COLLECTIVE THREAT FRAMING AND MOBILIZATION IN CIVIL WAR

ONLINE APPENDIX

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APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

The primary data on which this article is based was collected in Abkhazia over 2010-2013. The main source of data are 150 interviews conducted with 142 respondents selected according to location and participation in the Georgian-Abkhaz war of 1992-1993—the two sources of variation in my micro-comparative research design. This methodological appendix provides a description of the manner in which the interviews were conducted, including my fieldwork logistics and interview strategies.

Fieldwork Logistics

My research in Abkhazia began with an exploratory field trip, when I probed the feasibility of long-term engagement in the selected sub-national locales, the ability to locate respondents with the varied record of participation in the Georgian-Abkhaz war, and people's openness to discussing topics related to war participation, life events outside of the war period, and the conflict in general. This preliminary trip focused on establishing contacts in the non-governmental sector, government structures of the *de facto* Abkhaz state,[1] and local community groups. I identified key state and non-state organizations and held informal meetings with the leaders. The trip was essential in testing my initial assumptions about the case and refining my research design, developing trust among leading actors in the Abkhaz society and visibility on which my future research depended, and assessing the security issues I could encounter during long-term fieldwork in Abkhazia (Sluka 2012).

The insight I gained in the exploratory stage of my research guided my core field trip, when I spent close to a month in each of the four field sites—Sukhum/i, Gagra, Pitsunda, and Gudauta. In particular, it was important for me to remain unaffiliated during my field research: in the politicized Abkhaz environment, formal affiliation with any one organization can be perceived as acceding to that organization's position on the conflict.[2] Hence, I worked independently and relied on my local contacts, rather than official bodies, non-governmental organizations, or universities, for logistical support. This strategy helped "dispel the notion that [I was] affiliated with government agencies [or civil society opposition], a frequent fear of the residents of high-violence locales" (Arias 2009, 245).

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[1] Abkhazia is a partially recognized, breakaway territory of Georgia.

In entering each field site, I followed two steps to attain confidence of potential respondents and personal security. First, I introduced myself to the local authorities, including the heads of local administrations and the police (*milicija*) office. Formal approval implied that my research purposes were known and that respondents would not bear reprisals for participation from the state. Second, I drew on networks I established in the preliminary trip to contact prominent community members who served as gatekeepers for me in each locale, identified my first respondents, and could "vouch for [my] legitimacy" (Peritore 1990, 366). Both strategies reassured respondents of my researcher role—the impression critical for increasing trust and addressing security concerns in violent social contexts (Sluka 1990).

My sustained presence, consistency of research activities, and engagement in respondents' daily lives and formal and informal social events allowed me to extend my initial networks in each locale to include a broad range of local contacts, on which I drew to select subsequent respondents. These contacts originated in respondents' extended social networks I interacted with outside of the interview setting and war-related associations, libraries, and museums, where I collected secondary materials. Hence, following other researchers of violence, “I did not rely on any single person as an interlocutor or any single network of relations… to avoid personal biases” (Fujii 2008, 576).

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[2] This strategy of preventing research bias is unfeasible in many conflict settings (Wood 2006, 379).

Furthermore, when my networks did not provide the contacts needed to fulfill the spectrum of war participation roles, I approached those individuals highlighted in my interviews, secondary research, and informal interactions without referral. Field awareness I developed over the course of my work helped evaluate when this strategy was ethical and would not harm respondents, namely, in cases of official posts, and how to appropriately implement it—through formal appointments.

The interviews with potential respondents, selected through my combined network referral and targeted selection strategy, were generally arranged by phone, with respondents themselves or their office representatives, when I introduced myself, briefly described my research, and asked if they were comfortable with an interview. One woman and three men in fighter and non-fighter roles refused to participate, which indicated that “people did not feel pressured to talk” (Fujii 2008, 574). Following a refusal, I sought other respondents with similar participation status.

The interviews typically took place in respondents’ homes, offices, or public areas, such as parks and cafes, where distance from others and privacy of the interview could be ensured. I asked respondents for a preferred location, but suggested alternative options if I felt that the location may compromise confidentiality or security of respondents or myself. My ability to assess these factors increased over time; in general, I trusted the local knowledge of my respondents (Wood 2006, 380).

Since the interviews were clustered within each locale I lived in at a time, my access to the interview location was relatively easy. I used public forms of transportation, mostly traveling alone, but in rare cases, when a formal introduction was necessary or respondents’ residence was outside of the public transportation service area, was accompanied by an interlocutor. Due to the relatively small size of Abkhazia,[3] I was not obstructed in my movement between the locales, but had to limit my movement to the selected locales for security reasons.[4]

I conducted the interviews in Russian, a language spoken by all respondents in my research, and did not require translation or other types of assistance. The interviews lasted one to six hours, averaging two hours. Most were recorded (see consent details below) and transcribed upon return.[5] When recording during the interview hindered the conversation, I reconstructed the interview in my field notes immediately after. No respondent refused interview recording. However, when I judged that it could jeopardize respondents or myself, the interview was not recorded in any form.[6] Finally, respondents were not compensated for participation and, in turn, often offered to share a meal after the interview—an important indicator that my research was seen as valuable by my respondents.

In the course of my field research, I took great care in ensuring privacy, confidentiality, and security of my respondents in the interview as well as protecting the sensitive data I collected, both in the field and writing stages (Wood 2006; Fujii 2012). In the field, the interview recordings were kept in a secure, password-protected location, with the field notes carried with me at all times. My transcribed materials and field notes are not made publicly available as they were collected under assurances of confidentiality and remain sensitive materials in light of the ongoing tensions around Abkhazia. I present interview excerpts without attribution or personal identifiers and in the context of typical war participation trajectories, rather than individual details. These strategies protect my respondents in an ongoing way.

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[3] The area is 8,700km^2 over 170km along the coast and 66km from south to north (Dbar 2013, 23).

[4] For example, I avoided the bordering regions between Abkhazia and Georgia due to the continued violent activity there.

[5] This strategy is feasible in some field contexts (see, for example, Viterna 2006), but is avoided in others for security reasons (see, for example, Parkinson 2013, 420).

[6] This decision was made in exceptional cases of respondents with a sensitive public profile.

Interview Strategies

The interviews followed the semi-structured format, beginning with the thorough informed consent protocol and, only once respondents communicated their full consent, proceeding to semi-structured interview questions on pre-war, civil war, and post-war aspects of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The informed consent procedure was typically written for high-level government officials and leaders of non-governmental organizations and oral for all other individuals. The written option was offered to individuals in the noted positions due to their public profile and extensive exposure to academic and media interviewing. These respondents often requested me to note their affiliation and post in the interview record and presentation. However, their names are not used in writing and their consent forms are not made publicly available. I stressed at the outset of the consent procedure that the oral option could be taken at any time in the interview.[7] The majority of respondents in my research consented to be interviewed orally, so that no written record of their participation existed or could compromise their identity.

The informed consent procedure followed the same protocol regardless of the distinction in the written and oral form. I introduced myself as an academic researcher completing a Ph.D. degree in Canada. I ensured to make it clear early in the interview that I did not have an affiliation with the government, non-governmental organizations, or universities in Abkhazia, Georgia, or Russia—the main actors involved in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. However, I emphasized that I gained formal approval from the local authorities to conduct my research in the locale where the interview took place. I noticed that this self-presentation format put individuals at ease, as I was not seen as biased by the formal affiliation with political actors in the conflict and took care to secure the local approval viewed as important by most potential respondents.

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[7] No potential respondent in my research refused the written option. In contrast, respondents in this group often preferred written informed consent. It is a common practice of elite interviewing in the post-war context of Abkhazia and the region more broadly. However, this option is not advisable in the context of ongoing civil wars (Wood 2006, 380).

In-depth examination of the history of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict was the stated purpose of my research. I made sure to clarify that I would consult with a broad range of actors involved in the conflict, including individuals who participated in different capacities and did not participate in the Georgian-Abkhaz war of 1992-1993 and individuals with different affiliations and positions in present-day Abkhazia. I informed potential respondents that while my research focused on conflict processes that have developed in Abkhazia, I would conduct further research in Georgia and Russia to incorporate the views on the history of the conflict on all sides. Making my research purpose and scope transparent was important in general, but especially for those individuals who did not wish to participate in a project that involved the views of the actors they did not accept. While no individual refused to participate on these grounds, this information was central to a fully informed consent.

Finally, I assured potential respondents that I would maintain their confidentiality across all stages of research and that their responses would be excerpted in my writing, without attribution or identifying details. This applied to all potential respondents, including the government officials and non-governmental leaders noted above, unless they specifically requested their affiliation and post to be recorded.[8] I made it clear that no other benefits than academic writing based on the collected materials should be expected from my research. I followed Wood (2006, 380) in offering "different levels of confidentiality" to individuals, with the options to withdraw written or oral consent at any time, control what I recorded during or after the interview, and refuse to answer any of my questions. Combined, this protocol helped shape a full understanding of the interview process and outcomes and the interview dynamics where respondents could contribute to the conversation on their terms.[9] This approach appears to have prevented some of the distress that could otherwise be experienced in interviews on traumatic, conflict-related topics.

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[8] Even in these cases, I am careful not to include individual details in my writing and to note these respondents' positions mainly in the discussion of present-day issues and general conflict processes.

The remainder of the interview was based on the principles of in-depth interviewing within the interpretive research tradition.[10] This method "is intended to explore the meaning(s) of terms and/or situations and/or events… to the persons who live with and/or lived through them" (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006, 118). I selected this method because the core goal of my research was to explore the meanings Abkhaz men and women attributed to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict from the historical perspective, with their pre-war commitments, social interaction, and conflict participation setting the ground for understanding their perceptions of conflict at the war onset and mobilization trajectories. These understudied questions are "difficult to locate in documentary sources or everyday interactions" (Soss 2006, 141). In-depth interviewing allowed me to explore these questions in great detail and with the level of flexibility necessary to delve into the dilemmas and uncertainties surrounding mobilization decisions and the relationship between structure and agency in civil war.

What made the interviews *in-depth* was the discursive mode of interaction I adopted with respondents. "'Conversation' comes close to capturing the character of interviewing in an interpretive mode" (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006, 117). Hence, after the formal informed consent part of the interview, I suggested to my respondents that the interaction to follow was best viewed as a conversation. This removed the sense of interrogation that could be associated with the term "interview" and implied that my questions would be used to guide, rather than determine, the course of the interview. My role in the interview was defined as that of an engaged, focused listener.[11] The semi-structured interview plan served to navigate and direct the conversation toward my research purpose, while I was open to and followed up on respondent departures from my questions.[12]

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[9] See Thomson (2010) on the importance of engaging individuals on their own terms. This approach is especially critical in interviewing people on sensitive issues involving personal suffering or loss.
[10] While my interviews were semi-structured, rather than fully open-ended—the format commonly associated with interpretive interviewing,—they nonetheless had a discursive, as opposed to fixed, format, distinguishing my approach from surveys and preset formal interviews (Soss 2006, 135).

This discursive interview dynamic "allow[ed] the respondent to reflect on and even explore her own ideas, to reveal not only strong views but also worries, uncertainties—in a word, to engage human vulnerability" (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006, 118). It was essential to capturing personal views beyond the master narrative of conflict. Respondents often began with the official narrative, but revealed their nuanced positions in specific stories, silences, and physical gestures in the course of the interview. These "spoken and unspoken" interactions, signaling respondents' "thoughts and feelings," exemplify the "meta-data" that I paid close attention to and engaged in my research (Fujii 2010, 232). For example, the silences following women's accounts on war participation of fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands indicated that retelling of the stories of bravery and goodness of these Abkhaz fighters was a way of coping with their loss. As demonstrated below, the meta-data served as an invaluable source of insight for me to probe and reconstruct individual understandings of conflict and mobilization trajectories, both within and across the interviews.

My semi-structured interview plan followed the individual life histories in the context of the conflict.[13] The questions on respondents' childhood focused on the stories respondents remembered hearing within the family and outside of the household, the relations they developed with Georgian neighbors, teachers, and classmates, and the language they had to speak and history they learned at school—Abkhaz, Georgian, and/or Russian. These questions helped me examine whether and how the attitudes on the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict were formed within the structure of familial or other everyday social relations and reinforced at the national level, for instance, through education policy.

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[11] The intimate setting produced by this approach allowed me to share in the memories of the war and experience of remembering. It invited me to reflect on my emotional reactions to respondents, both in and outside of the interview setting. See Wood (2006, 384) on "secondary trauma" among researchers conducting interviews on war. See Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2006) on reflexivity.

[12] The length of my interviews varied largely for this reason.

[13] The interviews took the life history format, "a form of oral history" interviewing suitable to my research due to its scope, covering life trajectories, rather than focusing on singular topics or events (Benmayor 1991, fn. 1, p. 173). While oral history "refers to… recording, transcribing, editing, and

The next phase of the interview plan covered pre-war adulthood, focusing on the university experience, which most of my respondents had due to the Soviet emphasis on higher education, the Georgian-Abkhaz relations in the employment setting, and involvement in pre-war mobilization.[14] I interviewed individuals with a broad range of pre-war backgrounds, which allowed me to capture how respondents in the distinct state and non-state positions thought their group belonging affected education and employment opportunities. The sites of information exchange, affiliation formation, and organization of collective action were discussed in this phase of the interview, letting me probe the interaction between respondents' different pre-war commitments and organizational affiliation and their activism. At this stage in their life histories, respondents were likely to form strong extra-familial relationships within and outside of the Abkhaz group, making this phase of the interview central to gathering egocentric social network data.[15] This data emerged from respondent accounts of who they interacted with and what interactions shaped their views and participation in pre-war conflict events. It was collected across the interviews, as respondents' relationships overlapped.[16]

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making public the resulting product," an important departure in my research was not to edit or make transcripts available publicly to ensure security of respondents (Gluck and Patai 1991, fn. 1, p. 4).

[14] My respondents fell in two general age groups, young adults under the age of 30 prior to the war and individuals over 30 years old, most of whom had stable employment and families at that time.

[15] Parkinson (2013) adopts a similar strategy.

[16] Respondents often attended the same university and met in the employment context. I purposely selected respondents' family members and friends with varied war participation record to capture

The majority of the interview focused specifically on the first days of the Georgian-Abkhaz war of 1992-1993.[17] I followed the strategy that combined questions on the events that unfolded on August 14-18, 1992, in the individual's trajectory and more broadly, in the trajectories of families, friends, and acquaintances, and proceeded to narrative questions on the individual's understanding of these events.[18] Existing research in psychology and social sciences demonstrates "that more salient, less repetitive events are remembered with particular accuracy… and that highly intense or violent events… are especially well remembered in both the short and long term" (Viterna 2006, 14; Wood 2003, 33-4). Since these features characterized the war onset in Abkhazia, I was able to draw on the recollections of respondents to reconstruct each respondent's step by step mobilization trajectory, exploring how they learned about the Georgian advance into Abkhazia, who they talked to upon hearing the news of the advance, and what actions and with whom they pursued in response.

I then proceeded to ask about respondents' views on the war onset, including whether they anticipated the Georgian advance, how they perceived the anticipated risks associated with it, and what motivated them to participate in the war or not and in which capacity. The result is the highly nuanced collection of individual mobilization trajectories, with the sequences of individual actions situated within the broader structural context of the war onset and the social ties involved, as well as the narratives describing perceptions and motivations as they related to pre-war accounts of family past, personal relations in and outside of the group, and engagement in the conflict before the war.

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individuals' social relations and whether and how these relations persisted in the war. As I gathered data on multiple such networks, the interviews did not privilege certain views or affiliations.

[17] The Georgian advance took place on August 14-15, 1992. I focused on these two days to evaluate the differences in mobilization in the east, which unfolded on August 14, and west of Abkhazia the following day. I incorporated August 16-18 into the discussion of the war onset to establish whether respondents changed their mobilization decisions after exposure to the first episodes of violence.

[18] Viterna (2006, 14) adopts a similar strategy of "[m]ixing the recall of events with more open-ended narrative questions."

While the combination of event and narrative accounts helped me tackle the subject of war onset from different angles and so address the issue of memory in this core phase of the interview,[19] the last phases of the interview on further war and post-war stages allowed me to evaluate, first, the endogeneity of respondent memories to war-time processes and, second, whether and how people's post-war affiliations affected what they said about the past (Wood 2003). On the first issue, Wood (2003, 35) argues that "the telling of personal and community histories in an ethnographic setting is … shaped by the respondent's personal and family trajectories through the war." I employed three strategies to address this issue. First, I paid close attention to how respondents spoke about their war trajectories in relation to their family members and close friends. This strategy allowed me to check when respondent accounts conveyed self-aggrandizing or, in contrast, minimizing motives, rather than actual patterns of mobilization. For example, female respondents often spoke on behalf of men who fought and were lost in the war. Their war-time paths were cast *in relation* to men. This insight helped me steer the interview toward women's specific activities in support or other war-time roles.

Second, I recorded the occurrence of silences and gestures indicating discomfort and noted in the course of the interview when the information provided by the respondent conflicted with my prior knowledge of the case or their mobilization record, as gathered from their preceding responses and other respondents' accounts and interactions. I was careful not to challenge what appeared to be misrepresented information for ethical and practical reasons. This could "result in hostility toward the project and perhaps toward participants" (Wood 2006, 382).[20] Instead, the semi-structured format of the interview "provide[d me with] freedom for probes and follow-up questions" and I used targeted follow-up questions to cross-check responses within and across the interviews (Soss 2006,

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[19] My interviews took place two decades after the Georgian-Abkhaz war. See Wood (2003), Fujii (2010), and Wedeen (2010) on problems of memory in conflict- and violence-related interviewing.

[20] Researchers often face this dilemma, especially in perpetrator interviews (Wood 2006, 382).

135).[21] For example, the rumors (see Appendix B. Participant Observation Sites, p. 17) surrounding individuals who did not participate in the combat or support roles in Abkhazia, but insisted that they contributed to the war, allowed me to grasp difficult dilemmas of war participation in the interview, including the different normative commitments in the decisions to participate in the war or not and the blame individuals had to bear thereafter if their decisions departed from the social expectations.

Finally, I accessed comparable interview archives collected by other researchers at the time of the war in 1992-1993 and midway between the war and my field research.[22] This strategy helped me assess how war-time processes shaped respondent memories and whether these memories were reshaped with time by validating mobilization trajectories and narratives surrounding the war—the two components of my combined event and narrative interview strategy. In particular, some of my respondents were interviewed by other researchers, allowing me to compare individual paths. The confirmation of mobilization trajectories that emerged using this strategy increased the confidence in my interview responses. More importantly, by using this strategy, I was able to verify the broader patterns I arrived at as a result of my research. Both my interviews and alternative archives support the importance of threat framing across social structures and shared understandings of history and identity based on the so-called Georgianization of Abkhazia underlying this threat framing.

Triangulation with additional primary and secondary materials provided an additional level of validation. My extensive review of local academic studies, official documents, and news reports supplemented individual accounts on mobilization with macro-level data on the war, which further situated my interview data in the socio-structural context.[23] My elite interviews and interviews with respondents affected by the conflict in Georgia and Russia closed the remaining gaps in the structural context of the war.[24]

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[21] Fujii (2008) follows a similar strategy of cross-checking interview responses with meta-data.

[22] In using this strategy, I drew on Scott (1985, 90), whose requirement for research locale selection was “that the village be one that had been studied before.” The main sources of published interview transcripts on my case include Bebia (1997, 2011) and Khodzhaa (2003, 2006, 2009). Brojdo (2008) is based on interviews conducted during the war and offers base-line information for my research.

Beyond the strategies I adopted to engage the issue of memory, I was aware of the potential effects of post-war processes in Abkhazia on the interview. As Wood (2003, 35) suggests, "present political loyalties, beliefs concerning the likely consequences of participation in the interview and of expressing particular views, and present personal objectives" influence what respondents choose to tell the researcher or not. As demonstrated above, I paid close attention in the informed consent procedure to conveying that respondent confidentiality would be preserved, that participation in the interview did not conflict with local authorities, and that no participation benefits existed other than academic writing. The protocol and respondent flexibility in the interview helped ease the concerns about voicing personal views. Respondents often spoke critically of the official conflict narrative and present-day politics in Abkhazia. My unaffiliated status in the region suggested that I did not have political influence and my research would not advance respondents' political purposes. Most respondents worked to present their stories in as much detail as possible, using personal documents, photographs, and notes to support their accounts.[25] As other researchers of conflict, I realized that for many respondents, "sharing their life story with an engaged listener [eager to comprehend their history] was some sort of service that I provided in the course of my research" (Wood 2006, 382).

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[23] I surveyed major archives, libraries, and museums in Abkhazia (Sukhum/i, Gagra, and Gudauta), Georgia (Tbilisi), and Russia (Moscow) to locate official documents, secondary literature, and news archives on the conflict. See list of secondary materials appended as Table 5 (p. 29).

[24] I conducted 30 interviews with former Georgian residents of Abkhazia displaced as a result of the war and elite interviews with experts on the conflict in Georgia (Tbilisi) and Russia (Moscow). See interview details appended as Table 6 (p. 30).

[25] I did not request, but was frequently presented with supporting materials during the interviews.

Furthermore, to evaluate the extent to which post-war loyalties impacted the interviews and ensure that I did not privilege a single set of views on the war, I interviewed individuals with varied political affiliation in post-war Abkhazia. I expected that individuals disillusioned by the outcomes of the war, including the dire economic conditions and blockade of Abkhazia that followed, would not speak positively of the Abkhaz war effort. On the other hand, individuals who fought in the war and received high regard or leadership posts in the *de facto* Abkhaz state would be favorable toward it. To capture such differences, I interviewed state officials in local administration and police office and national ministries, including justice, defense, and foreign affairs. Respondents in the non-state group included leaders of non-governmental organizations, journalists, community leaders, such as the elders, and regular men and women. I noted how individuals in these distinct post-war positions spoke about the war and their participation. While ideological differences existed, the mobilization trajectories that emerged from the interviews, namely organized fighters, spontaneous fighters, and non-fighters, were represented across the post-war political divides. This suggests that present-day affiliation cannot explain the presented data. However, the pattern of how individuals learned about and decided to respond to the Georgian advance and the distinct motivations behind the trajectories were repeated across the interviews, with minor differences shaped by situational factors.[26]

APPENDIX B. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION SITES

Participant observation as a data collection method supplemented my in-depth interviews.[27] In each of my research locales, I engaged in "participating in the daily life of the community through ordinary conversation and interaction; observing events (meetings, ceremonies, rituals…); [and] recording data in field notes" (Bayard de Volo and Schatz 2004, 267). The two methods went hand in hand in developing insight and focusing my research on insider perspectives, what Schatz (2009) calls "ethnographic sensibility." I outlined above my use of participant observation in this research, as a way to situate respondents and what they reported in the interview setting within their war-time and present-day social context. This brief appendix describes my sites of participant observation.

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[26] I stopped interviewing in each locale when respondents repeated the information I had received.
[27] See Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2006), Schatz (2009), and Wedeen (2010) on combining the two.

First, I attended all national and local-level events related to the war I was aware of during my fieldwork in Abkhazia. These events included medal award ceremonies, memorial gatherings, and celebrations of the Abkhaz victory in the war. During the events, I recoded notes on the content of presented speeches and remarks, gestures, and facial expressions in the audience. Observation at these events helped better grasp the official conflict narrative and the ways in which individuals in different post-war positions reacted to it.[28] This not only created opportunities for me to broaden my networks and conduct interviews with individuals I met at these events who fit my research design, but also informed my questions and understanding of people's perceptions on conflict. For example, the use of the term Patriotic War of Abkhazia to refer to the Georgian-Abkhaz war of 1992-1993 in speeches was repeated in the interviews by those who fought or lost dear ones in the war. Attendant remarks and expressions signaled disillusionment of others, such as mothers of disappeared fighters or fighters who had not been awarded a medal, and formed the basis for follow up in the interviews.

Second, I participated in multiple interactions within respondents' organizational contexts. In particular, my primary and secondary research was frequently located in the offices of veterans' associations, mothers' organizations, and war-related libraries and museums. When conducting my research in these organizational settings, I was often invited to observe and participate in formal and informal discussions about the war and the post-war challenges that these organizations addressed.

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[28] I knew some attendants through my daily interactions and interviews, while others, such as high-level officials and war commanders, I learned about and approached during or after these events.

My main goal in these interactions was to trace the persistence of social networks from the time of the war into the post-war environment and identify for further interviews individuals related to one another through war-time bonds and those whose ties with war relations were severed. This helped me update my theoretical expectations on the transformation of social networks in war and tap into the questions of which social networks were salient for individuals with distinct war-time pasts. For instance, individuals who experienced injury or loss in the war later created or joined new networks to reflect their war-time experience, which pointed me to the relationships forged before the war, as opposed to present-day friendships, in trying to reconstruct the social patterns of war mobilization.

Finally, I engaged in informal conversations on a daily basis and was occasionally invited to social events, including dinners, holiday celebrations, and weddings. In addition to broadening my networks, two features of these informal interactions proved to be central to my research. First, the table traditions involved pointed to the significance of the war for regular Abkhaz men and women. For example, every event began with a toast to those lost in the war, reflecting the effort to preserve war memory within social institutions and contextualizing my respondents' efforts in the interview to reconstruct their war paths in great detail. Second, jokes about certain individuals' self-glorifying tendencies as contrasted with stories of their war participation and rumors surrounding individuals who, for example, did not participate in the war, helped me probe accounts presented by these and other individuals in the interviews, strengthening the overall interview process and its outcomes.

APPENDIX C. DATA ANALYSIS

As the discussion of field methods suggests, my research was characterized by the constant exchange between data and analysis, with analytic memos consistently recorded in my field notes and my theoretical expectations adjusted and further probed based on the patterns arising from the data.[29] However, systematic analysis of the data followed the transcription of my field materials. This appendix describes two major aspects of my data analysis, coding and process tracing.

Coding

Coding in qualitative research, what Miles and Huberman (1994, 10) call “data reduction,” “refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions.” My analytic choices for coding were guided by the existing theoretical knowledge on mobilization in civil war as well as the patterns that emerged during my field research. The combination of induction and deduction in the analysis allowed me to distinguish the effects of the alternative explanations and focus on the process underlying Abkhaz mobilization at the Georgian-Abkhaz war onset (George and Bennett 2005, 19-22).

My coding strategy consisted of three stages. In the first stage, I applied broad background categories to the interview data and identified pre- to post-war occupations and mobilization roles adopted by my respondents. Table 1 (below) provides my sample code. The Summary of Interview Data in the article (see Table 1) is based on the full version of this code. The background categories include gender, group self-identification, age, and location of the interview. Coding each interview according to these categories led to two important analytical results. First, I produced the detailed demographic breakdown of Abkhaz fighters and non-fighters carefully selected for the interviews, which helped place the case of Abkhazia within the broader universe of civil war cases. Second, I confirmed that the interviews were balanced across the four locales that form the basis of my micro-comparative research design and reflected the local-level spatial and temporal differences at the war onset that could have differentiated mobilization processes between the locales.

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[29] See Saldaña (2009, 32-4) on analytic memos.

Table 1. Coding Sample, Stage 1

Log	Date	Gender	Self-identified	Age	Location	Pre-war		War Mobilization	Post-War	
						Occupation	Mobilization		Occupation	Mobilization
xxx	xxx	M	A	75	xxx	NS	SM	SM (SR)	NS	OM
xxx	xxx	F	A	45	xxx	S	OM	EF	S	N/A

Legend:

A	Abkhaz
EF	Escaped fighting in Abkhazia
F	Female
M	Male
NS	Non-state
OM	Organized mobilization
S	State
SM	Spontaneous mobilization
SR	Support role
xxx	Identifying details

Respondents' pre- to post-war occupations and mobilization roles were coded to ensure that a broad range of pre- and post-war affiliations were captured in the interviews and that the issues of potential bias discussed above, namely, endogeneity of memory to war processes and homogeneity of responses due to common political loyalties, were adequately addressed across my interviews. In terms of occupation, I coded respondents' pre- and post-war employment as state or non-state, thus capturing formal affiliation. I coded respondents' participation in pre- and post-war conflict-related events according to their organized or spontaneous character to reflect organizational affiliation.[30]

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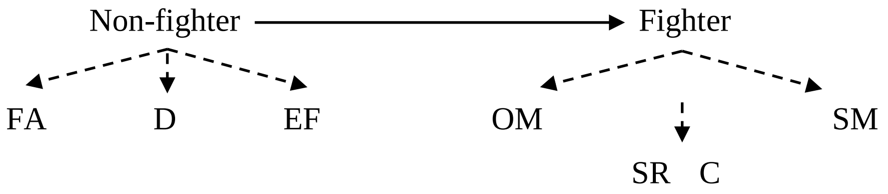
[30] The "organized mobilization" code was applied to those respondents who were mobilized by the organizations of the Abkhaz movement before the war and the Abkhaz *de facto* state after the war.

Figure 1. War-Time Mobilization Roles



Legend:

C	Combat
D	Defected
EF	Escaped fighting in Abkhazia
FA	Fled Abkhazia
OM	Organized mobilization
SM	Spontaneous mobilization
SR	Support Role

While the pre- and post-war categories provided important background information for the analysis, central to the analysis was the variation in the war-time mobilization roles. The roles were coded according to the mobilization continuum, from non-fighter to fighter roles. Figure 1 (above) illustrates the continuum. The non-fighter side of the continuum incorporated individuals who fled Abkhazia, defected to the Georgian side, and escaped fighting in Abkhazia in the course of the war. The fighter side included individuals organized by the Abkhaz leadership prior to the war and those who mobilized on the Abkhaz side spontaneously, in support or combat roles.[31] This detailed code allowed me to surpass the simple fighter-non-fighter dichotomy, which often characterizes studies of civil war mobilization, and move on to textual analysis of the different mobilization trajectories (Parkinson 2013, 422).

The subsequent stages of my coding strategy involved textual analysis of the interviews—single and grouped according to the different war-time mobilization roles as well as in their totality and broken down by the pre-war, civil war, and post-war stages—in order to “represent and capture

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[31] War-time mobilization was coded for the period of the war onset, as most Abkhaz fighters were later incorporated into the Abkhaz army, which was formed during the war.

[each] datum’s primary content and essence” (Saldaña 2009, 3). As discussed above, my interview strategy consisted of the combination of event and narrative accounts. My second and third stages of coding addressed these different aspects of the interview respectively.

In the second stage, I focused on the respondent recollections of the events that unfolded at the moment of war onset in Abkhazia. I analyzed relevant parts of the interviews according to four categories. Table 2 (below) presents a sample of a coded interview excerpt. First, I coded references to expectations of the war, as indicated by the expressions of prior knowledge about the possibility of the Georgian advance and preparation for it, for example, through arming, and such descriptions of the advance as *sudden* and others’ reactions to it as *confused*. Second, the source of information about the war was specified in the reports of the individuals or groups and the location—physical or media—where respondents heard about the Georgian advance. This category was as well recorded if respondents informed others, for instance, by telephone. Third, I coded the content of information that respondents received, with a particular focus on the different framing and perceptions of threat. Threat framing emerged from the use of alarming terms in describing received information, such as *armed clashes*, *shot at*, and *casualties*. Threat perceptions were evident in the acknowledgement of this information. The final aspects of coding targeted the social networks involved in mobilization. First, I differentiated between the collective and individual nature of action and decision-making in response to received information. Second, I coded the individual’s location at the war onset and that at the time of mobilization, which indicated the importance of certain social networks, for example, those in one’s home town. Finally, I recorded the instances of specific reference to social networks. This stage of coding prepared my interview data for the reconstruction of step by step mobilization sequences, essential for the process tracing method I use (see section below), following individual respondents and grouped across the interviews according to the different mobilization trajectories.

Table 2. Coding Sample, Stage 2

Interview Excerpt	Code
The day of the war, in 1992, I was in *Sochi*, [Russia].	*Location at the war onset*
On my way back [to Abkhazia], I saw that cars were standing and *people [at the border]* were passionately discussing something.	*Source of information about the war*
I *did not know* what happened.	*Expectation of the war*
At that time, the first *armed clashes* were happening in Ochamchira. The first *casualties* appeared.	*Threat framing*
They [Georgia] sent their troops here [to Abkhazia] *suddenly*.	*Expectation of the war*
We began *calling* everyone by phone. We called all the *friends*.	*Source of information about the war* *Social networks*
Everyone was *confused* at the administration. *No one could understand* the situation.	*Expectation of the war*
We *gathered [with my sports team]* at the *sports ground [in Gagra where I am from]*: *what do we do*?	*Collective action; Social networks; Location at mobilization; Coll. decision*
[I was told that m]y brothers were coming [to Gagra] from Gudauta and were *shot at* in Kolkhida. They *died*.	*Threat framing*
Now we understood who it was that we faced. The *armaments, heavy weapons, small arms*: *they had it all* and *we had nothing*. The Abkhaz population of Gagra was *armed with double-barreled guns* and had *no [army] structure* when the war began. Our *strengths were uneven*.	*Threat perception* *Expectation of the war*
We formed around *our close ones*.	*Social networks*

The final stage of coding focused on recurring themes in the narrative part of the interviews. My proximity and continuous engagement with the interviews, along with the insight on the case I developed in the course of my primary and secondary research, helped me identify and code salient

Table 3. Coding Sample, Stage 3

Interview Excerpt	Code
Abkhazia had *statehood* for 2000 years. It was only during Stalin that we were reduced to an *autonomy*. But Georgians thought that *Abkhazia did not exist*.	*Georgianization (political status)*
To *sweep Abkhazia with Georgians*, Georgia… led the process of *Georgianization* of the Abkhaz nation.	*Georgianization (demography)*
There were *localized clashes* and more *everyday ones*. It was scary when big crowds gathered on both sides.	*Pre-war violence*
[Soviet] leaders did not allow significant bloodshed to happen. But it still happened.	*Violence containment*
Fights always began with: "Why the Abkhaz do not know the Georgian language…"	*Georgianization (culture)*
We did not attack them. They did. We do not have another *motherland* as opposed to Georgians who are *both here and there*. They have their *motherland*, Georgia.	*Attack* *Motivation (belonging to Abkhazia)*

themes. Table 3 (above) offers a sample code. The so-called Georgianization of Abkhazia emerged in references to the reduction in Abkhazia's political status, Georgian demographic expansion, and cultural repression through language policy, among others. Mention of pre-war violence and Soviet violence containment added to the structural context inferred from these themes. The description of the Georgian advance as an *offensive* and *attack* and motivations listed for participation in the war, including belonging to Abkhazia and the Abkhaz as a group and fear for personal security or that of close family and friends, related to this context. This stage of coding helped me distinguish between the understandings of conflict and motivations of individuals in the varied mobilization trajectories.

Process Tracing

I applied the method of process tracing to the coded data because my core theoretical aim in this research was to discover the process underlying civil war mobilization in the understudied case that is poorly predicted by the existing approaches to mobilization.[32] As George and Bennett (2005, 215) argue, "[p]rocess tracing is particularly useful for obtaining an explanation for… cases… that have outcomes not predicted or explained adequately by existing theories."[33] The focus in process tracing on causal mechanisms lies at the core of such discovery.[34] "In process-tracing," Beach and Pedersen (2013, 49) explain, "we theorize more than just X and Y; we also theorize the mechanism between them." The threat framing mechanism that resulted from the interaction between inductive and deductive analysis in this research is discussed in detail in the theoretical section of the article. Figure 2 (below) presents the mechanism in the outline form to specify the steps I took to assess it, as compared to the alternative explanations.

To assess the mechanism, the method directs us to "sequential processes within a particular historical case" (George and Bennett 2005, 13). The following sequence should be observed if the threat framing mechanism holds. In general, individuals should mobilize at the war onset following threat framing. In particular, three steps should be observed. First, actors across social structures should address individuals in private and public in an attempt to frame the Georgian advance as an aggression against the collectivity. Second, respondents should reference this framing in how they learned about and perceived the advance. Third, respondents who reported to have perceived threat

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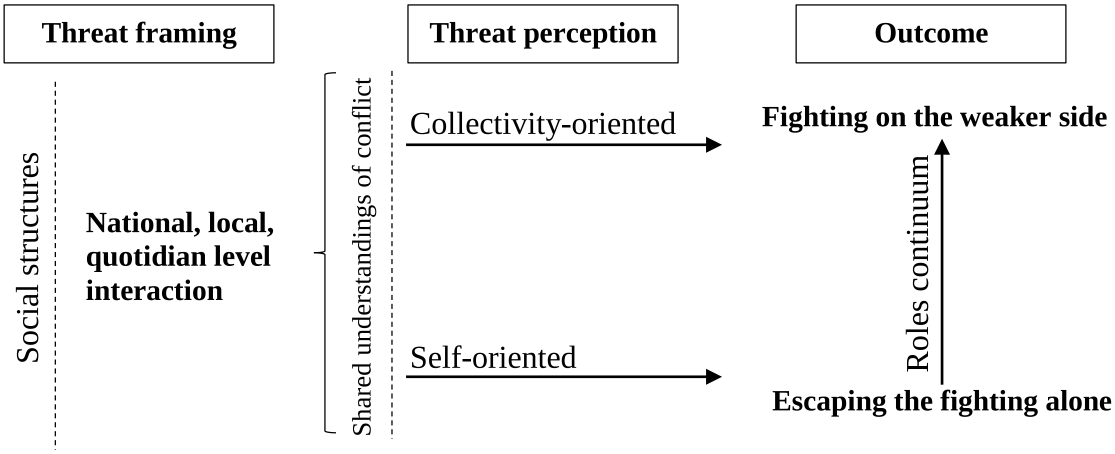
[32] See Beissinger (2002, 222) on the application of the existing approaches to Abkhaz mobilization.
[33] See Beach and Pedersen (2013) and Bennett and Checkel (2014) for a discussion of the method.
[34] The definition of causal mechanisms is contested (Checkel 2008). However, causal mechanisms can be understood as "ultimately unobservable physical, social, or psychological processes through which agents with causal capacities operate, but only in specific contexts of conditions, to transfer energy, information, or matter to other entities" (George and Bennett 2005, 137).

Figure 2. Threat Framing Mechanism


Threat framing
Threat perception
Outcome
Social structures
National, local, quotidian level interaction
Shared understandings of conflict
Collectivity-oriented
Self-oriented
Fighting on the weaker side
Roles continuum
Escaping the fighting alone

as directed primarily to themselves should hide, flee, or defect to the stronger, Georgian side. Those who prioritized threat against Abkhazia and cited the shared understanding of the conflict as part of the so-called Georgianization of Abkhazia should mobilize to fight on the weaker, Abkhaz side.

I verified this sequence by reconstructing individual mobilization trajectories to the lowest level of detail and grouping these trajectories across the interviews to produce the general organized and spontaneous fighter and non-fighter trajectories of mobilization.[35] The resulting rich account of Abkhaz mobilization at the Georgian-Abkhaz war onset improves on the alternatives in the relative deprivation (Gurr 1970), collective action (Weinstein 2007), and strategic interaction (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007) approaches to mobilization. Table 4 (below) charts the observable implications and application of these theoretical approaches to the case of Abkhaz mobilization at the war onset.

Relative deprivation concerns the conditions of relative inequality before war and attributes mobilization to ethnic, economic, political, and cultural grievances (Gurr 1970). Individuals should mobilize on the side that is marginalized due to its ethnic belonging and is excluded from economic opportunities, political process, and cultural development. While ethnic marginalization does not

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[35] The most representative interview excerpts within each trajectory were selected for presentation.

Table 4. Alternative Explanations

Theory	**Relative Deprivation**			**Collective Action**			**Strategic Interaction**
OIs	Ethnically marginalized	Economically deprived	Politically/ culturally excluded	Materially incentivized	Coerced	Socially sanctioned	Security seeking
CA	○	◌	●	○	○	●	○

Legend:

OIs	Observable implications
CA	Case application
○	Does not hold
◌	Partly holds
●	Strongly holds

hold strongly, economic, political, and cultural access are important in the Abkhaz case. Exclusion based on ethnicity—nationality in the Soviet terminology—was a serious breach of the Communist ideology, punishable by dismissal from leadership positions, and checked through the titular status that guaranteed representation in the Soviet republics to native groups, such as the Abkhaz. As the Union disintegrated before the war, the Abkhaz were overrepresented in Abkhaz institutions, with a quota of seats in the Supreme Council achieved through the power-sharing arrangement with the post-Soviet Georgian leadership that surpassed that of Georgians (45% of the population in 1989).

However, economic, political, and cultural grievances played a role in Abkhaz mobilization. Economic deprivation partially holds in the Abkhaz case as Georgia controlled most of Abkhazia's economy, with leading economic positions in enterprises and the state held largely by Georgians. This pattern can be explained by the proportion of the Abkhaz (17% in 1989) in the population and did not affect access to regular employment, where the Soviet standards based on inclusion applied, giving the Abkhaz access available to other demographic groups and special titular quotas favoring the Abkhaz in education and employment opportunities, especially in the last decade of the Union. While economic access was part of Abkhaz pre-war concerns, it is political and cultural grievances that formed the basis of Abkhaz claims. These grievances were related to the change in the political status of Abkhazia, from the Soviet Socialist Republic established in 1921 to the autonomous part of Georgia in 1931, and the so-called Georgianization of Abkhazia, or the corresponding Georgian demographic growth and suppression of Abkhaz language, schools, and other cultural institutions. Most Abkhaz shared in these grievances, but relative deprivation does not tell us how they mattered in producing the variation in organized, spontaneous, and non-fighter trajectories at the war onset.

Similarly, the collective action approach offers important insight into Abkhaz mobilization. According to this approach, mobilization poses a free-riding problem, which can be overcome with selective incentives and social sanctions (Weinstein 2007). Individuals should mobilize on the side that offers material and social rewards or punishment. While the Abkhaz side was unable to coerce mobilization or provide material incentives at the war onset, it is a typical strong community able to reward participants in status and punish non-participants through future exclusion from community benefits. The small size of the Abkhaz population (93.267 in 1989) and the history of demographic, political, and cultural changes in Abkhazia added to the strength of *familia* (family name) ties and Apsuara (duty) norms. Passed through generations in households and other social institutions, these strong community pressures applied to most Abkhaz, yet not all mobilized to fight at the war onset.

Finally, according to the strategic interaction theoretical approach, the Abkhaz should have been observed to mobilize on the stronger, Georgian side at the war onset or defect to the Georgian side early in the war, as Georgia established control over most of Abkhazia. This would provide the Abkhaz with the increased chances of survival in the war—a goal that security-seeking individuals should follow (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007). However, mobilization on the Georgian side among the Abkhaz was rare. Moreover, the Abkhaz mobilized both armed and unarmed and in the areas where Georgia controlled the territory. Despite the casualties on the Abkhaz side and the exit options that existed, especially at the war onset, Abkhaz mobilization continued, to attain control over strategic western Abkhazia and form the Abkhaz army in the course of the war. Whereas this army structure provided access to skills and resources for fighters joining the Abkhaz force later in the war, which should promote participation in line with the security-seeking explanation, it did not exist at the war onset and does not explain this immediate mass mobilization against the superior Georgian force.

As a result, alternative explanations address significant factors, but do not fully account for Abkhaz mobilization. Relative deprivation and collective action shed light on the socio-structural context of mobilization, yet cannot explain why some Abkhaz mobilized and others did not despite the common presence of grievances and social sanctions for mobilization. The strategic interaction approach struggles to account for the outcome of mobilization in the case, as the Abkhaz were the weaker side in the war and joining it did not increase but jeopardized individual security. The threat framing mechanism I propose draws on these approaches and provides a theoretical alternative. It survives the comparison across space and time in Abkhazia, as required in my micro-comparative research design, and informs the variation in the observed fighter and non-fighter trajectories.

APPENDED MATERIALS

Table 5. List of Secondary Research Sites

News Archives
Abkhazia
1. Apsnypress (1994-2011)
2. Echo Abhazii (1995-2011)
3. Respublika Abhazija (1999-2011)
Georgia
1. Georgian Chronicles (1992-1997)
2. Svobodnaja Gruzija (1992-2006)
3. The Armed Forces in Georgia (1998-1999)
4. The Army and Society in Georgia (1999-2001)
Russia
1. Current Digest of Russian Press (1992-2011)
International
1. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (1992-2011)
Other Archives
1. State Statistics Administration *Abkhazia in Numbers* (2002-2010)
2. State Republican Library of Abkhazia War Archive (1992-1993)
3. Ekaterina Bebia Private Video Archive (1992-2008)
4. Gagra TV Video Archive (1992-2008)
5. Gudauta War Museum War Archive (1992-1993)
6. Published Interview Archives (Khodzhaa, 2003, 2006, 2009)
7. Published War Document Archive (Volkhonskij et al., 2008)
8. Private Archive of Aidgylara (1989-1992)
Libraries
1. Gagra Library № 1, Gagra, Abkhazia
2. Gudauta War Museum Library, Gudauta, Abkhazia
3. State Republican Library, Sukhum/i. Abkhazia
4. National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia
5. Russian State Library, Moscow, Russia

Table 6. Summary of Secondary Interviews

			Total[36]	Percentage (rounded)
General information	Gender	Male	23	62%
		Female	14	38%
	Location	Georgia	31	84%
		Russia	6	16%
Interview type	Expert[37]		24	65%
	Focus group[38]		7	19%
	War witness[39]		6	16%

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[36] Calculated based on 37 respondents in 30 interviews and one focus group.

[37] This category includes university professors, governmental officials, and representatives of non-governmental organizations and research institutes.

[38] The focus group was carried out with support of the Ministry of Education of Abkhazia in exile with respondents who witnessed the war in Abkhazia and were displaced to Georgia.

[39] This category includes respondents who witnessed the war in Abkhazia and were displaced.

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