

Daniel Gauseth

Framing the Russia-Georgian War

An analysis of the Norwegian print-press coverage in August 2008



Master's thesis in History

Trondheim, fall 2012

Framing the Russia-Georgian War

An analysis of the Norwegian print-press coverage in August 2008

Daniel Gauseth

Master's thesis in History
Department of History and Classical Studies
NTNU
Trondheim 2012

Cover editing: by Silje M. Johansen

Cover artwork: by Latuff 2008 at Deviant Art

Original artwork: *Latuff 2008*, [online image] (2008)

<<http://latuff2.deviantart.com/art/Russia-Georgia-conflict-2-94380703?offset=10>>, accessed

12 Nov. 2012.

Foreword

My initial interest in the 2008 War surfaced during a seminar at the University of Wollongong, Australia. My tutor, Dr. Konstantin Sheiko, held a seminar detailing the war and its significance within international politics. At the end of the seminar we analyzed a news clip aired on Fox News America on August 8th 2008.¹ In this news clip, Fox News interviews two South Ossetian civilians, a twelve year old girl and her aunt. The news anchor asks the girl what happened during the outbreak of the war. The girl, claiming to have been present at a South Ossetian restaurant at the time, reports on an aerial bombardment of her home town by Georgian troops. She continues extending her gratitude to Russian troops for her rescue. Her aunt elaborates that Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili is solely to blame for the outbreak of the war, and holds him responsible for over two thousand South Ossetian casualties. Upon hearing this statement Fox News immediately cuts to commercial. Following a short break, the news anchor grants the aunt thirty seconds to finish her thought. After continuing for a few second she is interrupted once again.

This four minute interview intrigued me to investigate the war in more detail. Although subtle, the cover up in this interview is significant in a number of ways and raises some important questions; what interest does Fox News America have in relations to the 2008 War? Why was this interview censored in a country which prides itself with a free press and freedom of speech? And more importantly, who is pulling the strings in the news coverage of international political events? Fox News America is renowned for its right-wing approach to news coverage, and thus presents an extreme case of media bias. Regardless, media bias is not an uncommon phenomenon in modern society. Preliminary reading of studies concerning the 2008 War confirmed my suspicions by detailing information campaigns from both Georgian and Russian sides, governed deliberately to shed favorable light on their own engagement in the war. After a consultation with Dr Stephen Brown I decided to write a thesis discerning the role of media in the 2008 War, specializing on the Norwegian media coverage. Finally, my supervisor, Ola Svein Stugu, provided the much needed guidance for my project.

¹ The full interview is available online: see Nikolai Orlov, *Fox News - Cover up - Georgia Russia War*, [online video] (25 May. 2011), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKASUchWf_U>, accessed 11 Nov. 2012.

Table of contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Previous studies.....	6
Source material.....	8
Roadmap of the thesis:	9
Chapter 2: Terms and Boundaries	11
Chapter 3: Historical Background	15
Literature review	15
The origins of the Georgian nation.....	20
Soviet Georgia.....	25
Georgian independence	29
Abkhazia, South Ossetia and the question of autonomy	30
The South Ossetian War (1991-1992).....	30
The Abkhaz War (1992-1994)	32
Shevardnadze and Russian-Georgian relations	35
The Rose Revolution and Mikheil Saakashvili	39
The August 2008 War	41
Georgia, NATO and the Kosovo Precedent	44
Summary	49
Chapter 4: News Framing Analysis	51
Framing in the production of news	52
News framing analysis	55
Designing frame categories	58
Coding of articles	61
Data sample	62
Quantitative research.....	64
Qualitative research.....	64
Chapter 5: Research Analyses	67
Research questions	67
Quantitative analysis	72
Qualitative analysis	77
History in Klassekampen	82

History in <i>Aftenposten</i>	85
History in <i>Dagbladet</i>	87
History in <i>Dag og Tid</i>	89
Chapter 6: Conclusion	95
Bibliography	I
Appendix 1: Taxonomy table for frame categories.....	XI
Appendix 2: List of publications in August 2008	XV
Publications in <i>Aftenposten</i> (n=131)	XV
Publications in <i>Dag og Tid</i> (n=11).....	XVIII
Publications in <i>Dagbladet</i> (n=79)	XVIII
Publications in <i>Klassekampen</i> (n=65)	XXI
Appendix 3: Extraction of frame functions	XXIII
<i>Dagbladet</i> 's coverage of the 2008 War.....	XXIII
<i>Klassekampen</i> 's coverage of the 2008 War	XXVIII
<i>Aftenposten</i> 's coverage of the 2008 War.....	XXXII
<i>Dag og Tid</i> 's coverage of the 2008 War	XXXVIII

Chapter 1: Introduction

In August 2008 a war broke out in the South Caucasus. Georgian armed forces initiated a bombardment of the South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali on August 7, attacking Russian peacekeepers in the process. Soon to follow was an overwhelming and disproportionate response by the Russian 58th Army involving an estimate of 40 000 battle troops. The war, although limited in scope and length, took the world by surprise, as Russian operations continued beyond the boundaries of South Ossetia. Over the next days a two-pronged attack was engaged from the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia into Georgia proper. Halted only by a hastily sketched out ceasefire agreement on August 12, the Russia-Georgian War ended as suddenly as it had started.

In the sphere of international media another war was underway, an information war.² Both during the conflict and in its aftermath, Georgian and Russian intelligence promoted their reasons behind the outbreak of the war, and assigned responsibility for the loss of human life.³ This inevitably created confusion among news correspondents and journalists reporting on the conflict. The desire to swiftly disclose the conflict's origins to the public came at the expense of thorough investigative journalism. As a result, the reports often represented a bias towards one side of the conflict, while excluding the other parties' point of view. In the aftermath of the war, academics and journalists alike have investigated the media coverage of the 2008 War in conjunction with the events on the ground in an attempt to uncover the truth about the conflict.

This thesis follows a similar rationale. The research problem is the following: How was the Russia-Georgian War framed in the Norwegian print-press in August 2008?

Underlying this question is the aim to investigate to what extent the aforementioned information war affected the coverage in the Norwegian print-press. In the event of an information war, the media is subjected to divergent reports from the actors of a conflict. In

² P. A. Goble, 'Defining Victory and Defeat: The Information War between Russia and Georgia' in S.E. Cornell, & S.F. Starr, *The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia*, (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 181

³ J.V. Wertsch & Z. Karumidze, 'Spinning the past: Russian and Georgian accounts of the war of August 2008', *Memory Studies*, vol. 2, issue 3, (2009), 378.

their production of news, the media has to make conscious decisions as to which reports they should include and which reports should be dismissed. The final product, presented in the form of a news story, is thus the outcome of selective procedures by news institutions and journalists. As an inevitable result, the news stories contain fragments of the parties' original reports, causing certain frames to enter the news texts. As such, studies that investigate frames in the news can measure the impact of information wars on media output.

This study employs the concept of *framing* as presented by Entman.⁴ In its most fundamental sense, framing refers to the way in which an issue is portrayed.⁵ Specifically, framing refers to “the different interpretations of the same phenomenon”.⁶ The concept of framing is engraved in the way we make sense of the world around us. In the event of a collision between two cars, the drivers will often have diverging explanations as to what went wrong. Each driver will promote certain aspects of the incident, while simultaneously excluding others. Through either conscious or unconscious decisions they will frame the event according to their own agenda or perspective. This also holds true in other disputes, even within the realm of international relations. In the context of the Russia-Georgian War, the conflicting parties framed the war according to national self-interest. This produced conflicting information, which the media had to dissect in order to produce news stories. Inevitably this caused certain frames to penetrate the news texts. As such, this thesis examines how this phenomenon manifests in the Norwegian print-press coverage of the Russia-Georgian War.

In pursuit of this goal, this thesis employs news framing analysis as an approach to news discourse, one that serves as the basis of several successful studies that scrutinize the role of the media in military conflicts.⁷ The strength of this approach lies in the process of identifying various frames in news texts. These can be frames originating from parties of a conflict or

⁴ R. Entman, 'Framing towards clarification of a fractured paradigm', *Journal of Communication*, vol. 43, issue 4, (1993), 52

⁵ J.N. Druckman, 'Foreword' in P. D'Angelo & J.A. Kuypers (eds.), *Doing News Framing Analysis Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives* (New York, Routledge, 2010), xiii

⁶ J.N. Druckman in D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010, xiii

⁷ See R. Ottosen. 'The Norwegian Media Image of the War in Afghanistan: Peacekeeping or Aggression?', *Nordicom Review*, vol. 26, issue 1, (2005); D.V. Dmitrova & J.Strömback, 'Foreign policy and the framing of the 2003 Iraq War in elite Swedish and US newspapers', *Media, War and Conflict*, vol. 1, issue 1, (2008), 203-220; K.Sharif & F.U. Yousafzai, 'War or Peace Framing? An Analyses of the Pakistani Press Coverage on War on Terror', *Journal of Development Communication*, vol. 22, issue 1, (2011), 56-71; H. Semetko.. & P.M. Valkenburg, 'Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News', *Journalism of Communication*, vol. 50, issue 2, (2000), 93-109.

other frames that shape the news coverage. From a top-down perspective, this approach can examine the frames used by the parties of the Russia-Georgian War. Subsequently, these frames are employed in the analysis of news texts. Thus if a frame from the top level is reflected in the news, it indicates a successful frame. A high frequency of certain frames indicates a dominant perspective in the coverage. As such, the approach grants an in-depth look at how framing affects news coverage.

Overall this thesis sets out to investigate how the Russia-Georgian War was portrayed in the Norwegian print-press in August 2008. In pursuit of this goal, four newspapers were selected to represent the range of the Norwegian print-press, namely *Aftenposten*, *Klassekampen*, *Dag og Tid* and *Dagbladet*. Granted that an analysis of all Norwegian newspapers is insurmountable for this study, these newspapers were chosen to represent different political inclinations within the Norwegian print-press - *Aftenposten* is a daily published newspaper oriented towards liberal conservatives – *Klassekampen* is published daily and represents left-wing inclinations – *Dag og Tid* is a weekly published, independent newspaper – *Dagbladet* is a daily published, tabloid newspaper renowned for its radical views on politics. Accordingly, the analysis of these newspapers will comprise a broad view of the Norwegian print-press coverage as a whole.

This study analyzes 286 news articles across four newspapers. Considering the magnitude of the sample, a strict methodological approach is required. News framing analysis provides the researcher with a systematic framework for examining large samples of news texts across various media sources. This is advantageous since it guides the lens of investigation to specific aspects of the news. By examining source origin, source class, publication date, framing and genre, the approach can highlight similarities and differences between news stories. Moreover, the approach provides an overview of the sample, by examining coverage and framing over time. Thus possible shifts in the coverage are easier to detect for the analyst. In this thesis the approach will be employed within a study of history. As such, an integral part of this thesis is to evaluate the capability of news framing analysis to examine historical aspects of news coverage.

In order to make qualified assessments of complex military conflicts, such as the Russia-Georgian War, the researcher needs to be well versed in the subject under scrutiny. In this

thesis it is crucial, as it provides the necessary understanding to authenticate the information in the news coverage. During the 2008 War, the parties employed history in specific ways to justify their political interests. From the very outset of the war, references to the past were used to legitimize actions in the present. Georgia claimed that South Ossetia had been an integral part of Georgian sovereignty since the breakup of the Soviet Union.⁸ According to Georgia, this legitimized its intervention in South Ossetia on August 7. Conversely, South Ossetia stated that it had been an independent and sovereign state since 1991.⁹ In this regard, the Georgian incursion should be considered a violation of international law.

Lastly, Russia claimed that the people of South Ossetia were Russian citizens.¹⁰ From this point of view, the Georgian attack on Tskhinvali amounted to an attack on Russian citizens, thus forcing Russia to intervene to protect its people. Moreover, Russia paralleled the Georgian attack on South Ossetia to the Serbian attack on Kosovo in the nineties.¹¹ In 1999, NATO initiated a ‘humanitarian intervention’ to stop a Serbian genocide of Kosovo Albanians.¹² By employing the Kosovo analogy, Russia attempted to legitimize its own intervention in Georgia to stop a present day Slobodan Milosevic in Mikheil Saakashvili.¹³ Furthermore, the Kosovo parallel revealed an international dispute between Russia and NATO based on grievances from the early nineties to the present.¹⁴

These different narratives stimulated historical debates concerning the validity of the parties’ claims. In turn, this produced academic studies which investigate the historical dimension of the conflict.¹⁵ Specifically, these studies examine the long history of Georgia and its relations to Russia, in an attempt to disclose the origins of the 2008 War. For the purpose of this thesis, the studies will be addressed in a historical section, which will serve as the theoretical

⁸ European Union, *Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG)*, vol. 3, (September 2009), 8

⁹ IIFFMCG, vol. 3, 2009, 503

¹⁰ *ibid*, 337

¹¹ C.A. Nielsen, ‘The Kosovo precedent and the rhetorical deployment of former Yugoslav analogies in the cases of Abkhazia and South Ossetia’, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 9, nos. 1-2, (March-June 2009), 171.

¹² Nielsen, 2009, 172

¹³ Goble in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 187.

¹⁴ R.D. Asmus, *A Little War That Shook The World: Georgia, Russia, and the future of the West*, (St. Martin’s Press, New York, 2010), 217

¹⁵ See Cornell & Starr, 2009; C. King, *The Ghost of Freedom A History of the Caucasus*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2008); T. De Waal, *The Caucasus: An Introduction*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010); P. Gahrton, *Georgia Pawn in the New Great Game*, (New York, Pluto Press, 2010); Asmus, 2010

backbone for the news framing analysis. This section addresses the historical background of the Georgian nation, and the intricate relationship between the parties of the conflict, namely Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. One of the central themes in this section is the relationship between Russia and Georgia, on the one hand, and Russia and NATO on the other. The purpose of this section is to present the prominent debates in this regard, and how they relate to the conflict in 2008.

Against this historical backdrop the information in the news stories will be analyzed. The research model in this study was designed on the basis of prominent studies within the field of framing analysis.¹⁶ This involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses of news articles published across four newspapers. The analyses were guided by research questions, designed to illuminate specific aspects of the Norwegian war coverage. These questions scrutinize the newspapers' use of sources, framing and history. In the quantitative analysis the news articles were categorized according to genres, publication dates and use of in-text sources. In turn, the results of the quantitative analysis were coupled with a qualitative analysis determining the framing in specific news stories. Frames found in the sample, were aggregated under frame categories. Each category was designed to encompass clusters of similar frames in the sample. The aim of these analyses is to present an overview of how the Norwegian print-press covered the Russia-Georgian War over August 2008, and to discuss the results in relation to the historical backdrop.

In its coverage of the Russia-Georgian War, the Norwegian media raised debates concerning the security arrangements of Norway vis-à-vis its Russian neighbor. These debates paralleled the Russian incursion in South Ossetia to a potential military attack on Norway. In this thesis, these debates were arranged under a designated frame category - Norwegian Angle. Specifically, this thesis examines how these frames affect the Norwegian print-press coverage of Russia's engagements in Georgia.

The results of this study can contribute to general understanding of the Norwegian news media's stance towards the Russia-Georgian War. Furthermore, this thesis will investigate the

¹⁶ See P. D'Angelo & J.A. Kuypers (eds.), *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives* (New York, Routledge, 2010); Entman, 1993; Z. Pan & G.M. Kosichi, 'Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse', *Political Communication*, vol. 10 (1993), 55-75.; S.D. Reese, et al, *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world*, (London, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003)

divergence between Norwegian newspapers in their coverage of the 2008 War. As mentioned earlier the newspapers were selected on the basis of representing various political alignments. This study scrutinizes to what extent political inclination affects the framing of news. Furthermore, the results will represent a critical view of the conduct of Norwegian news media in their coverage of the Russia-Georgian War, in particular, and war reporting in general.

Ultimately this study scrutinizes the acquisition of knowledge in modern society. One of the central themes of this thesis is the process of knowledge accumulation between academic scholars and journalists. In academic studies, this process is developed over time on the basis of extensive reading of academic source materials, which are in turn arranged according to a preplanned track of arguments and discussions. In journalistic practices, this process is vastly different, and critically limited by time. This thesis poses the question of how journalistic practices affect the assessment of complex conflicts, such as the Russia-Georgian War.

This study sheds new light on the professional conduct of journalists, who hold a great deal of influential power in modern society. From the selection of sources to the production of news, journalists possess the tools to determine the agendas of tomorrow. As such, academic studies that scrutinize the credibility of journalistic practices are not only important, they are necessary. Moreover, they challenge the notion of the press as a mediator of knowledge.

Previous studies

Similar studies have scrutinized the media's portrayal of military conflicts in the last decades. These studies reveal the intentional use of media as an instrument of modern warfare, employed to shed favorable light on parties to a conflict.¹⁷ Moreover, they scrutinize journalistic practices in regards to objectivity. They attest that journalistic objectivity is by

¹⁷ See H. Luostarinen & R. Ottosen, 'The Changing Role of the Media in Conflicts. From the Cold War to the Net Age', in Willem Kempf & Heikki Luostarinen (eds.), *Journalism and the New World Order Vol. II – Studying War and the Media* (Goteborg University, Nordicom 2002), 39-59; J.Lynch & A. McGoldrick, *Peace Journalism*, (Stroud, Hawthorn Press, 2005); D.McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory*, 6th Ed, (London, Sage Publications, 2010).

default inconceivable, and that some degree of subjectivity is unavoidable.¹⁸ In the modern era every major political conflict has a media factor.¹⁹

Rune Ottosen has conducted two studies investigating the Norwegian media coverage of the 2001 War in Afghanistan and the 2003 Iraq War. His studies conclude that Norwegian journalists largely favored the Norwegian participation in both conflicts by framing their involvement as “good-doers”.²⁰ In addition, his studies criticize the Norwegian liberal and tabloid press’ imprudent adoption of American perspectives in their coverage. Through a similar lens, this study will examine to what extent this phenomenon influences the Norwegian print-press coverage of the Russia-Georgian War. The majority of American newspapers sided with the Georgian perspective; proclaiming Russia as the main aggressor.²¹

In relation to the 2008 War, several studies have investigated the media aspect of the conflict.²² These studies reveal that the media was subjected to diverging information from the conflicting parties, which in turn affected the news coverage. Goble (2009) points out in his study that both Georgian and Russian intelligence conducted information campaigns in order to promote their national political agenda in the international media.²³ This involved a systematic operation of misinformation by both parties promoting and excluding certain aspects of the war in an attempt to win the hearts and minds of the public.²⁴

In a study by Tønnesen (2012), the Russian print-press coverage of the war was examined in conjunction with the national political agenda.²⁵ The official Russian version argues that Russia was forced to intervene in South Ossetia on behalf of Russian citizens and to aid its

¹⁸ See B. McNair, *The Sociology of Journalism*. (London, Hodder Arnold, 1998); H. de Burg, *Making Journalists: Diverse Models, Global Issues*. (New York, Routledge, 2005)

¹⁹ Goble in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 182

²⁰ See Ottosen, 2005; R. Ottosen, *VG, Saddam og Vi*, (Kristiansand, IJ Forlaget, 2009)

²¹ See H. Heinrich & K. Tanaev, ‘Georgia & Russia: Contradictory Media Coverage of the August War’, *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, vol. 3, issue 3, (summer 2009), 244-259.

²² See Goble, 2009; Heinrich & Tanaev, 2009; H. Tønnesen & P. Kolstø. ‘Journalistic Identities and War Reporting: Coverage of the 2008 Russian-Georgian War in the Russian Press’, *Scando-Slavica*, vol. 58, issue 1, (2012), 101-121; Wertsch & Karumidze, 2009; A.K. Niedermaier, *Countdown to War in Georgia: Russia’s Foreign Policy and Media Coverage of the Conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia*, (United States, Minneapolis, East View Press, 2008); M. Akhvlediani, ‘The fatal flaw: the media and the Russian invasion of Georgia’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 20, no. 2, (June 2009), 363-390.

²³ See Goble in Cornell & Starr, 2009.

²⁴ See *ibid*

²⁵ See Tønnesen & Kolstø, 2012

peacekeepers. Tønnesen concludes that the Russian print-press coverage largely aligned with the national political agenda, especially in *Rossijskaja gazeta*.²⁶ Heinrich & Tanaev (2009) supports Tønnesen's conclusions in a study contrasting the print-press coverage between Georgian, Russian and Western sources. The *Georgian Messenger* opposed the *Rossijskaja gazeta*, while supporting the Georgian position. In terms of Western sources, newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Handelsblatt*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Le Monde*, and *Der Standard* aligned more closely with the Georgian official version; proclaiming Russia as the main aggressor.²⁷ These studies affirm the success of the Georgian information campaign in Western news media. The following thesis will supplement these studies by examining to what extent the Norwegian print-press follows the same direction.

Source material

This thesis builds upon both primary and secondary source material written in English and Norwegian. Important to note is the absence of source material written in Russian, Georgian, Abkhaz or Ossetian, which are crucial in acquiring a thorough understanding of this subject. Thus the section discerning the historical background of the 2008 War will be based mainly on secondary source material. On the basis of these sources, a historical context for the conflict will be established. The secondary sources are mainly books of history and politics as well as peer-reviewed articles published in internationally recognized journals.

In addition this thesis utilizes primary source material such as the *Independent International Fact Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia* (or EU report), interviews, official speeches and other official documents translated to English. Throughout this section, prominent debates concerning the establishment of the Georgian state and its breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia will be addressed. Given limited length and scope, it is not the purpose of this study to delve deep into historical debates concerning the 2008 War. A vast amount of extensive and highly detailed studies investigate the ethnic, political, cultural and historical origins of the conflicts in the South Caucasus.²⁸ Instead, this study sets out to establish a literary overview of prominent debates outlined in earlier studies.

²⁶ Tønnesen & Kolstø. 2012, 119.

²⁷ Heinrich & Tanaev, 2009, 257.

²⁸ See J. Wheatley, *From National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union*, (Hampshire, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005); King, 2008; De Waal, 2010; Asmus, 2010, S.E. Cornell,

The media analyses were based on primary source material. The sample data consisted of news stories published in August 2008 in four Norwegian newspapers. The newspapers were accessed through the digital database ATEKST.²⁹

Roadmap of the thesis:

In the second chapter, I will define the terms used throughout this thesis, many of which are either culturally or historically charged and denote multiple meanings. Accordingly the second chapter will clarify my own understanding and intended use of these terms.

Following this section, the historical background is outlined in chapter three. Here, the origins of the Georgian nation and the establishment of its autonomous entities of South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Adjara are examined. Russia plays a pivotal role in regards to the administrative structure of the Georgian state, first during Soviet times, from 1921 to 1991, and second in the post-Soviet era, from 1991 to the present. Moreover, this section will deal with the historical narratives employed by the parties in the 2008 War. The quarrel over Kosovo is here important, as it produced an extensive academic debate in the aftermath of the war. The legitimacy of the Kosovo parallel and its relevance to the 2008 War is dealt with specifically at the end of chapter three.

Chapter four will present the methodological framework for the media analysis. Important here is the concept of framing and its relation to media coverage. After defining fundamental concepts, I explain the design process and rationale behind the research model in this thesis.

In chapter five, the results of the analyses are presented conjoined with a thorough discussion of the Norwegian print press coverage. The analyses were guided by specific research questions, which examine the various newspapers' use of sources, history and framing. The findings from the quantitative analysis will be presented using tables and statistics, followed by a detailed approach in the qualitative analysis. The qualitative analysis will reveal the

'Autonomy and Conflict: Ethno-territoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus: Cases in Georgia'. *Department of Peace and Conflict Research*, Report No. 61. (Uppsala, 2002), 1-247; Cornell & Starr, 2009.

²⁹ ATEKST is a Scandinavian digital online database used to access media output from newspapers, magazines and journals. Search results can be aggregated in PDF formats and downloaded for research purposes.

presence of media frames in news texts. The findings of both the quantitative and qualitative analysis are compared across the four newspapers in the sample, to accentuate differences and similarities. This comparison will examine to what extent political inclination affects the coverage of news. Furthermore, this section will scrutinize how history was employed in the print press coverage. This entails examining news stories concerning the historical dimension of the conflict. These stories are discussed in conjunction with the historical findings in chapter three.

Chapter 2: Terms and Boundaries

Before assessing the intricate relationship between the actors of the 2008 War it is important to clearly define the different terms in use throughout this thesis. As a novice scholar of Georgian and Caucasian history, one bears a high risk of offending people by heedlessly adopting culturally and historically charged concepts. As such this section will outline my understanding of the different terms.

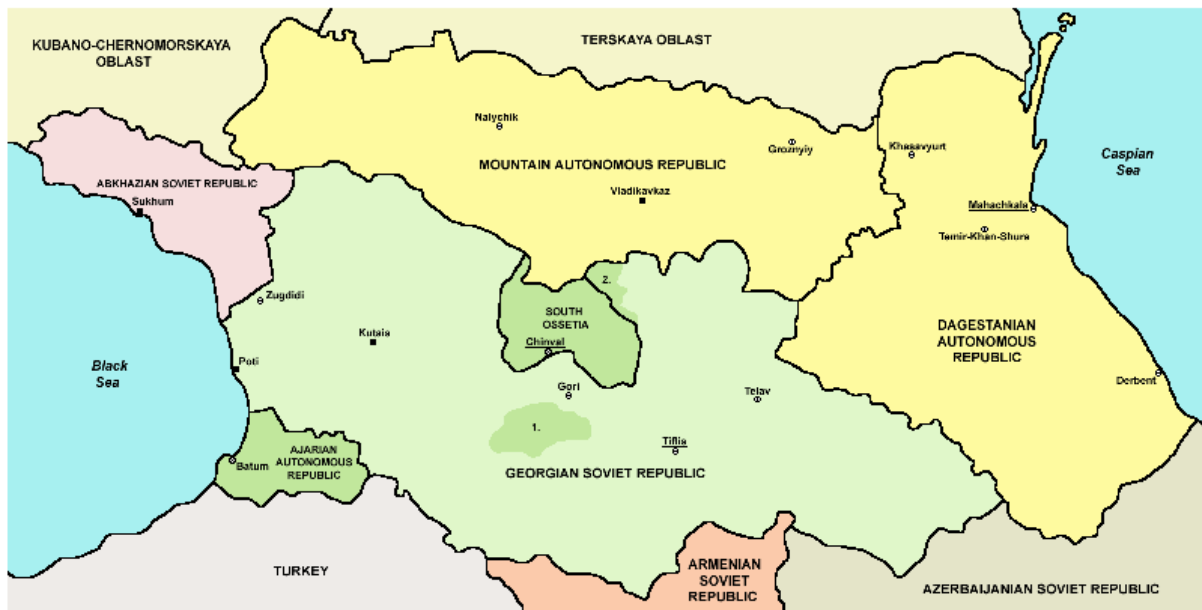
Firstly we must define the culturally ambiguous term *the Caucasus*. The Caucasus region traditionally refers to the geographical region surrounding the Greater Caucasus chain stretching from the Black Sea in the west to the Caspian Sea in the east. In modern years the Caucasus term has often been interlinked with *the South Caucasus*, referring to the region south of the Greater Caucasus chain. In this thesis I use the term South Caucasus in the modern sense referring to the geographical areas including Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.³⁰ The South Caucasus region has historically speaking been a crossroads between numerous empires. This has brought together cultural influences from both the Christian and Muslim world as well as remnants from the Ottoman, Persian, and Tsarist empires. As a result the people inhabiting the region are both culturally and historically diversified. The region is home to around ten main nationalities including Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Ossetians, Abkhaz, Kurds, Talysh and Lezgins, most of which speak languages that are not mutually understandable.³¹ Inherently this brings about tremendous challenges for any scholar attempting to dissect the very complicated relationship between the populace inhabiting the region.

The modern state of Georgia is located south of the Great Caucasian chain which also draws its northern border to Russia. Georgia stretches from the Black Sea in the west to Azerbaijan in the east and borders to Armenia and Turkey in the south. It is home to approximately 4.7 million people. Its two breakaway regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, are located in the west and central-north of the country.

³⁰ De Waal, 2010, 6.

³¹ Ibid, 8.

In relation to the 2008 War scholars encounter a number of issues related to terminology. The term *South Ossetia* originates from a Soviet territory within present day Georgia called the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast, which was established in 1922, as part of the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republics. Today the term refers to a territory in central northern Georgia.



Picture 1: The South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast, the Adjarian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and the Abkhazian Soviet Socialist Republic established in 1922.³²

Georgian scholars denounce the term *South Ossetia* altogether arguing that the term is a Soviet remnant and that the autonomy of the region was revoked in 1990.³³ In effect this integrated South Ossetia under Georgian sovereignty. Georgians instead refer to the area using the term *Tskhinvali region* or *Inner Kartli*. The dispute over the territorial boundaries of Georgia and South Ossetia further influences the remembrance of the 2008 War. In Georgian literature the War in 2008 is often referred to as the *Russia-Georgian War* or the *2008 War against Russia*. The Russian government denounce the term *Russia-Georgian War*.³⁴ Instead Russia refers to the region as South Ossetia, and the War in 2008 as the *South-Ossetian-Georgian War* or the *South Ossetian War*. These terms leave Russia out of the conflict and

³² This map is available online. See *Wikipedia* [online image] (27 Mar. 2010) <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/64/Soviet_caucasus1922.png>, accessed 12 Nov 2012.

³³ M. Matsaberidze. *Personal Interview held during meeting at Tbilisi State University*, 2012.

³⁴ IIFFMCG, vol. 3, 2009, 336

were used deliberately to shed a more favorable light on the Russian involvement.³⁵ In this thesis I use the terms *2008 War* and *Russia-Georgian War* interchangeably. Although it can be argued that the war began as a local conflict between Georgian and South Ossetian separatist forces, the escalation of the conflict revealed its two main protagonists; namely Russia and Georgia. These terms are also most prevalent in the academic literature, which serves as the foundation for this thesis.

The quarrel over South Ossetia's autonomy played a crucial role both during and in the aftermath of the 2008 war. According to Georgia, the South Ossetian autonomy was revoked in 1990 leading into the South Ossetian War from 1991-92. Although a joint peacekeeping operation was established at the end of the conflict, the dispute over where the Georgian national territory ends and the South Ossetian territory begins remained unresolved. Georgia lost control of South Ossetia during the South Ossetian War, and has failed to regain foothold in the region ever since. Conversely South Ossetian separatists claim they have been an independent region separated from Georgia ever since 1922. They argue that they were granted autonomy under Soviet rule. This contention brought about much confusion during the outbreak of the 2008 war. During the bombardment of Tskhinvali on the eve of August 7, Georgia claimed it was reinstating constitutional order within one of its national regions. Russia regarded the attack as an act of aggression on an independent region. This geopolitical disarray manifested itself in the media coverage as well. International news correspondents were walking on the razor's edge when reporting on whether Russia had invaded Georgia by entering South Ossetia. Russia's passing through the Roki Tunnel into South Ossetia on August 8 was obscure in terms of international boundaries, a confusion that Moscow exploited to full effect.³⁶ The E.U. report, published in the aftermath of the war, concludes that both South Ossetia and Abkhazia were part of Georgian national territory and thus restricted by law not to secede from Georgia.³⁷ These discussions will be dealt with in further detail at a later stage in this thesis.

³⁵ Matsaberidze, 2012.

³⁶ De Waal, 2010, 219

³⁷ European Union. *The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia*, vol. 1 (2009), 17.

Chapter 3: Historical Background

The Russia-Georgian War marked the reemergence of frozen conflicts in the Caucasus. In order to understand the complex nature of these conflicts, one must take into account the historical relationship between Georgia and Russia on the one hand, and Georgia's relations to South Ossetia and Abkhazia on the other. The 2008 War has been considered by many to be the culmination of a gradually deteriorating relationship between Georgia and Russia, one that has its origins prior to Mikheil Saakashvili and the Rose Revolution.³⁸ The purpose of this chapter is to assess the intricate relationship between the parties involved in the Russia-Georgian War. To achieve this goal one must examine the origins of these conflicts, and how the events of the past shape the debates of the present. This chapter examines the historical background of Georgia in general and its relations to South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Russia in particular. The purpose of this section is twofold: First, it sets out to establish a historical background of the conflict. Second, it will present prominent debates dealing with the geopolitical questions of the war, involving questions of autonomy, statehood and historical analogies. These debates are further reflected in the news coverage of August 2008.

Literature review

Before attempting to construct an historical background for the 2008 War, we must first address the sources this thesis builds upon. Important to note here is that the author is limited to studying sources written in English. This is significant, as it restricts the study to predominantly Western sources. Russian, South Ossetian, Abkhazian, Georgian and other non-English sources are only accessible through translated or internationally published documents. However, the aim of this study is to investigate the Norwegian media's representation of the conflict. As such, the absence of non-Western sources is permissible. One of the few English studies published from the Russian side is East View Press' 'Countdown to War in Georgia, Russia's Foreign Policy and Media Coverage of the Conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia'. South Ossetian and Abkhazian perspectives are reflected in a report released by the European Union. How this composition of source material affects the assessment of this crisis is difficult to evaluate. Regardless, it should be mentioned as some views may be absent from the analysis to follow.

³⁸ Cornell & Starr, 2009, 5.

History of the Caucasus

Two works were employed throughout this thesis to assess the history of the nations in the Caucasus. Thomas De Waal's 'The Caucasus: An Introduction' and Charles King's 'The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus' serve as suitable vantage points for any study concerning the Caucasian nations.³⁹ These books will serve as reference works for the historical and geopolitical arrangements of the Caucasus region. De Waal's book is especially strong in regards to the Caucasus' transitional phase from Tsarist and Soviet rule to the modern era. Throughout this period, the peoples of the Caucasus have been subjected to administrative changes and geographical alternations. In this thesis, King's sections on Georgian independence from 1918 to 1921 and Soviet Georgia from 1922 to 1991 are of particular interest. The complex administrative network of Soviet Georgia with its autonomous entities is a decisive factor for the state of affairs in August 2008.

Georgia's ancient history

During the 2008 War, one of the central debates concerned the viability of the Georgian state. This stimulated a discussion of the historical origins of the Georgian nation. As this thesis is a study of how history is represented in the media, it sets out to examine the genesis of Georgia as a nation. An integral part of this goal is to investigate what Georgia constitutes in terms of history. Valery Silogava and Kakha Shengelia's 'History of Georgia' traces Georgian history back to the birth of the Georgian Kingdoms in the 7th century B.C., bringing together historical debates from numerous scholars within its covers.⁴⁰ This book will serve as a reference work for the historical background of the Georgia from the 7th century B.C. to the

³⁹ Thomas De Waal is a British journalist and author of several books pertaining the various regions of the Caucasus. At the time of writing he is Senior Associate on the Caucasus at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. His extensive background as a journalist in the Caucasus and wider Black Sea region builds the foundation of his works. See Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 'Experts: Thomas De Waal', *CEFIP* [web page] (n/a), < http://www.carnegieendowment.org/experts/?fa=expert_view&expert_id=479>, accessed 26 Oct. 2012; Charles King is an American Professor of International Affairs and Government at Georgetown University, specializing in the ethnic politics and international affairs in the Transcaucasus region. He has published several books and articles in academic journals. See Charles King, 'About Charles King', *Charles King* [web page] (n/a) < <http://www.charles-king.net/about-me.html>>, accessed 26 Oct. 2012.

⁴⁰ Valery Silogava is a Georgian Professor from Tbilisi State University. He specializes in the History of Georgia and the origins of the Georgian Church. He has several international publications pertaining Georgian history. Kakha Shegelia is a historian from Tbilisi State University, specializing in Georgian monasteries and monuments. See V. Silogava & K. Shengelia, *History of Georgia: From the Ancient Times through the "Rose Revolution"*, (Tbilisi, Caucasus University Publishing House, 2007)

17th Century A.D. Considering that the focal point of this thesis is the 2008 War, this section will be limited to a brief overview of predominate events.

Georgia's western aspirations

Ronald D. Asmus' 'A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the future of the West' presents a detailed account of the events leading up to the Russia-Georgian War.⁴¹ Over the course of his book Asmus presents personal recollections of events and developments leading up to the war. Asmus was personally present in Tbilisi on several occasions prior to the war. His work provides an in-depth look at the decision making processes, battles and actors involved in the 2008 War. His study raises important questions about the future relations between Russia and the West, such as Russia's future relations to NATO. He concludes that the outbreak of war was partly due to a gradually deteriorating relationship between NATO and Russia. The relationship was further exacerbated by the West's recognition of Kosovo in early 2008.

For the purpose of this thesis, Asmus' work will be utilized as a historical framework. Asmus presents important arguments concerning the events leading into the war and the diplomatic efforts during the conflict. His book largely reflects the Georgian viewpoint, concluding that Russia was prepared to use armed forces to prevent Georgia from joining NATO. However, Asmus also points out that the act of aggression must be assigned to Georgia, through their shelling of Tskhinvali on 7 August.

Georgia from independence to Rose Revolution

Jonathan Wheatley's "Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution" explores the transformation of Georgia from a member of the U.S.S.R to modern democratic statehood.⁴²

⁴¹ Ronald D. Asmus was a renowned United States Diplomat and a strong advocate of NATO's open door policy. Asmus played a crucial role in facilitating the 1999 NATO admission of Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary. See H.R. Clinton, 'Passing of Ronald Asmus', *US State Department* [web page] (3 May, 2011) <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/05/162451.htm>>, accessed 8 Oct. 2012.

⁴² Jonathan Wheatley is Research Fellow at the Eastern Europe Institute of the Free University Berlin, Germany. He is part of a project called 'Accounting for State-Building, Stability and Violent Conflict: The Institutional Framework of Caucasian and Central Asian Transitional Societies'. The project explores the conditions for successful/failed defusing of conflict potentials in Caucasian and Central Asian societies, within the context of successful/failed state building. See Ashgate Publishing, 'Georgia From National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union', *Ashgate Publishing* [web page] (n/a)

In particular Wheatley discusses the success and failure of the Rose Revolution in 2003, and Georgia's establishment of democratic institutions. Along with it came aspirations towards integration with NATO and the EU. Many scholars argue that Saakashvili's presidency represents a breaking point in Georgian history, as the country dramatically shifts westwards, with closer ties, especially to the US.⁴³ Wheatley points out that Saakashvili's part in Georgia's transition should not be underestimated. Furthermore he explores how nationalism and democracy was combined in the case of the Georgian state. His study tracks the development of the Georgian regime from independence in 1991 to the aftermath of the Rose Revolution in 2004. He poses the question if the Rose Revolution marks a regime-change or if it represents a mere transition from Shevardnadze's presidency.

For the purpose of this thesis, Wheatley's study will be employed in analyzing the historical events leading up to the Rose Revolution. His book also sheds new light on important developments within Georgia, and its relations to its autonomous entities in Adjara, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Furthermore Wheatley presents important arguments as to why the Georgian state ultimately failed to bring about unity among its diversified population. These arguments are important when examining the origins of the frozen conflicts. Russia's part in destabilizing these regions played a significant role in the conflicts between Georgia and its autonomous entities. Wheatley concludes that Russian policy prevented Georgia from establishing the necessary stability to constitute a viable state.⁴⁴ This was achieved by exploiting internal factors within Georgia and supporting the separatist regimes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The European Union - Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG)

On 2 December 2008 the EU initiated an independent fact finding mission to investigate the events of the Russia-Georgian War. The crisis was subject to extensive information campaigns resulting in the release of diverging information from Russian and Georgian intelligence. This called to question the credibility of both sides and a desire to uncover the

<<http://www.ashgate.com/default.aspx?page=637&calcTitle=1&isbn=9780754645030&lang=cy-gb>>, accessed 8 Oct. 2012.

⁴³ See Asmus, 2010

⁴⁴ Wheatley, 2005, 224.

truth of what occurred in August 2008. As a result the EU Council of Ministers deployed a fact-finding mission in Georgia with the aim to:

Investigate the origins and the course of the conflict in Georgia, including with regard to international law (footnote: including the Helsinki Final Act), humanitarian law and human rights, and the accusations made in that context (footnote: including allegations of war crimes).⁴⁵

The report of this mission was published in September 2009 and provides an excellent source for academics researching the Russia-Georgian War. Although the report is unable to draw a complete picture of the war, it does reveal flaws in contemporary reports. Specifically it reveals erroneous claims made by both Russia and Georgia during the war. These involve claims of genocide, military movements on the ground, war crimes and violation of human rights and international law. In addition the report includes an elaborate historical account of the origins of the conflict. These sections provide a thorough analysis of the shared history of Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Important debates concerning ethno-political questions are addressed throughout the report, dealing with the origins of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian people, as well as political developments in the modern Georgian state.

For the purpose of this thesis the IIFFMCG report will act as a reference work in which to validate the credibility of news articles as well as political statements by government official from the parties involved. The media portion of the thesis will be dealt with specifically in chapter five. The print-press coverage of the War includes statements from political leaders as well as military officials on the ground. Allegations of war crimes and violation of international law are here central themes. In addition the IIFFMCG report will be employed as a historical reference work throughout this chapter.

The Guns of August 2008 – Russia’s War in Georgia

This book, edited by Svante E. Cornell and Stephen Fredrick Starr, includes a collection of studies dealing with the Russia-Georgian War.⁴⁶ The strength of this work is the presence of

⁴⁵ IIFFMCG, vol. 1, 2009, 5.

⁴⁶ Svante E. Cornell is Director of the Institute for Security and Development Policy in Stockholm. He specializes in post-Soviet studies in the Caucasus region, and has published four books and several articles dealing with the Caucasian nations. See Institute for Security & Development Policy, ‘Director’, *ISDP* [web page] (n/a) <<http://www.isdp.eu/research/energy-security-and-cooperation/185.html>>, accessed 26 Oct. 2012; Stephen

various views and perspectives of the causes of the war, and how the conflict factors into the geopolitical climate in the Caucasus region. Paul A. Goble's article 'Defining Victory and Defeat: The Information War Between Russia and Georgia', is particularly useful for this thesis. Here Goble addresses the deceitful nature of the war, and how both parties engaged in misinformation campaigns to garner support in the public sphere. In addition Thornike Gordadze's article discerning the Russian-Georgian relations in the 1990s is of interest, as it accounts for the primary causes for the exacerbating relationship between Moscow and Tbilisi.

The origins of the Georgian nation

The rich history of Georgia is a product of its geographical position. Located in the South Caucasus the country has historically been at a crossroads between the world's major empires; between East and West, the Christian and the Muslim world and between Europe and Asia. Its borders have been redrawn by kings and conquerors since before the Roman Empire. Present day Georgia stretches from the Black Sea in the west and borders to Dagestan and Azerbaijan in the east. However at the height of its power the Georgian borders reached as far as the Caspian Sea.⁴⁷ This section will examine the transition of Georgia from fragmented kingdoms to modern statehood. Considering that the Russia-Georgian War is the focal point of this thesis, the section pertaining Georgia's ancient history will be brief.⁴⁸

The origins of Georgia's territorial configuration can be traced back to the 5th century. However, the earliest historical remnants trace human presence in the Caucasus back 800 000 years.⁴⁹ The territory of present day Georgia was once comprised of two large Georgian monarchies; namely the Egrisi and Kartli Kingdoms. Egrisi, located in the western parts of present day Georgia (including the territories of present day Abkhazia), emerged between the

Fredrick Starr is the Chairman of the Central Asia- Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program in Washington D.C. Starr specializes in U.S. policies towards Central Asia and State building in the Caucasus. He has published 22 books and 200 articles, mainly on the history and development of Greater Central Asia. See Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Program, 'S. Frederick Starr', *CACISRSP* [web page] (n/a) <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/staff/staff_web/frederick_starr.htm>, accessed 26 Oct. 2012.

⁴⁷ V. Silogava & K. Shengelia, *History of Georgia: From the Ancient Times through the "Rose Revolution"*, (Tbilisi, Caucasus University Publishing House, 2007), 5.

⁴⁸ For a more detailed account of Georgian and Caucasian history see V. Silogava & K. Shengelia, 2007; De Waal, 2010; King, 2008

⁴⁹ Silogava & Shengelia, 2007, 5

7th and 6th century BC.⁵⁰ Kartli, or Iberia as it was commonly referred to, emerged after the death of Alexander the Great around the 3rd century BC. Georgian historians credit the enigmatic Farnavazi for the liberation and creation of the Kartli Kingdom.⁵¹ He is also known for establishing Mtskheta, the ancient capital of Georgia, located northwest of present day Tbilisi. Both Egrisi and Kartli were heathen kingdoms, worshipping pagan gods.

At the beginning of the 3rd century BC, the conquest of the Roman Empire had reached the borders of Egrisi and Kartli. In the year 65 B.C. the legendary Roman Commander Gneus Magnus Pompey initiated an invasion of Kartli and later Egrisi. Soon both kingdoms were subjugated as vassals of Rome.⁵² During the 3rd century A.D. the kingdom of Kartli expanded its borders to the southwest reaching into present day Turkey and establishing a shoreline to the Black Sea.⁵³ The Georgian kingdoms thrived as vassals of Rome. Feudalism developed over the course of the next century ‘facilitated by the development of production equipment, political strengthening of Georgia and its appearance on the international scene’.⁵⁴

Much of Georgia’s national identity has been credited to the establishment of the Georgian church. Christianity was officially instituted as the national religion of Kartli in 337, following the religious conference in Nicaea in 325. Georgian historians hold the introduction of Christianity as paramount to the establishment of the Georgian nation, as it consolidated power in Kartli and facilitated processes of feudalism.⁵⁵ In addition the Georgian church represented a much needed continuity throughout the nation’s history, enduring centuries of subjugation under foreign power.

By the end of the 3rd century the Persian Empire began its invasion of the Caucasus, subjugating Armenia and the kingdom of Kartli by 370. The Roman Empire was at the time shifting its power eastward to Constantinople, mainly caused by the fall of Rome in the 4th century. As a result the Kingdom of Egrisi was transformed to a vassal of the emerging Byzantine Empire.⁵⁶ In the beginning of the 5th century the king of Georgia, Vakhtang

⁵⁰ Silogava & Shengelia, 2007, 27

⁵¹ *ibid*, 29

⁵² *ibid*, 32

⁵³ *ibid*, 34

⁵⁴ *ibid*, 39

⁵⁵ *ibid*, 44

⁵⁶ *ibid*, 46

Gorgasali assumed control of Kartli. Vakhtang is a proud figure in Georgian history, credited for his military prowess against the Persian Empire and for the founding of Tbilisi. Vakhtang was ultimately defeated by the Persians, but he is remembered as a national hero by Georgians. A monument of Vakhtang can still be found in the heart of Tbilisi, commemorating his deeds for the Georgian nation.

Over the course of the next centuries the Byzantine and Persian Empire grappled over the supremacy of the Caucasus, leading to numerous engagements between Egrisi and Kartli. At the turn of the 7th century the Persian Empire was declining, and in its place a new power emerged; the Arabs. By 630 the Arab invasion of Transcaucasia began, leading to a rapid succession of well organized military campaigns.⁵⁷ By the end of the 8th century the Arabs had conquered the Byzantine Empire in Armenia, Kartli and parts of Egrisi, claiming taxation from its people and subduing its major cities, including Tbilisi.⁵⁸ The Arabs assumed complete control in the power centers of Kartli, but faced opposition in the highlands from the local population. The Kingdom of Kartli was subjected to Muslim rule until the late 10th century.

The unification of Georgia was a long and strenuous path which was strongly opposed by both the Byzantine Empire and the Arab state. In the late 10th century the plan for a consolidation of the Georgian kingdoms was set into motion, initiated mainly by the Georgian king David Kuropalates.⁵⁹ Over the course of the next century the kings of Georgia combined their monarchies under one banner. The 11th century marked the beginning of the Golden Age of Georgia, initiated by its most diligent leader king David IV, or David the Builder. His conquest of Tbilisi in 1122 was a pivotal moment of Georgian unification, effectively liberating the city from over 400 years of Muslim occupation.⁶⁰ In the following years the Kingdom of Georgia reached the pinnacle of its power in the Caucasus, its dominance reaching westwards into modern day Dagestan, Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea littoral, as well as south and east into present day Turkey, Armenia and northern Iran.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Silogava & Shengelia, 2007, 57

⁵⁸ *ibid*, 60

⁵⁹ *ibid*, 73

⁶⁰ *ibid*, 90

⁶¹ *ibid*, 115.



Picture 2: *The Kingdom of Georgia at the height of its power (1184-1230), present day Georgia outlined in red.*⁶²

The Golden Age continued throughout the 12th and early 13th century until the arrival of the Mongols. The Mongolian hordes were first encountered in the southern parts of the Kingdom of Georgia in 1225.⁶³ Soon the Mongols established complete sovereignty over Georgia, and dominated the country for over a century. Following the Mongol era, the Kingdom of Georgia was put under tremendous strain from outside assailants, ultimately leading to its disintegration in the late 15th century.⁶⁴ This led to the fragmentation of Georgia into three smaller kingdoms; the Kingdom of Kartli, covering the territories of central Georgia including present day South Ossetia and Tbilisi; the Kingdom of Kakheti covering eastern Georgia and the Kingdom of Emereti covering western Georgia including present day Abkhazia.⁶⁵ The regions of Kartli and Kakheti in present day Georgia are the historical remnants of these ancient monarchies.

⁶² About Georgia, 'About Georgia: Maps: Historical Maps: 1000-1600', *About Georgia* [web page] (2005) <<http://www.aboutgeorgia.ge/maps/historical.html?page=1>>, accessed 25 Oct. 2008.

⁶³ Silogava & Shengelia, 2007, 113.

⁶⁴ *ibid*, 130.

⁶⁵ *ibid*, 136.

Between the 16th and 18th century the Kingdoms of Georgia were contested by the Persian and Ottoman Empire, resulting in an infringement of territories to the southwest, south, and southeast. The majority of these territories were claimed during two important events; first the southern territories of the Kingdoms of Kartli and Kakheti were lost to the Shah-Abbas I in 1605; and second, the Georgian territories to the southwest were subdued by the Ottomans in the peace treaty of 1639.⁶⁶ By the time the Russian Empire crossed the Greater Caucasian Chain in the late 18th century the Georgian Kingdoms were merely a shadow of their former glory.

Georgia was incorporated in the Russian Empire in 1801, following an annexation by Tsar Paul I.⁶⁷ In effect the Russian Empire abolished the Kingdoms of Kartli, Kakheti and Emereti, and transformed them into Russian colonies.⁶⁸ It is interesting to examine the different narratives relating to the first Russian rule over Georgia. Russia regards the annexation of Georgia as a “humanitarian mission”, aiding its Christian neighbors against an Islamic threat.⁶⁹ Many Georgians, on the other hand, focus on the negative outcomes of the Tsarist rule, with regards to the dissolution of the Georgian church, socioeconomic oppression of its people and a general “Russification” of its country.⁷⁰ These issues lead to numerous uprisings in Georgia against the colonial power. One of the beneficiary outcomes of the Tsarist rule was the provision of border security against the Ottoman and Persian Empires.

Establishment of the modern Georgian nation

Historically speaking, the first Georgian nation was established in 1918.⁷¹ Although the first Georgian monarchies of Kartli and Egrisi can be regarded as the genesis of the Georgian nation, they failed to establish complete sovereignty within their borders. The first instance of a united Georgian Kingdom occurred in the 11th century. The first Georgian state came into being in 1918. Although short lived, the first Georgian nation is remembered as an important period in Georgian history, as the country’s first experience as a modern democratic state.⁷²

⁶⁶ Silogava & Shengelia, 2007, 142.

⁶⁷ European Union, *Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFMCG)*, vol. 2, (September 2009), 3.

⁶⁸ Silogava & Shengelia, 2007, 170.

⁶⁹ IIFMCG, vol. 2, 2009, 3.

⁷⁰ *ibid*, 3.

⁷¹ Hille, C., *State Building in the TransCaucasus since 1917*, (Netherlands, Leiden University, 2003), 93.

⁷² IIFMCG, vol. 2, 2009, 3.

The Russian Empire was brought to its knees during two revolutions in the early 20th century; first, through the 1905 establishment of the first Russian parliament, the Duma; and second, through the 1917 revolution and the end of the Tsarist rule.⁷³ At the time the two opposing factions of the revolutionary movement, the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks, contested over the control of the parliament. When the Bolsheviks ultimately assumed control in Petrograd, the Mensheviks withdrew to the Caucasus. The Mensheviks, comprised of many ethnic Georgians, declared the independence of Georgia the following year.

In the years to come the Mensheviks drafted the constitution of Georgia which was finalized in 1921. Georgia's strive for independence, however, was not realized without complications. In the east, the former principality of Abkhazia declared its intent to secede from Georgia and establish a sovereign state of Abkhazia. In 1918 however, the two parties reached a settlement granting Abkhazia partial autonomy under the sovereignty of Georgia.⁷⁴ In 1918 the government of Georgia experienced another set of uprisings along the Georgian Military Highway, a path leading north of present day Tbilisi into North Ossetia along the Aragvi Gorge.⁷⁵ These uprisings were initiated by Bolshevik rebels opposing the newly established Georgian government. By the end of the year the Georgian government had successfully brought these instabilities to a close, unfortunately the Bolshevik uprising had only just begun.

Soviet Georgia

The Bolshevik annexation of the South Caucasus began in the early 1920s. Joseph Stalin addressed the economic and strategic importance of the Caucasus in the following manner: "The important meaning of the Caucasus [...] is determined not only by the fact that it is a source of raw materials, fuel and food supplies but by its position between Europe and Asia and in particular between Russia and Turkey."⁷⁶ Indeed these prospects would play an important role throughout the Soviet Era and to some extent in the 21st century. The Bolshevik incursion began in Azerbaijan, capturing Baku by early 1920, before reaching west

⁷³ King, 2008, 162.

⁷⁴ Silogava & Shengelia, 2007, 214.

⁷⁵ *ibid*, 215.

⁷⁶ De Waal, 2010, 67.

to Armenia and finally north to Georgia by the end of the year. By 1921 the Bolsheviks had seized power in Georgia and assumed complete control over the South Caucasus. In 1922 Georgia was imbedded in a Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (TSFSR).

The interesting design of the TSFSR produced a complex administrative network in the South Caucasus. Autonomous entities were established within the larger entity of the TSFSR. Within, three Soviet Republics were founded; namely Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.⁷⁷ These enjoyed the benefits of establishing their own government, parliaments and administrative structures.⁷⁸ Within these Soviet Republics particular regions were granted autonomous status. In the case of Georgia, local autonomy was granted to Abkhazia and Adjara, as autonomous republics, and to South Ossetia within an autonomous district (or Russian ‘oblast’). These entities were tied to the centralized Soviet Republic of Georgia. The granting of local autonomy to these entities was based mainly on economic and ethnic considerations.

The Bolshevik consolidation of the South Caucasus has been source of scholarly debate due to the volatile climate it produced in the post-Soviet era. In terms of territorial division the Caucasus followed the blueprint of the Soviet system, based primarily on ethnic principles. These principles were built out of Stalin’s understanding of nations. According to Stalin a nation distinguished itself “...from races, tribes, linguistic groups or people who simply inhabited the same territory.”⁷⁹ A nation was something that had evolved over time and was relatively stable. Stalin believed that multiple ethnicities could reside within the same nation given appropriate measures of self-determination.⁸⁰ By recognizing larger pools of ethnicities and granting autonomy to the region in which they resided, one could create modern classless nations. Translated to the Caucasus, this modern nation was the TSFSR, with its Soviet Republics. Ultimately all the different republics of the Soviet Union would fuse into a single Soviet people.⁸¹

⁷⁷ IIFMCG, vol. 2, 2009, 4.

⁷⁸ De Waal, 2010, 74.

⁷⁹ King, 2008, 184.

⁸⁰ *ibid*, 185.

⁸¹ *ibid*, 186.

It is also important to address the internal entities within Soviet Georgia, namely Abkhazia, Adjara and South Ossetia.⁸² The territorial borders of these areas were drawn on the basis of ethnicity, economy and border security. Abkhazia, located in the northwest, was granted the status of Socialist Soviet Republic in 1922 tied by a treatise to Georgia.⁸³ Its status was later abolished in 1931, reducing Abkhazia to an autonomous republic on the same level as Adjara. The territory was determined based on the borders of the Principality of Abkhazia, which was annexed by the Russian Empire in 1810.⁸⁴

The territorial boundaries of Abkhazia have been changed throughout Georgian history ever since the Kingdom of Egrisi emerged between the 7th and 6th century B.C. Its modern borders were defined by the establishment of the Abkhazian Soviet Socialist Republic (A.S.S.R).⁸⁵ Historically the Abkhaz consider the territory between the Greater Caucasian chain and the Black Sea to be their homeland. It reaches from the Psou River in the north-west and the Inguri River in the south-east. The A.S.S.R. was founded mainly on the basis of the ethnic origin of the Abkhaz people. Abkhazia had also been central to the Bolshevik incursion against the Mensheviks of Georgia. King (2008) points out that the A.S.S.R. “created a buffer along what had recently been a hotly contested territory”.⁸⁶

Adjara, located in the southwest, represented a peculiar case of border formation. The region, inhabiting a large Muslim population, was conquered by the Russian Empire from the Ottomans in 1878.⁸⁷ The security of Adjara was a pressing concern for Turkey prior to the formation of TSFSR. An agreement between Soviet Russia and Turkey granted autonomous status to the region of Adjara located within the TSFSR, thus ensuring added security for its Muslim population.⁸⁸

South Ossetia, located in central-northern Georgia, was granted the status of autonomous oblast. This granted local autonomy to the region albeit not on the same level as an

⁸² IIFMCG, vol. 2, 2009, 4.

⁸³ S.E. Cornell, 'Autonomy and Conflict: Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus: Cases in Georgia'. *Department of Peace and Conflict Research*, Report No. 61. (2002), 138

⁸⁴ S. Chervonnaya, *Conflict in the Caucasus: Georgia, Abkhazia and the Russian Shadow*, (London, Gothic Image Publications, 1994), 16.

⁸⁵ *ibid*, 11.

⁸⁶ King, 2008, 189.

⁸⁷ Chervonnaya, 1994, 17.

⁸⁸ King, 2008, 189.

autonomous republic. The borders of the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast were drawn on the basis of ethnic contours, establishing a regional territory for the South Ossetian people. Similar to Adjara and Abkhazia, the governance of South Ossetia was tied to the centralized power in Tbilisi.

1936 marked the dissolution of the TSFSR entity; its territories were divided among the Soviet Republics of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. In effect this transformed the three into independent Soviet Republics, i.e. the largest constituent units of the Soviet Union. Although the TSFSR was absolved, the autonomous entities within Georgia endured. It is important to address the problematic transformation of Georgia to the post-Soviet era. The administrative structure of the Soviet state was fundamentally different from the dynamics of a modern state. Within Soviet Georgia the autonomous entities within Georgia were tied to the larger entities of the Soviet Republics. These were constituents of the larger Soviet Union. Thus the administration of these sub-entities was tied to the Soviet umbrella. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, this administrative network was dismissed. In its place the former Soviet Republics were faced with the challenge of forming new states and with it a new governance. When the Soviet administration ceased to exist, it resulted in an abundance of administrative issues in the Caucasus, especially within the autonomous entities. This was the legacy of the TSFSR.

The transformation of Georgia to a modern state suffered from issues of governance. With the Soviet umbrella absolved, the fate of the autonomous entities within Georgia had to be decided. During the Soviet era these entities had enjoyed partial autonomy. Facing the challenges of forging a new Georgian nation, the autonomous status of these regions became a pressing concern. Questions of autonomy soon evolved into questions of unity within the modern state of Georgia. The coming rulers of the country sought different paths to address the Georgian national identity problem, often involving the use of military power. King (2008) points out that the “politics of disintegration produced violence in these areas, not the other way around”.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ King, 2008, 219.

Georgian independence

The Soviet rule in Georgia came to an abrupt end on 9 April 1991, two years to the date after Soviet forces brutally shut down a peaceful demonstration in Tbilisi. The event, resulting in 19 deaths and hundreds of wounded, is regarded by many Georgians as a painful memory of Soviet oppression, which in turn fuelled Georgian national awakening.⁹⁰ Building on this sentiment, Zviad Gamsakhurdia succeeded in gaining the support of the Georgian people in the 1991 election. During the first years of independence, ethnopolitical challenges came to the forefront. Gamsakhurdia envisioned a reunited Georgia, restored to its former pre-Soviet glory. To achieve this goal he set out to secure Georgia's national integrity. Gamsakhurdia's nationalist campaign, coined "Georgia for the Georgians" was a central part of this vision.⁹¹ Although the campaign was designed to bring about the modern Georgian state, the sentiment ignored that Georgia as a nation never had been mono-ethnic. As former American journalist Thomas Goltz points out; "Georgia had never been a unitary or mono-ethnic state. (...) A full thirty percent of the population in Georgia, in fact, regarded themselves as less than full members of that state".⁹²

Gamsakhurdia's campaign furthermore stripped several minorities of the self-determination advantages they had enjoyed under Soviet rule. These involved perks such as university placement and job quotas.⁹³ These issues were central to the dismay and hostility articulated within the various regions of Georgia in the early nineties, especially in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Gahrton (2010) supports this argument by pointing out that the Abkhaz, despite being the minority in Abkhazia, assumed a significant number of administrative roles and high office seats in the late 20th century.⁹⁴ The Georgian claim for reintegrating Abkhazia was destined to involve a reorganization of these appointments. Furthermore the Gamsakhurdia Campaign left several minorities feeling alienated from the Georgian state. Asmus (2010) argues that the campaign ultimately achieved the contrary of its intention, by driving a wedge between Georgians and its regional minorities.⁹⁵ His argument is further supported by Nielsen (2009), who concludes in his study that Gamsakhurdia permanently damaged the relationship between the Georgian state and the Abkhaz and South Ossetian minorities. Ethnicity certainly

⁹⁰ Gahrton, 2010, 79.

⁹¹ T.Goltz., 'The Paradox of Living in Paradise: Georgia's Descent into Chaos', in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 16.

⁹² *ibid*, 16

⁹³ *ibid*, 17.

⁹⁴ Gahrton, 2010, 65.

⁹⁵ Asmus, 2010, 60.

factored into the hostilities between Georgia and its autonomous entities. King (2008) opposes this view however, by arguing that the disputes over Georgia's autonomous entities were fundamentally based on the control over territory rather than about deep ethnic grievances or historical debates of origin. Had the borders of Soviet Russia been drawn differently, many of these conflicts may never have materialized. These borders formations came to play a crucial role under Gamsakhurdia, leading to violent encounters in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the early nineties.

Abkhazia, South Ossetia and the question of autonomy

In their coverage of the 2008 War the international news media often addressed Abkhazia and South Ossetia as two sides of the same coin. However the historical review shows that there is a distinction between the regions in terms of history, geography and populace.⁹⁶ This section will address each region in turn and consider the key issues and debates in relation to Georgia. Gamsakhurdia's unsuccessful military encounters in Abkhazia and South Ossetia had dramatic effects on the relationship between Georgia and its autonomous entities. Its legacy played a pivotal role in the 2008 War.

The South Ossetian War (1991-1992)

South Ossetia is a region located in central northern Georgia, just northwest of the capital Tbilisi. The region borders to Russia and the region of North Ossetia in the north (which is in Russia). Economically South Ossetia is not as prosperous as its neighbor to the north, with its main source of income deriving from agriculture. In 1989 the region was home to about 100 000 people, out of which 70% were ethnic South Ossetians.⁹⁷ In terms of ethnicity the Ossetians are not native Georgians, but descendants of Persian origins tracing back a thousand years.⁹⁸ Specifically, the Ossetians are descendent from a nation comprising of an ancient people called the Alans.⁹⁹ Georgian historians claim that the Ossetians homeland is north of the Great Caucasian Chain, and that they migrated south at the beginning of the 18th century.¹⁰⁰ In spite of this, Gamsakhurdia referred to the South Ossetians as “ungrateful guests

⁹⁶ Asmus, 2010, 60.

⁹⁷ Cornell, 2002, 186.

⁹⁸ Goltz in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 18.

⁹⁹ IIFMCG, vol. 2, 2009, 69

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*, 69

of Georgia”.¹⁰¹ Sammut (1996) argues that Gamsakhurdia’s nationalist agenda at times came at the expense several minority groups.¹⁰² This agenda was all too clear in the Georgian language program launched in 1989, authorizing Georgian as the official language of conduct in all public spheres of society.¹⁰³ Cornell (2002) supports this view and points out that the program was detrimental to people inhabiting regions such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where the predominant languages were Abkhaz and Ossetian.¹⁰⁴ These languages are not mutually understandable with Georgian.

The South Ossetian Crisis span out in 1991 as the South Ossetians declared their unification with North Ossetia, and in turn with the Russian Federation.¹⁰⁵ A series of rallies were held in Tskhinvali, assembled by the separatist movement Ademon Nykhas. These rallies were designed to garner support against the Georgian nationalist movement. The conflict heated up as several thousand Georgian troops entered the South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali on January 5th.¹⁰⁶ A counter offensive was soon initiated as South Ossetian troops, with North Ossetian and Russian support, came into the fray. Georgian troops were soon forced to withdraw to the hills surrounding Tskhinvali. In June the following year, Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze signed a ceasefire agreement that effectively halted the conflict on the ground. The agreement stated that the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast should be divided equally between Georgian and Ossetian forces.¹⁰⁷ As mentioned earlier the autonomous oblast was a territorial remnant from Soviet times. Formulated in the ceasefire agreement, the peace was to be secured by a joint peacekeeping force with Georgian, Russian, South Ossetian and North Ossetian troops.

By the end of the year the Organization of Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) engaged in a monitoring role of the peacekeeping force. The OSCE operation has later been criticized to be overly passive in its monitoring of the Russian led peacekeeping operation in South Ossetia. In particular, the peacekeeping operation has been criticized for administrative deficiencies. The foundation of any peacekeeping operation is that all parties are present

¹⁰¹ D. Sammut & N. Cvetkovski, 'The Georgia-South Ossetia Conflict', *Confidence Building Matters*, No 6, (1996), 7.

¹⁰² *ibid*, 10.

¹⁰³ *ibid*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Cornell, 2002, 192.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*, 192.

¹⁰⁶ Sammut & Cvetkovski. 1996, 12.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid*, 28

during meetings and negotiations. Matsabaridze (2012) points out that Russia, South Ossetia and North Ossetia assembled numerous times concerning the peacekeeping operation, without consulting Georgia.¹⁰⁸ As a result important information bypassed Georgia all together. These shortcomings came to play an important role in 2008.

The Abkhaz War (1992-1994)

Abkhazia is located in Western Georgia, bordering to the Black Sea in the west and Russia in the north. During Soviet times the Abkhaz region enjoyed partial autonomy, with Abkhaz elites retaining benefits of self-determination. The Abkhaz themselves were a minority in the region, amounting for about twenty percent of the population, whilst Georgians made up about fifty percent. The predominant language in Abkhazia was Georgian, due to the large concentration of Georgians inhabiting the region. The Abkhaz on the other hand speak Abkhaz. As Georgian and Abkhaz are not mutually understandable, the cultural difference was (and still is) significant. According to Cornell (2009) the Gamsakhurdia language program, which introduced Georgian as the official language of communication, had dramatic consequences for the average Abkhaz.¹⁰⁹

In contrast to the South Ossetians, the Abkhaz people were regarded as native to their region. As such, many Abkhaz regarded self-determination as not only a privilege, but a legal right. With Georgia striving for independence following the breakup of the U.S.S.R., the Abkhaz feared the marginalization of their power within the region. Gamsakhurdia's aspiration to restore Georgian to its pre-Soviet glory was destined to involve Abkhazia, as it was an integral part of their national territory. However, Gamsakhurdia never questioned the autonomous status of Abkhazia; instead he advocated an agreement granting 70 % of the seats in the Abkhaz parliament to Georgian elites.¹¹⁰ In effect Tbilisi would assume control over the region. According to Cornell (2002), these issues soon evolved into an ethnopolitical conflict, with a minority; the Abkhaz, opposing a vast majority; the Georgians.¹¹¹ The desire to break

¹⁰⁸ Matsaberidze, 2012

¹⁰⁹ Cornell, 2002, 174.

¹¹⁰ Matsaberidze, 2012

¹¹¹ Cornell, 2002, 178.

free of their Georgian bonds and declare independence was promoted by the separatist movement, spearheaded by Abkhaz elites serving in high offices of the local government.¹¹²

In the summer of 1992, Abkhazia was suddenly and abruptly attacked by Georgia in an attempt to reclaim the region under Georgian sovereignty. The attack was a response to Abkhazia declaring independence from Georgia. In a swift move Georgian forces occupied the Abkhaz capital of Sukhumi.¹¹³ Georgian victory was however short lived, as Russian and North Caucasian forces came to assist the Abkhaz in their peril. Outnumbered, the Georgian forces were forced to retreat. The Abkhaz War came to a close when then Chairman of the Georgian state Eduard Shevardnadze brokered a ceasefire agreement with Abkhazia in late 1993.¹¹⁴ The agreement, mediated by the Russian Federation, established a peacekeeping force monitoring the borders between Georgia and Abkhazia. In exchange Georgia joined the Russian led Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).¹¹⁵ As a result Georgian forces retreated out of Abkhazia. The withdrawal was followed by the expulsion of about 230 000 ethnic Georgians from Abkhazia, reducing the pre-war population in Abkhazia from 500 000 to 200 000 after the war.¹¹⁶ The ceasefire agreement also established a security zone outside of Abkhazia extending twelve kilometers into both Abkhazia and Georgia proper.¹¹⁷ By the end of the war over ten thousand people had lost their lives.¹¹⁸

Frozen conflicts

In the aftermath of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian War, scholars have scrutinized the primary causes for the conflicts. Cornell (2002) points out that the divergence between the Abkhaz and South Ossetians on one hand and Georgians on the other has its roots from the Soviet Era, if not earlier. The Abkhaz sided with the Bolsheviks in the revolution of 1921, and enjoyed partial autonomy under Soviet rule within its Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia.¹¹⁹ Georgian historians claim the South Ossetians have their roots in North Ossetia, in present day

¹¹² Cornell, 2002, 180.

¹¹³ Goltz in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 24.

¹¹⁴ Asmus, 2010,62.

¹¹⁵ Chervonnaya, 1994, 171.

¹¹⁶ Asmus, 2010,63

¹¹⁷ ibid,62

¹¹⁸ Wheatley , 2005, 72.

¹¹⁹ Cornell, 2002, 175

Russia.¹²⁰ Ossetian historians on the other hand, regard the Ossetian homeland to be both south and north of the Great Caucasian chain.¹²¹ This can also explain why the Ossetians were involved in several uprisings during the Bolshevik Revolutions, as they opposed a territorial division of Ossetia set by the modern Georgian state.¹²² According to Cornell both Abkhazia and South Ossetia established strong ties to Russia under the Soviet rule:

Whereas the Abkhazian nobility had still been somewhat linked to Georgia before the revolution, the new, Communist leadership was linked to Moscow and not to Georgia. In South Ossetia, which hadn't had any nobility of its own, the Communist elite was, just like in Abkhazia, oriented mainly toward Moscow. This was natural, given the historical link between Ossetia and Russia.¹²³

Both regions had thus established strong ties to Russia. However it can be discussed to what extent the South Ossetian War was driven out of an ethnopolitical dispute. Matsaberidze (2012) points out that the ethnic conflict between South Ossetians and Georgians was an artificial construct.¹²⁴ During the South Ossetian conflict many South Ossetians emigrated from Georgia, but at the same time equal numbers changed their surnames and became full-fledged Georgians.¹²⁵ In addition cross marriages between South Ossetians and Georgians were not uncommon. Thus the conflicts between Georgia and South Ossetia can be regarded as a governmental dispute between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali. King (2008) supports this argument claiming that the ethnic dimension emerged in the aftermath, as opposed to the prelude to the wars.¹²⁶ All of this points to the complex nature of the conflicts in the early nineties.

In the late nineties both Abkhazia and South Ossetia became a breeding ground for criminal activities, such as racketeering, extortion, drug trafficking and corruption. Despite the establishment of peacekeeping missions conducted by the UN (in Abkhazia) and the OSCE (in South Ossetia) the regions had yet to stabilize.¹²⁷ The lack of success of these

¹²⁰ IIFFMCG, vol. 2, 2009, 69

¹²¹ *ibid*, 69

¹²² Cornell, 2002, 153

¹²³ *ibid*, 142

¹²⁴ Matsaberidze, 2012.

¹²⁵ *ibid*.

¹²⁶ King, 2008, 19.

¹²⁷ See OSCE, *Mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia adopted on 13 Dec 1992*, [web document] (13 Dec. 1992) < <http://www.osce.org/georgia-closed/43386>>, accessed 12 Nov. 2012; UN Security Council, *Resolution*

peacekeeping missions has been considered by many to be related to Russian influence in the regions. A central aspect of any peacekeeping operation is that the peacekeeping force must remain neutral to the conflict at hand. As Asmus (2010) points out, the peacekeeping operations in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia were dominated by Russian forces, itself a party of both conflicts.¹²⁸ This fundamental flaw would play a crucial role in the Russia-Georgian War 16 years later. Gordadze (2009) argues that Moscow had a hand in the instabilities of these regions ever since the Georgian independence. This was achieved through active support of the separatist regimes.¹²⁹ The peacekeeping missions by the UN and OSCE paradoxically allowed the Russian peacekeeping forces to maintain the instability in these regions.

Both peacekeeping missions were largely governed by Russia, with predominantly Russian troops constituting the peacekeeping force on the ground. The UN and OSCE operations in many ways funded continued Russian military presence in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. According to Gordadze (2009), these operations might otherwise be too costly for Russia to sustain on their own.¹³⁰ Gahrton (2010) opposes this view of the Russian peacekeeping force. Furthermore he claims that it is overly simplistic to claim that the Russian peacekeeping force was subject to the will of a handful of Russian political elites. In support of this argument Gahrton notes that the Russian Federation in fact upheld its CIS sanctions against Abkhazia up until 2008.¹³¹ Nevertheless the instability of these regions effectively weakened the Georgian state, and in turn crippled Georgia from joining the EU or NATO. The debates concerning the viability of the peacekeeping operations were critical at the outset of the 2008 War.

Shevardnadze and Russian-Georgian relations

Shevardnadze was appointed president of Georgia in 1995. During his presidency Shevardnadze succeeded in establishing closer relations with the West. In turn this caused Europe to reconsider the future benefits of the Caucasus region in respect to Euro-Atlantic

934 Adopted by the Security Council at its 3398th meeting, on 30 June 1994, [web document] (30 June 1994), <<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3b00f15c38.html>>, accessed 12 Nov. 2012.

¹²⁸ Asmus, 2010, 65

¹²⁹ Thornike Gordadze is a Research Fellow at the French Institute of Anatolian Studies in Istanbul. See T. Gordadze, 'Georgian-Russian Relations in the 1990s' in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 34.

¹³⁰ *ibid*, 34.

¹³¹ Gahrton, 2010, 70.

Alliance. The South-Caucasus could potentially serve as a bridge between Europe and Central Asia in terms of energy transportation.¹³² With this in mind the future of Georgia as a potential energy partner soon became a priority for the West.¹³³ A project named the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline (BTC) was set in motion in the early nineties to provide energy transportation from Azerbaijan to Turkey via Tbilisi.¹³⁴ The pipeline would transport large quantities of crude oil from Central Asia and the Caspian Sea to Europe, effectively circumventing both Russia and Iran. The BTC partners include Azerbaijan, Norway, Great Britain, Georgia, Turkey and the US.¹³⁵ In addition a BP led project of constructing the South Caucasian Pipeline (SCP) was finished in 2006, transporting Gas from Azerbaijan through a similar route.¹³⁶

It is important to note the political significance of these developments. Russia is a major crude oil and gas supplier to Europe and is thus reliant on its economic yields. As such it is understandable why Moscow opposed the construction of both pipelines. With the future energy needs of Europe steadily increasing, its reliance on Russian energy supplies would increase accordingly. However, the construction of these pipelines provided Europe with more legroom in its supply chain. With Europe less reliant on Russian markets, Moscow could potentially have less leverage on the political scene. The trade relationship goes both ways, however, as Berdikееva (2008) points out: “Russia is as much dependent on the European Markets as the EU is dependent on Russian Energy”.¹³⁷ Although the establishment of alternative routes of energy has been established, Berdikееva concludes that Russia is likely to remain the key supplier of crude oil and gas to Europe in the foreseeable future.¹³⁸ The quarrel over energy can explain the geopolitical significance of Georgia for the West, and why its future security was an increasing concern for the Atlantic Alliance. Although the economic aspect surely was a contributing element in the 2008 War, it should not be regarded

¹³² S. Berdikееva. ‘Future of Energy Transportation in Eurasia after the Georgian Crisis’, *Insight Turkey*, vol. 10, no. 4, (2008), 26.

¹³³ Gordadze in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 40.

¹³⁴ *ibid*, 40.

¹³⁵ *ibid*, 40.

¹³⁶ British Petroleum Caspian, ‘SPC Commissioning Commences’, *British Petroleum* [web page] (1 June 2006) <<http://www.bp.com/genericarticle.do?categoryId=9006615&contentId=7018471>>, accessed 8 Oct. 2012

¹³⁷ Berdikееva, 2008, 32.

¹³⁸ *ibid*, 33.

as the most decisive factor. Gahrton (2010), argues that the economic aspect was but one of many causes of the war.¹³⁹

In 1994 Shevardnadze signed a treaty of friendship with the Russian Federation.¹⁴⁰ According to the treaty Russia would help to secure Georgia's borders and assist in the training of the Georgian military. As part of the agreement four Russian military bases were established on Georgian soil; "in Batumi (Adjara), in Gudauta (Abkhazia), in Akhalkalaki (region of Samtskhe-Javakheti), and in Vaziani (near Tbilisi)".¹⁴¹ Over the course of his presidency Shevardnadze relied heavily on Russian support to resolve regional security issues within Georgia. Shevardnadze has later been criticized for leaving the fate of Georgian national security in the hands of Moscow, thus impeding Georgia's desire to establish de facto sovereignty within its borders.

In theory the Russian presence had the potential to stabilize Georgia; in practice the Russian support was not as beneficial as many would think. Continued instability in the country loomed as separatist forces, in regions such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia, thwarted Georgia from stabilizing. Gordadze (2009) argues that these separatist forces were not only supported by the Russian government, but actively funded by armaments, supplies, and military forces emanating from Moscow.¹⁴² Reoccurring hostilities during the early nineties involved ethnic cleansing and mass killings in Abkhazia during the Abkhaz War in 1992-94. In addition separatist regimes gained foothold in both South Ossetia and Adjara. Despite the large military presence of Russian troops within Georgia, little was done to prevent these insurgencies. Gordadze claims that on the contrary, as part of a post-Cold War policy in the post-Soviet space, Moscow actively promoted policies that would destabilize or weaken these newly formed states.¹⁴³

With a weakened state, these former provinces would be dependent on Russian aid to settle its domestic security disputes. Thus, Georgian ties to Russia would be secured in the future. In addition, Moscow could control its former provinces without interference by the international

¹³⁹ Gahrton, 2010, 74.

¹⁴⁰ IIFMCG, vol. 2, 2009, 5

¹⁴¹ *ibid*, 6

¹⁴² Gordadze in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 33.

¹⁴³ *ibid*, 34.

community, in a region where the West had no particular interest. The focus of the West, however, was about to shift to the Caucasus. Following the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the U.S. was heavily engaged in combating what was later known as Global Terrorism. Russia, too, was threatened from within its borders in the Second Chechen war in 1999. With an increasing concern about Islamic fundamentalism and the War on Terrorism, Russia engaged in combating terrorism in Chechnya along the same lines as the U.S. operation in Afghanistan.

In its response to the hostilities in Chechnya, Russia requested access to Georgian airfields along the Chechen border, much as it had in the First Chechen War.¹⁴⁴ The Georgian collaboration was however declining, as the Russian military presence on its soil had reaped few benefits over the years. After Georgia refused to grant Russia access, Moscow responded with claims of Georgian affiliation with Chechen terrorists. In short, Moscow accused Georgia of not only supporting the Chechen offensive, but facilitating terrorist activities by allowing transportation of Islamic fundamentalists through its territory in the Pankisi Gorge.¹⁴⁵

The call to question Georgia's role in the conflict eventually reached the international scene. With rising concerns of alleged terrorist activities in Georgia, it was up to the international community to respond. Shevardnadze turned a public disaster into success by inviting the U.S. to alleviate Georgia's security issues.¹⁴⁶ In 2002 the U.S. established a training program for Counter-Terrorist Security within Georgia.¹⁴⁷ The program, known as the Georgian Train and Equip Program (GTEP), involved deployment of qualified U.S. military personnel on Georgian soil, instructing Georgian troops how to handle terrorist threats domestically and internationally.¹⁴⁸ Although Russia resented the notion, it could not protest publicly as a result of its former claims. Paradoxically, Russia's allegations against Georgia resulted in a substantial American military presence in close proximity to its own borders.

With the U.S. physically present on the ground in Georgia, its relations to the West was gaining ground. U.S. foreign aid increased over the course of 2002, and by the end of the year

¹⁴⁴ Gordadze in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 36.

¹⁴⁵ Wheatley, 2005, 177.

¹⁴⁶ De Waal, 2010, 190.

¹⁴⁷ Gordadze in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 43

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*, 42

American aid constituted more than two-thirds of Georgia's military budget.¹⁴⁹ According to Gordadze, Moscow perceived this development as a sign of Shevardnadze becoming increasingly pro-American and that he now constituted an arch-enemy to Russia.¹⁵⁰ Shevardnadze's reign was however reaching its end.

The Rose Revolution and Mikheil Saakashvili

Although Georgia's Western aspirations can be traced back to Shevardnadze, the Rose Revolution is renowned for making the most dramatic change. By the time the roses had blossomed in Tbilisi's Freedom Square, the belief in democratization in the Caucasus gained strength. The peaceful revolution had achieved what was regarded by many to be impossible in the Caucasus; to topple an unwanted leader by the use of peaceful democratic processes. It also landed a significant blow to the Russian ideology concerning liberal democracies. In accordance with Kremlin ideologists such as Vladislav Surkov and Gleb Pavlovsky, any establishment of liberal democracies outside the "Euro-Atlantic" zone could never develop naturally. As such, if liberal democracies were to develop in areas, such as the South Caucasus, it had to be enforced as part of a Western ploy.¹⁵¹

Accordingly, Gordadze (2009) suggests that it is not surprising that Moscow, in the aftermath of the revolution, claimed that the Rose Revolution was a movement funded and supported by Western NGOs inside Georgia. The Kremlin ideology also explains why Moscow regarded it as such a travesty should the Rose Revolution come to fruition.¹⁵² Its last ditch effort to embrace the once resented Eduard Shevardnadze and Adjara leader Aslan Abashidze against the National Movement in the 2003 election attests to Moscow's desperation. The Russian efforts were unfortunately in vain, as the desire for regime change swept across the country.

Shevardnadze's presidency had been successful in terms of international relations. Internally however Georgia faced issues in terms of the economy, national security and corruption.¹⁵³ By the end of 2002 the Georgian people were ready for a regime change, after enduring two presidencies of former communist leaders. During the 2003 elections large scale protests took

¹⁴⁹ *ibid*, 41

¹⁵⁰ Gordadze in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 43

¹⁵¹ *ibid*, 46.

¹⁵² *ibid*, 46.

¹⁵³ De Waal, 2010, 191.

place, spearheaded by the leader of the National Movement, Mikheil Saakashvili. Among the most famous of these protests was the rally in Tbilisi's Freedom Square in November 2003, where a crowd of fifty to a hundred thousand protesters assembled. Saakashvili addressed the crowd demanding Shevardnadze's resignation. The next day Shevardnadze announced he would voluntarily leave office.¹⁵⁴ The revolution was a success, placing the previously insignificant nation of Georgia on the political maps of the West. An abundance of media coverage followed the events, turning the eyes of the world to Tbilisi. Saakashvili's role in the Rose Revolution should not be underestimated. Wheatley (2005) accounts Saakashvili as the single most decisive factor in the Rose Revolution. He argues that although other prominent politicians, such as Nino Burjanadze and Zurab Zhvania, contributed greatly to the revolution, it was the determination of Saakashvili that eventually won the day.¹⁵⁵ Saakashvili's insistence on Shevardnadze leaving office was imperative in this regard.¹⁵⁶

Georgia's western aspirations

Over the course of Saakashvili's first term in office, the nation gradually turned to the West for future political advices. Saakashvili, in many regards, provided the country with a political figure the West could relate to. He was a charismatic leader, fluent in both English and French, and had studied law at the University of Columbia. Washington, above all else, was largely in favor of integrating Georgia within NATO and eventually, the EU. The Bush Administration had deep diplomatic relations with Georgia, and George W. Bush was considered by many to be a personal friend of Saakashvili. The Georgian President desired to use his Western connections to close the distance between Georgia and Europe, and eventually become an integral part of NATO and the EU. In order to do so however, he needed to convince Europe that Georgia was a viable asset to its coalitions.

The main concern from Europe's point of view was the viability of the Georgian state and its democracy. Although progress was made during the Rose Revolution, Georgia had yet to establish de facto sovereignty within its borders. Georgia's autonomous entities in Adjara, South Ossetia and Abkhazia were a critical factor in this regard. The autonomous region of Adjara was however transitioned back to Georgian sovereignty in the 2004 Adjara Crisis.

¹⁵⁴ Wheatley, 2005, 184.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*, 183.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid*, 185.

Saakashvili had succeeded in returning the province by non-violent means. The resolve, famously coined the Second Bloodless Revolution, was a decisive victory for Saakashvili. He had proven once again that he was willing and able to change the status quo of his country without resorting to violence. His efforts did not go unnoticed, as the international community recognized the country's use of non-violent democratic processes to bring about much needed change. Paris and Munich, on the other hand were not yet convinced. The main concern from both fronts was Georgia's inability to resolve the frozen conflicts in the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.¹⁵⁷ These age old conflicts had been a thorn in Georgia's side ever since independence. Georgia had to settle the problems within its own borders before reaching out for Western integration.

The August 2008 War

On August 7th 2008, war broke out between Georgia and South Ossetia. Following months of political tension Georgian forces initiated a bombardment of the town of Tskhinvali in South Ossetia. According to Georgia, it responded to South Ossetian separatist forces' shelling of Georgian villages days earlier. During the assault on Tskhinvali, Russian peacekeeping forces were attacked, upon which they returned fire. On Friday morning, August 8th, Georgian forces had assumed complete control of Tskhinvali and the surrounding hills. Tbilisi stated that the government of Georgia was reinstating constitutional order in the Tskhinvali region. On August 8, the Russian 58th army, at the time undertaking military exercises in North Ossetia, entered South Ossetia through the Roki Tunnel, a passageway connecting North Ossetia to South Ossetia through the Caucasus Mountains. Russian authorities claimed it had received reports of genocide against South Ossetian civilians, and was engaging on the basis of humanitarian intervention. Over the course of August 8, Russian forces had Georgian positions in Tskhinvali under siege. Severely outnumbered, the Georgian forces retreated to the town of Gori outside the territory of South Ossetia. During the next day Georgian forces reported on extensive bombardment campaigns by the Russian Federation against Georgian towns and villages. By August 9th the town of Gori had been reduced to ruins and occupied by Russian forces. In the days to follow a two-pronged attack was initiated by the Russian Federation into Georgian territory; from the west, Abkhaz and Russian military forces crossed the Inguri River into Georgia proper; from the north, the Russian 58th army launched a full-

¹⁵⁷ Asmus, 2010, 141.

scale attack deep into Georgian territory, occupying towns and villages only an hour away from Tbilisi, and initiating aerial attacks onto the capital itself. On August 12th the fighting came to a halt, as Russia and Georgia signed a ceasefire agreement initiated by French president Nicolas Sarkozy. Although short in length, the Russia-Georgian War caused a substantial loss of human lives. When the smoke had settled the war had claimed over 850 lives, not to mention the over 100 000 internally displaced persons.¹⁵⁸ To this day many of these IDPs have not been able to return to their homes.

Conflicting narratives

In the aftermath of the war, the parties involved promoted different narratives as to why the conflict materialized in August 2008. As an integral part of the IIFMCG, the governments of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Georgia and Russia were requested to submit their version of the story. Reflected in the IIFMCG report, each side promoted diverging arguments concerning the origins of the conflict.

The government of South Ossetia proclaims that the Republic of South Ossetia seceded from Georgia during the disintegration of the Soviet Union, thus forming a sovereign and independent state.¹⁵⁹ In their view, Gamsakhurdia's campaign became the foundation for Georgia's future policies against its autonomous entities. These policies ruled out any possibility of South Ossetia integrating with Georgia. In addition the South Ossetian Government regards the U.S.-Georgian military operation, 'Immediate Response', to be the final iteration of a planned military operation against South Ossetia.¹⁶⁰ These allegations are in sharp contrast with the conclusions of the IIFMCG report, which describe 'Immediate Response' as "a regular exercise (...) with no hostile intent".¹⁶¹

In contrast to the South Ossetian narrative, the Government of Georgia proclaims that South Ossetia was an integral part of Georgian sovereignty after the Soviet dissolution. Georgia regards the Russian invasion as the final step of a long planned stratagem to subdue the Georgian state. These allegations are directed against Russia's policies vis-à-vis South Ossetia

¹⁵⁸ IIFMCG, vol. 1, 2009, 5.

¹⁵⁹ IIFMCG, vol. 3, 2009, 503

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*, 504

¹⁶¹ IIFMCG, vol. 2, 2009, 233

and Abkhazia since the early nineties. According to Georgia, Russia had abused its role as peacekeeper; initiated a long term ethnic cleansing of native Georgians from South Ossetia; and “manufactured” Russian citizens to protect in South Ossetia through its illegal distribution of Russian passports.¹⁶² With regards to the ‘passportification’ plead, the IIFMCG states that the printing and distribution of passports in South Ossetia and the subsequent “protection of Russian citizens” claim was in fact preplanned by Moscow.¹⁶³

The Russian Federation regards the ‘South Ossetian-Georgian’ conflict as the product of an unprovoked Georgian attack against the civilian population of South Ossetia and Russian peacekeepers.¹⁶⁴ In its military response, the Russian Federation invoked the rights of self-defense as defined in Article 51 of the UN Charter.¹⁶⁵ According to Russia, Georgia’s “criminal attempt” to conquer South Ossetia by military means cannot be justified under any circumstances. The extensive Russian military response was directed strictly for self-defensive purposes, in the protection of “Russian peacekeepers and other Russian nationals.”¹⁶⁶ Russia concludes that by attacking South Ossetia, the Saakashvili Administration has diminished any chance of restoring Georgia’s territorial integrity.

Above all else, these narratives reflect the disagreement between the parties of the 2008 War. Moreover, these narratives are influenced by the critique and debates which surfaced in the aftermath of the 2008 War. The South Ossetian Autonomy and the administrative structure of post-Soviet Georgia has been a source of extensive academic debate. These debates are also mirrored in the South Ossetian narrative, which proclaims South Ossetia as a sovereign and independence state at the time of the Georgian incursion. With regards to the Georgian narrative, Russia is held responsible for both the attack in 2008 and the destabilization of the Georgian state throughout the nineties. These allegations are directed towards a villainous and treacherous Russia, intended to undermine the Georgian nation. Entirely absent from the Georgian narrative is the initial shelling of Tskhinvali on August 7. This is interesting as there

¹⁶² IIFMCG, vol. 3, 2009, 8

¹⁶³ IIFMCG, vol. 2, 2009, 8

¹⁶⁴ The Russian Federation denounce the term “Russia-Georgian War”. Instead they refer to the conflict as the “South Ossetian-Georgian War”. See IIFMCG, vol. 3, 2009, 336.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*, 336

¹⁶⁶ *ibid*, 337

was a consensus among scholars to assign the first act of aggression to Georgia.¹⁶⁷ Lastly, the Russian narrative focuses on the legal basis of the Russian military engagement into Georgia. It highlights the justification of Russia's use of force in terms of international law. During the 2008 War, the Russian attack was subject to widespread condemnations from the international community. In response, the Russian narrative accentuates the legal ground for Russia's counter attack.

Georgia, NATO and the Kosovo Precedent

In many ways the August 2008 War served as the catalyst for an ongoing international security crisis, years in the making. On the ground level the 2008 war was fought between Georgia on one side, and the Russian Federation and the separatist forces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia on the other. In the grand game of international relations however, it was also a war concerning the security arrangements of post-Cold War Europe. Scholars such as Asmus (2010), Blank (2009) and Gahrton (2010) argue that Georgia served as a pawn in a much larger game of international politics.¹⁶⁸ It is important to focus on these issues as they are the grounds on which both Georgia and Russia engaged in the information wars during August 2008.¹⁶⁹ Each side had its own incentive and goal going into the conflict. This section assesses the debates concerning NATO expansion in the post-Cold War era and how this relates to the Russia-Georgian War. The purpose of this section is to focus on key developments in NATO-Russia relations, and to provide an international context for the conflict.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, NATO suffered from an identity crisis; with its main adversary defeated the coalition had arguably achieved its goal of a secure Europe. However, the expansion throughout the 1990s extended the function of the organization from its former defensive posture.¹⁷⁰ With several former members of the USSR joining NATO, many in Moscow perceived the expansion as anti-Russian in essence. The expansion is generally divided into different phases; the first wave, taking place in the late nineties, invited the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland into the

¹⁶⁷ This is also the conclusion of the IIFMCG report, which assigns the act of aggression to Georgia. See IIFMCG, vol. 1, 2009, 22.

¹⁶⁸ See Asmus, 2010; S. Blank, 'America and the Russo-Georgian War', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 20, no. 2, (June 2009), 425-451, Gahrton, 2010.

¹⁶⁹ Goble in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 181

¹⁷⁰ R.K. Betts, 'The Three Faces of NATO', *The National Interest*, issue 100, (March/April 2009), 33.

coalition; the second, included the Baltic States; Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia as well as Bulgaria, Romania Slovakia and Slovenia and finally the third wave, with the inclusion of Albania and Croatia in 2009.¹⁷¹ The expansion of NATO confirmed the fears of many in Moscow; this was a modern version of the containment policy conducted throughout the Cold War. With NATO assembling along its borders Russia felt threatened. Its influence in central and eastern Europe was declining.

In relation to the Russia-Georgian War the Kosovo Crisis became a significant event. The 1999 NATO operation in Kosovo had detrimental effects on NATO-Russian relations. A decade later the scars of Kosovo would play a decisive role in Russia's intervention in Georgia. In order to comprehend the importance of Kosovo, one must consider the historical relationship between Serbia and Russia. Serbia, along with its neighboring countries of the former republic of Yugoslavia, is home to a substantial Slavic population.¹⁷² Kosovo was subjugated by Serbia following a decisive victory over the Ottoman Empire in the First Balkan War in 1914.¹⁷³ Soon to follow the Kingdom of Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia formed Yugoslavia in 1918, later known as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Nielsen (2009) notes that in the aftermath of the Second World War, Kosovo was subjugated under Serbian rule and enjoyed limited autonomy until 1974.¹⁷⁴ In 1974 a constitution expanded the rights of many districts of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo. By 1989, the newly elected leader of the Serbian League of Communists Slobodan Milosevic, revoked these rights and stripped the autonomy of Kosovo. The resolve produced a repressive political climate within Serbia, eventually resulting in the creation of separatist groups such as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).¹⁷⁵ Mounting hostilities followed in the mid nineties between Serbian forces and Kosovo Albanians.

After failing to reach an agreement between the parties the conflict soon escalated. Kosovo Albanian claims of genocide carried out by the Serbian army called for an international response to the crisis. With the UN Security Council unable to reach a consensus for a military intervention, NATO decided to act unilaterally to halt the alleged genocide of

¹⁷¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 'A short history of NATO', *NATO* [web page] (2012) <<http://www.nato.int/history/index.html>>, accessed 8 Oct. 2012.

¹⁷² Asmus, 2010, 91.

¹⁷³ Nielsen, 2009, 172.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid*, 172

¹⁷⁵ *ibid*, 172

Kosovo Albanians. The operation, legitimized by NATO as a ‘humanitarian intervention’, involved an aerial bombardment campaign lasting 74 days, claiming the lives of many ethnic Serbs.¹⁷⁶

The bypassing of the UN Security Council effectively negated any possibility of a Russian veto of the operation. Asmus (2010) argues that the decision to intervene unilaterally in Kosovo without the participation of Russia was perceived in Moscow as a sign of “American expansionism under the guise of a new doctrine of humanitarian interventionism”.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, the term ‘humanitarian intervention’, came to play a crucial role in future NATO operations in Afghanistan in 2001 and later in Iraq in 2003. The legitimacy of the Kosovo operation has been source to extensive critique over the years, and is considered by many to be illegitimate in essence.¹⁷⁸ It came as no surprise then that Russia relied so heavily on the Kosovo analogy, in justifying its own ‘humanitarian intervention’ in Georgia in 2008. By referencing the intervention in Kosovo, Russia claimed that its intervention in South Ossetia was a necessity in the protection of Russian and South Ossetian civilians, who allegedly were being slaughtered by a present day Slobodan Milosevic in Mikheil Saakashvili.¹⁷⁹

Seven weeks prior to the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, the U.S. in collaboration with the E.U. recognized Kosovo as an independent state, ignoring Russian warnings that such a decision would have ramifications involving the South Caucasus region.¹⁸⁰ Asmus (2010) argues that the West’s failure to carefully consider the consequences of recognizing Kosovo had detrimental effects for Georgia.¹⁸¹ Kosovo was an especially emotional case for Russia, still agonized by NATO’s operation in 1999. In addition the recognition of Kosovo was in violation of the 1999 UN resolution 1244, stating that Kosovo should remain under Serbian sovereignty.¹⁸² Despite of this, Kosovo announced its independence on February 17, followed

¹⁷⁶ Nielsen, 2009, 172

¹⁷⁷ Asmus, 2010, 91

¹⁷⁸ See Reisman, W.M., ‘Editorial comments: NATO’s Kosovo intervention’, *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 93, Issue 4, (1999), 824-828; Guicherd, C. ‘International law and the war in Kosovo’. *Survival* vol. 41, no. 2, (1999), 19–34; Franck, T.M. et.al., ‘Sideline in Kosovo?’, *Foreign Affairs*, vol.78, no. 4, (1999), 116–122; G. Hafkin. ‘The Russo-Georgian War of 2008: Developing the Law of Unauthorized Humanitarian Intervention After Kosovo’, *Boston University International Law Journal*, vol. 28, (2010), 235.

¹⁷⁹ Goble in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 187.

¹⁸⁰ D.A. Smith, ‘The Saakashvili Administration’s Reaction to Russian Policies before the 2008 War’, in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 137

¹⁸¹ Asmus, 2010, 93.

¹⁸² H.W.Steinfeld, *Hatet i Europa: Tyve år etter Berlins andre fall*, (Trondheim, Cappelen Damm, 2009), 174

by international recognition by the U.S. and several key E.U. members. President Putin responded declaring that the international recognition of Kosovo landed a fatal blow to the whole system of international relations.¹⁸³ The references to Kosovo were all too clear on August 26, when South Ossetia and Abkhazia declared independence from the Georgian state.¹⁸⁴ The Russian response to the Kosovo recognition can further be exemplified by a meeting between President Putin and President Saakashvili on February 23 in 2008;

There is an urgent need to react to what has happened in Europe on Kosovo. We (Russia) are currently thinking how to deal with this problem. You shall remember that we are under huge pressure from the republics of the Northern Caucasus, and we have to answer to their solidarity for Abkhazia and South Ossetia. (...) You know we have to answer the West on Kosovo. And we are very sorry but you are going to be part of that answer.¹⁸⁵

The statement above leaves little room for interpretation; the recognition of Kosovo had consequences for Georgia's territorial integrity.

Legitimacy of the Kosovo analogy

The dispute over Kosovo culminated in academic debates of whether the Kosovo precedent was a valid argument for Russia's intervention in Georgia. Hafkin (2009) concludes that although the NATO operation in Kosovo might have been designed to intervene on the basis of humanitarian necessity, the operation was limited to dropping bombs. Furthermore he questions to what extent an aerial operation could improve the conditions for the Kosovars on the ground.¹⁸⁶ In a study by Nielsen (2009) the cases of Kosovo on one hand and South Ossetia and Abkhazia on the other, are compared in an attempt to draw similarities and differences between the two. Nielsen concludes that both Serbia and Georgia have experienced similar cases of political oppression, but that the differences far exceed the similarities.¹⁸⁷ Asmus (2010) further supports this view and adds that the Kosovo analogy was

¹⁸³ AFP, 'Putin calls Kosovo independence 'terrible precedent'', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [web page] (23 Feb. 2008), < <http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/putin-calls-kosovo-independence-terrible-precedent/2008/02/23/1203467431503.html> >, accessed 10 Oct. 2012.

¹⁸⁴ Nielsen, 2009, 179.

¹⁸⁵ Asmus 2010, 106.

¹⁸⁶ G. Hafkin. 'The Russo-Georgian War of 2008: Developing the Law of Unauthorized Humanitarian Intervention After Kosovo', *Boston University International Law Journal*, vol. 28, (2010), 235.

¹⁸⁷ Nielsen, 2009, 183.

deployed by Russia as a payback for old grievances against the West for its intervention against ethnic Serbs in Kosovo.¹⁸⁸

Humanitarian intervention is by default a very controversial matter, the deployment of humanitarian intervention in international conflicts has been source to extensive literary debate. Central to these debates is questions concerning the selective deployment of the term in regards to humanitarian crises, such as Rwanda in 1994.¹⁸⁹ According to the findings of the European Union Independent International Fact Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG) there are several issues with the Russian Federations deployment of the Kosovo analogy in regards to the Georgian conflict. Firstly, Russia strongly opposed any justification of the operation in Kosovo on the basis of humanitarian intervention. According to Russia, humanitarian intervention was an invalid vindication for military action. As such, the IIFFMCG concludes that Russia could not rely on the term to justify its own intervention in Georgia.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore a humanitarian intervention can only be commanded by an impartial party. Considering that Russia was highly involved in the political and security arrangements in Georgia, as well as the peacekeeping operation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, a humanitarian intervention by Russia in Georgia is not legitimate under any circumstances.¹⁹¹

Secondly, Russia claimed that it was forced to intervene in South Ossetia in protection of its own citizens. In a speech following the outbreak of the war, President Medvedev stated that “Georgian troops have committed what amounts to an act of aggression against Russian peacekeepers and the civilian population in South Ossetia”, he continued stating that “Civilians, women, children and old people are dying, and the majority of them are citizens of the Russian Federation”.¹⁹² The IIFFMCG notes that Russia distributed large quantities of Russian passports to South Ossetian and Abkhazians alike. This ‘passportification’ was illegitimate and in violation with the Georgian Constitution which does not allow dual citizenship.¹⁹³ Thus the IIFFMCG rendered the Russian argument concerning the protection of its own citizen invalid. On the other hand, the response to the killing of Russian

¹⁸⁸ Asmus, 2010, 109.

¹⁸⁹ See R. Dallaire, *Shake Hands With The Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, (New York, 1st Carroll & Graf trade publications, 2003)

¹⁹⁰ IIFFMCG, vol. 1, 2009, 24.

¹⁹¹ *ibid*, 24.

¹⁹² Niedermaier, 2008, 402.

¹⁹³ IIFFMCG, vol. 1, 2009. 18

peacekeepers was legitimized. However, international law clearly states that such a military response must be strictly for defensive purposes, and amount to a proportionate response to the attack.¹⁹⁴ In this regard, the first phase of the Russian response (i.e. the deployment of armed forces to protect Russian peacekeepers) was legitimate. The continued military engagement in the second phase of the conflict (i.e. the Russian/South Ossetian/Abkhazian advance into Georgia proper) is rendered by the IFFMCG to be beyond “the reasonable limits of defense”.¹⁹⁵ This also holds true for the extensive Russian military deployment in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and the Black Sea.¹⁹⁶

Thirdly, the Russian Federation claimed that it was intervening in Georgia to stop the genocide of South Ossetians by Georgian troops. According to the findings of the IFFMCG, the alleged genocide did not take place. Russian death tolls exceeded two thousand deaths in the interlude to the war, a majority of these being South Ossetian civilians.¹⁹⁷ The factual number of civilian casualties on South Ossetian side was approximately 162.¹⁹⁸

Summary

Throughout this chapter the historical relationship between the actors of the 2008 War has been addressed. Although the Georgian state emerged in 1918, the country holds a rich history tracing back as far as the 7th century B.C, and the subsequent Golden Age in the late 12th century A.D. Since ancient times Georgia has been subjected to numerous empires, serving as a bridge between the Muslim and Christian World. Its modern day population, with its highly diversified ethnicities, is a product of this history. Russia’s presence in the Caucasus region had dramatic effects on the geopolitical arrangement of modern day Georgia, through both the Tsarist and Soviet era. The territorial division of present day Georgia was formed by the contours of Soviet Russia. Within Soviet Georgia, the autonomous entities of South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Adjara, produced a complex administrative network tied to the Soviet umbrella. When the U.S.S.R. ultimately dissolved, this chain of command was absolved, which in turn fuelled administrative conflicts in the early nineties.

¹⁹⁴ *ibid*, 23

¹⁹⁵ IFFMCG, vol. 1, 2009, 24

¹⁹⁶ *ibid*, 24

¹⁹⁷ *ibid*, 27

¹⁹⁸ *ibid*, 21

The emergence of the modern Georgian state clashed with the interests of its autonomous entities. Aspiring to a unified nation, the leaders of Georgia attempted to integrate its regions and ethnicities under one banner. After Gamsakhurdia's failed policies in the early nineties, the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia froze solid; a state which crystallized under the auspices of a Russian led peacekeeping force. Georgia's western aspirations, which began with Shevardnadze and was intensified under Saakashvili, shifted its policies away from Moscow, resulting in a gradually deteriorating relationship between the two nations. As Georgia crept closer to NATO membership, its territorial disputes came to the forefront once again. In 2008, Georgia's failed attempt to integrate South Ossetia by military means exacerbated its relations to its breakaway regions and Russia. The crisis also revealed an international contention between Russia and NATO, with roots from past events in the former Republic of Yugoslavia. In its aftermath the parties promoted divergent narratives as to why the war came to be. These narratives attest to the deceptive nature of the war, which in turn caused tremendous confusion in the international press coverage during August 2008.

Chapter 4: News Framing Analysis

This chapter will address the field of framing and its subfield news framing analysis. Overall the aim of this study is to examine the framing in the Norwegian print-press coverage of the 2008 War. This entails identifying frames in news texts. The study of the impact of media frames on society is an equally important field, but outside the scope of this thesis.

Specifically, this section will examine framing as an integral part of news production. First, the role of mass media in military conflicts is scrutinized. Second, this section defines the often enigmatic term *framing*, and how it relates to news production. Third, the focus will be on the prominent approaches to news framing analysis. These approaches are used to design a research model for analyzing the Norwegian print-press coverage. Finally, the research sample, coding process and method of analysis will be presented.

This study will employ a combination of quantitative and qualitative research in its analyses. The historical assessment in chapter three will serve as the theoretical foundation for the analyses. The quantitative research will involve a systematic reading of selected newspapers. The results of the quantitative research will provide an overview of publication dates, genres and use of sources in the print-press coverage. Subsequently, the qualitative research will determine different frames present in individual news articles.

Media power

In the Age of Information the public is subject to a myriad of information almost infinite in its reach and nearly impossible to conceive for any individual person. As a result the mass media has assumed the role of mediator, systematically selecting and presenting matters of importance to the public. In modern society the mass media largely determines which matters should be considered significant and worth debating in the public sphere. Accordingly, the mass media is considered a significant force of power in modern society, a power that if governed correctly, could yield tremendous benefits. The potential power of media as an instrument of warfare has had a long history. In recent times however the mass media has become an integral part of modern warfare.

From the Balkan Wars and the Gulf War to the War on Terror, the media has been operated as a power to win the hearts and minds of the public.¹⁹⁹ As a result the relationship between the mass media and public opinion has been reinforced, and today every major political or military conflict has a media factor. By withholding, distributing or misrepresenting information, modern warfare is today directed to shed favorable light on one party of a conflict while simultaneously portraying its adversaries as villainous.²⁰⁰ Consequently, a common sentiment has evolved, claiming that the first victim of war is truth.

In this increasingly treacherous environment the role of media in warfare has, in recent years, become an increasingly important field of study. Academics within this field examine the most important aspects of information warfare such as: the influence of governments on media output, the role of powerful media corporations on forming public opinion, the role of journalists in conveying information and framing news in different levels of news production. These studies challenge the assumption that media presents an impartial and balanced view of reality. According to Denis McQuail, the mass media, above all else, is subject to the influence of governments and institutions with interests in forming public opinion. He continues stating: “They (*the media*) are subjects to formal and informal control by the very institutions (including their own) that have an interest in shaping public perception of reality”.²⁰¹

Interesting here is the statement “perception of reality” which according to McQuail is an artificial construct, granted that a complete picture of reality is inconceivable. Subsequently what is presented in the form of news stories is a fragment, or selection of reality, all depending on the source of information. McQuail concludes that this “reality will always be to some extent selected and constructed and there will be certain biases”.²⁰²

Framing in the production of news

The discussion about this “perceived reality” raises important questions; how is this perceived reality constructed? A news story is influenced by several actors, both inside and outside the

¹⁹⁹ See Luostarinen & Ottosen in Kempf & Luostarinen, 2002; McQuail, 2010; Dmitrova. & Strömback, 2008

²⁰⁰ Goble in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 182.

²⁰¹ McQuail, 2010, 86.

²⁰² *ibid*, 86.

media. These actors can be found across different levels of the information trajectory. An information trajectory refers to the way in which information is transferred from the source of information to the public. In between the source and the public, the information passes through several channels or levels before reaching its destination. These levels can usually be divided into six different categories; the event; the actors involved; the official channel of information; the news media corporation; the journalist; and finally the public.

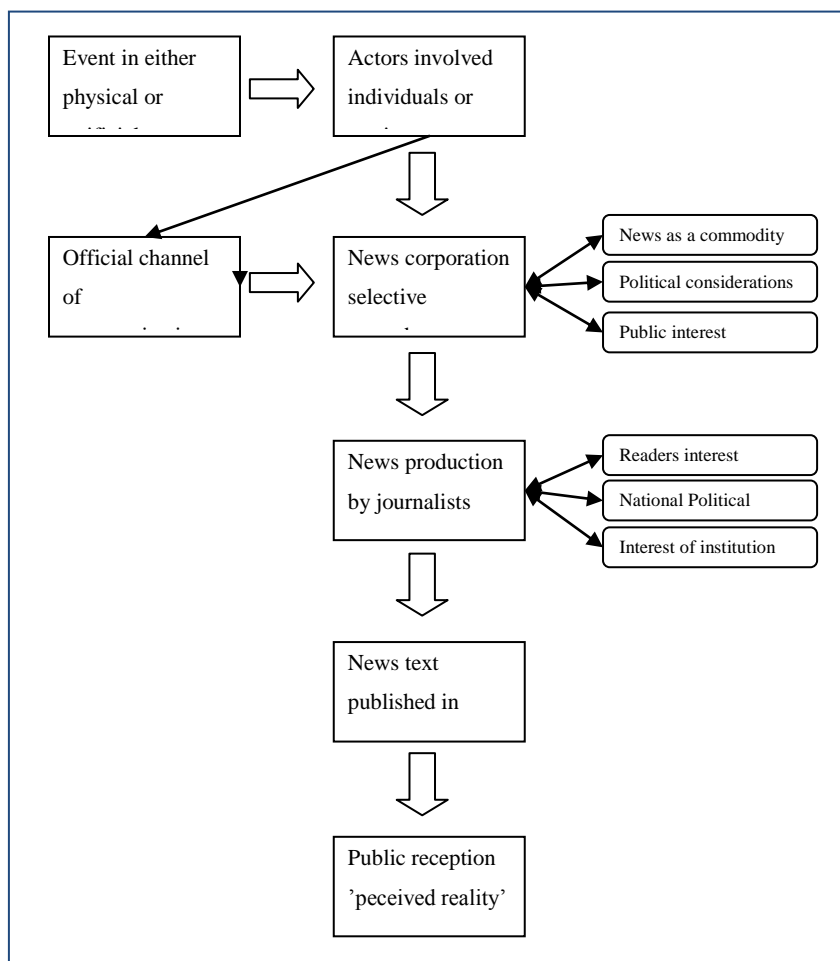


Illustration 1: Information trajectory from source origin to public reception.²⁰³

As shown in illustration 1, the information is processed through several levels before reaching the public. First is the event taking place at one point in time in a certain location either in physical or artificial space. Second are the actors involved; these might be parties of a conflict or individuals. These actors will promote certain aspects of the event in regards to their own perspective, while excluding others. The third level includes the official channels of

²⁰³ This illustration is based on the framing theory as presented in a study by Dmitrova & Strömback (2008) in conjunction with the theories in McQuail (2010). See Dmitrova & Strömback, 2008, 205; McQuail, 2010, 86.

information, speaking on behalf of the parties involved through for example a media brief or an official political statement. Fourth, the news corporations receive their information from either the official channels or individual actors. The news corporations decide which news stories are worth communicating to the public. This is a selective procedure, often subject to a range of factors; the political alignment of news corporations; the political interests of national governments; the institutions in which the news corporations are operating in; and the production and distribution of the news item as a commodity. Fifth, the production of the news text itself is conducted by journalists in individual newspapers. The journalist has to consider the interest of the newspaper he/she is writing for, the national political climate in which his story is published and the interest of his readers.²⁰⁴ Finally the news story is published and read by the general public, apprehending their version of the ‘reality’ and in turn stimulating public debate.

Crucial to the process of reality perception is the framing of information; meaning to highlight certain aspects of an event whilst excluding others.²⁰⁵ According to scholars, this framing process can take place on any of the above mentioned levels of the information trajectory, but not necessarily all of them.²⁰⁶ This brings about tremendous challenges for any scholar attempting to pinpoint the origin of a certain frame.

Furthermore these frames are oftentimes, consciously or unconsciously, adopted by journalists who are unfamiliar with the process of framing.²⁰⁷ This is important because it is pivotal for the success or failure of a particular spin or frame of an event. Thus, news stories presented to the public are the product of several sub-processes of framing across different levels of the information trajectory. The challenge for news writers is that framing is, by default, so imbedded in journalistic practices that journalists are oftentimes unaware of the phenomenon.²⁰⁸ According to Van Gorp this holds especially true in matters where preexisting knowledge is severely limited.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁴ Dmitrova. & J. Strömback, 2008, 205

²⁰⁵ Pan & Kosichi, 1993, 69.

²⁰⁶ Entman, R., cited in Dmitrova. & Strömback, 2008, 205

²⁰⁷ Entman, 1993, 57.

²⁰⁸ B. Van Gorp, ‘Strategies to Take Subjectivity Out of Framing Analysis’ in D’Angelo & Kuypers, 2010, 87.

²⁰⁹ *ibid*, 86.

In relation to the Russia-Georgian War, many news reporters covering the war had limited knowledge about South Ossetia prior to the conflict.²¹⁰ With a lack of preexisting knowledge of the conflict and its parties, news reporters are more likely to adopt existing frames in their reports. Previous studies have shown that this was a critical issue in the news covering of the 2008 War, which sometimes resulted in journalists adopting preexisting frames in their reports.²¹¹ To what extent this was evident in the Norwegian news coverage of the war is a point of interest in the following research. The following section will introduce the focal point of this study, namely news framing analysis.

News framing analysis

Framing studies is important because the studies analyze how the aforementioned ‘perception of reality’ manifests across different information levels, and ultimately forms debates among the public.²¹² The purpose of this study is to analyze the framing in the Norwegian media’s print-press coverage of the Russia-Georgian War. As such it will be limited to analyzing the framing present in news texts, regardless of framing in other tiers of the information trajectory. Specifically, this involves a textual analysis of individual news articles in order to identify frames in the text. In addition, this thesis will compare the differences in framing across four Norwegian newspapers.

An important distinction in news framing analysis is between the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of frames.²¹³ Researchers analyzing the ‘what’ of frames are concerned with how discourse elements in a news story are combined in such a way as to promote a certain frame.²¹⁴ The ‘how’ portion examines the way frames are promoted by certain agents in order to achieve a predefined goal. In addition the ‘how’ involves examining the way in which frames are processed by individuals to form public opinion. In this study the focus will be on the ‘what’ of frames rather than the ‘how’. Although interesting in its own merit, the ‘how’ of frames is outside the purview of this study. This thesis will be based on the basic concept of framing as provided by Entman (1993):

²¹⁰ A. Jugaste, ‘Communicating Georgia: Georgia’s information campaign in the 2008 war with Russia’, Master Thesis (Stockholm University, 2011), 31.

²¹¹ See Wertsch & Karumidze, 2009

²¹² P.D’Angelo, ‘News Framing as Multiparadigmatic’, *Journal of Communication*, vol 52, issue 4, (2002), 881.

²¹³ Reese et al., 2003, 19.

²¹⁴ S.D. Reese. ‘Finding Frames in a Web of Culture: The Case of the War on Terror’, in D’Angelo & Kuypers, 2010, 20.

Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.²¹⁵

Entman's definition is a frequently employed concept, one that serves as the basis for several news framing analyses.²¹⁶ According to Entman, the function of framing is to clearly define issues. A point of interest in this regard is the "in such a way" portion of the definition. As Stephen D. Reese points out, this is ultimately the question of where frames reside, either "(...) in a text, culture or the cognition of the perceiver?"²¹⁷ For the purpose of this thesis, the aim is to analyze the frames present in the text itself.

Reese (2010) accentuates the necessity to clearly define how researchers establish that a frame exists. In order to achieve this goal the researcher must identify framing devices, which are "...specific linguistic structures such as metaphors, visual icons, and catchphrases that communicate frames" and reasoning devices, which are defined as problem definitions and moral evaluations.²¹⁸ The advantage of a news framing analysis focusing on the 'what' of frames is that it contextualizes frames in relations to social, historical or cultural themes.²¹⁹ This thesis will specifically contextualize frames in relations to historical themes. These will be based upon the findings in the previous chapter assessing the historical relationship between Georgia, Russia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Sources and genres

Salience can also be achieved by including viewpoints from one side of a conflict whilst excluding others. Kosichi (1993) points out the importance of direct and indirect citations in news stories; "...by including quotes from one side of a conflict and excluding others the journalist makes one view more salient".²²⁰ In addition the absence of certain sources also influences the framing of a news story.²²¹ Thus the use of in-text sources is a decisive factor

²¹⁵ Entman, 1993, 52.

²¹⁶ See Ottosen, 2005; D'Angelo, 2002, 870-888; Van Gorp in D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010, 84-110.

²¹⁷ Reese in D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010, 17.

²¹⁸ *ibid*, 19.

²¹⁹ *ibid*, 20.

²²⁰ Pan & Kosichi, 1993, 69.

²²¹ Entman, 1993, 55.

in the framing of a particular news story. Dimitrova (2008) supports this view arguing that news media are highly dependent on both military and governmental sources, especially during wartime.²²² Accordingly a good framing analysis should incorporate source analysis as an integral part of its study. As such this thesis will critically examine the presence and frequency of in-text sources in the print-press coverage of the Russia-Georgian War. These sources will be categorized according to national origin and source class. The national origin will include four categories; namely Georgian, Russian, South Ossetian or Abkhazian sources and other nationalities. Source class will categorize in-text sources according to the agents' background. In addition to examining the frame and use of in-text sources, this thesis will arrange the articles by genre.

Extracting and categorizing frames

In addition to determining sources and genres, the next step is to extract frames found in the samples. Entman's subcategories - problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation - will serve as the basis for the frames in this study. As previously mentioned framing and reasoning devices can be used to identify frames in a text. These frames will in turn be aggregated under various frame categories. The complex process of designing frame categories brings about numerous challenges. According to Valkenburg (2000), there are two ways to go about quantitative framing analysis; either through inductive or deductive approaches. An inductive approach involves systematically examining a sample of the data in order to identify different frames apparent in the text. The strength of such an approach is that it uncovers a large number of frames apparent in textual units. A deductive approach on the other hand bases itself on a system of predefined frames that are expected to be present in the units of study. Valkenburg (2000) notes that the deductive approach is not only easily replicated, but is also particularly useful when comparing framing across different media sources. Considering that the main focus of this thesis is to detect frames across several Norwegian newspapers, the deductive approach is most applicable.

The deductive approach nonetheless raises some important questions that need to be addressed. By using predefined frames the analyzer risks overlooking certain frames that may

²²² Dimitrova & Strömback, 2008, 207.

appear during the process of analysis.²²³ Thus, carefully considering the predefined frames is a necessity prior to the analysis. According to Valkenburg (2000) the predefined frames should be broad enough to cover the expected frames present in the sample, but at the same time avoid reaching too wide and result in triviality. These frames should in turn be arranged in categories containing clusters of frame functions as defined by Entman (1993). Considering that this thesis builds upon a study of history, the frame categories were partly based on the historical findings in chapter three. Accordingly, each frame category was designed to encompass frame functions supporting the war aims of the parties involved.

Designing frame categories

In 2005 Rune Ottosen published a study concerning the Norwegian media's coverage of the War in Afghanistan. The article employs frame categories in order to analyze the media coverage of the Norwegian involvement in the war. Ottosen's study employs five frame categories with the following descriptions - *U.S. hatred*, analyzes the September 11 attacks as an inevitable outcome of U.S. engagements abroad – *U.S. critical*, regards the battle against terrorism as important, but believes it should be conducted by an international coalition instead of a U.S./NATO operation – *U.S. friendly*, argues that the U.S. has every right to defend its own citizens, the war in Afghanistan is means to that end - *Norwegian Angle*, discerns the consequences for Norway in relation to the War on Terror - *Neutral*, presents basic description of events, battle formations and military engagements.²²⁴ This thesis will follow Ottosen's blueprint in its design of frame categories.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to analyze how the Russia-Georgian War was framed by four Norwegian newspapers. Underlying this rationale is the aim to unveil to what extent the Norwegian print-press favored one side of the conflict over another, and if so which one? Thus two predefined frame categories were established; the Russian Supportive category and Georgian Supportive category. The frame functions in each category were further defined using a taxonomy table as presented in Appendix 1.²²⁵ Under each category predefined frame

²²³ Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, 95.

²²⁴ Ottosen, 2005, 99.

²²⁵ The design process behind this taxonomy table is based on a similar model employed in a study by Jugaste (2011). In addition the categories and frame functions were designed on the basis of historical findings in chapter three. The Norwegian Angle and Neutral categories were designed on the basis of a study by Ottosen

functions were specified according to Entman's concept of framing, including problem definition, causal representation and treatment recommendation/moral evaluation.

The 'Russian Supportive' category includes frame functions supporting the Russian involvement in the war and its political perspective of the conflict. Frame functions allocated to this category were designed on the basis of press releases from The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia during August 2008.²²⁶ These press releases reflect Russian official viewpoints on the developments of the 2008 War. These viewpoints were contextualized according to Entman's concepts of problem definition, causal representation and treatment recommendation/moral evaluation. Frame functions within this category regard the Georgian attack on South Ossetia as a violation of international law. In their view, Russian peacekeepers and citizens as well as South Ossetian civilians were being slaughtered in South Ossetia by Georgian military forces, thus forcing Moscow to intervene on behalf of humanitarian necessity. Accordingly, these frame functions will be used in the qualitative analysis to identify similar frames in the news text. If a frame in the news text mirrors viewpoints originating from the Russian press releases, that frame is allocated to the Russian Supportive category.

Opposing this view is the 'Georgian Supportive' category regarding the Russian involvement as a violation of international law. Frame functions within this category were designed on the basis of press releases from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia during August 2008.²²⁷ Similar to the Russian press-releases, these reflect the national political viewpoints on the developments of the 2008 War. Frame functions within this category consider South Ossetia and Abkhazia as an integral part of Georgian sovereignty, thus legitimizing Georgia's military engagement within its own territory. Furthermore Russia is seen as the main aggressor, either by placing the Russian offensive within a historical context of oppression against Georgia, or by claiming that Russia had long standing plans to subdue the Georgian state. Frame functions

(2005). See Jugaste, 2011, 69; and Ottosen, 2005, 99. See also Appendix 1: Taxonomy Table for Frame Categories

²²⁶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, 'Documents and Materials of the Russian MFA', *MFA of Russia* [web document] (2008), <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/brp_4.nsf/english!OpenView&Start=5.666&Count=30&Expand=5#5>, accessed 5 Oct. 2012.

²²⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, 'Blog Archive August 2008', *Georgian MFA* [web document] (2008), <<http://georgiamfa.blogspot.no/search?updated-max=2008-08-18T10:44:00%2B04:00&max-results=7&start=14&by-date=false>>, accessed 5 Oct. 2012.

in tandem with viewpoints from the Georgian press releases, are designated to the Georgian Supportive category.

Unique to the Norwegian print-press coverage was an increasing concern with Norwegian security in regards to the 2008 War. Georgia is a nation similar to Norway in terms of population, army size and geographical proximity to Russia. Accordingly, many journalists and politicians linked the 2008 War to Norway's national security arrangements vis-à-vis Russia. This stimulated a debate concerning the future relations between Norway and Russia. As such a third framing category was defined as the 'Norwegian Angle' including all frame functions juxtaposing the Russia-Georgian War to Norwegian security. Frame functions within this category were extracted from the news texts and specified according to Entman's definitions.

In addition a number of scholars discussed the crisis in the South Caucasus as part of an international dispute. These debates raised questions concerning NATO-Russia relations; the call for an international response to the crisis; international economic ramifications; and the future of the European Union. All frames including one or several of these debates were designated to a 'NATO Perspective' category. This category incorporates frames emphasizing the international dimension of the conflict. These frames contextualize the conflict as part of international politics. Furthermore they regard the Russia-Georgian War as a local manifestation of a much larger dispute in international relations. Examples of frame functions included in this category are Cold War frames regarding Russian operations in Georgia as an imminent threat to European security.

Lastly, the remaining frame functions were bundled together under a fifth category: Neutral. Frame functions allocated to this category does not designate responsibility for the war itself. Instead these frame functions are concerned with the 'human face' of the war. This entails reports on human suffering, refugees, personal recollections of events and humanitarian aid. Furthermore the frame functions in the 'Neutral' category focus on the detrimental outcomes of war and the loss of life, property and livelihood.

Coding of articles

Based on the aforementioned categories, the articles in four Norwegian news papers will be analyzed.²²⁸ The articles will be coded using the data analysis software QDA Miner. This application is used to digitally analyze large collections of documents and texts. For the purpose of this thesis the application will be employed in the quantitative analysis. The coding procedure entails categorizing all articles published during August 2008 according to source origin, source class, publication date and genre. After coding each individual news article QDA Miner can statistically display results, providing a visual representation of findings. Among its features is also the ability to quickly search through the sample data for key words and/or phrases in order to measure frequency of publication. Thus if a key word or phrase is frequently used across different newspapers, it may indicate a predominance of certain frames. In relation to the Norwegian print press coverage of the 2008 War, preliminary searches confirmed frequent use of terms such as "Cold War" or "Berlin Wall" or "East versus West" or "East and West" or "Russia versus the West" or "Russia and the West" or "the West" (Norwegian: "*Kald krig*" or "*Berlinmuren*" or "*Øst mot Vest*" or "*Øst og Vest*" or "*Russland mot vesten*" or "*Russland og Vesten*" or "*Vesten*"). These results may indicate a presence of Cold War frames in the sample data.

Validating results

An inevitable issue when doing news framing analysis is subjectivity and its unavoidable effect on research results.²²⁹ Researchers analyzing news frames may find it particularly challenging to identify frames that have become an integral part of society. These 'culturally imbedded frames' are according to Van Gorp (2010) "rooted in common cultural themes" and actively projected in all manners of communication "both popular and informative", especially in journalism.²³⁰ As a result, researchers that share the same culture as the journalists producing the news may find it increasingly difficult to identify certain frames. Ideally then, the researcher should be entirely independent from the culture in which the news is produced. To overcome this issue academics have employed different strategies to avoid subjectivity and authenticate results. Some studies utilize researchers who are independent

²²⁸ See Appendix 1 for detailed definitions of frame functions and categories

²²⁹ Van Gorp in D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010, 90.

²³⁰ *ibid*, 87.

from the culture under scrutiny.²³¹ Other studies train independent coders to assign frames to predefined frame categories designed by the researchers.²³² Subsequently these studies performed validation tests to measure result disparity between testers.

For the purpose of this study one single tester will conduct the research. Since the researcher is native to Norway, a culturally independent analysis is impossible. The analysis will however be guided by predefined frame categories with clearly defined frame functions under each category.²³³ This method is transparent and thus easily repeatable for validation purposes. The details of each frame category can be accessed in appendix 1. Furthermore the digital coding of each news item will be made available for future verification. Based on the limited resources available for this project, any additional validation tests by independent testers was unattainable. As a result further research is required to verify the results of this study.

Data collection procedure

The print-press coverage of Norwegian newspapers was accessed through the ATEKST database. ATEKST is a digital media database used to access news items posted in Norwegian print media. As mentioned earlier the news coverage of this event is substantial. Therefore the data collection was limited to coverage posted in August 2008. The data was collected by searching for key words such as “*Georgia*” and “*Russia*” (Norwegian: “*Georgia*” and “*Rusland*”) posted in the selected newspapers between 1 August and 31 August 2008. The search yielded a total of 286 news items.

Data sample

The print-press data was collected from four Norwegian newspapers; namely *Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet*, *Klassekampen* and *Dag og Tid*. These were selected on the basis of representing various political alignments and perspectives. Accordingly the analysis will contrast the frames and viewpoint present in the articles between the newspapers. The purpose of this

²³¹ See C.C.Maslog, S.T. Lee & H.S.Kim, 'Framing Analysis of a conflict: How Newspapers in Five Asian Countries Covered the Iraq War', *Asian Journal of Communication*, vol. 16, issue 1 (2006), 19-39.

²³² See Dmitrova & Strömback, 2008.

²³³ See Appendix 1: Taxonomy Table for Frame Categories

analysis is to illuminate the differences in the newspapers' coverage of the Russia-Georgian War.

Aftenposten is Norway's largest morning newspaper and is oriented towards liberal conservatives. It is a national circulated daily newspaper owned by Schibsted, one of three major media corporations in Norway. The newspaper was the second most circulated newspaper with 247 556 copies per edition in 2008. *Aftenposten* is considered to be Norway's most influential newspapers. Previous studies have concluded that *Aftenposten* traditionally is oriented towards the United States in its coverage of international news such as the War in Afghanistan and the War in Iraq.²³⁴

Dagbladet was Norway's second largest tabloid newspaper in 2008, surpassed only by *VG*. In terms of daily circulation it was the fourth largest newspaper in Norway with 123 383 copies per edition sold in 2008.²³⁵ It is a daily circulated national newspaper, renowned for its radical views on politics. Politically *Dagbladet* has been liberal oriented in its news reporting.²³⁶

Klassekampen is a daily circulated national news paper. In 2008 the newspaper printed 12 106 copies per edition.²³⁷ In terms of political alignment the news paper is left wing and radical oriented, specializing in politics, economy and culture.²³⁸ *Klassekampen* is owned by a number of companies including Fagforbundet, Industri Energi as well as Norwegian publishing houses such as Pax and Oktober, both of which represent socialist inclinations.

Dag og Tid is a weekly newspaper circulated regionally in Oslo, Norway. It is the only independent newspaper in the sample and prides itself with representing a wide array of political perspectives in its articles and editorials. Thus it provides an interesting sample to

²³⁴ See Ottosen, 2009; Ottosen, 2005; D'Angelo, 2002; Van Gorp in D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010.

²³⁵ Medienorge Fakta om Norske Medier, 'Opplagstall for norske aviser 2008', *Medienorge* [webpage], (2008) <<http://medienorge.uib.no/?cat=statistikk&medium=avis&queryID=353>>, accessed 06 June. 2012.

²³⁶ Ottosen, 2005, 98.

²³⁷ Medienorge Fakta om Norske Medier, 'Opplagsutvikling for de ti største avisene i 2008', *Medienorge* [webpage], (2008) <<http://medienorge.uib.no/?cat=statistikk&medium=avis&queryID=190>>, accessed 06 June. 2012.

²³⁸ Klassekampen, 'Om Klassekampen', *Klassekampen* [webpage], (2012) <http://www.klassekampen.no/om_oss>, accessed 06 June, 2012.

examine conflicting views in comparison to the more mainstream media represented by *Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet*. *Dag og Tid* printed 7 233 copies per edition in 2008.²³⁹

As mentioned earlier the data collection yielded a total of 286 articles. Considering that the newspapers differ in size, rate of publication and area of circulation the search presented a discrepancy regarding the amount of articles per source. The search generated the following results; *Aftenposten* published 131 articles; *Dagbladet* published 79 articles; *Klassekampen* published 65 articles and *Dag og Tid* published 11 articles dealing with the Russia-Georgian War during August 2008. Although expected, this discrepancy raises some complications for the analysis. When the units of comparison are non-symmetrical the researcher risks misinterpreting results and can potentially draw faulty conclusions.²⁴⁰ To overcome this issue, this study will analyze the data using percentage based statistics.

Quantitative research

Primarily, the quantitative research sets out to examine the general war coverage of the Norwegian print-press coverage during August 2008. This entails a systematic reading of all articles published during August in the sample newspapers. Each item will be coded according to in-text source, genres and publication dates. The results will be displayed using tables and percentage based statistics. In turn the findings will be contrasted across individual newspapers to accentuate differences and similarities. In the quantitative analysis, various research questions will guide the investigation to illuminate certain aspects of the Norwegian print-press coverage. Each research question will be addressed in detailed at the outset of chapter five.

Qualitative research

The primary objective of the qualitative research is to identify frames in news texts. This entails an in depth reading of articles in order to extract frames from news texts. Each frame will be extracted by assigning individual frame functions to segments of texts. In turn these frame functions are aggregated under predefined frame categories as presented in Appendix 1. An integral part of this study is to examine how different newspapers frame the same event,

²³⁹ Fakta om Norske Medier, 2008

²⁴⁰ Dmitrova & Strömback, 2008, 209.

from various perspectives. In pursuit of this goal the frames will be compared across the sample newspapers to examine differences and similarities in the framing of news. Similar to the quantitative analysis, individual research questions will guide the qualitative investigation.

Chapter 5: Research Analyses

Overall, this thesis sets out to examine how the Norwegian print-press framed the Russia-Georgian War. In pursuit of this goal, this study utilizes research questions in its analyses to answer the main research problem from various perspectives. This chapter will present the framing analyses of the sample newspapers. First, the design process behind the research questions will be addressed in detail. These questions were designed on the basis of studies outlined in earlier chapters of this thesis. Second, the quantitative analysis will be addressed, detailing publication rates, use of genres and use of sources in each newspaper. Third, the qualitative analysis will analyze the framing in news stories. An important part of this study is to contrast the coverage between different sources of print-press media. With this goal in mind, the qualitative analysis investigates how the newspapers differ in terms of coverage, selection of information and the framing of news. This involves a systematic reading of articles published on three dates during August 2008. The dates were selected to accentuate the difference in coverage and framing over time.

Research questions

Research questions provide the analyst with important tools for examining and interpreting texts. In contrast to research hypotheses, which focus on direct empirical evidence, research questions open up new avenues for textual research. Furthermore they are guided by the researcher's aim to uncover inferences and meanings in the text that may otherwise be overlooked by hypothetical approaches.²⁴¹ In relation to the concept of framing, research questions focus on the interpretive meaning of texts. As a result, they stimulate discussions of observed phenomena, rather than absolute truths. According to Krippendorff (2004) the answers to research questions represent "truth claims that could be supported [...] by plausible argumentation from related observations".²⁴² The research questions in the following analysis are designed in accordance with Krippendorff's rationale.

A number of research questions were designed in relation to the Norwegian print-press coverage of the 2008 War. Specifically, these research questions were formed on the basis of studies addressed in the previous chapters of this thesis. The following research questions are

²⁴¹ K. Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, (London, Sage Publications, 2004), 32.

²⁴² *ibid*, 32.

arranged thematically. First, research questions concerning the use of sources are addressed. Second, research questions examining coverage and framing are presented. Third, research questions investigating the use of history in news stories are detailed. The sources and genres questions will be addressed in the quantitative analysis, whereas questions concerning coverage, framing and employment of history will be addressed in the qualitative analysis.

Sources

In the coverage of international conflicts, the selection of sources and information is crucial to the framing of news.²⁴³ During the 2008 War both Russia and Georgia utilized press-releases to distribute information to the international media.²⁴⁴ With limited access to the battleground, the international media often turned to political leaders for their war reportage.²⁴⁵ As a result these press releases formed the basis of coverage in the initial stages of the war. Consequently the coverage in the international news press was highly dependent on state officials for their information. According to Dmitrova & Stromback (2008), this reliance is a critical issue in the coverage of international conflicts.²⁴⁶ In regards to the 2008 War a research question was formed to examine if this manifested itself in the Norwegian print-press coverage.

Research question 1: (USE OF SOURCES) to what extent will the newspapers in the sample rely on politicians and military representatives in their coverage of the 2008 War?

Subsequently individual newspapers incorporated these press-releases to produce news stories. As an inevitable outcome the newspapers deviated in their selection of sources, from either Russian or Georgian intelligence. It is thus especially interesting to investigate to what extent the political alignment of newspapers affects this selective procedure. A research question was formed to investigate the differences between newspapers in terms of in-text sources:

²⁴³ Pan & Kosichi, 1993, 69.

²⁴⁴ See The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, 2008; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, 2008

²⁴⁵ Goble in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 186..

²⁴⁶ Dmitrova & Strömback, 2008, 207.

Research question 2: (SOURCE DIFFERENCE) to what extent will the left-wing press encompass more Russian based sources than the liberal press? Conversely, to what extent will the liberal press incorporate more Georgian based sources than the left wing press?

Coverage and framing

In the initial stages of the war the world's gaze was focused elsewhere, either on the opening of the Olympic Games in Beijing or the Iraq War. As a result only limited attention was drawn to the impending conflict in the Caucasus. Over the next few days however, the 2008 War spiraled into an international conflict, bringing about news coverage from across the globe. Accordingly more information was made available for the media to utilize in their reports. Expectedly this development will affect the Norwegian print-press coverage as well. A research question was formed to examine to what extent this phenomenon influenced the coverage and framing of news during August 2008.

Research question 3: (SHIFTS IN COVERAGE AND FRAMING OVER TIME) how will the coverage and framing in the Norwegian print-press develop over the course of August 2008? Will the print-press support Georgia in the initial stages of the conflict, while assuming a more critical view over time?

In order to examine coverage and framing over time, the qualitative analysis will sample three dates in August 2008. The coverage and framing is compared and contrasted across these dates to determine if a shift occurs. According to De Waal (2010), the Russian engagement in South Ossetia received much more publicity in the international press, compared to the Georgian attack days in advance.²⁴⁷ This was due to the international condemnation of the Russian offensive. This manifested itself in the media coverage as well. With limited access to the conflict zones inside South Ossetia, the first television images reaching the international news scene witnessed the Russian invasion of Gori.²⁴⁸ Accordingly many Western journalists concluded that Russia was invading Georgia, while excluding the Georgian incursion from

²⁴⁷ De Waal, 2010, 213

²⁴⁸ *ibid*, 215

their news stories.²⁴⁹ In regards to the Norwegian print-press coverage a research question was formed, investigating to what extent De Waal's contention holds true.

Research question 4: (MEDIA BIAS) will the Russian invasion of Georgia receive more attention in the Norwegian print-press coverage than the Georgian attack on South Ossetia during August 2008?

Ottosen (2005) in particular has criticized the Norwegian print-press for endorsing American perspectives in its coverage of international conflicts.²⁵⁰ Previous studies have shown that the American press was highly critical of Russia's engagements in Georgia throughout the war.²⁵¹ As such a research question was formed, examine if the Norwegian print-press followed the same direction:

Research Question 5: (POLITICAL ALIGNMENT) to what extent will the Norwegian print-press align with the American press in its coverage of the 2008 War? Will the independent and left-wing press be more critical towards Georgia than the tabloid and liberal press?

The international press generally sympathized with Georgia during August 2008. Over the course of August however, several newspapers criticized the Georgian government for the outbreak of war. Considering that the newspapers under scrutiny represent different political alignments, a divergence in coverage and framing is expected.

History and news

An integral part of this study is the historical background of the 2008 War. As shown in previous chapters, the conflicting parties employed history in different ways to legitimize their own engagements in the war. References to the past were used to legitimize actions of the present, as the adversaries clashed together on the battlefield. This also affected the print-press coverage of the war, as journalists and scholars asked questions as to why war had erupted in the Caucasus on August 7. In the print-press, history was employed to

²⁴⁹ De Waal, 2010, 215

²⁵⁰ See Ottosen, 2009; Ottosen, 2005.

²⁵¹ Heinrich & Tanaev, 2009, 250.

contextualize the conflict in an attempt to point out where things had gone wrong. Given limited time, journalists published stories disclosing the historical background of the conflict in the Caucasus. As history remains a narrative, it is all the more interesting to investigate which narratives were employed in the Norwegian print-press coverage of the 2008 War. Accordingly the following research question was formed:

Research question 6: (EMPLOYING HISTORY) how was history employed by the Norwegian print-press in their coverage of the 2008 War?

The answer to this research question will be obtained through systematic reading of news stories disclosing the historical background of the conflict. The information presented in specific news stories is compared to the findings of the historical chapter in this thesis.

As a long standing member of NATO, Norway's allegiance to the Euro-Atlantic Alliance is unquestionable. Throughout the Cold War, Norway found itself within a bipolarized world, sharing borders with one of the two superpowers. The culture produced by the Cold War deeply affected national identity, and penetrated nearly every facet of public life.²⁵² Although the Cold War ended in 1991, many of its cultural aspects endured. It was not surprising then that the television images of old Russian tanks entering Gori stimulated debates of a new Cold War era in the international press.²⁵³ In relation to the Norwegian press, the Cold War may represent what Van Gorp (2010) refers to as *culturally imbedded frames*, which are ready-to-use frame packages "rooted in common cultural themes".²⁵⁴ Over time, these frames evolve into commonly accepted notions which are used unconsciously by journalists. Based on its historical relationship to Soviet Russia as an adversary, this Cold War mentality may still persist among Norwegian journalists. A research question was thus formed, examining to what extent Cold War frames were used in the Norwegian print-press coverage of the Russia-Georgia War.

Research question 7: (DOMINANT FRAME) to what extent are bipolar concepts and Cold War frames used in the Norwegian print-press coverage during August 2008?

²⁵² S.J. Whitfield cited in Luostarinen & Ottosen in Kempf & Luostarinen, 2002, 40.

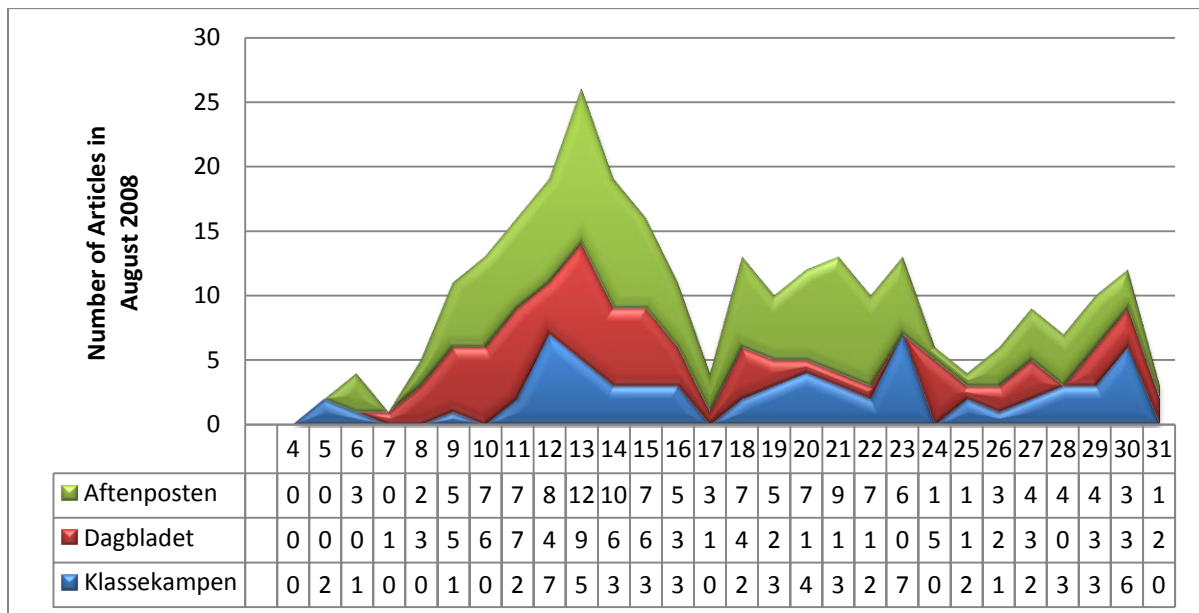
²⁵³ V. Papava, 'The end of the Frozen Cold War', *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, vol.3, issue. 1, (Winter 2009), 98.

²⁵⁴ Van Gorp in D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010, 87

Bipolar concepts denote terms used actively throughout the Cold War. Examples of these may be *Russia versus the West* or *East versus West*. By employing these terms in news stories concerning the Russia-Georgian War, journalists connote worldviews originating from the Cold War.

Quantitative analysis

Overall, the four newspapers in the sample published 286 news items between August 1 and August 31 regarding the 2008 War. *Klassekampen* published its first story on August 5, reporting on mounting tension between South Ossetia and Georgia. *Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet* soon followed on August 6 and 7, reporting on the Georgian bombardment of Tskhinvali and the introduction of Georgian troops into South Ossetia. *Dag og Tid* published its first story on August 15, mainly disclosing the Russian counter offensive to the Georgian advance. Important to note here is that *Dag og Tid* is a weekly newspaper published on Fridays. The Russia-Georgian War broke out around midnight on Thursday August 7. As a result the first news stories in *Dag og Tid* were published a week later.



Graph 1: Dates and frequency of publications in daily newspapers during August 2008

The majority of news stories were published between August 9 and August 23 as illustrated in Graph 1. Excluded from Graph 1 is *Dag og Tid* based on its weekly publication. Important to

note is that *Dagbladet* and *Aftenposten* are published Monday through Sunday, whereas *Klassekampen* has no Sunday edition. This partly explains the decrease in coverage on August 17, 24 and 31. Noteworthy is the divergence on August 23 and 28, where *Dagbladet*'s coverage is entirely absent, in contrast to the considerable coverage in both *Aftenposten* and *Klassekampen* on the same day.

An important aspect of the 2008 War was its limited duration; the war lasted less than a week. This brought about numerous challenges for the media reporting on the war, trying to catch up with the events on the ground. The limited access to the battleground in the initial stages of the war further complicated the situation. Thus it is not surprising that the majority of the news coverage occurred in the aftermath of the war itself. The highest rate of publication occurred between August 9 and August 16, amounting for 137 news stories or approximately 47.9% of total coverage.

The upsurge in coverage coincidentally occurred at the same time as Russian military forces engaged in South Ossetia on August 9. Over the next days, Russian tanks entered the town of Gori and continued deep into Georgia, occupying areas in both Western and Central Georgia. Based on the findings in Graph 1, the Russian incursion received considerable more attention in the Norwegian print-press than the Georgian attack days in advance. These findings indicate that the Norwegian print-press followed the trend in the international press coverage as presented in research question 4.²⁵⁵ The Georgian bombardment of Tskhinvali on August 7 has been regarded as the culmination of mounting tension between Georgia and South Ossetia.²⁵⁶ The first reports of exchanges between South Ossetian separatists and Georgian forces appeared as early as August 1.²⁵⁷ Nevertheless, these events received only limited attention in the sample newspapers.

In terms of genres, the newspapers encompassed a considerable amount of news articles and features/reports. *Aftenposten* contained more opinion editorials (13) than any of the other newspapers. As shown in Table 1, all the newspapers included a high degree of commentaries (3 in *Dag og Tid*, 10 in *Klassekampen*, 10 in *Dagbladet* and 13 in *Aftenposten*). The majority

²⁵⁵ Research question 4: (MEDIA BIAS) will the Russian invasion of Georgia receive more attention in the Norwegian print-press coverage than the Georgian attack on South Ossetia during August 2008?

²⁵⁶ IIFMCG, vol. 1, 2009, 11.

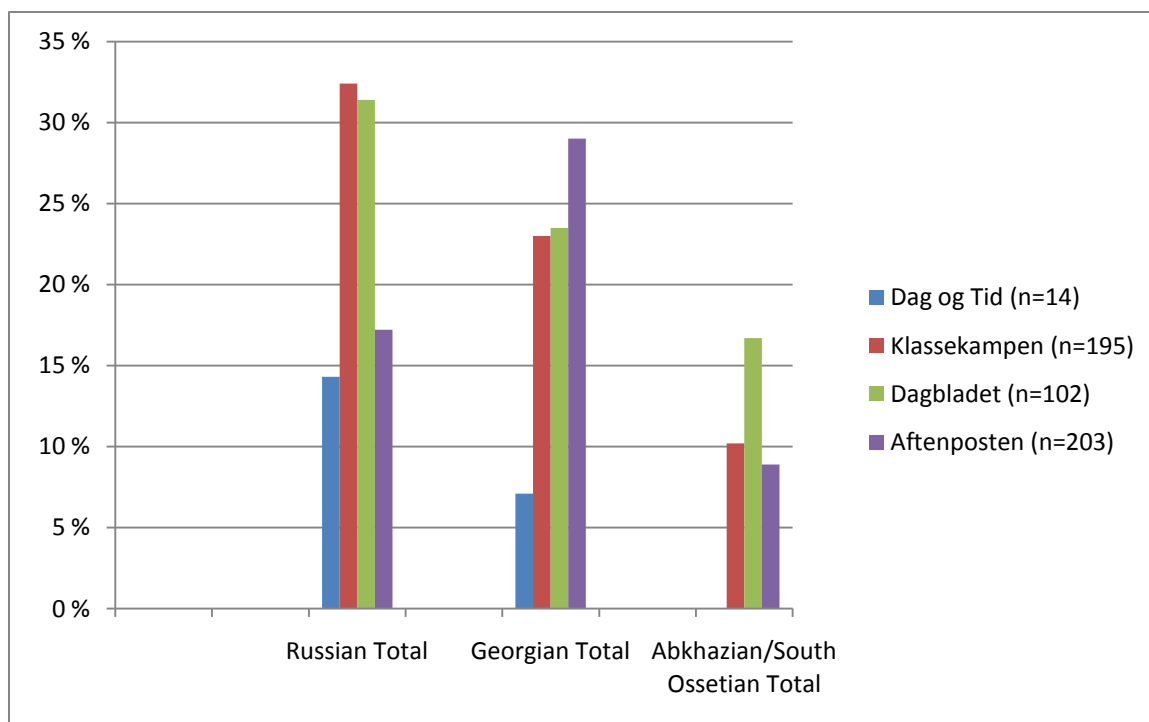
²⁵⁷ Georgian MFA, 2008

of commentaries (23 of 36) occurred after the ceasefire agreement on August 12.

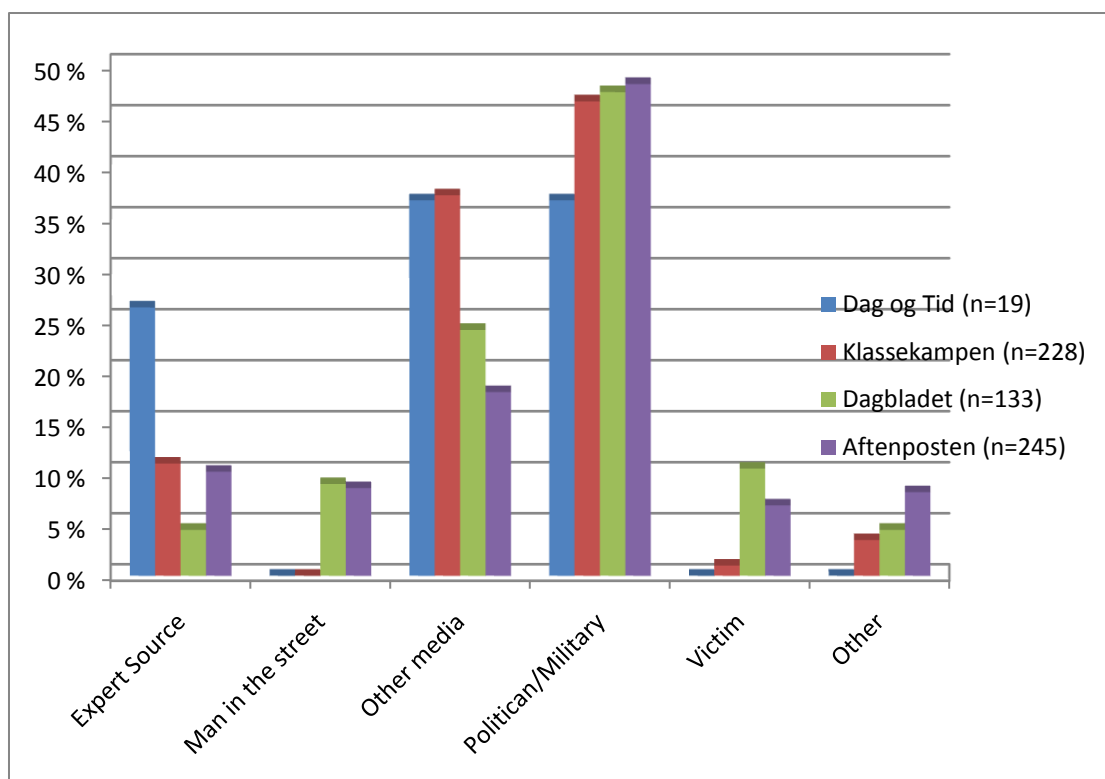
Klassekampen contained more fact sheets (18) than all the other newspapers.

	Dag og Tid		Klassekampen		Dagbladet		Aftenposten	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Brief	2	18,18	5	7,69	15	18,99	25	19,08
Commentary	3	27,27	10	15,38	10	12,66	13	9,92
Editorial	2	18,18	3	4,62	4	5,06	9	6,87
Fact Sheet			18	27,69	10	12,66	1	0,76
Feature/report	1	9,09	11	16,92	10	12,66	22	16,79
Interview	2	18,18	2	3,08	3	3,80	3	2,29
News	1	9,09	13	20,00	25	31,65	45	34,35
Op-Ed			3	4,62	2	2,53	13	9,92
Total	11	100,00	65	100,00	79	100,00	131	100,00

Table 1: Use of genres in the Norwegian print-press coverage of the 2008 War in August 2008 (per cent)



Graph 2: In-text sources by national origin in the Norwegian print-press coverage of the 2008 War in August 2008 (per cent)



Graph 3: Sources by class in the Norwegian print-press coverage of the 2008 War in August 2008 (per cent)

As illustrated by Graph 2, the use of in-text sources varied between the different newspapers. Noteworthy is the discrepancy between *Klassekampen* and *Aftenposten*. *Klassekampen* incorporates a substantial amount of Russian sources compared to *Aftenposten* (32.4% vs. 17.2%). Conversely *Aftenposten* contains more Georgian sources than *Klassekampen* (29% vs. 23%). These findings indicate that the political alignment of newspapers can indeed affect its selection of sources, as contested in research question 2.²⁵⁸ Based on this analysis alone, the deviation is quite considerable. To what extent this is a product of conscious decisions by journalists or editors remains unknown. Regardless, *Aftenposten* has been criticized in the past for aligning with American perspectives in its coverage of international news. As mentioned earlier the American print-press was supportive of Georgia in its initial coverage of the war.²⁵⁹ Thus the substantial amount of Georgian based sources in *Aftenposten* can indicate a continuation of its affirmation of American perspectives.

²⁵⁸ See research question 2: (SOURCE DIFFERENCE) Will the left-wing press encompass more Russian based sources than the liberal press? Conversely, will the liberal press incorporate more Georgian based sources than the left wing press?

²⁵⁹ Heinrich & Tanaev, 2009, 250.

Klassekampen and *Dagbladet* are congruent in their use of both Russian and Georgian sources (32.4% and 31.4% Russian sources and 23.5% and 23% Georgian sources, respectively). This is surprising considering the newspapers' difference in political inclination. As such it is interesting to investigate to what extent these newspapers differ in their framing of the 2008 War. Granted that there is a correlation between source origin and framing of news, the coverage in *Klassekampen* and *Dagbladet* should be analogous. This contention will be addressed specifically in the qualitative analysis. *Dagbladet* contains more Abkhazian and South Ossetian sources than the other newspapers (16.7%). The vast majority of in-text sources originated from other nationalities (78.6% in *Dag og Tid*; 34.4% in *Klassekampen*; 28.4% in *Dagbladet* and 44.8% in *Aftenposten*). These findings indicate that the Norwegian print-press were highly dependent on sources outside the conflict zones in their coverage of the 2008 War.

Furthermore the sources were categorized according to source class. As illustrated in Graph 3, the vast majority of sources originated from either other media (36.8 % in *Dag og Tid*; 37.3% in *Klassekampen*; 24.1% in *Dagbladet*; 18.0% in *Aftenposten*) or politicians/military representatives (36.8% in *Dag og Tid*; 46.5% in *Klassekampen*; 47.4% in *Dagbladet* and 48.2% in *Aftenposten*). In regards to research question 1 these findings indicate that the Norwegian print-press had limited access to independent sources inside the conflict zone.²⁶⁰ As a result they were dependent on information from other media or government officials in their war coverage. These findings are in tandem with Dimitrova and Strömback's (2008) argument concerning the news media's high dependency on military and governmental sources during wartime.²⁶¹ In the 2008 War, the clash between Georgian, South Ossetian and Russian forces produced a perilous war zone surrounding Tskhinvali, further endangering journalists attempting to cover the war first hand. Similar to war zones in the past, this restricted the available source material for news reporters.²⁶² As a result the news media turned to military leaders and politicians for updated information. To what extent this reliance affects the framing in the individual newspapers will be addressed in the qualitative analysis.

²⁶⁰ See research question 1: (USE OF SOURCES) to what extent will the newspapers in the sample rely on politicians and military representatives in their coverage of the 2008?

²⁶¹ Dimitrova & Strömback, 2008, 207

²⁶² S.A. Nohrstedt & R.Ottosen, 'Studying the Media Gulf War', in S.A.Nohrstedt & R.Ottosen (eds), *Journalism and the New World Order Vol1: Gulf War, National News Discourses and Globalization*, (Goteborg, Nordicom, 2000), 16

Qualitative analysis

The qualitative analysis was conducted in order to identify frames in news stories covering the 2008 War. Individual frames were determined using Entman's definition of frame functions; problem definition, causal interpretation, treatment recommendation and/or moral evaluation.²⁶³ These frame functions were contextualized according to the 2008 War using a coding scheme presented in the taxonomy table in appendix 1.²⁶⁴ The process of determining frame functions is further detailed in chapter four. Groups of frame functions were allocated to the following categories; the Russian Supportive category; the Georgian Supportive category, the NATO Perspective category; the Norwegian Angle category; and the Neutral Category. Based on this coding scheme news stories published on key dates were analyzed. With respect to the limited length of this thesis, the following section will present the findings of the qualitative research. The elaborate process of assigning frame functions to segments of news texts is demonstrated in Appendix 3.

The purpose of this analysis is to investigate how the war coverage developed over August 2008 in the sample newspapers. In pursuit of this goal the qualitative analysis will examine the coverage on various dates. Specifically, the outbreak of the war on August 7th and 8th was analyzed. Considering that news stories are generally published the next day, the date of analysis was August 8th and 9th. The two following weekends, August 15 and August 22, were included to investigate the development in coverage and framing over time. The qualitative analysis will compare and contrast the news stories over these three dates in an attempt to unveil possible shifts in coverage. These shifts may involve selection of information or the framing of news. Throughout this section the research questions, as presented at the outset of this chapter, will guide the investigations.

Research Question 5: (POLITICAL ALIGNMENT) to what extent will the liberal print-press align with the American press in its coverage of the 2008 War? Will the left-wing press be more critical towards Georgia than the liberal press?

There seems to be a consensus among the sample newspapers in regards to Saakashvili being the primary cause for the outbreak of war. His decision to engage in South Ossetia is

²⁶³ Entman, 1993

²⁶⁴ See Appendix 1: Taxonomy Table for Frame Categories

described as irrational, reckless or unilateral at various points by all the newspapers. This criticism was most evident in *Dagbladet*, which blamed Saakashvili for the war as early as August 9. *Aftenposten* remained highly critical of the Russian response throughout August, but held both Saakashvili and the U.S. responsible for the outbreak in their coverage on August 22. *Klassekampen* does not explicitly blame Saakashvili, but includes several citations from Russian state officials blaming the Georgian government for the war. In *Dag og Tid*, Saakashvili and the U.S. is held partly accountable for the outbreak of the war. Frames describing Saakashvili and his government as reckless and unilateral were promoted by Russia during August 2008.²⁶⁵ The frequent deployment in the Norwegian print-press affirms the success of this Russian Supportive frame.²⁶⁶

As mentioned earlier, the American print-press aligned closely with the Georgian position in their initial coverage of the war, while assuming a critical stance towards Russia from day one.²⁶⁷ There is a divergence between the left-wing and liberal press in their coverage of Georgia's engagement in South Ossetia. *Klassekampen* remains critical of the U.S. and NATO's involvement in Georgia throughout the month of August. As mentioned in the quantitative analysis there is a predominance of Russian based sources in *Klassekampen*'s coverage. Furthermore the qualitative analysis revealed a majority of Russian Supportive frames across the dates of analysis.

Conversely, *Aftenposten* included more Georgian based sources in its coverage of the war. In its initial coverage *Aftenposten* focused on the Russian incursion in South Ossetia and its detrimental effects on the Georgian people. Although Saakashvili is held responsible for the outbreak of war, the Russian counter offensive is criticized. Reports of Russian forces violating ceasefire agreements and damaging Georgian civilian infrastructure are evident throughout *Aftenposten*'s coverage.

Together these findings indicate that the coverage in *Klassekampen* incorporated considerably more Russian Supportive frames than *Aftenposten*. Accordingly *Klassekampen* assumed a

²⁶⁵ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, 'Statement of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov Concerning the Situation in South Ossetia', *MFA of Russia* [web document] (8 Aug 2008), <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/c589adb74fb34c63c325749f0025531b!OpenDocument>, accessed 5 Oct. 2012.

²⁶⁶ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Russian Supportive Category, Saakashvili is reckless and/or brutal

²⁶⁷ Heinrich & Tanaev, 2009, 250.

more critical stance towards Georgia in its war coverage. Moreover the coverage in *Aftenposten* aligned closer with the American coverage than *Klassekampen*.²⁶⁸ This is especially evident in *Aftenposten*'s editorials, which state that only Washington may restore peace in the Caucasus. Furthermore the coverage in *Aftenposten* was accompanied by a substantial coverage of the U.S. presidential election between John McCain and Barack Obama, which is much less prominent in *Klassekampen*. During its coverage of the 2008 War, *Aftenposten* used the Washington Post as a source in its news production, which can further explain its concurrence with the American press.²⁶⁹

Research question 3: (SHIFTS IN COVERAGE AND FRAMING OVER TIME) how will the coverage and framing in the Norwegian Print Press develop over the course of August 2008? Will the print-press support Georgia in the initial stages of the conflict, while assuming a more critical view over time?

In the production of news, time is of the utmost importance, as journalists are limited by certain deadlines. This analysis examines the coverage in three daily newspapers and one weekly newspaper. In a daily newspaper, news stories are produced over the course of one day, reaching the printers by midnight. In a weekly newspaper this time frame is substantially longer. Considering the deceitful nature of the 2008 War, the aspect of time was imperative.²⁷⁰ As time passed, the true nature of the events on the ground was revealed. As a result, false accusations, misinformation and misconceptions did not withstand the test of time. By default this provided *Dag og Tid* with an edge compared to the other newspapers, as its stories were produced over the course of a week.

This certainly factored into the Norwegian print-press coverage. In the initial coverage, several instances of false reports were allowed to enter the daily newspapers. One of these

²⁶⁸ *ibid*, 250.

²⁶⁹ H.Tjønn, *Interview conducted by electronic mail*, (16 Oct. 2012)

²⁷⁰ Freelance Reporter Ragnar Skre was present in Tbilisi during the 2008 War. In the aftermath of the War he stated that several flaws in the initial war coverage did not withstand the test of time. In an interview he states that during the Russian incursion of Georgia, Tbilisi was reportedly hit by an extensive Russian aerial bombardment, knocking out a communication tower on Makhata, a hill overlooking the capital. After further investigation, Skre was unable to find any remnants of a Russian attack on this location. In the aftermath of the war Skre traced the source of information back to the Georgian Council of National Security. They admitted that the initial report had been confused with a second bombardment, outside Tbilisi. By the time these misconceptions reached the surface however, the media's attention had turned elsewhere. See R.Skre, *Interview conducted by electronic mail*, (17 Oct. 2012)

was the South Ossetian genocide claim. During the outbreak of the war, the South Ossetian separatist government accused Georgia of genocidal acts against the civilian population in South Ossetia. The alleged death tolls ranged from one to two thousand civilian casualties. These death tolls were mirrored in both *Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet* on August 9.²⁷¹ In the aftermath of the war, these death tolls were further investigated. As shown in chapter three, the factual number of civilian casualties was 162.²⁷² These false claims were much less salient in *Klassekampen* and entirely absent from the coverage in *Dag og Tid*.

Over the course of August, the newspapers gradually shifted their coverage of the war, some more than others. Noteworthy is the dramatic shift in *Dagbladet* from August 8/9 to August 15. In its initial coverage *Dagbladet* assumed a critical stance towards Georgia's actions, aligning closely with frames in the Russian Supportive category. On August 15 however, the newspaper incorporated considerably more Georgian frames, while assuming a more critical view on the Russian invasion. *Dagbladet*'s reliance on reports by correspondent Morten Strand seems a critical factor in this regard. On August 8 and 9, Strand was stationed in St.Petersburg, while on August 15 he was present in Tbilisi. These findings indicate the importance of source origin in the framing of news. On August 22, *Dagbladet* resumed its critical stance towards Saakashvili in regards to his handling of the conflict. The U.S. in particular is criticized for their complete disregard for Russia's 'red lines' at the NATO Bucharest Summit.

Klassekampen incorporated more Russian Supportive frames than Georgian Supportive frames across the dates of analysis, although less salient on August 22. Traditionally *Klassekampen* has been left-wing oriented, assuming a critical stance towards capitalism in general, and its main sponsor, the U.S., in particular.²⁷³ Thus the prevalence of Russian Supportive frames may be a product of its critical stance towards the U.S., and by extension Georgia, rather than its support for the Russian operation.²⁷⁴ At the same time, modern day Russia fuses Western-style capitalism with authoritarian state rule. Thus the country is not up

²⁷¹ See *Dagbladet*, 9 Aug. 2008, 22; *Aftenposten*, 9 Aug, 2008, 10.

²⁷² IIFMCG, vol. 1, 2009, 21

²⁷³ O.S. Stugu, *Personal interview held during meeting at Norwegian University of Science and Technology*, (18 Oct. 2012)

²⁷⁴ P.M. Johansen, *Interview conducted by electronic mail*, (25 Oct. 2012)

to the standards of a western democracy. This can partly explain the presence of several Georgian Supportive frames in *Klassekampen*, which criticizes the Russian involvement.

On August 15 *Klassekampen* incorporates more NATO Perspective and Norwegian Angle frames. *Klassekampen* has later stated that the Norwegian press did little to scrutinize the U.S. presence in Georgia during August 2008.²⁷⁵ As a result *Klassekampen* prioritized an alternative route, focusing on the geopolitical relations between Russia and the U.S/NATO.²⁷⁶ In contrast to *Dagbladet*, *Klassekampen* remained persistently critical towards the U.S. involvement in Georgia throughout August. Considering the congruence between *Klassekampen* and *Dagbladet* in their use of sources, this divergence is intriguing. Specifically, this deviation shows that the correlation between source origin and framing of news is not absolute. Although source origin can affect the process of framing, it remains one of many factors.

Aftenposten includes the most Georgian frames compared to the other newspapers in the sample. Its reliance on reports by freelance journalist Ragnar Skre on August 8/9 and August 15 seems to be an important factor in this regard. During the 2008 War, Skre was stationed in Tbilisi, thus mainly covering the war from a Georgian standpoint. By August 22, *Aftenposten* assumes a more critical stance towards Georgia and the U.S. in regards to the outbreak of war. In addition, *Aftenposten* incorporates a considerable amount of Norwegian Angle frames throughout August. The frequency of these frames indicates an increasing concern with Norwegian Security in the public sphere following the Russian invasion of Georgia.

This debate is also evident in *Dag og Tid* which includes a considerable amount of Norwegian Angle frames in its war coverage. The newspaper remained highly critical of the U.S. presence in Georgia throughout their news stories. *Dag og Tid* utilized the least amount of Georgian and Russian frames on August 15. The absence of these frames is presumptively an outcome of the considerable amount of expert sources in their news stories. In contrast to the other newspapers in the sample, *Dag og Tid* has no correspondents abroad. Consequently it is dependent on alternative sources in its coverage of international news.²⁷⁷ In regards to the

²⁷⁵ Johansen, 2012

²⁷⁶ *ibid*

²⁷⁷ P.A.Todal, *Interview conducted by electronic mail*, (15 Oct. 2012)

2008 War, academic sources were advised to comment on the complex nature of the conflict in the Caucasus.²⁷⁸ As a result the coverage was less reliant on the mainstream newsfeed, which caused fewer frames to penetrate its news stories.

Research question 6: (EMPLOYING HISTORY) how was history employed by the Norwegian print-press in their coverage of the 2008 War?

The 2008 War was infamous for its conflicting narratives, with each party promoting diverging reasons as to why the war came to be. Some of these narratives have been contested to this day, as is evident in the historical chapter of this thesis. Inevitably this caused different versions of history to manifest in the media as well. In the Norwegian print-press the historical background of the crisis was presented in various ways. Some newspapers, like *Dagbladet* and *Aftenposten*, incorporated historical assessments as part of its news stories. *Dag og Tid* on the other hand published specific articles designated to the historical dimension of the crisis. Fact sheets were used extensively in *Dagbladet*, *Aftenposten* and *Klassekampen* to inform readers on the historical context of the crisis. The following section investigates how, and to what extent, history was employed in the sample newspapers. Debates and arguments in the press releases are juxtaposed to the findings of chapter three for verification purposes.

History in Klassekampen

The historical aspects of the 2008 War were extensively covered in *Klassekampen* over the course of August. The majority of these historical segments were assessed in elaborate reports by journalist Peter M. Johansen, often accompanied by fact sheets including dates and annotations. In regards to the origins of the conflict, *Klassekampen* remained highly critical of the U.S. and NATO involvement in Georgia. As previously mentioned, the newspaper incorporated several frames from the Russian Supportive and the NATO Perspective category in its coverage of the war. These frames criticize the military buildup in Georgia throughout the late nineties and early 20s. NATO in particular is criticized for its policies in the post-Cold War era. Its projected expansion into Georgia and the Ukraine is regarded as the last piece of a containment puzzle against the Russian Federation.

²⁷⁸ Todal, 2012

The U.S. presence in Georgia is further criticized in a news story on August 9. *Klassekampen* states that Tbilisi has been a CIA headquarter ever since the Soviet Union disintegrated.²⁷⁹ Furthermore *Klassekampen* states that the U.S. was behind the Rose Revolution in 2003, a claim that has been largely disputed by Western scholars.²⁸⁰ As stated in chapter three, the claim that American NGOs was the engine behind the Rose Revolution originated in Moscow. Certainly, the U.S. was a large contributor to the Georgian economy in the late nineties and the early twenties, but limited evidence suggests that American NGOs brought about the revolution itself. On the contrary Saakashvili and the Georgian people are mainly credited for the toppling of Shevardnadze's government.

The criticism of Saakashvili persisted throughout *Klassekampen*'s coverage. In particular, his integration of the breakaway region Adjara was, according to *Klassekampen*, achieved by military means.²⁸¹ This claim is disputed by the academic literature assessed in this thesis. Although the crisis of 2004 produced considerable political tension, Adjara was integrated under Georgian sovereignty by peaceful means.²⁸² In addition the integration of Adjara was fundamentally different from the situation in South Ossetia. There existed no "ethno-linguistic difference" between Adjarans and Georgians, and Adjara had never attempted secession from Georgia in the past.²⁸³

The discussion concerning Kosovo was a focal point in *Klassekampen*'s coverage. The Kosovo analogy is interesting, since it was purposely designed by Russian intelligence.²⁸⁴ In the wake of the 2008 War, Russia legitimized its incursion in Georgia based on the precedent set by NATO's operations in Serbia in 1999. As mentioned in chapter three, the operation involved an extensive aerial bombardment of ethnic Serbs in Kosovo. NATO's 'humanitarian

²⁷⁹ The full paragraph reads: "Tbilisi har vært CIAs hovedkvarter siden Sovjetunionen gikk i oppløsning, og amerikanske krefter sto bak Roserevolusjonen som felte president Eduard Sjevardnadse. Georgia har kvittert med å sende små kontingenter med soldater til Irak og Afghanistan.", *Klassekampen*, 9 Aug. 2008, 16.

²⁸⁰ Gordadze in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 46.

²⁸¹ The full paragraph reads: "Vestens raske anerkjennelse av Kosovo gjallet i Kaukasus hvor ingen av de regionale konfliktene har blitt løst etter mer enn 15 år, bortsett fra utbryterrepublikken Adsjaria som ble hentet inn under Tbilisis kontroll igjen i mai 2004, bare drøye tre måneder etter at Saakasjvili rykket inn i presidentpalasset. Det skjedde med militære midler, mens konfliktene om Abkhasia, Sør-Ossetia og Nagorno-Karabakh virker sementerte.", *Klassekampen* 12 Aug. 2008, 12.

²⁸² A. Illarionov, 'The Russian Leadership's Preparation for War, 1999-2008', in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 55.

²⁸³ IIFMCG, vol 2, 2009, 12.

²⁸⁴ Matsaberidze, 2012

operation' has been criticized for ignoring both Russian objections and the agreed upon principles in the Charter of Paris and the UN.²⁸⁵ Similar to Kosovo, the UN Security Council failed to reach an agreement regarding the conflict in Georgia. Subsequently, Russia deployed the Kosovo analogy as a pretext for its intervention in Georgia. This pretext is mirrored in *Klassekampen's* coverage of the war. In an editorial on August 20, *Klassekampen* states that the recognition of Kosovo has set a new precedent for the principles of sovereignty.²⁸⁶ Moreover the recognition of Kosovo ignored the sovereignty of Serbia. As such these principles are, according to *Klassekampen*, applicable in the cases of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

In a second story, *Klassekampen* discerns NATO's condemnation of Russia's involvement in Georgia. Both the U.S. and NATO are criticized for assuming a moral high ground vis-à-vis Russia. *Klassekampen* points to the U.S. and NATO's disregard for international law in the case of Serbia in 1999, the operation in Afghanistan in 2001, the War in Iraq in 2003 and the recognition of Kosovo in 2008. Considering these infringements, *Klassekampen* has effectively ruled the current criticism against Russia groundless.²⁸⁷

One of the central questions of the legitimacy of the Russian operation was whether or not the people of South Ossetia constituted Russian citizens. At the outset of the war, President Medvedev proclaimed Russia's right to protect its own citizens, wherever they might be.²⁸⁸ On August 9, *Klassekampen* mentioned that not counting Georgian citizens, ninety percent of the 70 000 people in South Ossetia holds Russian passports. Although implied, there is no mention of whether or not these people are considered as Russian citizens. According to Russia, the population of South Ossetia holding Russian passports constituted a Russian contingent inside South Ossetia. Allegedly, the Georgian attack on Tskhinvali involved mass killings of the South Ossetian civilian population. In turn these atrocities legitimized the Russian military response. This narrative is mirrored in a fact sheet in *Klassekampen* on August 22. According to *Klassekampen*, Georgia initiated a military attack on the 'Russian-friendly region' of South Ossetia on August 7. The next day, Russia responded militarily in

²⁸⁵ Steinfeld, 2009, 174

²⁸⁶ The full paragraph reads: " Det er likevel et faktum at Kosovo har gitt fornyet kraft til selvstendighetskampen andre steder, ikke minst i Sør-Ossetia og Abkhasia." *Klassekampen*, 20 Aug. 2008, 2

²⁸⁷ P.M. Johansen, 'Folkerettsdrap', *Klassekampen*, 28 Aug. 2008, 16.

²⁸⁸ Niedermaier, 2008, 402..

the aid and protection of Russian citizens in the region.²⁸⁹ As indicated in chapter three, the Georgian constitution does not allow dual citizenship, thus ruling the Russian ‘passportification’ of South Ossetia illegitimate. The quarrel over citizenship produced conflicting narratives between Georgia and Russia, which further influenced the press coverage. In this particular case *Klassekampen* endorses a Russian perspective, by defining the South Ossetians as Russian citizens.

History in *Aftenposten*

Similar to *Klassekampen*, the debates concerning Kosovo were also prominent in *Aftenposten*. In a news story on August 16, the Russian invasion of Georgia is regarded as the product of long standing grievances between Russia and the West. *Aftenposten* states that the 1999 NATO operation in Serbia, together with the recognition of Kosovo in 2008, left deep grievances in Moscow. By referencing Kosovo and painting Saakashvili as a present day Slobodan Milosevic, the current crisis is considered a Russian retaliation. In contrast to *Klassekampen* however, the Kosovo precedent is here ruled illegitimate.²⁹⁰ *Aftenposten* points to the incomparable nature of Kosovo and Georgia, stating that NATO only opted for a military solution in Serbia once every diplomatic possibility was depleted. By falsely paralleling Kosovo, Russia has now proven its complete disregard for international boundaries. Throughout this story, *Aftenposten* assumes a critical stance towards Russia’s policies, with no mention of the detrimental outcomes of the 1999 NATO operation for Serbs and Kosovars alike.

The legitimacy of the Kosovo precedent is also addressed in an editorial on August 20. According to *Aftenposten* the Russian incursion in Georgia has demonstrated its sphere of influence in the Caucasus. By referencing Kosovo, Russia has responded to the NATO operation in Serbia and the international recognition of Kosovo. In contrast to the story on

²⁸⁹ The full paragraph reads: "7.august gikk georgiske styrker til angrep på utbrytterregionen Sør-Ossetias hovedstad Tskhinvali for å ta kontroll over det russiskvennlige området militært. Dagen etter sendte Russland styrker til Sør-Ossetia for å svare på angrepet og beskytte russiske statsborgere der." *Klassekampen*, 22 Aug. 2008, 8.

²⁹⁰ The full paragraph reads: "Russerne støtter seg til den vrangforestilling at Georgias president Mikhail Saakasjvili er dagens motstykke til Slobodan Milosevic, og at sørosseterne ble gjort til ofre av Tbilisi på samme måte som kosovoalbanerne led under Beograd." *Aftenposten*, 16 Aug. 2008, 10.

August 16, this editorial endorses the Russian perspective by supporting the Kosovo parallel.²⁹¹

The ethnic dimension of the 2008 War is assessed throughout *Aftenposten*'s coverage. As mentioned earlier, the debate over citizenship was one of the central questions in the conflict. *Aftenposten* points to the illegal distribution of Russian passports to South Ossetians in the post-Cold War era. Although 90 percent of South Ossetians holds Russian passports, they are considered, by *Aftenposten*, to be Georgian citizens.²⁹² These segments support the Georgian perspective. The Russian 'passportification' of South Ossetia is also addressed in a commentary on August 12, stating that Russia granted passports to the South Ossetian people in order to legitimize a military invasion of the region.²⁹³

In another story, *Aftenposten* points to the ethnic friendship between South Ossetians and Georgians. These segments are in contrast with the claims of deep ethnic disputes between the minorities of Georgia, as promoted by the separatists and Russia at the outset of the war. Moreover, *Aftenposten* claims that Ossetians are not native Georgians, but are of Iranian descent, tracing back some 400 years. Abkhazia is further described as the historical cradle of the Georgian nation.²⁹⁴ Presumptively this is a reference to the Egrisi Kingdom, which was established between the 7th and 6th century B.C. These segments are congruent with the findings in the historical chapter of this thesis.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ The full paragraph reads: "Russland har nå bare gjort alvor av trusler de har fremsatt i lang tid: Vi bruker våpenmakt dersom Georgia og Ukraina nærmer seg NATO, og vi tillater ikke at Abkhazia og Ossetia anses som georgiske, særlig ikke etter at NATO angrep Serbia og anerkjente Kosovo som egen stat. Russerne har her et meget godt poeng." *Aftenposten*, 20 Aug. 2008, 2.

²⁹² The full paragraph reads: "Russland har også sine svin på skogen i denne konflikten. De to utbryterne av Georgia på 90-tallet, Sør-Ossetia og Abkhasia, er nærmest blitt russiske lydriker. Det lover ikke spesielt godt at president Dmitrij Medvedev har lovet å beskytte «russiske medborgere» i Sør-Ossetia når vi vet at russerne har utstyrt 90 prosent av sørosseterne med russisk pass - selv om folkeretten klart sider at Sør-Ossetia er en del av Georgia." *Aftenposten*, 9 Aug. 2008, 12.

²⁹³ The full paragraph reads: " Han kan heller ikke ha lest Russlands nye utenrikspolitiske doktrine, som forteller at Russland må og skal regnes med i internasjonal politikk, og ikke minst avsnittet som sier at Russland har som mål «å beskytte rettighetene og de legitime interessene til russiske statsborgere og medborgere som bor i utlandet.» Det legges til at dette skal skje på grunnlag av folkeretten og tosidige avtaler. Men i Sør-Ossetia har Russland først gitt borgere av et annet land russiske pass, og bruker deretter deres medborgerstatus som argument for sin militære invasjon." *Aftenposten*, 12 Aug. 2008, 3

²⁹⁴ The full paragraph reads: " Georgiere flest oppfatter områdene som en naturlig del av landet deres, og oppfatter kravet om å bryte ut som en ettervirkning av tiden under Sovjetisk okkupasjon. Området som kalles Abkhasia, var den georgiske nasjonens vugge og sete for det første kongedømmet, noe georgierne er seg svært så bevisste i dag." *Aftenposten*, 10 Aug., 8.

²⁹⁵ References for the historical origin of the Ossetian people see: Goltz in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 18.

As for the details of the Egrisi Kingdom see Silogava & Shengelia, 2007, 27.

The historical origins of the crisis are further examined in an editorial on August 13. According to *Aftenposten* the ‘unnecessary war’ in the Caucasus is a product of old historical grievances under the banner of ‘uncivilized leaders’.²⁹⁶ Both the Georgian and Russian leadership are criticized for their ‘middle age mentality’ by resorting to violence in the case of South Ossetia.²⁹⁷ Furthermore the political climate in the Caucasus is paralleled to the Balkan and Middle East regions. According to *Aftenposten* these regions are infamous for disregarding notions of unity and collaboration. The current crisis is thus the outcome of the parties’ relentless pursuit of national agendas, resulting in further bloodshed.

History in Dagbladet

The historical segments in *Dagbladet* were presented in different ways. Similar to *Klassekampen* and *Aftenposten*, historical information was often included in fact sheets. These fact sheets supplemented various news stories concerning recent developments in the 2008 War. Commentaries were used to provide a historical background for the conflict. Overall the Caucasus is described as an exceptionally volatile region, where several violent encounters have occurred in the past. In a news story on August 14, the Caucasus is referred to as an unlit powder keg.²⁹⁸ Based on the complex mixture of ethnicities, the region is considered to be especially prone to hostilities. There seems to be a consensus between *Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet* in this regard.

Dagbladet oscillates in its assessment of the autonomous status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. All too often these entities are dealt with as two sides of the same coin. In a fact sheet on August 8, both regions have reportedly accomplished de facto independence from Georgia in the ‘bloody wars’ of 1992.²⁹⁹ On August 10, *Dagbladet* states that South Ossetia

²⁹⁶ The full paragraph reads: "Tilsvarende historisk avleirede motsetninger møter vi altfor ofte i to andre områder med gamle sivilisasjoner og få siviliserte ledere: Balkan og i Midtøsten. En middelaldersk mentalitet hos ledere som har det 21. århundres stridsmidler har ført til den blodige og totalt unødvendige konflikten i og rundt utbryter-republikken Sør-Ossetia.", *Aftenposten*, 13 Aug. 2008, 2.

²⁹⁷ *Aftenposten*, 13 Aug. 2008, 2

²⁹⁸ The full paragraph reads: " Historisk er Kaukasus en region med sterke motsetningsforhold. Tidlig på 1990-tallet, etter Sovjetunionens oppløsning, var regionen preget av krig og store menneskemasser på flukt. - Dette er en region som er som en kruttønne med altfor mange fyrstikker", *Dagbladet*, 14 Aug. 2008, 22

²⁹⁹ The full paragraph reads: " -Det minste av de autonome områdene som vantreell selvstendighet i blodige krigene i 1992", *Dagbladet*, 8 Aug. 2008, 21

and Abkhazia fought a 'bloody liberation war' against Georgia in 1991 and 1992.³⁰⁰ These segments are in contrast to the historical findings in this thesis, which differentiates between two distinct conflicts in the 1990s. The South Ossetian conflict occurred from 1991 to 1992, whereas the Abkhaz War took place between 1992 and 1994. The tendency to treat these separate conflicts as one was not limited to the Norwegian print-press or *Dagbladet* however. As Asmus (2010) points out, this phenomenon was quite common in Western discourses.³⁰¹ Nevertheless it is an indication of the limited knowledge of the Caucasus region among Norwegian journalists writing on the 2008 War.

These deficiencies were also present in a commentary on August 15, detailing the historical background for the Russia-Georgian relationship. This commentary assesses the origins of the Georgian nation as well as the Russian presence in Georgia during the last two centuries. Given the limited length of this commentary certain sections are rather brief, resulting in rudimentary analyses of complex affairs. In addition, some historical inaccuracies occur throughout the commentary; the Rose Revolution is assigned to 2005 rather than 2003; the dissolution of the Soviet Union is assigned to 1990 rather than 1991; Abkhazia is described as the only autonomous entity of the Georgian SSR, with no mention of South Ossetia or Adjara. The current crisis is regarded as the outcome of NATO's disregard for Russia's historical sphere of influence. The projected expansion of the coalition is described as *out-of-area* in *Russia's arena*.³⁰²

Indeed the historical presence of Russia in the South Caucasus is beyond question. However the arguments concerning spheres of influence were rendered obsolete by the Charter of Paris in 1990, of which Soviet Russia was a signee.³⁰³ According to the document, the sovereignty

³⁰⁰ The full paragraph reads: " -Sør-Ossetia og det autonome området Abkhasia utkjempet en blodig frigjøringskrig fra Georgia i 1991 og - 92. Dette førte til at de aller fleste etniske georgiere flyktet." *Dagbladet*, 10 Aug. 2008, 15

³⁰¹ Asmus, 2010, 60.

³⁰² The full paragraph reads: "DENNE KRUTT-TØNNA av gammalt hat, skyfling av folkegrupper, kommunistisk hardkjør og russisk maktpolitikk eksploderte då Sovjetunionen braut saman - med georgiaren Eduard Sjevardnadze som siste utanriksminister og seinare som korrumpert president i eit Georgia med uklare grenser og uløyste etniske konflikhtar. KIKK PÅ KARTET og studer historia: Dette er Russlands historiske bakgård og buffersoner. Når den nordatlantiske forsvarsalliansen vil eta seg inn i restane av det tsaristiske og kommunistiske imperiet, er NATO virkelig out-of-area; dette er Russlands arena.", See A. Hompland, *Dagbladet*, 15 Aug, 2008, 49.

³⁰³ U.S. State Department, 'Charter of Paris for a New Europe', *Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation* [web document] (21 Nov. 1990) <<http://www.state.gov/t/isn/4721.htm>>, accessed 23 Oct. 2012.

and territorial integrity of nations should not be contested by the signatories. Nevertheless the arguments of Russia's historical sphere of influence in the South Caucasus region were prevalent in *Dagbladet* throughout its coverage. On August 13, an expert commentary assesses the historical significance of Georgia under Russian rule. This commentary states that Russia's engagement in Georgia is part of traditional Russian politics, rather than a reemergence of the Cold War.³⁰⁴ Accordingly Russia has confirmed its role as an authoritarian state, in which actions speak louder than words.³⁰⁵ *Dagbladet* promotes a dangerous notion here; by claiming that Russia has a free pass within its historical sphere of influence, somehow absolved from the constraints of international law.

Dagbladet's most extensive story on the history of the Caucasus was published on August 24. The story is a translated segment from British author and historian Simon Sebag Montefiore. Throughout this commentary, Montefiore assesses the historical presence of Russia in the Caucasus region, from the late 18th century to the present. Personal recollections of meeting with Georgian presidents are tied in with discussions of the breakaway regions. Montefiore criticizes the past leaders of Georgia by describing Gamsakhurdia's presidency as "idiotic and insane" and Shevardnadze's as "autocratic".³⁰⁶ He concludes his commentary by describing the Russian incursion in Georgia as "a dangerous tribute to the reckless use of force in the international community".³⁰⁷ As such, he urges the West to condemn Russia's actions in unison.

History in Dag og Tid

In contrast to the other newspapers the historical dimension was assessed in designated news articles in *Dag og Tid*. These stories were often based on expert sources, which provide added

³⁰⁴ The full paragraph reads: "Men det ville være like misforstått å tro at vi nå er i en ny kald krig. Dette er ikke et kommunistisk Russland, men et tradisjonelt Russland." *Dagbladet*, 13 Aug. 2008, 43.

³⁰⁵ The full paragraph reads: "Russlands politikk i Kaukasus bekrefter et bilde som er blitt klarere og klarere de siste åtte årene, nemlig at Russland er en autoritær stat." *Dagbladet*, 13 Aug. 2008, 43

³⁰⁶ The full paragraph reads: " Russland oppmuntret det sørlige Ossetia til å etablere en ministat inne i Georgia, hvis idiotiske, gale første president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, hadde fått de etniske spenningene til å flamme opp (...) Gamle, autokratiske Sjevardnadze ble styrtet i Roserevolusjonen i 2003 av en anstendig og energisk, men impulsiv advokat utdannet i USA, Mikhail Saakashvili, som håpet å unnsnippe Moskva for alltid ved å slutte seg til EU og Nato - akkurat som Russlands enorme nabo Ukraina håpet, om enn splittet mellom prorussiske og provestlige halvdel." *Aftenposten*, 24 Aug. 2008, 46.

³⁰⁷ S.S. Montefiore, 'Den kaukasiske kruttønne', *Aftenposten*, 24 Aug. 2008, 46.

depth in the historical assessments.³⁰⁸ In an expert commentary on August 15, *Dag og Tid* assesses the intricate relationship between Russia and Georgia during the Soviet era. According to the commentary, the ethnic dimension of the conflict is an artificial construct. The author supports this argument by pointing to the shared culture between South Ossetians and Georgians under Soviet rule.³⁰⁹ Matsaberidze (2012) supports this argument, stating that the notion of ethnic disputes between South Ossetians and Georgians was intentionally promoted by Russia to exacerbate the conflict.³¹⁰

Dag og Tid states that the current conflict is the product of Georgian nationalist policies in the post-Soviet era. Moreover Gamsakhurdia is described as an incompetent leader, responsible for causing the South Ossetian War and driving a wedge between Georgia and its national minorities. These sections are in agreement with many Western scholars, who discredit Gamsakhurdia for his failed attempt to bring about national unity in Georgia in the early nineties.³¹¹ Furthermore *Dag og Tid* claims that Saakashvili was driven by a similar national agenda in his plea to integrate South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Adjara under Georgian sovereignty. The Georgian attack on South Ossetia is paralleled to the Croatian attack on the Serbian enclave *Republika Srpska Krajina*. In contrast to the Croatian incursion, the author says, the Russians were determined to protect “their own” in South Ossetia. Using “their own” in this context is an indication that the author regards South Ossetians as Russian citizens.³¹² On the other hand the author renders the Russian invasion of Georgia as invalid, which cannot be justified under any pretenses. The author concludes the commentary by stating that Russia may win on the ground, but will eventually lose the propaganda war that follows, having permanently damaged its relations to the West.

In another story the historical background between Georgia and Russia is examined. This report assesses the shared history between the two countries tracing back over two hundred years. *Dag og Tid* credits Tsarist Russia for aiding Georgia against the Ottoman Empire in the

³⁰⁸ Todal, 2012

³⁰⁹ The full paragraph reads: “Krigen i Georgia er difor skapt av politikarar – i Tbilisi og Moskva – og avspeglar ikkje noko gammalt etnisk hat.”, *Dag og Tid*, 15 Aug. 2008, 2.

³¹⁰ Matsaberidze, 2012

³¹¹ See Cornell, 2002; De Waal, 2008; Asmus, 2010

³¹² The full paragraph reads: “Russarane har synt langt større vilje til å støtte «sine» enn Serbias president Milosevic gjorde i konflikten om Krajina.” *Dag og Tid*, 15 Aug. 2008, 2.

19th century.³¹³ The Tsarist annexation of Georgia has been source to an extensive historical debate. As mentioned in chapter three, there is a divergence between Russian and Georgian perspectives in this regard. In Russian literature, the Tsarist expansion into the South Caucasus is regarded as a ‘humanitarian mission’, in the aid of the Georgian nation against the Ottoman Empire.³¹⁴ Conversely, many Georgian historians point to the negative outcomes of the Tsarist rule, particularly with regards to the abolition of the Georgian church and denationalization.³¹⁵ In this paragraph, *Dag og Tid* promotes the Russian narrative.

In the same story *Dag og Tid* states that the Georgian nation suffered immensely under Soviet rule, enduring cases of terror, corruption and large scale killings of native Georgians. Attention is drawn to Georgia’s brutal strive for independence against the Soviet yoke. These sections paint a grievous picture of the Russian presence in Georgia. Under the subheading *Gas and Blood*, the two breakaway regions are addressed in detail. The author points to the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of native Georgians following the wars in the early nineties. Furthermore the viability of the peacekeeping force in South Ossetia and Abkhazia is criticized by describing it as “...a Russian led so-called peacekeeping force”.³¹⁶ Overall this report assumes a critical stance towards Russia’s historical presence in Georgia. The historical segments in this report paints a Goliath versus David image of the Russia-Georgian relationship.

Research question 7: (DOMINANT FRAME) to what extent are bipolar concepts and Cold War frames used in the Norwegian print-press coverage during August 2008?

Overall, the four newspapers under scrutiny incorporated a substantial amount of bipolar concepts in their coverage of the 2008 War. Most evident was *Dagbladet*’s coverage on August 8th and 9th, which included several references to the Cold War. *Aftenposten* also

³¹³ The full paragraph reads: “Først på slutten av 1700-talet tok den framveksande russiske stormakta til å gjere seg gjeldande i Georgia, i byrjinga som ein alliert i kampen mot tyrkarane og persarane.” *Dag og Tid*, 15 Aug. 2008, 6.

³¹⁴ See the classical work of Vasily Klyuchevsky (Ključevskij, V.O.: *Russkaja istorija*, Rostov-na-Donu 2000, kniga tret’ja, 437-440) cited in IFFMCG, vol. 2, 2009, 3.

³¹⁵ IFFMCG, vol. 2, 2009, 3.

³¹⁶ The full paragraph reads: “Dei første leveåra til det uavhengige Georgia var kaotiske og prega av fleire væpna oppstandar. Og ved å støtte dei væpna separatistørslene i Sør-Ossetia og Abkhasia, der eit fleirtal av befolkninga ønskte å vere tilknytte Russland, sikra russarane seg eit fotfeste innanfor dei offisielle grensene til den nye georgiske staten. Russiske styrkar vart stasjonerte i både Sør-Ossetia og Abkhasia, som såkalla fredsstyrkar.” *Dag og Tid*, 15 Aug. 2008, 6.

included bipolar concepts across the dates of analysis, especially on August 8 and August 22. In addition *Aftenposten* included several stories paralleling the Russian incursion of Georgia to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Coincidentally the Russian invasion of Georgia occurred 40 years after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The U.S. in particular promoted this reference to condemn the Russian military engagement.³¹⁷ In *Aftenposten*, elaborate articles were designated to the Czechoslovakia parallel.³¹⁸

Although less dominant, the Cold War frames also occurred in *Klassekampen* and *Dag og Tid* over the course of August. In addition to the qualitative analysis, a keyword search was utilized to quantify the use of Cold War references in the sample newspapers.³¹⁹ The search yielded a total of 184 cases of Cold War references and/or bipolar concepts across the newspapers. The majority of these terms occurred in *Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet*, amounting for 57 and 63 hits respectively. *Klassekampen* employed the terms 50 times, whereas *Dag og Tid* used the terms 14 times. In combination with the results of the qualitative analysis, these findings indicate a prevalence of Cold War frames in the Norwegian print-press' coverage of the 2008 War.

As stated earlier, the use of bipolar concepts or Cold War references connotes worldviews originating from the Cold War. The frequent deployment of these concepts in the Norwegian print-press coverage indicates a persistence of Cold War rhetoric in regards to Russia. Arguably these findings align with Van Gorp's notion of *culturally imbedded frames*.³²⁰ In the production of news stories, journalists attempt to find the balance between interpreting sources and informing the public. By using concepts inherently known by its readers, the journalist can easily communicate new stories to the public.³²¹ In the context of the 2008 War, the Cold War provided journalists with a ready-to-use concept. Whether these concepts were used deliberately or unintentionally by the sample newspapers is outside the purview of this

³¹⁷ BBC News, 'Georgia conflict: Key statements - Condoleezza Rice', *BBC News* [web page] (2008) <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7556857.stm>>, accessed 22 Oct. 2012.

³¹⁸ See P.E. Hegge, 'Invasjonen', *Aftenposten*, 17 Aug. 2008, 12; A. Appelbaum, 'Vesten må opptre som Vesten', *Aftenposten*, 21 Aug. 2008, 19.

³¹⁹ The search entailed a keyword retrieval from all publications in the sample newspapers during August 2008. The following keywords were included: "Cold War" or "Berlin Wall" or "East versus West" or "East and West" or "Russia versus the West" or "Russia and the West" or "the West" (Norwegian: "Kald krig" or "Berlinmuren" or "øst mot vest" or "øst og vest" or "Russland mot vesten" or "Russland og Vesten" or "Vesten")

³²⁰ Van Gorp in D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010, 87

³²¹ *ibid*, 84

analysis. Nevertheless, the prominence of Cold War frames in the Norwegian print-press coverage indicates that history is indeed inseparable from the construction of social reality. In the pursuit of making sense of the present, we often turn to the past.

In addition the substantial amount of Norwegian Angle frames can indicate the persistence of Cold War thinking in the Norwegian print-press. As Russian tanks entered Georgian territory, the Norwegian print-press raised debates concerning Norway's National Security. Although refuted by some newspapers, this debate called for a reassessment of Russia as a potential military threat to Norway. These debates are indicative of the Norwegian print-press' posture towards its neighbor in the north. Based on its historical relationship to Soviet Russia, this Cold War mentality may have caused journalists to regard Russia as a potential adversary to Norway. It is the proposal of this analysis, that this preconception influenced the way in which the Norwegian print-press framed Russia's engagement in Georgia. These findings are the result of a qualitative study however, and needs to be verified by future analysts before any wide conclusions may be drawn.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Theme and research problem

This thesis has examined how the Russia-Georgian War was framed in the Norwegian print-press in August 2008. During the war, the parties promoted diverging narratives as to why the conflict materialized. This produced an information war, which in turn caused misinformation and false claims to manifest in the news. Accordingly, part of this study was to investigate to what extent the information war affected the coverage in Norwegian print-press. Moreover, this thesis examined how the war was portrayed by various newspapers in August 2008. In pursuit of this goal this study has analyzed four Norwegian newspapers, namely *Aftenposten*, *Klassekampen*, *Dag og Tid* and *Dagbladet*. Each newspaper was selected to represent different political alignments within the Norwegian print-press, thus covering a wide range of perspectives. Additionally, this study has examined the correlation between political inclination and the framing of news.

Methodology

To examine the coverage, this thesis has employed framing analysis as an approach to news discourse. The approach was pertinent to the research problem, as it investigates how frames shape news coverage of events. As such, the approach identified frames from the conflicting parties, as well as other frames which are prominent in the news. Moreover, the approach was used to examine historical aspects of the coverage. Throughout August 2008, the parties employed history to legitimize their war aims. To make qualified assessments of these claims, this study has addressed the historical background of the 2008 War. The purpose of this section was to examine the origins of the conflict, and to determine how the events of the past shape the debates in 2008.

Against this historical backdrop a research model was designed to analyze the coverage in the Norwegian print-press. To provide an overview of the coverage, the model categorized news articles according to genre, publication date, source class and source origin. Subsequently, the framing in the news texts was analyzed over three dates in August 2008. These dates were selected to examine how coverage and framing developed over time. Through a systematic approach, with predefined frame categories, the frames in individual articles were determined.

The investigation was further guided by research questions, designed to compare coverage across the sample newspapers and to answer the main research problem from various viewpoints.

Research results

The findings of this study reveal flaws in the initial reports of the Norwegian print-press during August 2008. Throughout their coverage, several media frames entered the newspapers. This caused some newspapers to align closer with one side of the conflict than the others, by mirroring arguments from the parties involved. Furthermore, this study has shown that Norwegian journalist had only limited knowledge of the conflict they were writing on. In the coverage of the Russia-Georgian War, a conflict most treacherous, these deficiencies were amplified. Specifically, this caused erroneous claims, false information and historical inaccuracies to manifest in the news texts.

The quantitative analysis examined the use of sources in the sample newspapers. In the absence of independent sources from the conflict zones, the Norwegian print-press sought different paths to form news texts. An extensive use of both political and military sources was mutual in all newspapers under scrutiny. Moreover they employed a considerable amount of reports from the international media. The reliance on these sources explains why deficiencies in the international press, also penetrated Norwegian newspapers. These findings can also explain the congruence between the Norwegian print-press and the international press, both in terms of coverage and framing.

There are however, differences between the newspapers in this regard. The sample newspapers were selected on the basis of representing various political alignments. An integral part of this study was to investigate the correlation between the political inclination of media institutions and the framing of news. As shown in this study, political inclination influenced the way in which Norwegian newspapers framed the Russia-Georgian War. This phenomenon produced a divergence in coverage between the newspapers.

In *Aftenposten*, Russia was criticized for its disproportionate response to the Georgian incursion of South Ossetia. As shown in the qualitative analysis, *Aftenposten* employed a

majority of Georgian Supportive frames across the dates of analysis, which further indicates its critical stance towards Russia. Conversely *Klassekampen*, assumes a critical view towards both Georgia and the U.S. Moreover, *Klassekampen* scrutinized NATO's role in the conflict within a historical context of policies vis-à-vis Russia. This criticism produced a majority of Russian Supportive frames in *Klassekampen*.

The coverage in the newspapers was not however constant, but evolved over the course of August. As shown in this study, the aspect of time is imperative in the coverage of military conflicts. Over the course of August, the Norwegian press shifted their coverage of the Russia-Georgian War. This phenomenon was most evident in *Dagbladet*, which oscillates in both framing and coverage across the dates of analysis. *Klassekampen* remained critical of both Georgia and NATO throughout its coverage. Initially, *Aftenposten* assumed a critical stance towards Russia, but over the course of August the newspaper holds Georgia responsible for the outbreak of war. *Dag og Tid* employed a substantial amount of expert sources to substitute its lack of correspondents. This also affects its news coverage, which provides a wider context for the conflict in the Caucasus. Moreover, *Dag og Tid* had an advantage compared to the daily newspapers, as its stories were published over the course of a week. As a result, fewer frames were identified in *Dag og Tid* than the other newspapers.

An interesting aspect of the Norwegian print press coverage was the high frequency of Norwegian Angle frames - which scrutinized the national security arrangement of Norway vis-à-vis Russia. The analysis in this study revealed a prevalence of these frames across all the sample newspapers. Some newspapers in the sample, like *Dag og Tid* and *Klassekampen*, refuted these concerns. Regardless, the prominence of these frames is indicative of the Norwegian media's posture towards Russia. Moreover, the analyses revealed a frequent deployment of bipolar concepts in sample newspapers. Specifically, these concepts connote worldviews originating from the Cold War. The findings of this study suggest that this Cold War outlook influenced the way in which the Norwegian print press framed Russia's military operations in Georgia.

The Kosovo analogy was reflected in the Norwegian print-press on several occasions. As mentioned in chapter three, the analogy was deployed by the Russian Federation throughout August 2008. First, the analogy was used to legitimize Russia's military engagements in

South Ossetia on the basis of humanitarian intervention. According to Russia, a Georgian genocide of the people of South Ossetia legitimized the Russian military intervention. As shown in this study the alleged genocide never took place. Second, the analogy was utilized as a legal framework to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states. Moscow claimed that the recognition of Kosovo, in April 2008, set a precedent for other autonomous regions to freely declare their own independence.

As discussed in chapter three, the deployment of the Kosovo parallel was ruled invalid by the E.U. report. Although there is a resemblance between the cases of Kosovo and South Ossetia, the differences far outweigh the similarities. On the basis of these findings, the Kosovo analogy should be regarded as a rhetorical instrument used to shed a more favorable light on Russian military engagement in Georgia. Nevertheless, these analogies entered several news articles in the Norwegian print-press. *Klassekampen*, in particular, regards the Kosovo analogy to be directly applicable to the cases of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. *Aftenposten* on the other hand points to the incomparable nature between South Ossetia and Kosovo.

Review of methodology

An important part of this thesis was to assess the capacity of news framing analysis to examine framing and historical themes in the news. The strength of the approach lies in comparing news coverage across various media sources. As shown in this study, the predefined categories proved useful tools for contrasting coverage between different newspapers. As such, divergences are easily detectable for the analyst, thus serving as springboards for further discussion. In this regard, the approach has been successful. Furthermore, the analysis revealed differences in the way history was employed in the sample newspapers.

However, the framing analysis method also has certain weaknesses. One of these is subjectivity, and its unavoidable effect on research results.³²² Although the approach is sufficient to identifying frames in news texts, it is largely guided by the lens of the analyst. In this study, the frames and categories were determined prior to the research. However, the extraction of individual frames from news texts is ultimately decided by the researcher. As

³²² Van Gorp, in D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010, 85

such, the findings of framing studies should be validated by independent coders. Furthermore, the results of these analyses should be regarded as indications of trends, rather than absolute truths. In this study the method was supplemented by specific research questions, which stimulated discussion of the findings in a wider context. This was useful, as it directed the analysis towards answering the main research problem. As such, news framing analysis should be combined with other approaches that investigate news discourse.

In this study the approach proved quite labor intensive, for a number of reasons. First the process of designing suitable categories and frame functions for the analysis requires a high degree of knowledge about the subject matter. As such, an elaborate historical background was a necessity. Without it, the quality of the analyses would deteriorate. Second, some of the news stories under scrutiny employed history as part of their discourses. Thus to authenticate these assessments, necessitates a thorough understanding of the historical dimension of the 2008 War.

Third, the process of extracting frame functions from news texts requires in-depth reading of individual articles. Even though this study employed a systematic research model in its analyses, the coding of individual articles proved to be challenging. Lastly, the extensive coding process of categorizing a large collection of articles according to genre, source class, source origin, and publication date is a meticulous exercise. Many of these issues may have been alleviated through the use of designated coders, which were unavailable for this project. Nevertheless, the approach proved a suitable method for analyzing news coverage from a historical perspective.

The role of the media in modern warfare

In other major military conflicts the media has been used as an instrument of modern warfare to shed favorable light on the actions of individual parties. The aim of this study was to investigate to what extent the media was subject to the will of political interests in 2008. The Russia-Georgian War was no exception. Throughout August 2008, the parties involved promoted conflicting reasons behind the outbreak of war. Previous studies have confirmed

that this affected the coverage in international news media to a great extent.³²³ The findings of this study profess a similar trend in the Norwegian print-press coverage.

This thesis has scrutinized the accumulation of knowledge in modern society. As part of this process, the media has assumed the role of inter-mediator between the source of information and the public. As such the media holds significant power in its selection, coverage and framing of news. Thus, the professional conduct of journalists provides an important subject of study for scholars interested in the construction of social reality. Journalistic practices are vastly different from academic practices, in the acquisition and processing of sources to produce texts. At its outset, this thesis posed the question of how journalistic practices affected the assessment of complex military conflicts, such as the Russia-Georgian War.

The historical assessments in this thesis are a testament to the complex nature of the Russia-Georgian War. Even through extensive research and investigation, many aspects of the 2008 War remain enigmatic. By default this brings about tremendous challenges for any writer trying to dissect the intricate relationship between the actors of the war. This study has underlined the critical importance of source material in the assessment of international conflicts.

In the Norwegian print-press, the homogenous composition of source material greatly affected the news coverage of the Russia-Georgian War. Similar to conflicts in the past, the reliance on military and political sources was substantial during August 2008. In this regard, the findings of this study confirm the assertions of others - the media are highly susceptible to media frames during wartime.³²⁴ Studies that scrutinize the role of the media in military conflicts can contribute to increased awareness of this phenomenon. Today these studies are imperative, as they recognize information as a source of political power. Only by embracing this reality can the media limit the effects of framing on news coverage. The challenge for journalists lies in finding the balance between informing the public and granting a voice to the parties of a conflict.

³²³ Heinrich & Tanaev, 2009, 257.

³²⁴ Dmitrova & Strömback, 2008, 207.

Future studies

The framing analysis model in this study, is but one of many approaches which can examine the influence of information wars on media output. As such the results of this study will not necessarily be analogous to other methods of analysis. Nevertheless, the approach is applicable for future studies investigating framing in the news. Many of the themes addressed in this thesis are broad enough to stimulate projects of their own. The correlation between political alignment and framing of news is an interesting subject for future research. In this study, the analysis was based on four Norwegian newspapers. Thus, an analysis of the coverage in other Norwegian newspapers would supplement the assessments in this study. Furthermore, this thesis has analyzed news coverage from an academic perspective, outside the media. As such, a study from the newspapers' point of view would provide an in-depth look at the process of framing from inside the news.

Bibliography

Akhvlediani, M. 'The fatal flaw: the media and the Russian invasion of Georgia', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 20, no. 2, (June 2009), 363-390.

Asmus, R.D. *A Little War That Shook The World: Georgia, Russia, and the future of the West*, (St. Martin's Press, New York, 2010).

Berdikeeva, S. 'Future of Energy Transportation in Eurasia after the Georgian Crisis', *Insight Turkey*, vol. 10, no. 4, (2008), 25-34.

Betts, R.K. 'The Three Faces of NATO', *The National Interest*, issue 100, (March/April 2009), 31-38.

Blank, S. 'America and the Russo-Georgian War', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 20, no. 2, (June 2009), 425-451.

Chervonnaya, S. *Conflict in the Caucasus: Georgia, Abkhazia and the Russian Shadow*, (Gothic Images Publications, London, 1994).

Cornell, S.E & Starr, S.F. *The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia*, (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2009).

Cornell, S.E. 'Autonomy and Conflict: Ethno-territoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus: Cases in Georgia'. *Department of Peace and Conflict Research*, Report No. 61. (Uppsala, 2002), 1-247.

Cornell, S.E. *Small nations and great powers: A study of ethno-political conflict in the Caucasus*, (Richmond, Surrey, Great Britain Curzon Press Limited, 2000).

D'Angelo & Jim A. Kuypers (eds.), *Doing News Framing Analysis Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives* (New York, Routledge, 2010)

D'Angelo, P. 'News Framing as Multiparadigmatic', *Journal of Communication*, vol 52, issue 4, (2002), 870-888.

Dallaire, R. *Shake Hands With The Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, (New York, 1st Carroll & Graf trade publications, 2003)

De Burg, H. *Making Journalists: Diverse Models, Global Issues*. (New York, Routledge, 2005).

De Waal, T. *The Caucasus: An Introduction*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010).

Dmitrova, D.V. & Strömback, J. 'Foreign policy and the framing of the 2003 Iraq War in elite Swedish and US newspapers', *Media, War and Conflict*, vol. 1, issue 1, (2008), 203-220.

Entman, R. 'Framing towards clarification of a fractured paradigm', *Journal of Communication*, vol 43, issue 4, (1993), 51-58.

European Union. *The Independent Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia*. Vol. 1-3. (2009).

Franck, T.M. et.al., 'Sidelined in Kosovo?', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.78, no. 4, (1999), 116–122.

Gahrton, P. *Georgia Pawn in the New Great Game*, (New York, Pluto Press, 2010).

Goble, P.A. 'Defining Victory and Defeat: The Information War between Russia and Georgia' in Cornell, S.E & Starr, S.F. *The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia*, (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 181-196.

Goltz, T., 'The Paradox of Living in Paradise: Georgia's Descent into Chaos', in Cornell, S.E. & Starr, S.F. *The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia*, (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 10-28.

Gordadze, T., 'Georgian-Russian Relations in the 1990s', in Cornell, S.E. & Starr, S.F., *The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia*, (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 28-48.

Guicherd, C. 'International law and the war in Kosovo'. *Survival* vol. 41, no. 2, (1999), 19–34.

Hafkin, G. 'The Russo-Georgian War of 2008: Developing the Law of Unauthorized Humanitarian Intervention After Kosovo', *Boston University International Law Journal*, vol. 28, (2010), 219-239.

Heinrich, H. & Tanaev, K. 'Georgia & Russia: Contradictory Media Coverage of the August War', *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, vol. 3, issue 3, (summer 2009), 244-259.

Henkin, L, et al., 'NATO's 'humanitarian war' over Kosovo', *Survival* 41, no. 3, (1999), 102–23.

Hille, C., *State Building in the TransCaucasus since 1917*, (Netherlands, Leiden University, 2003).

Illarionov, A. 'The Russian Leadership's Preparation for War, 1999-2008', in Cornell, S.E & Starr, S.F. *The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia*, (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 49-85.

Jugaste, A. 'Communicating Georgia: Georgia's information campaign in the 2008 war with Russia', Master Thesis (Stockholm University, 2011).

King, C. *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus*, Oxford University Press, (New York, 2008)

Krippendorff, K. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, (London, Sage Publications, 2004).

Luostarinen, H. & Ottosen, R. 'The Changing Role of the Media in Conflicts', in Kempf, W. & Luostarinen, H. (eds.), *Journalism and the New World Order: Studying War and the Media vol. 2*, (Goteborg, Nordicom, 2002), 39-59.

Lynch, J & McGoldrick, A. *Peace Journalism*, (Stroud, Hawthorn Press, 2005)

Maslog, C.C., Lee, S.T. & Kim, H.S., 'Framing Analysis of a conflict: How Newspapers in Five Asian Countries Covered the Iraq War', *Asian Journal of Communication*, vol. 16, issue 1 (2006), 19-39.

McNair, B. *The Sociology of Journalism*. (London, Hodder Arnold, 1998)

McQuail, D. *Mass Communication Theory 6th Edition*, (London, Sage Publications, 2010)

Niedermaier, A.K. *Countdown to War in Georgia: Russia's Foreign Policy and Media Coverage of the Conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia*, (United States, Minneapolis, East View Press, 2008).

Nielsen, C.A. 'The Kosovo Precedent and the rhetorical deployment of former Yugoslav analogies in the cases of Abkhazia and South Ossetia', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 9, nos. 1-2, (March-June 2009), 171-189.

Nohrstedt, S.A. & Ottosen, R. 'Studying the Media Gulf War', in Nohrstedt, S.A. & Ottosen, R. (eds), *Journalism and the New World Order Vol1: Gulf War, National News Discourses and Globalization*, (Goteborg, Nordicom, 2000), 11-35.

Ottosen, R. 'The Norwegian Media Image of the War in Afghanistan: Peacekeeping or Aggression?', *Nordicom Review*, vol 26, issue 1, (2005), 95-109.

Ottosen, R. *VG, Saddam og Vi*, (Kristiansand, IJ Forlaget, 2009)

Pan, Z & Kosichi, G.M. 'Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse', *Political Communication*, vol 10 (1993), 55-75.

Papava, V. 'The end of the Frozen Cold War', *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, vol.3,issue. 1,(Winter 2009), 98-102.

Reese, S.D. 'Finding Frames in a Web of Culture: The Case of the War on Terror', in Paul D'Angelo & Jim A. Kuypers (eds.), *Doing News Framing Analysis Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives* (New York, Routledge, 2010), 17-43.

Reese, S.D. et al, *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world*, (London, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003)

Reisman, W.M., 'Editorial comments: NATO's Kosovo intervention', *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 93, Issue 4, (1999), 824-828.

Sammut, D & Cvetkovski, N. 'The Georgia-South Ossetia Conflict', *Confidence Building Matters*, No 6, VERTIC, London, (March 1996), 1-32.

Semetko, H. & Valkenburg, P.M. 'Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News', *Journalism of Communication*, vol 50, issue 2, (2000), 93-109.

Sharif, K. & Yousafzai, F.U. 'War or Peace Framing? An Analysis of the Pakistani Press Coverage on the War on Terror', *Journalism of Development Communication*, vol 22, issue 1 (2011), 56-71.

Silogava, V. & Shengelia, K. *History of Georgia: From Ancient Times Through the "Rose Revolution"*, (Tbilisi, Caucasus University Publishing House, 2007).

Smith, D.A. 'The Saakashvili Administration's Reaction to Russian Policies before the 2008 War', in S.E. Cornell, & S.F. Starr, *The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia*, (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 122-143.

Steinfeld, H.W. *Hatet i Europa: Tyve år etter Berlins andre fall*, (Trondheim, Cappelen Damm, 2009)

Tønnessen, H. & Kolstø, P. 'Journalistic Identities and War Reporting: Coverage of the 2008 Russian-Georgian War in the Russian Press', *Scando-Slavica*, vol. 58, issue 1, (2012), 101-121.

Van Gorp, B. 'Strategies to Take Subjectivity Out of Framing Analysis' in Paul D'Angelo & Jim A. Kuypers (eds.), *Doing News Framing Analysis Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives* (New York, Routledge, 2010), 84-110.

Wertsch, J.V. & Karumidze, Z., 'Spinning the past: Russian and Georgian accounts of the war of August 2008', *Memory Studies*, vol 2, issue 3, (2009), 377-391.

Wheatley, J. *Georgia from national awakening to Rose Revolution*, (Hampshire, England, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005).

Internet sources

About Georgia, 'About Georgia: Maps: Historical Maps: 1000-1600', *About Georgia* [web page] (2005) <<http://www.aboutgeorgia.ge/maps/historical.html?page=1>>, accessed 25 Oct. 2012.

AFP, 'Putin Calls Kosovo independence 'terrible precedent'', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [web page] (23 Feb. 2008), <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/putin-calls-kosovo-independence-terrible-precedent/2008/02/23/1203467431503.html>>, accessed 25 April 2012.

Ashgate Publishing, *Georgia From National Awakening to Rose Revolution*, *Ashgate Publishing Limited*, [web page] (n/a), <<http://www.ashgate.com/default.aspx?page=637&calcTitle=1&isbn=9780754645030&lang=cy-gb>>, accessed 23 Apr. 2012.

BBC News, 'Georgia conflict: Key statements - Condoleezza Rice', *BBC News* [web page] (2008) <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7556857.stm>>, accessed 22 Oct. 2012.

British Petroleum Caspian, 'South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) Commissioning Commences', *British Petroleum* [web page] (1 June 2006)
<<http://www.bp.com/genericarticle.do?categoryId=9006615&contentId=7018471>>, accessed 22 Mar. 2012.

Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 'Experts: Thomas De Waal', *CEFIP* [web page] (n/a), <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/experts/?fa=expert_view&expert_id=479>, accessed 26 Oct. 2012.

Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Program, 'S. Frederick Starr', *CACISRSP* [web page] (n/a)
<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/staff/staff_web/frederick_starr.htm>, accessed 26 Oct. 2012.

Charles King, 'About Charles King', *Charles King* [web page] (n/a) <<http://www.charles-king.net/about-me.html>>, accessed 26 Oct. 2012.

Clinton, H.R. 'Passing of Ronald Asmus', *U.S. State Department* [web page] (3 May 2011)
<<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/05/162451.htm>>, accessed 23 April 2012.

Institute for Security & Development Policy, 'Director', *ISDP* [web page] (n/a)
<<http://www.isdp.eu/research/energy-security-and-cooperation/185.html>>, accessed 26 Oct. 2012.

Klassekampen, 'Om Klassekampen', *Klassekampen* [webpage], (2012)
<http://www.klassekampen.no/om_oss>, accessed 06 June, 2012.

Latuff 2008, [online image] (2008) <<http://latuff2.deviantart.com/art/Russia-Georgia-conflict-2-94380703?offset=10>>, accessed 12 Nov. 2012.

Medienorge Fakta om Norske Medier, 'Opplagstall for norske aviser 2008', *Medienorge* [webpage], (2008) <<http://medienorge.uib.no/?cat=statistikk&medium=avis&queryID=353>>, accessed 06 June. 2012.

Medienorge Fakta om Norske Medier, 'Opplagsutvikling for de ti største avisene i 2008', Medienorge [webpage], (2008)
<<http://medienorge.uib.no/?cat=statistikk&medium=avis&queryID=190>>, accessed 06 June. 2012.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, 'Blog Archive August 2008', *Georgian MFA* [web document] (2008), <<http://georgiamfa.blogspot.no/search?updated-max=2008-08-18T10:44:00%2B04:00&max-results=7&start=14&by-date=false>>, accessed 5 Oct. 2012.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 'A Short History of NATO', *NATO* [web page] (2012), <<http://www.nato.int/history/nato-history.html>>, accessed 23 April 2012.

Orlov, Nikolai. *Fox News - Cover up - Georgia Russia War*, [online video] (25 May. 2011), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKASUchWf_U>, accessed 11 Nov. 2012

OSCE, *Mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, adopted on 13 Dec 1992*, [web document] (13 Dec. 1992) <<http://www.osce.org/georgia-closed/43386>>, accessed 12 Nov. 2012

RIA Novosti, 'South Ossetia says fatalities over 1,000 – RIA', *Reuters* [webpage], (8 Aug. 2008) <<http://in.reuters.com/article/2008/08/08/idINIndia-34904720080808>>, accessed 27 Sep. 2012.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, 'Statement of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov Concerning the Situation in South Ossetia', *MFA of Russia* [web document] (8 Aug 2008), <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/c589adb74fb34c63c325749f0025531b!OpenDocument>, accessed 5 Oct. 2012.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, 'Documents and Materials of the Russian MFA', *MFA of Russia* [web document] (2008), <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/brp_4.nsf/english!OpenView&Start=5.666&Count=30&Expand=5#5>, accessed 5 Oct. 2012.

UN Security Council, *Resolution 934 Adopted by the Security Council at its 3398th meeting, on 30 June 1994*, [web document] (30 June 1994),
<<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3b00f15c38.html>>, accessed 12 Nov. 2012.

U.S. State Department, 'Charter of Paris for a New Europe', *Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation* [web document] (21 Nov. 1990) <<http://www.state.gov/t/isn/4721.htm>>, accessed 23 Oct. 2012.

Wikipedia [online image] (27 Mar. 2010)
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/64/Soviet_caucasus1922.png>, accessed 12 Nov 2012.

Interviews

Johansen, P.M. *Interview conducted by electronic mail*, (25 Oct. 2012)

Matsaberidze, M. *Personal Interview held during meeting at Tbilisi State University*, (Tbilisi, Georgia, 26 June 2012).

Skre, R. *Interview conducted by electronic mail*, (17 Oct. 2012)

Stugu, O.S. *Personal interview held during meeting at Norwegian University of Science and Technology*, (18 Oct. 2012)

Tjønn, H. *Interview conducted by electronic mail*, (16 Oct. 2012)

Todal, P.A. *Interview conducted by electronic mail*, (15 Oct. 2012)

Appendix 1: Taxonomy Table for Frame Categories³²⁵

Frame function	Frame function in the print-press releases	Coding category
Problem definition	Georgia bombardment of Tskhinvali	Russian Supportive Category
	Georgian genocide of South Ossetian/Russian civilians	
	Georgia kills Russian peacekeepers	
	Georgia invades South Ossetia	
	Georgian military forces committing war crimes	
	South Ossetians defined as Russian citizens	
	Georgian attack on South Ossetian civilians	
	Georgia violating ceasefire agreement	
	Georgia violating international law	
Causal interpretation	Saakashvili is reckless and/or brutal	Russian Supportive Category
	Georgian government untrustworthy, unhealthy ambitions	
	Diplomatic suicide by Saakashvili to attack South Ossetia	
	Russia protecting South Ossetia/Russian citizens	
	South Ossetia as part of Russia's sphere of influence (described as Russian zone, backyard, region, arena)	
	Georgia long planned attack on South Ossetia	
	Israel, NATO or the U.S. supported the Georgian war effort, forcing Russia to intervene	
	Kosovo precedent legitimizes S.O. and Abkhazia to secede from Georgia	
Treatment recommendation and/or moral evaluation	Georgia must withdraw its forces	Russian Supportive Category
	Georgia must stop the violence	
	Russia will secure the peace	
Problem definition	South Ossetian separatists bombarding Georgian villages	Georgian Supportive Category
	Russia attacking Georgia	
	Russia invading Georgia	
	Russia destroying Georgian military infrastructure (army bases, military facilities, military factories etc.)	
	Russia destroying Georgian civilian infrastructure (villages, ports, hospitals, houses etc.)	
	Russian peacekeepers attacking Georgian troops	
	Killing of Georgian civilians	
	Russia cyber attack on Georgia	
	Russian forces violating ceasefire agreement	
	Russian or separatist forces killing/pillaging Georgian villages	
	Russian or separatist forces violating international law	
	Russia violating ceasefire agreement	

³²⁵ The design process behind this taxonomy table is based on a similar model employed in a study by Jugaste (2011). In addition the categories and frame functions were designed on the basis of historical findings in chapter three, as well as press releases from the Georgian and Russian MFA. The Norwegian Angle and Neutral categories were designed on the basis of a study by Ottosen (2005). See Jugaste, 2011, 69; The Georgian MFA, 2008; The Russian MFA, 2008; and Ottosen, 2005, 99.






































Causal interpretation	Russia encouraging separatists to revolt against Georgia	
	Putin/Medvedev is reckless/barbaric/authoritarian	
	2008 War as part of a long history of Russian oppression against Georgia	
	Viability of the Russian peacekeeping operation in question	
	Russia attacks a smaller, weaker nation (Goliath vs. David)	
	Russia supplying separatists with weapons	
	Russian passportization of South Ossetians in violation with the Georgian constitution	
	Russia aiming to weaken the Georgian state	
	Russian attempting to thwart Georgia's NATO membership	
	Russian aiming to destroy the Georgian state	
	Russia aiming to remove the Saakashvili government	
Russia long planned military actions against Georgia		
Treatment recommendation and/or moral evaluation	Russia must withdraw its forces	
	Russia must stop the violence	
Problem definition	The war is a conflict between Russia and the West	NATO/EU Perspective Category
	Cold War references and/or bipolar concepts (communism vs. liberal democracies, Russia vs. the West, East vs. West)	
	Georgia as an American puppet, proxy state	
	Resurgent Russia threatening Europe	
	International economic ramifications of the war	
Casual interpretation	International responsibility for the conflict	
	Bucharest Summit as a pretext to the war	
	Kosovo precedent is not applicable to S.O. and Abkhazia	
	U.S. partly responsible for the war (financial aid, arms supply, military training etc.)	
	Russian invasion of Georgia as a response to NATO's policies	
	NATO partly responsible for the war (financial aid, arms supply, military training, promising Georgia membership etc.)	
Treatment recommendation and/or moral evaluation	NATO must reconsider its expansionist policies into former Soviet states	
	International negotiations are required to restore peace in Georgia	
	NATO-Russia relations permanently damaged as a result of the war	
Problem definition	Russia invading a neighboring sovereign country	Norwegian Angle Category
	Russia willing to use force in pursuit of national interest	
	Russia ignoring international law in pursuit of national/economic interest	
	Russia-Georgian War relevant to Russia-Norwegian relations in the Barents Sea	
	Norwegian Army is incapable to secure Norwegian borders in the Barents Sea	
	Cyber attack on Georgia is a threat to Norwegian National Security	
Causal interpretation	Economic interests as a cause (oil/gas/fish/other)	
	Paralleling Georgia to Norway (population size, army size, geographical proximity to Russia)	

	Georgia was provoking Russia by pursuing policies in conflict with Moscow	
	Ignoring Russia's wishes will result in violence	
Treatment recommendation and/or moral evaluation	Norway-Russia diplomacy is the solution (bilateral agreements, negotiations etc.)	
	Increasing Norwegian security measures is the correct response to the war (increase army, increase awareness, improve defense systems)	
	Norway should not increase its army size	
	Russia-Georgian War has no relevance for Norway	
Problem definition	Humanitarian crisis	
	Victims of war (casualties, infrastructure, livelihoods)	
	Invisible effects of war (trauma, fear, psychological damage)	
Causal interpretation	Both Russia and Georgia are equally responsible for the war	
	The conflict is a result of a gradually deteriorating relationship between Russia and Georgia	
Treatment recommendation	All parties must withdraw their troops	
	All parties must stop the violence	
	War is not the solution, problem solving by peaceful means	
	Humanitarian organizations must attend the wounded	


















Appendix 2: List of publications in August 2008

Publications in *Aftenposten* (n=131)

Farlig overspill	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	06.08.2008
Ny Cuba-krise truer USA	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	06.08.2008
Eksplodivt i Sør-Ossetia	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	06.08.2008
Harde kamper i Sør-Ossetia	☞ Aftenposten Aften	08.08.2008
Georgias president tilbyr våpenhvile	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	08.08.2008
Frykt for storkrig	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	09.08.2008
Russerne tok hovedstaden	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	09.08.2008
Over 1400 drept i kampene	☞ Aftenposten Aften	09.08.2008
Uvisshet og frykt i Georgia	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	09.08.2008
Knuten i Kaukasus	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	09.08.2008
Poesi fra jernhånd	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	10.08.2008
Gråter for sin døde bror	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	10.08.2008
Er ikke ute etter å skremme noen	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	10.08.2008
Ni spørsmål og svar om krigen	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	10.08.2008
Russland traff sivile mål	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	10.08.2008
Frykter Tbilisi kan bli bombet	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	10.08.2008
Uvettet i Kaukasus	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	10.08.2008
Maktens sanne ansikt	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	11.08.2008
USA fordømmer bombingene i Georgia	☞ Aftenposten Aften	11.08.2008
Flykter for annen gang	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	11.08.2008
Frykter opptrapping i Kaukasus	☞ Aftenposten morgen	11.08.2008
Frykt for utvidet krig i Kaukasus	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	11.08.2008
Abkhasia står for tur	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	11.08.2008
Russland har ingen plan	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	11.08.2008
Russisk invasjon	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	12.08.2008
Stille før stormen	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	12.08.2008
Norsk sykehus til Georgia	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	12.08.2008
Angrep mot georgiske styrker i Abkhasia	☞ Aftenposten Aften	12.08.2008
Georgiere frykter langvarig krig	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	12.08.2008
Tviler på folkemord	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	12.08.2008
9. april i Kaukasus	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	12.08.2008
Nå angriper Russland fra to sider	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	12.08.2008
Solberg mener Norge trenger en større hær	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	13.08.2008
Debatt	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	13.08.2008

Kortsynt om forsvar	 Aftenposten Morgen	13.08.2008
Iskalde fronter	 Aftenposten Morgen	13.08.2008
Økonomisk uro herjer Georgia	 Aftenposten Morgen	13.08.2008
Russland har ansvaret	 Aftenposten Morgen	13.08.2008
Krig, for enhver pris	 Aftenposten Morgen	13.08.2008
McCain så farene først	 Aftenposten Morgen	13.08.2008
Georgiere føler seg sviktet av Europa	 Aftenposten Morgen	13.08.2008
Ble presset ut av utbrytere i Abkhasia	 Aftenposten Morgen	13.08.2008
Enige om fredsplan	 Aftenposten Aften	13.08.2008
Russland vil diktere fredsavtale	 Aftenposten Morgen	13.08.2008
Krig også på internett	 Aftenposten Morgen	14.08.2008
«Gjennom aksjonen i	 Aftenposten Morgen	14.08.2008
Journalister skutt, såret og tatt med til Russland	 Aftenposten Morgen	14.08.2008
- Abkhasere plantet flagg i Georgia	 Aftenposten Morgen	14.08.2008
- De har ingen steder de kan dra	 Aftenposten Morgen	14.08.2008
Vanskeligere å bli med i NATO	 Aftenposten Morgen	14.08.2008
Krig i fredens tid	 Aftenposten Morgen	14.08.2008
Våpnene må tie i Kaukasus	 Aftenposten Morgen	14.08.2008
Anklager om nettkrig	 Aftenposten Morgen	14.08.2008
Bush omfavner Georgia	 Aftenposten Morgen	14.08.2008
Vesten vil ikke tukte Russland	 Aftenposten Morgen	15.08.2008
Frykter russisk militærmakt	 Aftenposten Morgen	15.08.2008
Varsler hevn	 Aftenposten Morgen	15.08.2008
Tamme trusler mot russerne	 Aftenposten Morgen	15.08.2008
Kan lamme regjeringen.no	 Aftenposten Morgen	15.08.2008
Kampen om Kaspi-oljen	 Aftenposten Morgen	15.08.2008
Støtt Georgias demokratisering	 Aftenposten Morgen	15.08.2008
Ber russerne rydde opp etter klasebomber	 Aftenposten Morgen	16.08.2008
Raketter og trusler	 Aftenposten Morgen	16.08.2008
Støre advarer mot å straffe Russland	 Aftenposten Morgen	16.08.2008
Bister tone mellom Washington og Moskva	 Aftenposten Morgen	16.08.2008
Russlands illevarslende nye kurs	 Aftenposten Morgen	16.08.2008
Stoltenberg til Det hvite hus	 Aftenposten Morgen	17.08.2008
Invasjonen	 Aftenposten Morgen	17.08.2008
- Kan vi vende hjem noensinne?	 Aftenposten Morgen	17.08.2008
Oljejunkies	 Aftenposten Morgen	18.08.2008
Sør-Ossetias president sparket regjeringen	 Aftenposten Aften	18.08.2008
Ond eller god?	 Aftenposten Morgen	18.08.2008
Iskaldt mellom USA og Russland	 Aftenposten Morgen	18.08.2008

- Russland har utplassert raketter i Sør-Ossetia	☞ Aftenposten Aften	18.08.2008
Russland sår splid i EU	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	18.08.2008
Derfor ble det krig	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	18.08.2008
Sverige vil «straffe» Russland	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	19.08.2008
Russisk njet til Bildt-møte	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	19.08.2008
Sør-Ossetia ønsker russiske baser	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	19.08.2008
Ingen bevis for alle drepte	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	19.08.2008
Saakasjvili vil forhandle	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	19.08.2008
Hvitvaskingsprosjekt	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	20.08.2008
Krigshissere	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	20.08.2008
Russisk maktspill	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	20.08.2008
NATO stiller krav til russerne	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	20.08.2008
Hvem bryr seg om hva NATO sier?	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	20.08.2008
Georgia er ikke Norge	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	20.08.2008
Israel terger Moskva	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	20.08.2008
Kald vind gjør ingen kald krig	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	21.08.2008
Norge håper på snarlig tøyær	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	21.08.2008
Forsvarsbluss	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	21.08.2008
Større hær!	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	21.08.2008
Vesten må opptre som Vesten	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	21.08.2008
Georgia- krisen satte fart i skjold- avtalen	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	21.08.2008
Lover penger til Georgia	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	21.08.2008
Sivil kontakt kan fortsette	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	21.08.2008
Stille før den politiske stormen i Georgia	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	21.08.2008
Negativ kampanje har hjulpet McCain	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	22.08.2008
Russland bekrefter «frys» i note	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	22.08.2008
Oljeprisen opp seks dollar	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	22.08.2008
Oljefest på Oslo Børs	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	22.08.2008
Tror NATO vil ha Georgia med	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	22.08.2008
Kjølig øst-vest	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	22.08.2008
«Sikkerhetssone» ved Sør-Ossetia	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	22.08.2008
Investorene rømmer Russland	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	23.08.2008
Ingen ny kald krig	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	23.08.2008
Russland må fratas OL i 2014	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	23.08.2008
Krigen koster 80 mrd.	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	23.08.2008
Ikke glem oss!	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	23.08.2008
Russisk rekviem i Sør-Ossetia	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	23.08.2008
OSSE-styrker til russisk buffersone	☞ Aftenposten Morgen	24.08.2008
Krigen kostet Georgia dyrt	☞ Aftenposten Aften	25.08.2008

Norge i russisk skvis i NATO	 Aftenposten Morgen	26.08.2008
Israels våpeneksport	 Aftenposten Morgen	26.08.2008
Ber om anerkjennelse av utbryterregioner	 Aftenposten Morgen	26.08.2008
En hær som ikke gjør inntrykk	 Aftenposten Morgen	27.08.2008
Russland skremmer Norden	 Aftenposten Morgen	27.08.2008
Jubel for to nye lydriker	 Aftenposten Morgen	27.08.2008
Krig lønner seg ikke.	 Aftenposten Morgen	27.08.2008
Regjeringen avviker forsvaret	 Aftenposten Morgen	28.08.2008
Russland kriger, EU betaler	 Aftenposten Morgen	28.08.2008
Ambassadøren ikke kalt inn til UD	 Aftenposten Morgen	28.08.2008
Økt press fra Russland	 Aftenposten Morgen	28.08.2008
Tre utfordringer i nord	 Aftenposten Morgen	29.08.2008
Ordkrigen trappes opp	 Aftenposten Morgen	29.08.2008
Russland trues av isolasjon	 Aftenposten Morgen	29.08.2008
Finland: Vi kan forsvare oss	 Aftenposten Morgen	29.08.2008
Tør ikke straffe russerne	 Aftenposten Morgen	30.08.2008
Sender senger fra Værnes	 Aftenposten Morgen	30.08.2008
Israel blidgjør Moskva	 Aftenposten Morgen	30.08.2008
OSSE klandrer Georgia for konflikten	 Aftenposten Morgen	31.08.2008

Publications in *Dag og Tid* (n=11)

Nettkrig mot Georgia	 Dag og Tid	14.08.2008
Ingen relevans for Noreg	 Dag og Tid	14.08.2008
Krigen mellom Russland og Georgia handla ikkje om etnisk hat	 Dag og Tid	14.08.2008
Smertefull naboskap	 Dag og Tid	14.08.2008
Vengene til USA dekkjer ikkje Georgia	 Dag og Tid	14.08.2008
-Klokt å halda Georgia utanfor NATO	 Dag og Tid	14.08.2008
Gorbatsjov refsar	 Dag og Tid	21.08.2008
Behov for norsk militærmakt	 Dag og Tid	21.08.2008
Georgia bør ikkje inn i NATO	 Dag og Tid	21.08.2008
Ingen ny kald krig	 Dag og Tid	21.08.2008
Augenblinken til USA er Over	 Dag og Tid	28.08.2008

Publications in *Dagbladet* (n=79)

Ber ro i Kaukasus	 Dagbladet	07.08.2008
Fakta Sør-Ossetia	 Dagbladet	08.08.2008
XVIII		

Venter på invasjonen	 Dagbladet	08.08.2008
Krig i kaukasus	 Dagbladet	08.08.2008
Sitatet	 Dagbladet	09.08.2008
Kosakkene står i kø for å krige	 Dagbladet	09.08.2008
De venter på slaget	 Dagbladet	09.08.2008
Melua redd for sin mor og bror	 Dagbladet	09.08.2008
Større enn seg selv	 Dagbladet	09.08.2008
Sitatet	 Dagbladet	10.08.2008
«Jeg blir bekymret når jeg tenker på vår egen hær på 5000 mann»	 Dagbladet	10.08.2008
Georgia vurderer å trekke seg	 Dagbladet	10.08.2008
For seint å be om nåde?	 Dagbladet	10.08.2008
Putin: - Dere har mistet Sør-Ossetia	 Dagbladet	10.08.2008
fakta Krigen i Kaukasus	 Dagbladet	10.08.2008
Russland senket Georgisk skip	 Dagbladet	11.08.2008
Melua vil reise til Georgia	 Dagbladet	11.08.2008
- To journalister drept	 Dagbladet	11.08.2008
-Grusomme overgrep	 Dagbladet	11.08.2008
Tolv nordmenn i Georgia	 Dagbladet	11.08.2008
Krig i Kaukasus	 Dagbladet	11.08.2008
Skremmende likheter	 Dagbladet	11.08.2008
Georgia i koma	 Dagbladet	12.08.2008
Bildets makt	 Dagbladet	12.08.2008
- Vi kan miste halve landet	 Dagbladet	12.08.2008
Galskap i Tbilisi og dumhet i New York	 Dagbladet	12.08.2008
- Russland som nazi-Tyskland	 Dagbladet	13.08.2008
Sitatet	 Dagbladet	13.08.2008
Georgia-krigen kan ende i Haag	 Dagbladet	13.08.2008
Måtte flykte for andre gang	 Dagbladet	13.08.2008
Apokalypse snart	 Dagbladet	13.08.2008
Personlig vendetta	 Dagbladet	13.08.2008
fakta Bakgrunnen for krigen	 Dagbladet	13.08.2008
Feiret nederlag som seier	 Dagbladet	13.08.2008
Russlands grenser	 Dagbladet	13.08.2008
Sender hjelp med militære	 Dagbladet	14.08.2008
Støre: - En kruttønne	 Dagbladet	14.08.2008
«De plyndrer våre hjem, og de er på jakt etter unge kvinner»	 Dagbladet	14.08.2008
fakta bakgrunnen for krigen	 Dagbladet	14.08.2008
- Han gjorde en tragisk feil	 Dagbladet	14.08.2008
EU - best i krise	 Dagbladet	14.08.2008

Sitatet	 Dagbladet	15.08.2008
Her forteller David: Fant naboen med avskåret hode	 Dagbladet	15.08.2008
Fakta Avtalen om våpenhvile	 Dagbladet	15.08.2008
Lar Rice bli kurer	 Dagbladet	15.08.2008
Russisk bakgård	 Dagbladet	15.08.2008
FAKTA Krigen i Kaukasus	 Dagbladet	15.08.2008
Sitatet	 Dagbladet	16.08.2008
Eliza (82) ble alene igjen	 Dagbladet	16.08.2008
Dikterte våpenhvile - rykker videre inn i Georgia	 Dagbladet	16.08.2008
Den totale ydmykelsen	 Dagbladet	17.08.2008
Slåss om det daglige brød	 Dagbladet	18.08.2008
Litt å tygge på	 Dagbladet	18.08.2008
Krigen i Kaukasus	 Dagbladet	18.08.2008
fakta Krigen i Kaukasus	 Dagbladet	18.08.2008
fakta Krigen i Georgia	 Dagbladet	19.08.2008
Kald krig i Stalins by	 Dagbladet	19.08.2008
Russerne i Natos fryseboks	 Dagbladet	20.08.2008
Istid over europa	 Dagbladet	21.08.2008
Bushs siste tap	 Dagbladet	22.08.2008
Stormaktpolitisk dobbeltmoral	 Dagbladet	24.08.2008
Hoveddirigenten for London-symfonien, Valerij Gergiev,	 Dagbladet	24.08.2008
Sitatet	 Dagbladet	24.08.2008
Krever NATO-utvidelse	 Dagbladet	24.08.2008
Den kaukasiske kruttønne	 Dagbladet	24.08.2008
Refses pressen	 Dagbladet	25.08.2008
«Russland kan bryte med Nato»	 Dagbladet	26.08.2008
Følg saken Krigen i Georgia	 Dagbladet	26.08.2008
Sitatet	 Dagbladet	27.08.2008
Rir høyt på tøffe grep	 Dagbladet	27.08.2008
«Weekendkrigen»	 Dagbladet	27.08.2008
Sitatet	 Dagbladet	29.08.2008
Putin anklager USA	 Dagbladet	29.08.2008
- Neppe moden for NATO	 Dagbladet	29.08.2008
Alltid foran	 Dagbladet	30.08.2008
Fakta Konflikten i Georgia	 Dagbladet	30.08.2008
- USA deltok i krigen	 Dagbladet	30.08.2008
Vestens fiasko	 Dagbladet	31.08.2008
Sitatet	 Dagbladet	31.08.2008

Publications in *Klassekampen* (n=65)

fakta <fakta	 Klassekampen	05.08.2008
Kaukasus darrer	 Klassekampen	05.08.2008
Fastlåst konflikt i Tbilisi	 Klassekampen	06.08.2008
Har inntatt hovedstaden	 Klassekampen	09.08.2008
Fakta <fakta	 Klassekampen	11.08.2008
Russland ønsker en stabil region, men vil samtidig unngå	 Klassekampen	11.08.2008
Snart våpenhvile	 Klassekampen	12.08.2008
Fakta <fakta tittel>	 Klassekampen	12.08.2008
Høgt spel	 Klassekampen	12.08.2008
Saakasjvili	 Klassekampen	12.08.2008
Fakta <fakta tittel>Krig i Kaukasus	 Klassekampen	12.08.2008
Sør-Ossetia tømmes	 Klassekampen	12.08.2008
Nato-aspiranten Georgia sådde en lokal konflikt og høstet en	 Klassekampen	12.08.2008
Fakta <fakta tittel>Olje og	 Klassekampen	13.08.2008
Det norske pensjonsfondet er nå kommet i	 Klassekampen	13.08.2008
Fakta <fakta tittel></fakta tittel>	 Klassekampen	13.08.2008
Vil tvinge fram freden	 Klassekampen	13.08.2008
Russland slår flere fluer i en smekk	 Klassekampen	13.08.2008
Fakta <fakta	 Klassekampen	14.08.2008
Jubel og kritikk	 Klassekampen	14.08.2008
Skal bli i Sør-Ossetia	 Klassekampen	14.08.2008
Mørke skyer	 Klassekampen	15.08.2008
Fakta <fakta	 Klassekampen	15.08.2008
USA er på plass	 Klassekampen	15.08.2008
Fakta <fakta	 Klassekampen	16.08.2008
Krig i ettertanke	 Klassekampen	16.08.2008
Nye kaldkrigstener	 Klassekampen	16.08.2008
Fakta <fakta	 Klassekampen	18.08.2008
Trekker seg tilbake	 Klassekampen	18.08.2008
Fakta <fakta	 Klassekampen	19.08.2008
Vil ha Nato-utvidelse	 Klassekampen	19.08.2008
Sannheten og løgnen	 Klassekampen	19.08.2008
Fakta Nato og Georgia	 Klassekampen	20.08.2008
Advarer om økt spenning	 Klassekampen	20.08.2008
Brudd på folkeretten?	 Klassekampen	20.08.2008
Selvstyre	 Klassekampen	20.08.2008
Littell til Georgia	 Klassekampen	21.08.2008

Geopolitisk sjakk	📄 Klassekampen	21.08.2008
Krigens anatomi	📄 Klassekampen	21.08.2008
Venter en formell note fra Russland	📄 Klassekampen	22.08.2008
fakta <fakta	📄 Klassekampen	22.08.2008
Det enkleste er pistol	📄 Klassekampen	23.08.2008
Fakta <fakta	📄 Klassekampen	23.08.2008
Under skjoldet?	📄 Klassekampen	23.08.2008
McCain fikk «Georgia on my mind» i valgkampen	📄 Klassekampen	23.08.2008
Flytande geografi	📄 Klassekampen	23.08.2008
Strid om tilbaketrekking	📄 Klassekampen	23.08.2008
Diplomatisk kamp om Kosovo	📄 Klassekampen	23.08.2008
– NATO eneste løsning	📄 Klassekampen	25.08.2008
Informasjonsblokkade om	📄 Klassekampen	25.08.2008
Avviser å bli en del av Georgia	📄 Klassekampen	26.08.2008
Vårt eget ansvar	📄 Klassekampen	27.08.2008
Anerkjenner	📄 Klassekampen	27.08.2008
Folkerettsdrap	📄 Klassekampen	28.08.2008
Russisk krise skviser Norge	📄 Klassekampen	28.08.2008
Den 7. august angrep georgiske	📄 Klassekampen	28.08.2008
Retting	📄 Klassekampen	29.08.2008
Russland sier njet	📄 Klassekampen	29.08.2008
Søker støtte fra land i øst	📄 Klassekampen	29.08.2008
Fakta <fakta tittel>	📄 Klassekampen	30.08.2008
Åpner for kald krig	📄 Klassekampen	30.08.2008
Midtøsten: Neste måned	📄 Klassekampen	30.08.2008
Cheney vil se på Eurasias oljerør	📄 Klassekampen	30.08.2008
Russland avfeier G7-kritikk	📄 Klassekampen	30.08.2008
Russland, Georgia og Nato	📄 Klassekampen	30.08.2008

Appendix 3: Extraction of frame functions

Dagbladet's coverage of the 2008 War

August 8/9

Dagbladet published eight news items over these two days dealing with the 2008 War, consisting of four news stories, one interview, one brief, one editorial and a fact sheet. The news stories were mainly based on reports by Norwegian correspondent Morten Strand, stationed in St. Petersburg Russia at the time. His reports rely heavily on Russian media sources and statements from Russian policy officials, which further affect the news stories. The initial story on August 8, *War in the Caucasus* (Norwegian: *Krig i Kaukasus*), is presented with the subheading “Crisis between East and West”, a title which bipolarizes the conflict within a Cold War framework. Several references are made throughout the text connoting Cold War concepts such as “Russia versus the West” and the Berlin Wall. As mentioned in research question 7, the incorporation of Cold War concepts connotes worldviews originating from the Cold War era.³²⁶ In turn these culturally charged terms can affect the readers understanding of an important event or conflict.

Further on the story articulates that the pro-American Georgia had initiated a war against South Ossetia by shelling the capital Tskhinvali, killing 21 South Ossetians in the process.³²⁷ As a result South Ossetians are now forced to flee from their homes to their northern neighbor Russia. The article claims that South Ossetia achieved de facto sovereignty from Georgia following the South Ossetian War in 1992, a claim that has been source of much controversy in academic literature.³²⁸ In another story, under the heading *Waiting for the invasion* (Norwegian: *Venter på invasjon*), South Ossetian president Eduard Kokoity is cited; claiming that the Georgian assault on Tskhinvali was the result of a long planned military operation.³²⁹

³²⁶ See research question 7: (DOMINANT FRAME) to what extent are bipolar concepts and Cold War frames used in the Norwegian print-press coverage during August 2008?

³²⁷ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Russian Supportive Category, Georgia killing South Ossetian civilians

³²⁸ Matsaberidze, 2012

³²⁹ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Russian Supportive Category, Georgia long planned attack on South Ossetia

President Saakashvili is cited towards the end of the story claiming that the volatile situation in South Ossetia is a product of Russian aggression.³³⁰

The next day's coverage features a story detailing the Russian intervention in South Ossetia. In the story *They are waiting for battle* (Norwegian: *De venter på slaget*), refugees in Tskhinvali are interviewed, detailing their hardships as a result of the war. Furthermore the story reports on 1400 South Ossetian casualties. These death tolls are allegedly based on reports submitted by South Ossetian families. According to the news text this "ethnic cleansing" was operated by Georgians in retaliation for the expulsion of ethnic Georgians from South Ossetia during the war in 1992. Again the news story is based on Strand's reports, incorporating a substantial amount of Russian sources. The story concludes that Russia has every right to intervene in South Ossetia in protection of Russian citizen and peacekeepers, despite the fact that the Georgian constitution rules South Ossetia as an integral part of its national sovereignty.³³¹ Limited space is designated to Georgian perspectives which are by and large refuted. Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergej Lavrov is later cited, stating that Georgian troops are executing Russian civilians and peacekeepers if captured.³³² This article includes several frames from the Russian Supportive category, based on the considerable amount of Russian perspectives throughout the text.

On the same day an editorial with the title *Larger than itself* (Norwegian: *Større enn seg selv*) was published contextualizing the conflict within international politics. Similar to the news stories, the editorial repeatedly incorporates bipolar concepts such as "Russia and the West". In addition the future economic prospects of the Caucasus are considered as a pretext for the Russian intervention in Georgia. The West, reportedly, provoked a Russian intervention by attempting to imbed Georgia in the Euro-Atlantic Alliances.³³³ *Dagbladet* clearly states that President Saakashvili is solely to blame for the outbreak of war in the Caucasus, describing his actions as reckless and unilateral. Frames describing Saakashvili as reckless or irrational

³³⁰ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Georgian Supportive Category, Russia aiming to weaken the Georgian state

³³¹ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Russian Supportive Category, Georgian genocide of South Ossetian/Russian civilians.

³³² See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Russian Supportive Category, Georgian military forces committing war crimes

³³³ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, NATO Perspective Category, NATO partly responsible for the war

are designated to the Russian Supportive category.³³⁴ In effect the war in the Caucasus has thwarted any prospects for Georgia joining the EU or NATO, and deteriorated relations between Russia and the West. By and large this editorial views the 2008 War as the fallout of disputes in international politics, thus framing the war within the NATO Perspective category.

August 15

Dagbladet published 6 news items on August 15, consisting of one report, one commentary, one news article, one brief and two fact sheets. The first story called *Here David recites: found the neighbor with his head sawed off* (Norwegian: *Her forteller David: Fant naboen med avskåret hode*) reports on Georgian refugees outside Tbilisi. News correspondent Morten Strand reports from a refugee camp near Kaheti, where refugees from Georgian villages have sought refuge from the Russian invasion of Georgia. David Tafiskvili, a refugee from Thviavi, reports on executions of native Georgians on August 13 by Cossack and Ossetian militia. A considerable amount of this report is dedicated to descriptions of the brutality of the murders, as well as widespread killing and pillaging of Georgian villagers.³³⁵ *Dagbladet* reports on Russian military forces remaining in the conflict areas on August 14, in clear violation of the ceasefire agreement signed on August 12.³³⁶ Although Tafiskvili holds the Ossetians primarily responsible for these atrocities, the Russian forces are described as passive bystanders, allowing the separatists to freely rampage Georgian villages. Reports on ceasefire violations and human rights violations by Russian or separatist forces are assigned to the Georgian Supportive category.³³⁷

A second story *Sending Rice as courier* (Norwegian: *Lar Rice bli kurer*) details a diplomatic meeting between President of France Nicolas Sarkozy and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice concerning the Russia-Georgian War. Sarkozy's initiation of the ceasefire agreement is described as a diplomatic triumph. Rice is reportedly heading for Georgia the following day, carrying documents that will enhance the ceasefire agreement already in place. The rest of this news article addresses the role of the U.S. in the outbreak of the war. Secretary of Defense

³³⁴ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Russian Supportive Category, Saakashvili is reckless and/or brutal

³³⁵ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Georgian Supportive Category, Russian or Separatist forces killing/pillaging Georgian villages

³³⁶ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Georgian Supportive Category, Russian forces violating ceasefire agreement

³³⁷ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Georgian Supportive Category, Russian or separatist forces violating international law

Robert Gates is cited claiming that the war may have deteriorated Russian-American relations. The next paragraphs, based on reports from the *International Herald Tribune*, claim that the U.S. repeatedly warned Georgia not to engage militarily in South Ossetia prior to the August 2008 War. Frames holding the U.S. partly responsible for the outbreak of the 2008 War are assigned to the NATO Perspective category.³³⁸ In the initial stages of the war, the U.S. was held partly responsible for the Georgian attack, based on its close relationship as well as economic contribution to Georgia. In particular, the paragraphs in this news article present the U.S. response to this criticism. Asmus (2010) concludes in his study that the U.S. explicitly informed Georgia it would not receive any U.S. support in the case of a military operation in South Ossetia.³³⁹ However, it can be argued that without the U.S. military contributions to Georgia (i.e. the supply of military armaments and training of the Georgian army), the August 2008 War may have been avoided.

The final story in *Dagbladet* on August 15 is a commentary by Andreas Hompland detailing the historical background for the Russia-Georgian relationship. Hompland assesses the origins of the Georgian nation as well as the Russian presence in Georgia during the last two centuries. Given the limited length of this commentary certain sections are rather brief, resulting in rudimentary analyses of complex affairs. In addition some historical inaccuracies occur throughout the commentary; the Rose Revolution is assigned to 2005 rather than 2003; the dissolution of the Soviet Union is assigned to 1990 rather than 1991; Abkhazia is described as the only autonomous entity of the Georgian SSR, with no mention of South Ossetia or Adjara. Hompland describes Georgia as part of Russia's backyard and buffer zone. He further criticizes NATO for expanding into Russia's sphere of influence, describing it as *out-of-area* in *Russia's arena*.³⁴⁰ Hompland concludes his commentary by describing President Saakashvili as a *classic Caucasian warrior*.³⁴¹ Overall this commentary assumes a

³³⁸ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, NATO Perspective Category, U.S. partly responsible for the war (financial aid, arms supply, military training etc.)

³³⁹ Asmus, 2010, 144.

³⁴⁰ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Russian Supportive Category, South Ossetia as part of Russian sphere of influence

³⁴¹ The full paragraph reads: "DENNE KRUTT-TØNNA av gammalt hat, skyfling av folkegrupper, kommunistisk hardkjør og russisk maktpolitikk eksploderte då Sovjetunionen braut saman - med georgiaren Eduard Sjevardnadze som siste utanriksminister og seinare som korrumpert president i eit Georgia med uklare grenser og uløyste etniske konflikter. KIKK PÅ KARTET og studer historia: Dette er Russlands historiske bakgård og buffersone. Når den nordatlantiske forsvarsalliansen vil eta seg inn i restane av det tsaristiske og kommunistiske imperiet, er NATO virkelig out-of-area; dette er Russlands arena.", See A. Hompland, *Dagbladet*, 15 Aug, 2008, 49.

critical stance towards both NATO and Georgia. By holding NATO and Saakashvili largely responsible for the outbreak of the war, this commentary incorporates frames from both the Russian Supportive and the NATO Perspective category.

August 22

On August 22, *Dagbladet* featured a commentary discerning the geopolitical implications of the 2008 War. Under the heading *Bush's final defeat* (Norwegian: *Bushs siste tap*), the 2008 War is regarded as the outcome of failed U.S. policies in Georgia.³⁴² The journalist claims that Russia desires to mitigate its losses after the Cold War. Consequently it was not surprising that the war had dire ramifications when 'the Georgian mouse' engaged 'the Russian bear' on August 8, took aim and fired.³⁴³ The mouse versus bear metaphor is used several times during this commentary, connoting the power disparity between Russia and Georgia.³⁴⁴ Furthermore, the metaphor implies that Georgia engaged Russia when attacking South Ossetia. Saakashvili is held responsible for instigating the Russian response. A considerable amount of the commentary discerns Russian perspectives on the conflict. The Bush administration's disregard for Russian 'red lines' is regarded as a pretext to the war. The journalist states that by recognizing the independence of Kosovo and promising NATO membership for the Ukraine and Georgia, the U.S. completely ignored Moscow's objections.³⁴⁵ Abkhazia and South Ossetia are further defined as Russia's backyard.³⁴⁶

In the following paragraphs the Georgian attack on South Ossetia is compared with a Serbian blitz on Kosovo's civilian population. This comparison is controversial, as it insinuates that the Georgian attack on Tskhinvali was aimed at the civilian population.³⁴⁷ The remaining sections of the commentary criticize the U.S. and Saakashvili for their handling of the conflict. Speculations are made whether Georgia had received mixed signals from the U.S.

³⁴² See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, NATO Perspective Category, U.S. partly responsible for the war (financial aid, arms supply, military training etc.)

³⁴³ The full paragraph reads: "MAN TRENGER DERFOR ikke å være noen stor politisk analytiker for å ane at konsekvensene kunne bli enorme da den lille musa – Saakasjvilis Georgia - gikk inn til bjørnen - Putins Russland - natt til 8. august, trakk våpen, og skjøt." See M. Strand, *Dagbladet*, 22 Aug. 2008, 3.

³⁴⁴ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Georgian Supportive Category, Russia attacking a smaller, weaker nation (Goliath vs. David)

³⁴⁵ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, NATO Perspective Category, Bucharest Summit as a pretext to the war

³⁴⁶ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation Russian Supportive Category, South Ossetia as part of Russia's sphere of influence

³⁴⁷ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Russian Supportive Category, Georgian attack on South Ossetian civilians

administration in regards to a military solution in South Ossetia.³⁴⁸ Saakashvili is further described as confrontational and anti-Russian in essence.

Klassekampen's Coverage of the 2008 War

August 8/9

Klassekampen's coverage was limited to a single news story between August 8 and 9. In the news story *Has reached the capital* (Norwegian: *Har inntatt hovedstaden*), journalist Peter M. Johansen writes on the introduction of Russian troops into South Ossetia on August 8. The news article reports on 150 Russian armored vehicles crossing the North Ossetian border, heading south for Tskhinvali. Georgian President Saakashvili is cited, stating that this is a clear violation of the national territory of sovereign Georgia, pointing out that two Russian air fighters have been shot down over Georgian airspace. Georgian Minister of Internal Affairs is furthermore cited claiming that Russian Su-24s bombarded targets in the Gori and Kareli regions inside Georgian territory.³⁴⁹ In the main body, the article incorporates both South Ossetian and Russian perspectives. Leader of the Russian Peacekeeping Force in South Ossetia Marat Kulakhmetov reports on the “total destruction” of Tskhinvali caused by Georgian artillery, claiming that the Russian headquarters was demolished during the attack.³⁵⁰ Next, South Ossetian representative Dmitriy Medoljev accuses Tbilisi for ethnic cleansing of South Ossetians.³⁵¹ In contrast to *Dagbladet* the death tolls are not mentioned in this paragraph. Saakashvili states, in the following section, that the military operations in South Ossetia will continue until order is restored in the region, only then may negotiations resume.

Towards the end of the article different perspectives are considered. Putin is cited blaming the Georgian leadership for the outbreak of war, killing Russian peacekeepers in the process. Johansen points out that there are conflicting views in terms of designating responsibility for the war. The U.S. rules South Ossetia as the main aggressor, whereas diplomats in Tbilisi are

³⁴⁸ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, NATO Perspective Category, The U.S. partly responsible for the war

³⁴⁹ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Georgian Supportive Category, Russia destroying civilian infrastructure

³⁵⁰ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Russian Supportive Category, Georgian bombardment of Tskhinvali

³⁵¹ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Russian Supportive Category, Georgian genocide of South Ossetians/Russian civilians

more cautious in their assessment. Johansen mentions that fighting erupted as early as August 1 in South Ossetia, with both Georgian and South Ossetian forces involved in the exchange. Further on the news article explains the conflict from both Georgian and Russian perspectives. According to Georgia, South Ossetia and Russia is engaging militarily to thwart any international presence in the region. Conversely Moscow suspects Tbilisi to take up arms in order to force an international intervention in South Ossetia. President of South Ossetia, Eduard Kokoitij is cited declaring the end goal to be international recognition of his republic, paralleling his region to that of Kosovo. The Kosovo parallel is interesting, since it was a purposely design of Russian intelligence.³⁵² As mentioned in chapter three, the Kosovo parallel was deployed to legitimate the secession of South Ossetia and Abkhazia from Georgia. The international recognition of Kosovo at the NATO Bucharest summit in April 2008 completely ignored Russian objections. It landed a critical blow to Russia-NATO relations, leaving deep grievances among many in Moscow. Johansen does not comment on the legitimacy of the Kosovo precedent.

Johansen mentions that not counting Georgian citizens, ninety percent of the 70 000 people in South Ossetia holds Russian passports. Although implied, there is no mention of whether or not these people are considered as Russian citizens. The last paragraphs of this news article address the international dimension of the conflict. The UN Security Council reportedly failed to reach an agreement on the conflict in South Ossetia. Several paragraphs are designated to Russian citations, claiming that NATO must reconsider granting Georgia membership in its coalition.³⁵³ According to Moscow NATO expansion eastwards is regarded as a containment of the Russian Federation. Johansen states in the last paragraph that Tbilisi has been a CIA headquarter ever since the Soviet Union disintegrated. Furthermore he states that the U.S. was behind the Rose Revolution in 2003, a claim that has been disputed by Western scholars.³⁵⁴ As mentioned in chapter three, the claim that American NGOs was the driving force behind the Rose Revolution originated in Moscow. Certainly, the U.S. was a large contributor to the Georgian economy in the late nineties and the early twenties, but limited evidence suggests that American NGOs brought about the revolution itself. On the contrary Saakashvili and the Georgian people are mainly credited for the toppling of Shevardnadze's government.

³⁵² See Goble in Cornell & Starr, 2009

³⁵³ See Appendix 1, Treatment recommendation, NATO Perspective Category, NATO must reconsider its expansionist policies into former Soviet states

³⁵⁴ Gordadze in Cornell & Starr, 2009, 46.

Overall *Klassekampen*'s coverage on August 8 and 9 incorporates several frames from both the Georgian and Russian Supportive category. In the introduction of the article, frames in the Georgian Supportive category are most salient. Immediately after reporting on the Russian military incursion, the Georgian leadership is cited, promoting their views on the conflict. Following this section the article turns progressively towards Russian perspectives. Claims of ethnic cleansing, the Kosovo parallel, killing of Russian peacekeepers and South Ossetians with Russian passports are all included. Although Johansen explicitly points to the confusing nature of the conflict, the predominance of Russian frames tells a different story. In all *Klassekampen*'s coverage on August 8 and 9 included 6 frames in the Georgian Supportive category and 8 frames in the Russian Supportive category.

August 15

Klassekampen published 3 news items on August 15; one fact sheet, one editorial and one feature/report. The editorial under the heading *Dark clouds* (Norwegian: *Mørke skyer*) discusses the Russia-Georgian War in relation to Norwegian National Security. Throughout this editorial the future prospects of Norway's economic security in regards to Russia are considered.³⁵⁵ The call for a national army capable of protecting Norway's economic sphere is brought to the forefront. Russia is described as an emerging energy colossus expected to challenge Norway's economic spheres in the Barents Sea. The editor criticizes high ranked politicians and military representatives who neglect the need for a strong national defense. *Klassekampen* states that the future economic security of Norway is at risk without a strong national army, and that the current debate is too shortsighted.

The most extensive news story in this edition of *Klassekampen* is a report named *The U.S. is in place* (Norwegian: *USA er på plass*). Journalist Peter M. Johansen reports on U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's visit to Tbilisi on August 15 carrying "a briefcase full of warnings to Russia". Rice is early on cited saying "This is not 1968", referring to the Soviet invasion of the Czech Republic.³⁵⁶ The initial sections of the report incorporate numerous

³⁵⁵ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Norwegian Angle Category, Russia-Georgian War relevant to Russia-Norwegian relations in the Barents Sea

³⁵⁶ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, NATO Perspective Category, Cold War references and/or bipolar concepts.

Russian citations, questioning the U.S. and NATO support of Georgia. Russian NATO-ambassador Dmitrij Rogozin is cited accusing the U.S. and NATO for consenting to Georgian military operations in South Ossetia. Johansen accompanies this paragraph by speculating if the U.S.-Georgian military exercise *Immediate Response* was the final preparation for the war. Frames claiming the Georgian attack on South Ossetia as a long planned military operation are designated to the Russian Supportive category.³⁵⁷ A considerable amount of this report details the Georgian military buildup since 1999. NATO has delivered a substantial amount of battle tanks, armored vehicles, helicopters, artillery weapon systems and drones to Georgia. The report is dominated by Russian-based sources (5 out of 11 in-text sources), which also is reflected in the news text by its critical stance towards NATO's involvement in Georgia.³⁵⁸ In its final sections the report scrutinizes the arms trade between Israel and Georgia. Johansen elaborates on Israel's critical stance towards Moscow and its economic interests in Georgia through the BTC pipeline. Overall this report incorporates four frames from the Russian Supportive category, four frames from the NATO Perspective category and one frame from the Georgian Supportive category.

August 22

Klasskampen's coverage on August 22 discloses Russia's freeze of all military cooperation with NATO countries until further notice. According to the journalist the action is a response to NATO's decision to temporarily suspend the NATO-Russian Council. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is cited stating that NATO must reconsider its priorities vis-à-vis Russia. He continues stating that if NATO chooses to support the Saakashvili regime over Russia, it will send a clear message to Moscow. This article assumes no clear inclination in terms of framing. The article is accompanied by a fact sheet, describing the origins of the conflict. According to *Klassekampen*, Georgia initiated a military attack on the Russian-friendly region of South Ossetia on August 7. The next day, Russia responded militarily in the aid of Russian citizens in the region.³⁵⁹ This is an example of a Russian Supportive frame. According to Russia, the population of South Ossetia holding Russian passports constituted a

³⁵⁷ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Russian Supportive Category, Georgia long planned attack on South Ossetia

³⁵⁸ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, NATO Perspective Category, NATO partly responsible for the war

³⁵⁹ The full paragraph reads: "7.august gikk georgiske styrker til angrep på utbrytterregionen Sør-Ossetias hovedstad Tskhinvali for å ta kontroll over det russiskvennlige området militært. Dagen etter sendte Russland styrker til Sør-Ossetia for å svare på angrepet og beskytte russiske statsborgere der." *Klassekampen*, 22 Aug. 2008, 8.

Russian contingent inside South Ossetia. Allegedly, the Georgian attack on Tskhinvali involved mass killing of the South Ossetian civilian population. According to Moscow, these atrocities legitimized the Russian military response.³⁶⁰ As mentioned in chapter three, the Georgian constitution does not allow dual citizenship, thus ruling the Russian ‘passportization’ of South Ossetia as illegitimate. The quarrel over citizenship produces conflicting narratives between Georgia and Russia, which further influenced the press coverage. In this particular case *Klassekampen* endorses the Russian perspective, by defining the South Ossetians as Russian citizens.

Aftenposten's Coverage of the 2008 War

August 8/9

Aftenposten published 7 news items over August 8 and 9, including three briefs, three news stories and one commentary. On August 8, two briefs detail the Georgian attack on targets inside South Ossetia and a Georgian ceasefire proposition put forward by President Saakashvili. Both briefs are short and limited to disclosing immediate news updates on the conflict in the Caucasus. As such, these news items contain no clear inclination in terms of framing. On August 9 however the conflict in the Caucasus reached the front page, proclaiming 1400 casualties. In contrast to *Dagbladet*, the bulletin states that the death toll is the outcome of clashes between Russian and Georgian forces. This is a noteworthy detail considering that the death toll originated from the South Ossetian government, claiming it was the outcome of ethnic cleansing by Georgian armed forces. The main story *Fear and uncertainty in Georgia* (Norwegian: *Frykt og uvisshet i Georgia*), is written by freelance journalist Ragnar Skre reporting out of Tbilisi Georgia. *Aftenposten* states that Skre lives in the conflict area, despite the hostilities taking place in Tskhinvali, nearly 70 miles from the Georgian capital. Skre’s reports are used several times throughout *Aftenposten's* coverage of the war. In this news story, Skre reports on Georgian villagers suffering from the Russian aerial bombardment.³⁶¹ Attention is drawn to the tragic outcomes of the Russian attack on

³⁶⁰ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Russian Supportive Category, Georgian military forces committing war crimes

³⁶¹ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Georgian Supportive Category, Russia destroying Georgian civilian infrastructure

Georgian soil, causing widespread fear and suffering among the local population. Skre also mentions support for the Georgian war effort among the people of Gori.

In another news story *The Russians captured the capital* (Norwegian: *Russerne tok hovedstaden*) journalist Torill Nordeng reports on the Russian assault incursion on Tskhinvali. In the lead paragraph *Aftenposten* states that “Russia has assumed control of the South Ossetian capital Tskhinvali, which may lead Georgia and the entire Caucasus into large scale war”. Using the term Caucasus here is misleading as it remains unclear whether the author implies that Armenia and Azerbaijan is somehow involved in the conflict in South Ossetia. In the first paragraph, the news text reports on a large scale Russian artillery and aerial assault on the capital Tskhinvali.³⁶² In the following paragraph, civilian death tolls are specified, without any mention of the Georgian bombardment on August 7th and 8th. Perhaps unintentionally, this arrangement of information holds the Russian attack responsible for the loss of human lives.

Another point of interest is that *Aftenposten* was published in two editions on August 9. All articles remained unaltered in both editions, except for Nordeng’s news story. In the first edition, the death tolls counted over 1000 civilian casualties, based on a statement by South Ossetian Nationalities Minister Teimuraz Kasaev. In the second edition this number was increased to 1400 casualties, referring to the same source. Kasaev’s statement originated from an interview by telephone conducted by Russian news agency RIA Novosti. His original statement referred to over 1000 civilian losses caused by the Georgian shelling of Tskhinvali between August 7th and 8th, prior to the Russian involvement.³⁶³ In Nordeng’s article the same death tolls are employed in an article disclosing the Russian bombardment of the capital on August 9. It remains unclear as to why *Aftenposten* decided to alter the death tolls from its first to its second edition.

The headlines of these articles were also altered. In the first edition the title proclaimed *The Russians captured the capital* (Norwegian: *Russerne tok hovedstaden*), whereas the second edition uses the headline *Over 1400 killed in battle* (Norwegian: *Over 1400 drept i*

³⁶² See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Georgian Supportive Category, Russia is attacking Georgia

³⁶³ RIA Novosti, ‘South Ossetia says fatalities over 1,000 – RIA’, *Reuters* [webpage], (2008)

<<http://in.reuters.com/article/2008/08/08/idiNIndia-34904720080808>>, accessed 27.09.2012.

kampene). This divergence is particularly interesting in regards to the general war coverage of the 2008 War. It is a striking example of how conflicting information was processed by the media over the course of the war, and in this case over the course of a day. Additionally, the second edition article extends the first article by 8 paragraphs. In particular, these paragraphs add statements from South Ossetian and Russian sources. This also affects the framing of the article. The first edition article predominantly blames Russia for the loss of human lives. However, this is altered in the second edition by incorporating South Ossetian and Russian perspectives. In particular, the second edition adds a controversial statement from South Ossetian representative Irina Gaglojeva, who describes Georgian engagements in Tskhinvali as a fascist occupation.³⁶⁴ In contrast to the article in the first edition, the second edition article mentions the Georgian bombardment prior to the Russian engagement, and its detrimental effects on the capital's infrastructure.³⁶⁵ As a result the second article integrates several frames in the Russian Supportive category.

Lastly a commentary called *The knot in the Caucasus* (Norwegian: *Knuten i Kaukasus*) was published on August 9. Foreign news editor Kjell Dragnes presents his take on the conflict. In this commentary Dragnes contextualizes the current crisis as part of international politics. He claims that only Moscow and Washington can solve this conflict. Similar to the coverage in *Dagbladet*, this commentary places the conflict in a Cold War framework, with its two major players being the U.S. and Russia. A substantial amount of the text deals with NATO expansion into former Soviet states such as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Dragnes holds the Bucharest Summit as a decisive factor for the current South Ossetian crisis, claiming that the U.S. provoked Russia by promising future membership for the Ukraine and Georgia.³⁶⁶ According to Dragnes, Saakashvili's "reckless decision" to invade South Ossetia proves that he has a fundamental lack of understanding of how democracies operate.³⁶⁷ Dragnes concludes that only through negotiations between Washington and Moscow can peace be

³⁶⁴ The full paragraph reads: "Irina Gaglojeva, som er en sørøstetisk talskvinne i Tskhinvali, beskrev i går den dramatiske situasjonen etter det georgiske angrepet slik overfor BBC: - Så godt som alle i byen er gått i dekning, slik også jeg har gjort. Det hele startet ved midnatt, og pågikk hele natten og formiddagen. Alle vinduene i huset mitt er knust, og trettifem tusen innbyggere i vår hovedstad er blitt gisler under georgisk fascisme." See Torill Nordeng, 'Over 1400 drept i kampene', *Aftenposten*, 9 Aug, 2008, 10.

³⁶⁵ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Russian Supportive Category, Georgian attack on South Ossetian civilians

³⁶⁶ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, NATO Perspective Category, Bucharest Summit as a pretext to the war

³⁶⁷ See Appendix 1, Casual interpretation, Russian Supportive Category, Saakashvili is reckless and/or brutal

restored in the Caucasus.³⁶⁸ This commentary incorporates frames almost exclusively from the NATO Perspective category.

August 15

On August 15 *Aftenposten* published 7 news items detailing the 2008 War, consisting of three feature/reports, two news stories, one brief and one opinion editorial. *Aftenposten*'s first story is a report discussing the dispute between the U.S and Russia over the conflict in the Caucasus. Under the heading *Feeble threats against the Russians* (Norwegian: *Tamme trusler mot Russerne*) Norwegian correspondent John Hultgren reports on U.S. threats against Moscow in response to the Russian invasion of Georgia. Hultgren states that neither the U.S. nor the EU has leverage to force Russia's hand in Georgia. Russia has assumed a position of undisputed power in international politics as a large scale supplier of energy to Europe.

The report parallels the threats from the U.S. to the rhetoric of the Cold War, referring to the Berlin Airlift in 1948.³⁶⁹ Russian military forces are, according to the news text, still present on Georgian territory, in violation with the ceasefire agreement.³⁷⁰ Russian Foreign Minister Sergej Lavrov is cited, stating that Georgia's territorial integrity is non-existent. In the last paragraphs Russian military forces are reported to still be present in Gori as well as destroying infrastructure in Poti on August 14.³⁷¹ Humanitarian organizations inform that over 23 000 people are forced to flee in Georgia as a result of the war.³⁷² Overall this report includes three frames from the Georgian Supportive category, two frames from the NATO Perspective category, one frame from the Russian Supportive category and one frame from the Neutral category.

In another story *Proclaims Vengeance* (Norwegian: *Varsler Hevn*) freelance journalist Ragnar Skre details incoming reports on murder and rape from areas controlled by Russian and

³⁶⁸ See Appendix 1, Treatment recommendation, NATO Perspective Category, International negotiations are required to restore peace in Georgia

³⁶⁹ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, NATO Perspective Category, Cold War references and/or bipolar concepts

³⁷⁰ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Georgian Supportive Category, Russia violating ceasefire agreement

³⁷¹ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Georgian Supportive Category, Russia destroying Georgian civilian infrastructure

³⁷² See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Neutral Category, Victims of war

Ossetian forces.³⁷³ Skre elaborates that bands of Russian soldiers are forcing Georgian civilians to flee their homes south of Tskhinvali. Feelings of sorrow and anger are on the rise among Georgian people. Skre details news of unidentified warriors raping and killing civilians around Gori, which in turn fuels thoughts of vengeance in Georgia. This news story incorporates frames exclusively from the Georgian Supportive category.

A third report titled *The Battle over Caspian Oil* (Norwegian: *Kampen om Kaspi-oljen*) addresses the economic ramifications of the 2008 War. Central to this report is the western economic reliance on Russian energy. *Aftenposten* states that the BTC pipeline, which transports large quantities of Caspian Oil to European markets, is a central aspect of the quarrel over Georgia. The BTC pipeline represents an alternative energy route for Europe, reducing its dependency on Russian energy. Bipolar concepts such as “Russia versus the West” and “Russia’s relations to the West” are used repeatedly throughout the report. Although the 2008 War is mentioned, the main body of the report is dedicated to discussions of international economic policies.³⁷⁴ In all this report includes two frames from the NATO Perspective category.

The remaining news stories details the 2008 War in regards to Norwegian security. In the news article *May disable regjeringen.no* (Norwegian: *Kan lamme regjeringen.no*), a cyber attack on Georgia is tied to Norwegian national security.³⁷⁵ During the outbreak of the 2008 War several Georgian governmental sites were disabled. As part of modern warfare a cyber attack can severely cripple computer based defense systems. Throughout this article Norway’s current internet defense systems are examined in the case of a cyber attack on Norway. The final news story on this day is a report assessing Russia as a potential threat to Norwegian national security. Under the title *Fears Russian military power* (Norwegian: *Frykter russisk militærmakt*) Norwegian defense politicians are discussing the plausibility of a military encounter with Russia.³⁷⁶ Various viewpoints are presented throughout the report; Signe Øye is cited claiming that a Russian attack on a NATO member is highly unlikely; Jan Petterson

³⁷³ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Georgian Supportive Category, Russian or Separatist forces killing/pillaging Georgian villages

³⁷⁴ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, NATO Perspective Category, International economic ramifications of the war

³⁷⁵ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Norwegian Angle Category, Cyber attack on Georgia is a threat to Norwegian National Security

³⁷⁶ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Norwegian Angle Category, Russia-Georgian War relevant to Russia-Norwegian relations in the Barents Sea

views the 2008 War as a sign that Russia is willing to use military force in pursuit of national interests; Norwegian Defense Minister Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen supports the call for modernizing the Norwegian Army, but regards the 2008 War to be of little relevance to Norway's national security. These news stories incorporate a total of six frames from the Norwegian Angle category.

August 22

Similar to the other newspapers, *Aftenposten* coverage on August 22 discerns the Russian freeze of military cooperation with NATO. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is cited prompting NATO to make a choice between Russia and Georgia. Two news stories reports on the economic ramifications of the recent development between Russia and the West.³⁷⁷

According to these reports the NATO-Russia dispute has produced a climate of geopolitical uncertainty. As a result Russia's role as a reliable energy supplier is debated, causing an upsurge in the price of oil. In another story Georgia's future prospects as a NATO member are considered. U.S. NATO Ambassador Kurt Volker states that he still anticipates NATO membership for Georgia in the future. Georgia must, according to Volker, be held partly responsible for the outbreak of the war. Volker admits that the Georgian attack on Tskhinvali was the necessary pretext for a long prepared Russian military response.³⁷⁸ Volker concludes that only through an international presence inside South Ossetia may peace be restored in the Caucasus.³⁷⁹

In another story the Russian military withdrawal from Georgia is examined. Russian military officials are quoted saying that Russian forces are withdrawing to the buffer zone surrounding South Ossetia in accordance with the ceasefire agreement. Saakashvili is cited stating that there exists no evidence of a Russian withdrawal. The final news story is an editorial with the heading *Cold between East and West* (Norwegian: *Kjølig øst-vest*). Bipolar concepts are used throughout the editorial in its discussion of NATO-Russia relations.³⁸⁰ *Aftenposten* holds both

³⁷⁷ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, NATO Perspective Category, International economic ramifications of the war

³⁷⁸ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Georgian Supportive Category, Russia long planned military actions against Georgia

³⁷⁹ See Appendix 1, Treatment recommendation, NATO Perspective Category, International negotiations are required to restore peace in Georgia

³⁸⁰ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, NATO Perspective Category, Cold War references and/or bipolar concepts

Russia and Georgia responsible for the tragic war in the Caucasus.³⁸¹ The leaders of each country are criticized for using military force to solve political issues. Saakashvili in particular is described as unwise. The victims of war are regrettably the people, which are used as pawns in a political game.³⁸² Russia's international reputation is declining as a result of its military engagement in Georgia. Russia is suffering economically as a result.³⁸³ *Aftenposten* concludes that Russia and the West are interdependent on each other. As such the resumption of the NATO-Russia Alliance is paramount.

***Dag og Tid's* Coverage of the 2008 War**

August 15

As mentioned earlier *Dag og Tid's* first news stories on the August 2008 War occurred on August 15. By then, the war had already passed its critical stages, halted only by the ceasefire agreement on August 12. In its weekly edition on August 15, *Dag og Tid* published 6 news items detailing the Russia-Georgian War, consisting of one news story, one feature/report, one interview, one commentary, one editorial and one brief. A considerable amount of space in the international news section is dedicated to the conflict in the Caucasus, covering 5 out of 32 pages on this day. These news stories encompass a substantial amount of expert sources compared to the coverage in the other newspapers in the sample. An increasing concern with Norwegian national security surfaced in the wake of the Russian invasion of Georgia. This stimulated a debate among journalists and politicians, reassessing the Norwegian security arrangement vis-à-vis Russia. In an editorial titled *No relevance for Norway* (Norwegian: *Ingen relevans for Noreg*) editor Svein Gjerdåker presents his take on the Russia-Georgian War. Responding to an opinion editorial by former Prime Minister of Norway Kåre Willoch, Gjerdåker states that the Russian incursion in Georgia poses no threat to Norwegian Security.³⁸⁴ Willoch claims Norway's defense policy is overly naïve in regards to its Russian neighbor. Gjerdåker on the other hand, regards a Russian attack on a NATO country to be highly

³⁸¹ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Neutral Category, Both Russia and Georgia are equally responsible for the war

³⁸² See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Neutral Category, Victims of war

³⁸³ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, NATO Perspective Category, International economic ramifications of the war

³⁸⁴ See Appendix 1, Treatment recommendation, Norwegian Angle Category, Russia-Georgian War has no relevance for Norway

unlikely, stating that the main concern for the Norwegian Defense Department should be protecting Norway's economic sphere in the Barents Sea. Gjerdåker's editorial incorporates exclusively frames from the Norwegian Angle category.

Gjerdåker's viewpoints are further elaborated in an expert interview with Professor Iver B. Neumann. In this interview, Neumann regards the Russian incursion in South Ossetia as a clear demonstration of Russia's sphere of influence.³⁸⁵ According to Neumann, Norway is outside this Russian sphere. Norway's main concern should thus be to secure its sovereignty in the Barents Sea, and maintain its bilateral arrangements with Russia. Neumann credits Germany and France for opposing Georgian NATO membership during the NATO Bucharest Summit. Furthermore he states that if Georgia was granted NATO membership, the conflict in the Caucasus would have had tragic outcomes for the coalition. Neumann holds the U.S. partly responsible for the current conflict by spreading liberal democracies into former Soviet states.³⁸⁶ When questioned if the U.S. took part in the military operation in South Ossetia, Neumann responds with affirmation.³⁸⁷ This interview incorporates one frame from the Russian Supportive category, one frame from the NATO Perspective category and three frames from the Norwegian Angle category.

In an expert commentary *The War between Russia and Georgia does not revolve around ethnic hatred* (Norwegian: *Krigen mellom Russland og Georgia handla ikkje om etnisk hat*), Professor Pål Kolstø assesses the intricate relationship between Russia and Georgia during the Soviet era. According to Kolstø the ethnic dimension of the conflict is an artificial construct. Kolstø backs up this argument by pointing to the shared culture between South Ossetians and Georgians under Soviet rule. According to Kolstø the current conflict is the product of Georgian nationalist policies in the post-Soviet era. Gamsakhurdia is described as an incompetent leader, responsible for causing the South Ossetian War and driving a wedge between Georgia and its national minorities. Similar to Kolstø, many Western scholars discredit Gamsakhurdia for his failed attempt to bring about national unity in Georgia in the

³⁸⁵ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Russian Supportive Category, South Ossetia as part of Russia's sphere of influence

³⁸⁶ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, NATO Perspective Category, U.S. partly responsible for the war

³⁸⁷ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Russian Supportive Category, Israel, NATO or the U.S. supported the Georgian war effort

early nineties.³⁸⁸ Kolstø claims that Saakashvili was driven by a similar national agenda in his plead to integrate South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Adjara under Georgian sovereignty. He criticizes Saakashvili for sending Georgian troops to Iraq as a trade-off for American support in case of a military encounter with Russia. Furthermore Kolstø parallels the Georgian attack on South Ossetia to the Croatian attack on the Serbian enclave *Republica Srpska Krajina*. In contrast to the Croatian incursion, Kolstø says, the Russians were determined to protect “their own” in South Ossetia. Using “their own” in this context is an indication that Kolstø regards South Ossetians as Russian citizens.³⁸⁹ On the other hand he condemns the Russian invasion of Georgia, which under no pretenses can be justified.³⁹⁰ He further on questions the viability of the Russian/South Ossetian genocide claim. Kolstø concludes the commentary by stating that Russia may win on the ground, but will eventually lose the propaganda war that follows, having permanently damaged its relations to the West.

In another story called *Hurtful neighborliness* (Norwegian: *Smertfull naboskap*) the historical background between Georgia and Russia is examined. Written by journalist Per Anders Todal, this report assesses the shared history between the two countries tracing back over two hundred years. Tsarist Russia is credited for aiding Georgia against the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. According to Todal, the Georgian nation suffered immensely under Soviet rule, enduring cases of terror, corruption and large scale killings of native Georgians. Todal furthermore points to Georgia’s brutal strive for independence against the Soviet yoke. These sections of the report paint a grievous picture of the Russian presence in Georgia.³⁹¹ Under the subheading *Gas and Blood*, the two breakaway regions are addressed in detail. Todal points to the expulsion of hundred thousands of native Georgians following the wars in the early nineties. He further questions the viability of the peacekeeping force in South Ossetia and Abkhazia by describing it as “...a Russian led so-called peacekeeping force”.³⁹² Overall this report assumes a critical stance on the Russian presence in Georgia. The historical section of

³⁸⁸ See Cornell, 2002; De Waal, 2008; or Asmus, 2010

³⁸⁹ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Russian Supportive Category, South Ossetians defined as Russian citizens

³⁹⁰ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Georgian Supportive Category, Russian or Separatist forces violating international law

³⁹¹ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Georgian Supportive Category, 2008 War as part of a long history of Russian oppression against Georgia.

³⁹² See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Georgian Supportive Category, Viability of the Russian peacekeeping operation in question

this report paints a David versus Goliath image of the Georgia-Russian relationship, thus incorporating several frames from the Georgian Supportive category.

The final story in *Dag og Tid* on August 15 is a news article named *The wings of the U.S.A. do not cover Georgia* (Norwegian: *Vengene til USA dekkjer ikkje Georgia*). This article assumes a critical angle towards the U.S. in regards to the Georgian attack on South Ossetia. *Dag og Tid* holds the U.S. partly responsible for Saakashvili's imprudent decision to attack Tskhinvali.³⁹³ As a result Georgia is now facing the fatal consequences of its liberal democratic transformation, initiated by Saakashvili in collaboration with the Bush administration. Saakashvili is further criticized for injudiciously believing the U.S. would save Georgia once fighting erupted in South Ossetia. Frames describing Saakashvili as a reckless or irresponsible leader shed favorable light on the Russian engagement.³⁹⁴

August 22

Dag og Tid featured four news items on August 22 concerning the 2008 War. In its editorial the future prospects of Georgia are discussed. *Dag og Tid* states that it is unwise to imbed Georgia under the coalition considering its detrimental outcome for NATO-Russia relations. *Dag og Tid* encourages the West to pursue other means to support Georgia than NATO membership. Georgia's strategic and historical importance to Russia is considered a critical factor in the current conflict. As such NATO expansion into Georgia will exacerbate relations between Russia and the West.³⁹⁵

In a commentary Norwegian right-wing politician Erna Solberg responds to *Dag og Tid's* editorial published on August 15, dismissing her call for an increase in the Norwegian military. Solberg states that Russia's unannounced war aim is to remove or weaken the Saakashvili government.³⁹⁶ Furthermore Solberg argues that the Russian invasion of Georgia is relevant to Norwegian security.³⁹⁷ Georgia pursued policies in conflict with Moscow by its

³⁹³ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, NATO Perspective Category, U.S. partly responsible for the war

³⁹⁴ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Russian Supportive Category, Saakashvili is reckless and/or brutal

³⁹⁵ See Appendix 1, Treatment recommendation, NATO Perspective Category, Nato must reconsider its expansionist policies into former Soviet States

³⁹⁶ See Appendix1, Causal interpretation, Georgian Supportive Category, Russia aims to forcefully remove the Saakashvili government

³⁹⁷ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, Norwegian Angle Category, Russia-Georgian War relevant to Russia-Norwegian relations in the Barents Sea

Western aspirations, thus instigating a Russian response. Solberg states that Norway's economic sphere in the Barents Sea is highly contested by Russia.³⁹⁸ Accordingly Norway must be prepared to secure its sovereignty vis-à-vis Russia. Solberg argues that the current state of the Norwegian military is not sufficient to the task.³⁹⁹

Dag og Tid also featured an expert interview on August 22, discussing the 2008 War in regards to the Cold War. The Russian invasion of Georgia, led many political analysts to debate whether or not a new Cold War was at hand. In this interview, *Dag og Tid*, questions Professor Øyvind Østerud of the viability of these claims. Bipolar concepts and Cold War references are frequently used throughout this interview, especially by the interviewer.⁴⁰⁰ Østerud largely dismisses the claims of a new Cold War era, pointing to the incomparable nature of the current crisis.

³⁹⁸ See Appendix 1, Causal interpretation, Norwegian Angle Category, Georgia was provoking Russia by pursuing policies in conflict with Moscow

³⁹⁹ See Appendix 1, Treatment recommendation, Norwegian Angle Category, Increasing Norwegian security measures is the correct response to the war

⁴⁰⁰ See Appendix 1, Problem definition, NATO Perspective Category, Cold War references and/or bipolar concepts