay On the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 21.

that ‘frameworks’ allow us to see “how individuals and groups come to define their environment.”⁷ ‘Frameworks’ aid us in examining how social perceptions develop. Goffman differs from more contemporary theories of frame analysis in that his ‘frameworks’ are arranged in bottom to top structures with “primary frameworks” functioning as the base.⁸ When we think of the term ‘frame,’ the connotation is a picture frame which is the image evoked by John A. Noakes and Hank Johnston’s definition of ‘frames’ and not by Goffman’s. In their definition, ‘frames’ are like picture frames because they are used to draw focus to certain perceptions.

However, Goffman’s ‘frameworks’ are still relevant to the frame analysis of ethnic conflicts, particularly his ‘primary frameworks’ and ‘social frameworks,’ even though he “never applied his frame analysis to social movements or protest.”⁹ According to Goffman there are two categories of ‘primary frameworks,’ natural and social. “Natural frameworks” are not influenced by anyone, while “social frameworks” are those that are influenced by others on purpose, meaning they are so-called “guided doings.”¹⁰ These are the frameworks of focus in media and conflict studies because they are unnatural. Within ‘social frameworks’ or ‘guided doings’ there are two types: the blatant “manipulation of the natural world” within the boundaries of ‘primary frameworks’ of course and the other refers to the “special worlds in which actors can become involved” or the man-made ‘frameworks.’¹¹ Goffman uses playing checkers as an example of the two types of ‘social frameworks’: the controlling of the ‘natural world’ would be the actual moving of the pieces, while the rules of the game and the strategy behind the moves are an example of an entirely man-made ‘social

⁷George Ritzer, Gary Allen Fine, and Phillip Manning. "Erving Goffman." *The Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 457-485.

⁸Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, 21.

⁹Hank Johnston, “Comparative Frame Analysis,” *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective*, Hank Johnston and John A. Noakes, eds. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), Kindle Location 6047.

¹⁰Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay On the Organization of Experience*, 23.

¹¹Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay On the Organization of Experience*, 24.

framework.’ In ethnic conflict, both are used by “social movement entrepreneurs.”¹² They manipulate the ‘natural world,’ being the ethnic identities of their constituents and also construct brand new ‘frames’ of their own such as injustices.

Even though ‘primary frameworks’ act as foundations to our perceptions and belief systems, we are not always conscious of their application, despite this “we glance at nothing without applying” them.¹³ Even if people are aware of ‘primary frameworks’ they are often “unable to describe the framework with any completeness if asked” but this does not hinder them from fully functioning.¹⁴ An example of a ‘primary framework’ is a person’s ethnicity or cultural background, which functions as a foundation for some individual’s identities and in turn influences their perceptions. This makes them relevant to the study of ethnic conflicts because “the primary frameworks of a particular social group constitute a central element of its culture,” which of course plays an important role in ethnic conflicts.¹⁵ The key thing to remember about the functions of ‘primary frameworks’ is that they are the foundation or the “first concept needed” for other ‘frames’ to work with.¹⁶

1.2 Frame analysis and mobilization

‘Frames’ are important to understanding mobilization since they are used to draw attention to particular issues, identify who is to blame for said issues, and propose answers to the issues.¹⁷ Bert Klandermans examined ‘frames’ a “social-psychological” perspective and found that “mobilization attempts always contain two components,” “consensus

¹²Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 193.

¹³Johnston, *Comparative Frame Analysis*, Kindle Location 6065.

¹⁴Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 21.

¹⁵Johnston, *Comparative Frame Analysis*, Kindle Location 6065.

¹⁶Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay On the Organization of Experience*, 25.

¹⁷Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 156.

mobilization” and “action mobilization.”¹⁸ ‘Consensus mobilization’ is crucial to understanding the origins of ethnic conflict because it:

“is a process through which a social movement tries to obtain support for its viewpoints. It involves (a) a collective good, (b) a movement strategy, (c) confrontation with the opponent, (d) results achieved.”¹⁹

There have been different versions of this, which I will discuss in the following paragraph, but for the most they all follow the same basic schema. Without a ‘collective good’ people will be unwilling to participate, there has to be something in it for them. Value motivates people to back a certain ‘viewpoint’ but, as Klandermans argued, “if the value of the collective good is zero, the collective motive is zero.”²⁰ ‘Action mobilization’ is the *call to arms* or the process of actually getting people to act once consensus has been established. ‘Consensus mobilization’ and ‘action mobilization’ are separate processes and there can be no action if consensus over an issue has not been already established.

Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow went into even further detail and proposed that there are three “core functions of a *collective action frame*”: “diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational.”²¹ They argue that “collective action frames offer strategic interpretations of issues with intention of mobilizing people to act,” which falls under Klandermans’ ‘consensus mobilization’ umbrella.²² ‘Diagnostic framing’ pinpoints an issue, while ‘prognostic framing’ proposes a resolution, and ‘motivational framing’ are the call for action to address the issue. ‘Diagnostic’ and ‘prognostic framing’ are part of ‘consensus mobilization,’ while ‘action mobilization’ consists of ‘motivational framing.’ ‘Social mobilization entrepreneurs’ rely on these frames because it is actually more difficult to build consensus than we realize due to ‘primary frameworks,’ therefore it takes a lot of effort on

¹⁸Bert Klandermans, “Mobilization and Participation: Social-Psychological Expansions of Resource Mobilization Theory,” *American Sociological Review* 49 (1984): 583-600.

¹⁹Klandermans, *Mobilization and Participation*, 586.

²⁰Klandermans, *Mobilization and Participation*, 586.

²¹Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 157

²²Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 158

their part. We can see the importance of this in the millions of dollars U.S. presidential candidates spend on their campaigns, who argue, much to the dismay of supporters of campaign finance caps, that it takes that much effort to mobilize consensus. This shows us that mobilizing consensus, let alone mobilizing action, is not an easy task. ‘Diagnosis, prognosis, and motivational frames’ are critical to ethnic mobilization because they establish the issue and rally the masses around said issue, and then finally get them to take action. Benford and Snow argue that these are “core framing tasks” and that “by pursuing these core framing tasks, movement actors attend to the interrelated problems of ‘consensus mobilization’ and ‘action mobilization.’”²³

William Gamson’s “components” of ‘frames,’ which differ from Benford and Snow’s but still fall under Klandermans’ ‘consensus mobilization’ umbrella, are “identity, agency, and injustice.”²⁴ An ‘identity frame’ establishes the “we” and an ‘agency frame’ “recognizes” that there is an issue with the “them” and “encourages those in the “we” to become agents of their own history,” which is similar to how ‘diagnostic frames’ identify an issue and ‘prognostic frames’ propose a resolution.²⁵ Noakes and Johnston argue that, “there is considerable overlap between Gamson’s conception of a frame and Snow and Benford’s conception of a collective action frame” and consolidate the two except for “injustice frames,” which I will explain further in the last section.²⁶ Even though Benford and Snow are used more often than Gamson, his ‘frames’ “help us understand the less strategic aspects of framing, including, the construction of meaning by those on the receiving end of framing strategies.”²⁷

²³David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford. "Framing Processes And Social Movements: An Overview And Assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611-639.

²⁴Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 158.

²⁵Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 158.

²⁶Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 174.

²⁷Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 176.

1.3 Who constructs frames?

What type of actors can construct ‘frames’ and manipulate them? Political scientist and sociologist Sydney Tarrow referred to these “frame makers” of social movements as “social movement entrepreneurs.”²⁸ However, these ‘social movement entrepreneurs’ do not have total control of all ‘frames,’ especially since they are ‘frames’ are fluid and can also occur organically. According to Gamson and Meyer “social movement organizers regularly exaggerate the opportunities present in a particular situation in an effort to mobilize people to act.”²⁹ They also use “frame amplification” in order to draw focus to “various issues, events, or beliefs from the broader interpretive sweep of the movement.”³⁰ Since ‘collective action frames’ are not organic, they cannot exist without ‘social movement entrepreneurs.’ Considering that ‘primary frameworks’ act as foundations for other ‘frames,’ ‘frame makers’ in ethnic conflicts can use these to their advantage.

‘Frame makers’ do not only consist of ‘social movement entrepreneurs,’ they also consist of elites who can shape policy such as politicians. Political Scientist James N. Druckman conducted a study examining “who can frame” and whether the credibility of the actor has an effect on framing.³¹ He focused on how elites influence public opinion and wanted to find out whether or not elites faced many “constraints [when] using frames to influence and manipulate citizens’ opinions.”³² He wanted to find out “*when* an elite *can* and *cannot* successfully engage in framing.”³³ Whether an elite faces many constraints when constructing ‘frames’ in ethnic conflicts and if people prefer someone with more credibility, are concerns and Druckman’s study shows us that they do indeed face constraints and that

²⁸Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 185.

²⁹Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 60.

³⁰Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 208.

³¹James N. Druckman. "On The Limits Of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?." *The Journal of Politics* 63 (2001): 1041-1066.

³²Druckman, *On The Limits Of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?*, 1041.

³³Druckman, *On The Limits Of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?*, 1041.

people do prefer credibility. Druckman also makes the distinction between ‘framing’ and persuasion. He argues that “persuasion works by altering belief content” while “framing effects work by altering ‘the *importance* individuals attach to particular beliefs.”³⁴ It is especially important to notice the difference between the persuasion and framing, since persuasion involves actually changing someone’s opinion while framing in public opinion involves building on ‘primary frameworks.’ ‘Frame makers’ do not change people’s minds; they just build on beliefs and concepts that already there.

The significance of Druckman’s study to the frame analysis of ethnic conflicts is “that source credibility is not necessary for successful framing at least in terms of overall opinion” since “belief content” or the “primary frame” is already there.³⁵ This just further proves that ‘frame makers’ face obstacles to their mobilizing efforts. More importantly, the studies showed “that the frames worked through a distinct process from persuasion” and that frames differ from persuasion “because citizens delegate to credible elites for guidance.”³⁶ This means that a person who does not like a ‘framer maker’s’ political stance is most likely not going to be persuaded by that ‘frame maker’ and is most likely never going to agree with said ‘frame maker.’

Druckman’s study results further prove Klanderman’s argument that “rational individuals will not participate in the production of a collective good unless selective incentives motivate them to do so,” meaning that people do not join causes that they do not already have an interest in.³⁷ ‘Frame makers,’ regardless of whether they are a so-called elite or a ‘social movement entrepreneur,’ appeal to those that are seeking someone who shares their ideologies. In sum, people do not necessarily sit back and let elites and media outlets completely control their beliefs. There are definitely constraints on ‘frame makers’ and

³⁴Druckman, *On The Limits Of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?*, 1042.

³⁵Druckman, *On The Limits Of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?*, 1052.

³⁶Druckman, *On The Limits Of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?*, 1061.

³⁷Klandermans, *Mobilization and Participation*, 585.

individuals do have the ability to choose whose ‘frames’ they will follow. Effective ‘frame-maker’ consist of “charismatic leaders” who “can amplify frames and attract followers by the force of their commitment and personality.”³⁸

1.4 The devil is in the details: Framing in ethnic conflict

“Ancient hatreds” and “ethnicity run amok type arguments” are often used in reference to ethnic conflict, which marginalizes the situations and distances them, when in reality there is so much more to mobilization.³⁹ Frame analysis allows us to identify how people are mobilized based on ethnic lines and the types of frames they use to do this. Elite ‘frame makers’ in ethnic conflicts use ‘frames’ in order to “‘ethnicize’ circumstances and issues.”⁴⁰ Since ‘frames’ are fluid, those who create the ‘frame’ makers are not necessarily in complete control of them, which means that they must work hard to appeal to their constituents. It is difficult to mobilize consensus because “target audiences may not accept a movement’s motivational frame and never join a protest” even if “they understand the diagnosis and prognosis.”⁴¹ This is why ‘frame amplification’ is extremely important to mobilization in ethnic conflicts.

As I had mentioned in the previous section, ‘consensus mobilization’ consists of ‘diagnosis’ and ‘prognosis frames.’ These include the following ‘frames’: ‘injustice framing,’ “adversarial framing,” and “counter-framing,” which are crucial to understanding the details of ethnic mobilization.⁴² Originally proposed by Gamson, an ‘injustice frame’ “places the blame for grievances on the individuals or institutions that compose the “them” and sparks members of the “we” to respond.”⁴³ Despite Benford and Snow arguing, “that injustice frames are not found in all collective actions,” they do agree with Gamson in that they “are

³⁸Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 364.

³⁹Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 11.

⁴⁰Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 10.

⁴¹Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 185.

⁴²Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 12.

⁴³Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 158.

ubiquitous in political and economic movements.”⁴⁴ People are easily offended if they believe something is unfair especially in regards to “power inequalities,” “infringed upon collective entitlements to land or resources,” and discrimination based on ethnicity.⁴⁵ Through ‘injustice framing,’ ‘social movement entrepreneurs’ can manipulate resentment of injustice for political gain. ‘Injustice frames’ are an instrumental tool due to their ability to make inequality a group issue.

Gamson’s ‘adversarial frames’ are used to “exaggerate differences between ethnic groups” and make the opposing side the villain or antagonist.⁴⁶ This type of framing can be found in something as simple as sports rivalries and are important role to building consensus in ethnic conflicts. ‘Adversarial frames’ help develop ‘ethnic solidarity’ because they draw a line in the sand between the two groups that they cannot cross. Benford and Snow’s ‘counter-framing’ is used convince people their side is the *good* side and that they are bound to be victorious. As Klandermans had argued, people will mobilize if they believe that their side is capable of winning. While ‘adversarial framing’ makes a group’s opposition the villain, ‘counter-framing’ makes said group the protagonist heroes. In cases of ‘ethnic mobilization,’ “ethnic counter-framing” is also used to narrow “what people take to be plausible options for actions.”⁴⁷ The main purpose of ‘ethnic counter-framing’ is to make the people believe that their side, their ethnicity, is in the right by making the opposing ethnic group out as inferior and in the wrong. “Denial frames” are used to supplement ‘ethnic counter-framing’ and are used to make people believe that any other possible solutions to the issue as too uncertain.

⁴⁴Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 161.

⁴⁵Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 12.

⁴⁶Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 12.

⁴⁷Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 14.

Once consensus is established, framers employ ‘mobilization for action’ frames and these consist of “gravity framing” and “aptness framing.”⁴⁸ ‘Gravity frames’ build on the ‘consensus mobilization frames’ already in place and call for action by convincing people that they are in danger, and that this danger will only worsen if they fail to act. In ethnic conflicts ‘gravity frames’ are used to convince people that the other side wants to steal their “resources and land,” “exact violations or attack.”⁴⁹ Since the ‘consensus mobilization frames’ establish the enemy, ‘gravity frames’ establish the physical threats.

‘Aptness framing’ is used to “build positive expectations with regards to taking collective action.”⁵⁰ In other words, these are used to convince people that if they take action they are bound to be successful. In ethnic conflicts these frames are also used to convince people that their ethnicity is superior to the other, which gives them more likely to be victorious. ‘Aptness frames’ are also where framers “play on notions of honor, duty, and patriotism” in order to convince them to act.⁵¹ ‘Gravity framing’ was used by framers to convince Americans during the aftermath of the September 11th attacks that they were in danger of more attacks. Meanwhile, ‘aptness framing’ was used to convince them that an invasion was absolutely necessary. These frames are the key tools used by framers to escalate to violence in conflicts.

As we can see, the ‘injustice, adversarial, and counter-framing frames’ work congruently to mobilize consensus having successfully riled up the populations and laying down the framework for *action mobilization*. These ‘consensus mobilization frames’ answered people’s questions of the *who* and the *what*. They also demonstrated to us ‘frame makers’ know how to utilize these tools at their disposal. By using these frames, framers are able to “depersonalize” the situation, which is a key strategy in ethnic mobilization and

⁴⁸Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 14.

⁴⁹Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 14.

⁵⁰Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 15.

⁵¹Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 15.

maintaining the notion of the *other*.⁵² If people view the other side as having less humanity than them, then engaging in violent conflict is easier to do.

The use of frame analysis has considerably expanded since it was first developed in the 1950s and is now being used in conflict studies. It is vital to helping us better understand the ‘micro-processes’ of conflict. We now understand there are ‘primary frameworks’ that framers must consider when constructing their frames. More importantly, frame analysis shows us that we cannot change people’s frameworks but instead we must build on them. Despite what some may believe, people are not sheep and actually hold onto their beliefs which is why framers have to put forth a great deal of effort in their frames. ‘Consensus mobilization’ and ‘action mobilization’ frames help us better understand the reasoning behind the rhetoric of framers in conflicts and ethnic mobilization. In the following chapters I will apply these frameworks to the cases of the de facto states, Abkhazia and Kosovo, in order to examine who were the framers, how framers mobilized the people, how frames have affected their recognition or non-recognition in the international system.

⁵²Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 15.

CHAPTER 2: ETHNIC CONFLICT IN DE FACTO STATES

Abkhazia and Kosovo actually share many similarities. Abkhazia is located the South Caucasus and lies on the Black Sea, south of Russia and on the northwest border of Georgia. While Kosovo is landlocked and located in the Western Balkans, wedged between Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia, and Serbia. Abkhazia is 8,700 sq. km⁵³ and Kosovo is slightly bigger at 10,887 sq. km.⁵⁴ Both are small in area and roughly “the size of Delaware” one of the U.S.’ smallest states.⁵⁵ Abkhazia is also small in population: it had a population of 550,000 in 1991⁵⁶, and according to the Abkhazian census 216,000 in 2003 (also the most current figure available).⁵⁷ Kosovo is also bigger in population than Abkhazia with 1,859,203 (2014) consisting of 92% Albanian and 8% various others with Albanian and Serbian as their official languages.⁵⁸ There are more statistics available on Kosovo, who declared independence from Serbia in 2008, than Abkhazia, who declared independence from Georgia in 1999, which can be attributed to its international recognition as an independent republic.

2.1 Historical background: A comparison

Ethnic Abkhaz and Georgians are not related and their languages are also not part of the same language family. The Abkhaz are actually related to Circassians that live in the North Caucasus but they have existed together in the same region for centuries. Georgian-Abkhaz relations had been “one of the more peaceful ones in the South Caucasus” in comparison to other relations in the South Caucasus such as the ones between Armenians and

⁵³UNPO, “Abkhazia,” Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, <http://www.unpo.org/members/7854> (accessed May 15, 2014).

⁵⁴The World Factbook, “Kosovo,” Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kv.html> (accessed May 14, 2014).

⁵⁵Central Intelligence Agency, “Kosovo.”

⁵⁶BBC Profiles: European Territories, “Abkhazia Profile,” BBC, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18175394> (assessed May 05, 2014).

⁵⁷Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, “Abkhazia.”

⁵⁸Central Intelligence Agency, “Kosovo.”

Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh.⁵⁹ Abkhazia had been ethnically diverse like the rest of the region and was also home to many ethnic Georgians prior to the wars in 1992-1993 and 2008. The Abkhaz had actually been the minority in the region before the Soviet Union due to “the expulsion of the Abkhaz communities by the Russian Empire in the 1860s.”⁶⁰ Before the rise of the Soviet Union it mostly had conflict with the Russian Empire and not Georgians. The conflict between Abkhaz and Georgians did not arise until WWI and the end of the Russian Empire “but those conflicts were not generally drawn along ethnic lines.”⁶¹ In addition, religion was not much of a factor in relations between the Abkhaz and Georgians, with many being Orthodox Christians, “if they claimed a religious affiliation at all,” and a minority Muslim population.⁶²

Conversely, tension between Albanians and Serbians goes centuries back unlike the relations between the Abkhaz and Georgians. Kosovar Albanians are predominantly Muslim, mostly Sunni with a Bektashi minority, and there were also about 60,000 Catholics as of 2000, and a smaller number of Orthodox.⁶³ However, for Albanians religion is not as tied to their identity, similar to the Abkhaz attitude towards religion, as it is in the rest of the Balkans. Outside of Kosovo there are intermarriages between religions amongst Albanians.⁶⁴ Part of what also connects them across religious lines is their own “legal/moral code, the Kanun of Dukagjin” from the 1400s, which “was published in its entirety only in 1933.”⁶⁵ Serbs are attached to Kosovo because it is the sight of an important historic battle, the battle of Kosovo Polje against the Ottomans in 1389, Serbs even though they ultimately were defeated in 1455. However, there is already dispute over history since Albanians also

⁵⁹Charles King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus* (New York: Oxford, 2008), 215.

⁶⁰King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*, 215.

⁶¹King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*, 215.

⁶²King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*, 215.

⁶³Central Intelligence Agency, "Kosovo."

⁶⁴Tim Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 8.

⁶⁵Carole Rogel, "Kosovo: Where it all began." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 17 (2003): 167-182.

considered Kosovo as being the land of their ancestors and claim that they were there “long before Serb tribes arrived in the 6th century AD.”⁶⁶

Both the Abkhaz and Albanians had been under Ottoman rule. The Abkhaz had been under Ottoman rule starting in the 15th century during which it “became an autonomous principality” and “maneuvered between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.”⁶⁷ It is important to note that during this period the Abkhaz maintained “close links with their western Georgian neighbors” and that Abkhaz and Mingrelian royalty also inter-married.⁶⁸ During the early 19th century, the Russian Empire annexed the Georgians and the Abkhaz. Georgians acclimated, while Abkhaz “resistance to Russian rule, aided by the Ottomans, continued for much of the nineteenth century.”⁶⁹ It was not until the collapse of the Russian Empire that the Abkhaz really strove for independence.

Meanwhile, Albanians did not resist Ottoman rule while the Serbs did and unlike the Abkhaz, Albanians had not been under the rule of the Russian Empire. Albanians did not develop nationalist aspirations at the same time as the Serbs but established groups because they were wary of growing Serbian nationalism. The Serbs gained independence in 1878 but more importantly, in the grander scheme of things, Serbian independence was acknowledged by Europe in 1878. Albanian nationalism did not develop at the same time as Serbian nationalism due to the Ottomans not allowing “schooling in Albanian” because they wanted to “prevent the emergence of an Albanian national identity.”⁷⁰ Serbian nationalism did increase and by the early 1900s they were aspiring to create a “Greater Serbia” that would also include “lands where Serbs may have lived or ruled in the past.”⁷¹ As this would include

⁶⁶ Rogel, "Kosovo: Where it all began," 169.

⁶⁷ Thomas de Waal, *The Caucasus: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Kindle Location 2615.

⁶⁸ de Waal, *The Caucasus: An Introduction*, Kindle Location 2615.

⁶⁹ de Waal, *The Caucasus: An Introduction*, Kindle Location 2615.

⁷⁰ Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 9.

⁷¹ Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 119.

Kosovo and other areas inhabited by Albanians, the Austro-Hungarian Empire helped Albanians form a state of their own in 1912, followed by the development of Albanian nationalism. In 1918, following WWI and the collapse of the empires, Yugoslavia was formed, which included Serbs, Slovenes and Croats, as well as other minorities in the region such as Hungarians and Germans.

The year 1918 proved to be a significant one for both the Abkhaz and Kosovar Albanians. That same year Abkhazia was given autonomy by Georgia after the fall of the Russian Empire. In 1921 this arrangement would be included in Georgia's constitution, but was voided when Georgia lost its independence.⁷² This was a significant blow to Abkhaz-Georgian relations and the relations began to sour. Abkhazia was given autonomous republic status inside Georgia by the Soviet Union in 1931. Meanwhile in 1918, the Committee for the National Defense of Kosovo was established which was formed by Kosovo Albanian leaders "such as Hasan Prishtina" to aid Albanian rebels against the Serbs.⁷³ Similar to the policy of "Georgianification" in Abkhazia during the 1930s and '40s, Belgrade also wanted to alter Kosovo's population make-up and to dampen the Albanian rebellion.⁷⁴

In 1936 Joseph Stalin and Levrenti Beria murdered the leader of Abkhazia Nestor Lakoba, who had once been their ally, and began implementing "the immigration of ethnic Georgians into the autonomous republic, in part to help boost agricultural production there, in part to alter the ethnic balance further in favor of Georgians."⁷⁵ This process was also known as 'Georgianification' and is part of why the Abkhaz were not the majority of Abkhazia prior to the war in 1992-1993. Abkhazia was still relatively diverse in its 2003 census, where the Abkhaz made up 44% of the population and the rest of the population was comprised of the

⁷²Dorota Gierycz, *The Mysteries of the Caucasus* (United States: Xlibris, 2010), 20.

⁷³Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 42.

⁷⁴Gierycz, *The Mysteries of the Caucasus*, 19.

⁷⁵King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*, 215.

following: 21% Armenian, 21% Georgian, 1% Greek, 11% Russian, and 2% other.⁷⁶ In the past it had also been home to many Turks, Pontic Greeks, Tartars and several others. After Stalin and Beria's deaths, "Moscow adopted a largely pro-Abkhaz policy."⁷⁷ Even though the Abkhaz made up "only a quarter of the population, they soon occupied all important party and government posts" and "were also disproportionately represented in the local parliament."⁷⁸ This also shows how it differed from other breakaway regions in the area, where the ethnic group that was breaking away was the majority in that region, like in the case of South Ossetia. Similar to the attitudes of the Serbs in regards to Tito supporting Kosovo's increasing independence from Serbia, the 'pro-Abkhaz policy' did not sit well with Georgians and created more tension between the two.

After each of the World Wars, Kosovo's status had remained in limbo due to Albanian's being considered a "'nationality' rather than a 'nation.'"⁷⁹ Following Josip Broz Tito's falling out with the Soviet Union in 1948, Kosovo was subsequently "stuck in Serbia/Yugoslavia" and "cut off from Albania" for the next forty years.⁸⁰ However, despite its being "stuck in Serbia/Yugoslavia," under Tito's rule Kosovo started to gain more autonomy from Serbia and officially became a province in 1963 followed by a "a new constitution" in 1967, a "new supreme court," and even "authorization for a university in Pristina."⁸¹ In 1974 its independence was further bolstered when it was officially made an "official unit" of Yugoslavia, which granted it "an equal vote in national government bodies."⁸² After years of colonization and suppression, Kosovars were finally making headway towards complete autonomy from Serbia. Unfortunately for Kosovo, Tito's death

⁷⁶Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, "Abkhazia."

⁷⁷Gierycz, *The Mysteries of the Caucasus*, 20.

⁷⁸Gierycz, *The Mysteries of the Caucasus*, 19.

⁷⁹Rogel, "Kosovo: Where it all began," 171.

⁸⁰Rogel, "Kosovo: Where it all began," 171.

⁸¹Rogel, "Kosovo: Where it all began," 171.

⁸²Rogel, "Kosovo: Where it all began," 171.

in 1980 would turn the tide. Unrest flared up only about a year after his death in the form of student demonstrations being met with police brutality. Serbian nationalism would have a resurgence subsequently sparking Albanian nationalism.

The catalyst for increased tension between Abkhaz and Georgians occurred in 1989 when the Abkhaz, who were tired of being treated as second-class citizens, decided they wanted to follow the same path as Nagorno-Karabakh and seek de facto status with help from Moscow. Due to already growing unrest amongst Georgians in regards to the Soviets, Georgian nationalism had been growing. Georgian nationalism took an extremist form and its leaders were the separatist rebels, Merab Kostava and Zviad Gamasakhurdia. The latter was killed in an automobile accident which then led to the former, who was more extreme, to become the sole leader of the movement.

In May 1990 the Serbians enacted a new constitution and the Kosovo Albanians followed suit in July, declaring them independent from Serbia, while the Serbs claimed otherwise. In 1991 Yugoslavia started falling apart and in lieu of the disintegration, the Yugoslav Wars ensued but Kosovo remained mostly on the sidelines. That same year Kosovo also declared its independence, as did other Balkan countries, but was not officially recognized. It was after the Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the war, when things began to heat up in Kosovo again.

2.2 Frame Makers in Abkhazia and Kosovo

Before we discuss mobilization we must first identify the ‘frame makers’ and the ‘frame receivers’ in the two conflicts. The ‘frame receivers’ were those with more nationalist sentiments on both sides of the conflicts. They had to have already harbored ethnic prejudices against the other side or they would not have joined the ‘collective action.’ If they did not believe that there was a value to the “collective goods,” then “the collective motive”

would have had “zero value.”⁸³ Meaning that there must be an expected gain to joining a social movement, and in these cases these were the nationalist ones. The ‘frame makers’ of both conflicts changed several times over the course of the conflicts. In the following section I will discuss the ‘frame makers’ from the beginnings of each of the conflicts.

2.2.1 Abkhazia

The key ‘frame maker’ on the Georgian side of the conflict at the start of the conflict was the first post-Soviet elected president of Georgia, Zviad Gamasakhurdia. Gamasakhurdia appealed to the growing nationalist sentiment during the breakdown of the Soviet Union and Georgians found him credible because he came from a prominent Georgian family, and his father had been a well-respected academic. Tbilisi, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, was fine with maintaining the “Soviet hierarchal system” but Georgian nationalists disagreed.⁸⁴ Gamasakhurdia was also an academic and had a professional background in literature and human rights. He had an extreme Nationalist following named after him, the Zviadists. There was coup against him, which established a “three person state council—with Shevardnadze at the helm and [Tengiz] Kitovani and Jaba Ioseliani” that “was in the midst of a power struggle with” the Zviadists making Abkhazia “one more war front” for Georgians.⁸⁵

The key ‘frame maker’ on the Abkhaz side of the conflict was Vladislav Ardzinba, the first president of Abkhazia (1994-2005), was also an academic turned politician who actually did not speak Georgian or Abkhazian very well. In 1989 he gave a speech to the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR where he discussed the issues of autonomous republics and ethnic minorities within the Soviet Union. During his speech he focused particularly on the maltreatment of the Abkhaz and other ethnic minorities during Stalin’s

⁸³Klandermans, *Mobilization and Participation*, 586.

⁸⁴Bruno Coppieters. "The Roots of the Conflict." *Accord: A Question of Sovereignty- The Georgia-Abkhazia Peace Process*. (London: Conciliation Resources, 1999), 14-19.

⁸⁵Gierycz, *The Mysteries of the Caucasus*, 20.

'Georgianification' of Abkhazia. Ardzinba was well respected, and had the credibility and the trust of the Abkhaz people. These men would later earn more infamous reputations for their actions during the conflict. I will discuss the other framers that entered in the conflict later as I discuss the corresponding frames.

2.2.2 Kosovo

Slobodan Milosevic was a career politician who was president of Serbia from 1989-1997 and then president of Yugoslavia from 1997-2000, and is most infamously known for his extreme Serbian nationalist policies and of course ethnic cleansing. He was an ethnic Montenegrin whose family “traces its root back to the time of the 1339 battle of Kosovo Polje.”⁸⁶ His rise in popularity began in the late 1980s amongst rising tension in Yugoslavia and his platform on the “Kosovo problem.” His popularity was launched by his response to an incident of police brutality against Serbs who were protesting “persecution by Kosovo’s majority Albanian population” where he told police “no one will ever beat this people again.”⁸⁷ However, it is debated whether or not he actually said this but nonetheless it became symbol of “the populist movement Milosevic led to power” and “a myth was created.”⁸⁸ Milosevic is widely considered to have been xenophobic, opportunistic, and power hungry to extent of which he has been described as ruling “with a gambler’s logic.”⁸⁹ Meaning that he did not think through the ramifications of his actions and this eventually led to his downfall.

The Kosovar politician and first president of Kosovo (1992-2006), Ibrahim Rugova was president of Kosovo from 1992-2000 and again in 2002 until 2006. He was considered by more extremist Kosovo Albanians as too moderate, a pacifist, and “was often called the

⁸⁶Louis Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Durham: Duke University Press: 2002), Kindle Location 11.

⁸⁷Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the destruction of Yugoslavia*, Kindle Location 1.

⁸⁸Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the destruction of Yugoslavia*, Kindle Location 1.

⁸⁹Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the destruction of Yugoslavia*, Kindle Location 2.

‘Gandhi of the Balkans.’”⁹⁰ Rugova had studied at the Sorbonne and had even “spent a year studying under Roland Barthes.”⁹¹ He was an academic like the other elite ‘frame makers’ in the ethnic conflicts of the 1990s such as Gamasakhurdia and Ardzinba. Rugova also “preached non-violence” and was known for his “trademark silk scarf.”⁹² He was head of the “new Democratic League of Kosovo, the LDK,” that had been established in 1989 during which,

“many members of the LPRK [(Popular Movement for the Republic of Kosovo and a precursor to the KLA)] and other underground groups loosely known as the ‘the movement’ left their secret organizations to join Rugova. So, only the hardest of the hard remained; men who said it was beneath their dignity to be members of a party *legal in the eyes of the Serbian state*.”⁹³

Here we can see that many did in fact support Rugova and that it was the more extreme that remained with the KLA. Rugova was wary of Serbia and even during the early 1990s believed that Kosovo would have no chance if they were to stand up against them if war broke out. However, the ‘moderate’ Rugova would soon impose a so-called income tax, even on remittances from workers abroad, that would go to “Rugova’s republican coffers” and if someone failed to do so they would be “ostracized” and threatened by the community.⁹⁴ He was also sometimes accused of cooperating with Serbia. Rugova does not seem like a typical elite ‘frame maker’ of an ethnic conflict but it was his non-violence stance that kept Kosovo from warring with Serbia during the early 1990s when it was already at war with Bosnia and Croatia. He knew the limits of Kosovo that the KLA chose to disregard.

Kosovo also had an extremist group acting outside of the state like Georgia’s Zviadists after the coup against Gamasakhurdia. The other key ‘frame maker’ in this conflict is the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which had been established in 1993 and had been led

⁹⁰Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 71.

⁹¹Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 71.

⁹²Judah, “The Kosovo Liberation Army,” 64.

⁹³Judah, “The Kosovo Liberation Army,” 64.

⁹⁴Judah, “The Kosovo Liberation Army,” 64.

by a young Hashim Thaci, the current Prime Minister of Kosovo. The KLA had Marxist beginnings but then evolved and became known for carrying out guerilla attacks against Serbia. As stated above, the KLA were the ‘hardest of the hard’ and were also known for “recruiting a network of sleepers—secret sympathizers ready to fight and take command of their village when the time came.”⁹⁵ Their reputation was further bolstered because of NATO’s involvement in the war, thus saving them from defeat.

2.2.3 Frame makers: after the wars

In the Abkhazia conflict, Russia took on the role of facilitator after it grew concerned with the North Caucasus people’s involvement in the first war on the side of the Abkhaz, and the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) “was formed on August 24, 1993.”⁹⁶ However, “the mission’s mandate was very limited and strictly observatory—to monitor the agreed cease-fire” and this war was also “the only case where the UN engaged in a conflict involving Russia.”⁹⁷ The conflict remained frozen until the August 2008 war, since the so-called *frozen* conflict erupted again, it is important to identify the ‘framer-makers’ during this interwar period. The Abkhaz’ amicable relationship with Moscow during the post-Stalin Soviet era had changed because Shevardnadze grudgingly drew support from Yeltsin during the first war, while the Abkhaz had support from the North Caucasus. Then there was another flip-flop in allegiances and the Moscow-Tbilisi and Moscow-Sukhumi dynamics changed once again due to change in leadership. During this time “Abkhazia established itself as a de facto independent state, holding regular elections for its de facto president and parliament, despite the lack of formal recognition by any country.” Russia had actually recognized Abkhaz independence even though it “strongly condoned” it, on paper

⁹⁵Judah, “The Kosovo Liberation Army,” 66.

⁹⁶Gierycz, *The Mysteries of the Caucasus*, 22.

⁹⁷Gierycz, *The Mysteries of the Caucasus*, 22.

Russia still “officially expressed support for the unquestionable principle of Georgian territorial integrity.”⁹⁸

Ardzinba left office in 2005 and was succeeded by Sergei Bagapsh who remained in office until his death in 2011. Russia’s support of Abkhazia and Abkhazia’s de facto independence during this period that deepened the chasm between Abkhazia and Georgia, and Russia and Georgia. There were gestures that were passive-aggressive such as Russia’s importing of Abkhaz wine during the “Georgian-Russian wine war” and giving the Abkhaz Russian passports. Then there were not so passive gestures such as Georgia sending troops to the Abkhaz-Georgian border in 1998. Relations further soured when two new framers were introduced, Vladimir Putin and Mikheil Saakashvili. Saakashvili was concerned with Westernizing Georgia, further distancing it from Russia and reclaiming Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which would later awaken the conflict again in 2008. Putin, of course did not agree with Saakashvili and would continue to offer support to Abkhazia as it did in the August 2008 war, whether it truly wanted it, Moscow has been known to intervene in Abkhaz elections.

The key ‘framer makers’ of the Kosovo War that began in February 1998, were Slobodan Milosevic and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). During the war, more actors would enter the arena such as NATO, U.S. President Bill Clinton, and Russian President Boris Yeltsin. The U.S. had previously warned Milosevic in 1992 about interfering in Kosovo in the “Christmas warning.”⁹⁹ NATO and the U.S. got involved in much controversy because there had not been a vote held by NATO members and it has been questioned as interfering with Serbian territory. After the war, like in Abkhazia a UN Mission was established except in this case “the jurisdiction in Kosovo passed to the UN, which in turn

⁹⁸Gierycz, *The Mysteries of the Caucasus*, 22.

⁹⁹Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 71.

created the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).”¹⁰⁰ We see definitely see an overlap in the players involved in the conflicts. The Russia was present in both but to a lesser extent in the Kosovo conflict much to the dismay of Milosevic. The U.S. had not gotten involved in either of the wars in Abkhazia, but is allies with Georgia and stands by their claim on Abkhazia. The U.S. and the E.U. play a significant role in the international recognition of Kosovo and both also do not recognize Abkhazia as being independent.

¹⁰⁰Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 93.

CHAPTER 3: MOBILIZATION AND DEMOBILIZATION

‘Primary frameworks’ act as the foundation, and in cases of ethnic conflicts and in particular Abkhazia and Kosovo, one of the key ones that ‘frame makers’ built on was the ‘frame receiver’s’ ethnicity. ‘Frame makers’ must first establish consensus and then they can initiate a call to arms. As discussed in the first chapter, there can be no call to arms without consensus being established first, just as you cannot build the second floor of a building without a ground floor being built first. In the following sections I will identify these ‘consensus mobilization’ and ‘action mobilization frames’ in the context of the conflicts that took place in Abkhazia and Kosovo during the 1990s, only going as far back as the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the last section I will discuss the varying effects these ‘frames’ have had at an international level, particularly the role ‘frames’ had on their recognition or non-recognition.

3.1 Building consensus

The Soviet Union’s “nationalities policy” had autonomous areas and their so-called parent countries billowing towards a breaking point.¹⁰¹ These policies did not sit well because they “granted political status to the major nationalities which composed the Soviet state and ranked them in a hierarchical federal system.”¹⁰² In this “ethnofederal” system, the hierarchy was as follows in order from highest to lowest rank: union republics, autonomous republics, and lastly the autonomous regions.¹⁰³ In the case of Abkhazia, the Abkhaz had been favored by Moscow over the Georgians despite them being ranked lower than the Georgians in the Soviet ‘ethnofederal’ hierarchy. The Kosovar Albanians were in a similar position as the Abkhaz because they favored by Belgrade under Tito’s rule over the Serbs despite their autonomous status. Clearly this system did not sit well with everyone,

¹⁰¹Coppieters, "The Roots of the Conflict," 14.

¹⁰²Coppieters, "The Roots of the Conflict," 14.

¹⁰³Coppieters, "The Roots of the Conflict," 14.

especially the Georgians and the Serbs, which is why ‘frame makers’ had a relatively easy time rallying the masses and building consensus, followed by violent conflict.

3.1.1 Injustice framing

As discussed in the first chapter, ‘injustice frames’ are used to pinpoint inequalities and discrimination such as “collective entitlements to land or resources.”¹⁰⁴ We can see it in use by ‘frame makers’ on either sides of the two conflicts. The Abkhaz framers played on the Abkhaz’ concern with maintaining sovereignty over what they saw as their land. Given the state of affairs during the early 1990s in part due to the Soviet hierarchal system, it was fairly easy for Gamasakhurdia and Ardzinba, and in the Kosovo conflict Milosevic and the KLA, to fuel ‘injustice frames.’

In regards to the autonomous republics of the Soviet Union, “Georgian nationalists considered such autonomy as a Soviet instrument to divide and rule its dependencies in the South Caucasus.”¹⁰⁵ Georgians in Abkhazia had “believed themselves to be victims of discrimination” due to the Soviet Union having “favored” the Abkhaz over the Georgians since the deaths of Stalin and Beria.¹⁰⁶ After the collapse of the Soviet Union and following the coup against Gamasakhurdia, Tbilisi challenged the Abkhaz’ independence by reverting back to a previous constitution that did not give Abkhazia as much independence as it had enjoyed during the Soviet Union. This was part of what the Abkhaz and Ardzinba had been fearing would happen once Georgia achieved independence since the late 1980s.

Much like the state of affairs in the late 1980s and early ‘90s in Abkhazia, the Balkans were also in upheaval during the collapse of the Soviet Union and more importantly Yugoslavia. Tito’s death acted as a catalyst for the rise of nationalism in the federation. The Serbs in Kosovo, like the Georgians in Abkhazia, had felt discriminated against during Tito’s

¹⁰⁴Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 12.

¹⁰⁵Coppieters, Bruno. "The roots of the conflict." *Accord: A question of sovereignty- The Georgia-Abkhazia peace process*: 14-19.

¹⁰⁶Gierycz, *The Mysteries of the Caucasus*, 20.

rule since during his rule Kosovo Albanians had gained more independence from Serbia. In combination with police brutality from the Yugoslav state, Serbs in Kosovo had grown frustrated and were ripe for the picking, so to speak, by Milosevic.

Through ‘injustice framing’ Milosevic and other Serbian nationalists were also able to manipulate the Kosovo Serbs’ resentment of their treatment by the Kosovo Albanians. There had already been frames in place from the history of relations between Albanians and Serbs, making it easier for framers to build on those concepts. Kosovo Serbs were already aware of the inequalities, as they had been protesting them back in the 1980s. Serbs find Kosovo important to their ethnic identity due to the battle of Kosovo Polje and the Serbian policies of the early part of the 20th century in which they wanted and gained control of Kosovo. So there was definitely feelings of inequality and that their land had been “infringed upon,” and the desire amongst Serbs to gain back control of Kosovo.¹⁰⁷

At the same time, ‘frame makers’ on the Georgian side played on the Georgians’ belief that the Abkhaz were actually infringing on their territory and did not have the right to independence. Georgians in Abkhazia saw that they were receiving unequal treatment such as in their representation in the local government, this “politically privileged position of the Abkhaz minority was unacceptable to them.”¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, the Abkhaz were not too enthused by the discrimination being experienced by Abkhaz in Georgia. Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union they had tried “to upgrade Abkhazia’s status from autonomous republic to union republic.”¹⁰⁹ Once it did collapse “they demanded equal status with Georgia in a loose federative framework” and “refused to acknowledge the authority of the Georgian political leadership.”¹¹⁰ As we can see both sides felt discriminated against and wronged thus

¹⁰⁷Desrosiers, *Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies*, 14.

¹⁰⁸Coppieters, *The Roots of the Conflict*, 16.

¹⁰⁹Coppieters, *The Roots of the Conflict*, 16.

¹¹⁰Coppieters, *The Roots of the Conflict*, 16.

making it relatively easy for framers to identify and manipulate these perceived injustices as collective.

Like the Abkhaz, Kosovo Albanians had enjoyed much more independence, during Tito's rule than they ever had under Serbian rule. It did not come as a shock that they were none too happy about Serbia trying to rule them again when the "Serb assembly [adopted] direct rule in Kosovo" the same month "Kosovo Albanians under LDK influence" declared themselves "an 'independent unit' within [the] Yugoslav federation."¹¹¹ Given the tug-of-war between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs over control of Kosovo and the resurgence of Serbian nationalism, they were will to see that their land and independence was at stake once again.

3.1.2 Adversarial framing

'Adversarial framing' was being used to further the distinction between the ethnic groups in both conflicts. The back and forth discrimination perpetrated by both sides fueled the notion of them being of different groups. As it was easy for both sides to see injustices against them, it was just as easy to pinpoint their adversaries, via 'adversarial frames.' In ethnic conflicts, "ethnocentric rhetoric is often centered on the 'other.'"¹¹² As I mentioned earlier, the Abkhaz and Georgians are not part of the same ethnic group or share the same language family but have lived in the area together for centuries. Meanwhile, the Kosovar Albanians and the Serbs shared separate identities too but also had a longer history of violent conflict than the Abkhaz and Georgians.

Before the escalation of the tension in the early 1990s, Georgians had recognized that the Abkhaz were an indigenous group while at the same time they did not recognize the South Ossetians as one. Georgians had believed that the Abkhaz "had the right to preserve their political status as an indigenous people, provided that the rights of the Georgians

¹¹¹Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the destruction of Yugoslavia*, Kindle Location 196.

¹¹²Coppieters, *The Roots of the Conflict*, 17.

population in Abkhazia were significantly extended” and herein lies part of the dilemma.¹¹³

The Abkhaz, along with other minorities at this time in Georgia, were receiving unequal treatment due to the Georgian nationalism that was emerging during collapse of the Soviet Union. This only spurred the Abkhaz in Abkhazia to further discriminate against Georgians.

Conversely, ‘adversarial framing’ had been going on for a lot longer between the Kosovar Albanians and the Serbs. Just as in the case of ‘injustice framing,’ given the state of affairs during the early 1990s and the struggle for survival after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, it was easy for the nationalist movements to identify the *other*, since it had been the same *other* for each side for over a century. Each side did not necessarily need an extremist to help them identify an adversary but reiterating it while people were already swept up in nationalist fervor did not hurt. Each side of the conflict already had ‘ethnic solidarity’ but in retaliation of Serbia not recognizing Kosovo’s independence the KLA began targeting Serbs with guerrilla acts of violence.

Due to the perceived injustices against them, the Georgians easily found an adversary in the Abkhaz, especially since Georgia was a nascent country and the Abkhaz had been against their independence. Georgians viewed the Abkhaz as the *villain* or *other* because they believed they were a threat to their culture. They “feared the Russification of Abkhazia by cultural means and the loss of the ‘historical’ Georgian character of this region.”¹¹⁴ Georgians felt threatened by the bond between the Abkhaz and Moscow during the Soviet Union and this deepened the rift between them and fueled their fears of *Russification*. We can clearly see that the fear stems from a perceived threat to their identities and as the rift deepened, each side kept pointing the finger at the *other*.

¹¹³ Coppieters, *The Roots of the Conflict*, 16.

¹¹⁴ Coppieters, *The Roots of the Conflict*, 16.

3.1.3 Counter-framing

‘Ethnic counter-framing’ is used by ‘frame makers’ to hinder other possible solutions to the issue. In this case, the Zviadists were in favor of the more extreme solutions and less about compromise, which is the case with extreme groups who tend believe violence is the solution. The ‘frame makers’ in this conflict were not looking at all the possible solutions and not willing to compromise. Instead, ‘framer makers’ were touting that their side was more prepared and more likely to be victorious than the other side. In addition, ‘denial frames’ were used to prevent more peaceful solutions from being used because they deemed them as too uncertain. Both sides were made to believe there were no other options since they felt that their core, their ethnicity (a primary framework), was at stake. Both the Abkhaz and the Georgians were made extra uneasy by the war between the Georgian-South Ossetians, which definitely worried ‘frame makers,’ thus influencing their framing.

The nationalist movements were convincing in vilifying the opposition and convincing people that they were the heroes. The KLA came off as heroic to Albanians in their tactics against Serbs, they even had drawn support from the Albanian diaspora. In terms of ‘ethnic counter-framing’ the Serbian nationalists definitely believed that they were the superior ones, later reflected in their ethnic cleansing of the Kosovo Albanians in 1999. ‘Denial frames’ were also relatively easy to implement by the KLA since Serbia kept rejecting their independence and how after the Dayton Peace Agreement the situation of Kosovo had not gotten better fueling their growing frustration.

3.2 Action mobilization

As we can see, establishing consensus is more complicated than we assume but when fear is running high, ‘frame makers’ can achieve this. ‘Frame amplification’ is used to focus on a particular concept or ‘good’ in order to boost the “resonance” of the other ‘frames.’ It “involves the highlighting or accenting of various issues, events, or beliefs from the broader

interpretive sweep of the movement.”¹¹⁵ ‘Consensus mobilization’ established the enemy but getting people to take action against said enemy can be tricky, people may be afraid to act because of the fear of losing. This is why ‘adversarial frames’ are important since they convince people that their side cannot fail, people are not typically willing to fight when they know they are going to lose, there has to be some degree of belief that they will be victorious. As discussed in the first chapter, *action mobilization* consists of ‘gravity framing’ and ‘aptness framing,’ and they function as the “call to arms.” Once consensus has been established via the three ‘consensus mobilization’ frames, framers must *build* on those frames to rally people to claim what they believe is theirs and take arms in this case.

3.2.1 Gravity framing

‘Gravity framing’ is used to emphasize the ‘severity of the situation’ and to propagandize the threat of the enemy as getting worse if they fail to act. In this case, ‘gravity framing’ was used by framers to convince people that *other* was going to take their land from them if they did not act made very real by the Georgian-South Ossetian war. Each side was unwilling to let the *other* take the land the believed was rightfully theirs. ‘Frame makers’ on the Kosovo Albanian side did not have to do much convincing to emphasize the ‘severity of the situation’ because the Serbs were trying to regain control of what they saw as their land. The Serbian government had already warred with its neighbors so Kosovo Albanians knew that violence was on the table. Violent tactics had already been implemented by the KLA over the years as well. Given the chaos following the collapse of the Soviet Union both Abkhazia and Kosovo seemed bound for conflict without their former protectors, Moscow for Abkhazia and Tito for Kosovo.

¹¹⁵Noakes and Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, Kindle Location 218.

3.2.2 Aptness framing

‘Aptness framing’ was then used to convince constituents that it was their duty, as Georgians and Abkhaz or Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, to protect their land. It also helped in reassuring them, that their ethnicity, was the superior one, therefore they were bound to win, which we see in all of the cases. Once the Abkhaz “[withdrew] from the authority of the Georgian state, in the view of the Georgians and of the Abkhaz radicals, [this] paved the way for full secession and the establishment of an independent Abkhaz state,” which then escalated to violent conflict on August 14, 1992.¹¹⁶ In the case of Kosovo, Milosevic miscalculated the support that the Kosovo Albanians would receive from the international community.

Given the tug-of-war between the Kosovo Albanians and Serbs over the past century, it was even easier to mobilize consensus. Both sides had already established the *who* and *what* years before and the framers just had to spark them. The timing was right and the Kosovo Albanians and Serbs were ripe for the picking by ‘frame makers’ such as Milosevic and the KLA. Rugova on the other hand, was successful in his non-violent approach, specifically for preventing ‘action mobilization’ for so long since he believed that Kosovo did not stand a chance against Serbia. As we can see from the two conflicts that once consensus has been established, it is easier to engage ‘action mobilization’ in ethnic conflicts than it is in social movements because the adversaries are more threatening and the ‘collective goods’ stakes are higher, since the ‘collective good’ in their case is independence and international recognition.

After the first war each side would use ‘consensus mobilization’ frames again in the 2008 War. Once ‘consensus and action mobilization’ frames have been implemented they do not disappear, especially if a conflict has not been successfully resolved like the Georgian-

¹¹⁶Coppieters, *The Roots of the Conflict*, 17.

Abkhazia conflict. As in Goffman's initial theory, frames are build on other 'frames,' meaning in when an ethnic conflict *freezes*, the ethnic mobilization frames that implemented prior to the war are not erased from people's memories, there is no clean slate. In fact, they are there for new 'frame makers' to use if they want to ethnically mobilize again.

3.3 Demobilization: Resolved or frozen?

Since NATO and the U.S. got involved the Kosovo War, the so-called underdog in the scenario, were in theory the victors. The third parties that got involved in this conflict did not suffer casualties, like the Serbs and Kosovo Albanians did. Milosevic had not anticipated the involvement of NATO troops. From the ceasefire of this war, we have an image of Yeltsin casually calling Bill Clinton to put a stop to it, while those on the ground are the ones suffering the casualties. In this case the victors, the Kosovo Albanians, got the independence from Serbia they wanted, at least as close as they could get especially since they spent several years under UN jurisdiction. On the other hand, the real underdogs are the Abkhaz but the situation has been reversed in the international community. "Unrecognized states," like Abkhazia,

"may face a degree of international isolation, but are at the same time dependent on external forces for survival: they rely on support from external patrons, diaspora population, and other trans border linkages, and have sometimes even established limited relations with their parent states."¹¹⁷

The international community portrays the Georgians as the David protecting it's territory from Goliath, in this case Russia. Meanwhile the Abkhaz are marginalized and portrayed as troublemaking rebels who turn to Russia when they have a problem, while they are the ultimate losers in this scenario.

In the case of Kosovo, it is 'frame makers' such as Rugova, who promote non-violence after a conflict. However, going back Klandermans argument, "if the value of the

¹¹⁷Nina Caspersen, *Unrecognized States: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Modern International System* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), Kindle Location 1684.

collective good is zero, the collective motive is zero.”¹¹⁸ In both cases we see this work, in Kosovo they were able to achieve the ‘collective good’ or independence and international recognition at least for now. While Abkhazia sees zero value and therefore zero motive since things are not as tense as they had been between them and Georgia, and since they have been focusing more on building infrastructure. Abkhazia is often referred to as a *frozen* conflict but Kosovo is too but not to the same extent as Abkhazia. Kosovo has the recognition from the international community but not from Serbia, so it is not truly independent, which may thaw or resurface in the future.

3.3.1 Frame makers’ affects on international recognition

The ‘framer makers’ of ethnic conflicts, especially when they involve de facto states, have a significant impact on whether a de facto state will be recognized by the “the white rabbit that is the international community.”¹¹⁹ *Why does the international community recognize some de facto states and not others?* In the historical comparison we see that the two cases both have long histories of autonomy, with Kosovo and Serbia having the more volatile relationship compared to Georgia and Abkhazia. The same ‘frames’ had been present in both and achieved relatively the same aims aside from international recognition on Abkhazia’s part. These cases boil down to the ‘frame makers’ involved in the conflict and their international supporters. In the 2008 War, even though he had been the aggressor, Saakashvili did not get the troop support from his Western allies that he had wanted but the aftermath reflects this relationship. While Abkhazia being allies with Russia, remains unrecognized by the international community.

Since Saakashvili was an ally of the US, Georgia had troops fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Western media coverage that the war did manage to receive, definitely

¹¹⁸Klandermans, *Mobilization and Participation*, 586.

¹¹⁹Caspersen, *Unrecognized States: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Modern International System*, Kindle Location 1714.

presented Russia and the Abkhaz as the aggressors and not the other way around. In 2011, a Hollywood produced film about the August 2008 war, titled *Five Days of War*, portrays Saakashvili as the hero and the Russians, South Ossetians, and Abkhaz as the villains, a clear example of ‘adversarial framing.’ Even the UNOMIG is biased in its description of Abkhazia, making it a framer. They describe the situation in 1992 thusly: “strategically located on the Black Sea in the northwestern region of the Republic of Georgia, began with social unrest and the attempts by the local authorities to separate from the Republic.”¹²⁰ Also, on the former missions page is this description of the ’92-’93 war: “The Abkhaz forces, supported by fighters from the North Caucasus region, quickly captured the major towns, and threatened to bring nearly 80 per cent of Abkhazia, including the capital city of Sukhumi, under their control.”¹²¹ Therefore they do not recognize Abkhazia’s independence. Another example is that there is a CIA World Factbook page for Kosovo but not Abkhazia.

However, Kosovo declared independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008 and has since been the subject of debate in international law in regards to its recognition. Kosovo now consists of an Albanian majority, with a pocket of Serbs living in the north that are “isolated” and “heavily guarded by international peacekeeping troops.”¹²² There are questions as to whether it sets a precedent for other de facto states since usually the international community does not support secessionism. According to Article 2.4 of the Charter of United Nations, members cannot “[threaten] or use force against the territorial

¹²⁰United Nations: Peace and Security Section of the Department of Public Information in cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. "UNOMIG: United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia - Background." UN News Center.
<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unomig/background.html> (accessed May 18, 2014).

¹²¹United Nations: Peace and Security Section of the Department of Public Information in cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. "UNOMIG: United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia - Background." UN News Center.
<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unomig/background.html> (accessed May 18, 2014).

¹²²Milena Sterio. "The Case of Kosovo: Self-Determination, Secession, and Statehood Under International Law Author(s): Milena Sterio." *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting (American Society of International Law)* 104: 361-365.

integrity or political independence of any state.”¹²³ The US cites it as being a “special case” because of “the combination of factors found in the Kosovo situation” but officially claims that it does not see it “as a precedent in the world today” and neither does the EU (as of 2008).¹²⁴ The U.S. stated in 2008,

“We declare Kosovo to be a democratic, secular and multi-ethnic republic, guided by principles of non-discrimination and equal protection under the law. We shall protect and promote the rights of all communities in Kosovo and create the conditions necessary for their effective participation in political and decision-making processes.”¹²⁵

In addition to recognition by the US (it even has an ambassador in Pristina), the majority of the EU, and a little over half of UN members also recognize Kosovo, as an independent state while Serbia does not. It has even “joined the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund” in 2009 and is on the Euro.¹²⁶

What we learn from these cases is that it is important to understand the micro-processes of ethnic conflicts, and frame analysis is a tool that allows us to do this. Through frame analysis we can see the types of rhetoric being used and it also helps us identify the framers of these conflicts. Frame analysis shows us that there is a lot more to ‘consensus mobilization’ and ‘action mobilization’ than we think. Frame analysis also helps us try to understand why Abkhazia does not have recognition from the international community and the international community ‘frames’ it as violating territorial integrity rather than framing at as a case of self-determination, while Kosovo has international recognition.

¹²³Michael Wood, "The Princeton Encyclopedia of Self-Determination: Territorial Integrity," The Princeton Encyclopedia of Self-Determination, <http://pesd.princeton.edu/?q=node/271> (accessed May 3, 2014).

¹²⁴"United States Recognizes Kosovo as an Independent State." *American Journal of International Law* 102 (2008): 638-640.

¹²⁵"United States Recognizes Kosovo as an Independent State." *American Journal of International Law* 102 (2008): 638-640.

¹²⁶Central Intelligence Agency, "Kosovo."

CONCLUSION

Mobilizing people is much more difficult than we think and there is much more to it than some actors who are gifted in the art of persuasion. Frame analysis provides us with tools to examine the micro-processes at work in mobilization and this allowed us the similarities and differences in the mobilization processes of the ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and Kosovo. Since frame analysis is used to study social movements it really should be used more often to analyze ethnic conflicts and especially those involving de facto states. Frame analysis can be used to examine the micro-processes of de facto states' ethnic conflicts in order to examine the how actors mobilized and demobilized the masses, to identify those actors and the constraints they face in mobilizing. Since frame analysis is used to look at historical events and it has not really been used to predict future events or even current events. It would be interesting to use frame analysis to examine the micro-processes of the conflict over Crimea, which we make another for a whole other project.

We have learned from this analysis that frame analysis also takes much more effort to mobilize consensus than it does to mobilize action once consensus has been established in regards to mobilization in ethnic conflicts. In addition, just because 'frame receivers' have received and understood the 'diagnostic' prognostic frames,' this does not mean that automatically action will then be mobilized. People must believe in the 'collective goods' and being presented to them. There must be a value in the 'collective goods' or people will not mobilize. 'Consensus mobilization' is crucial to inciting ethnic conflict. As in the previous case the key 'primary framework' that framers built upon is ethnicity and to a lesser extent religion.

We have also learned that 'frame makers' include elites and 'social movement entrepreneurs,' and these actors are very much aware of the foundational concepts such as beliefs and identities, which are also known as primary frameworks, and manipulate those in

order to direct the attention of the people to issues they deem important. In ethnic conflicts, ‘frame makers’ manipulate people’s identities and fears of their identity being threatened by the *other*. This is how they divert people’s attention from more pressing issues such as building infrastructure, which just further demonstrates how framers guide perceptions. Given the tension between the Abkhaz and the Georgians, and Kosovo Albanians and the Serbs, in part due to the Soviet hierarchal system, it was relatively easy for ‘frame makers,’ to build on existing social beliefs and identities, ‘primary frameworks’ and to manipulate years of tension. We have also learned from de facto states, that the international community acts as a ‘frame maker’ itself, and uses self-determination and territorial integrity as ‘frames.’ In the case of Abkhazia, the international community does not recognize it and therefore it is ‘framed’ as secessionists violating Georgia’s territorial integrity. Whereas, Kosovo is viewed as the opposite and is seen as a case of self-determination by the “white rabbit that is the international community.”¹²⁷

It is important to understand the micro-processes behind mobilization of ethnic conflicts in de facto states because they are stuck in the purgatory of the international system of states, isolated from the rest of the world, striving for recognition from the international community. De facto states are often located in struggling areas and their de facto status does not improve these already difficult conditions. They are also lumped together with the narrative of the state they broke away from, the parent state, and this is especially worse for those who are unrecognized by the international community because of their already limited resources and isolation. However, even if they are recognized by the international community, they have their *ten minutes of fame* in the media until the world forgets about them once again.

¹²⁷Nina Caspersen, *Unrecognized States: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Modern International System* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), Kindle Location 1714.

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