

**Secessionist framing:
The role of different discourses in creating arguments for
self-determination**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis contains no materials accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions. To my knowledge the thesis does not contain unreferenced material or ideas from other authors.

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Abstract

By looking at the self determination movements which emerged in Yugoslavia and its successor states, we find that the various movements were framed very differently while political leaders tried to garner support for their state building ambitions. While Slovenia claimed to seek independence mainly on economic grounds, in Croatia, historical and ethno-nationalist arguments dominated the discourse on independence. Economic arguments played a prominent role also in Montenegro during mobilization where, however, a reformist, pro-democracy rhetoric became the most salient. The question arises why in some cases of self-determination elites push for a higher level of sovereignty in the name of economic advancement, whereas in other cases, self-determination movements refer to ethnic identity, human rights issues and other kind of rationale.

Therefore, this dissertation specifically asks why some movements are framed by certain types of arguments and not by others. Why did the Montenegrin independence movement rely so heavily on a pro-democracy rhetoric and why did economic arguments become so central in Slovenia? How can it be explained that in Croatia ethno-nationalist themes dominated while references to economic reasons remained marginal?

This study is based on the assumption that framing influences inter-ethnic dynamics during the course of a self-determination movement in a multi-ethnic setting. While mobilization centered on ethnicity tend to exclude minorities from the national community, by contrast movements employing economic or pro-democracy arguments tend to express claims with reference to a territorial unit not to an ethnic group. Thus they are less likely to alienate minorities than so called “primordialist nationalist” arguments referring to ethnic identity. Consequently, it can be argued that a relevant aspect distinguishing mobilization discourses from each other is whether they define collective identity in ethnically inclusive or exclusive way.

By studying the Slovenian, the Croatian and the Montenegrin independence movement, the goal of this study is to explain how and why certain discourses come to dominate some independence movements and not others. Thus the present dissertation aims to shed light on the dynamics of secessionist framing, that is how politicians interpret events and present arguments with the intention to mobilize their constituencies for independence.

I fundamentally argue that from the standpoint of what sort of identity constitutes the basis of a nationalist movement, the most crucial factor is whether there is a widespread perception of internal threat associated with the presence of a local minority. Where such perceptions emerge and become widespread, collective identity is likely to be framed in an ethnically exclusive way, as a result inter-ethnic relations are often marked by serious tensions. By contrast, in the absence of such perceptions, frames communicating an ethnically inclusive national self-understanding tend to dominate, which are less likely to alienate ethnic minorities, thus can contribute to the maintenance of ethnic peace.

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Contents

I. Theoretical introduction	1
Research context	1
Possible explanations	6
“Framing” nationalist movements	11
Three Mobilizational Frames.....	16
THE ARGUMENT	23
Research design and case selection.....	42
II. Mobilization for independence in Slovenia	46
Introduction	46
Antecedent discourses in Slovenia.....	52
Event: “The trial of the four”	65
Framing the Kosovo conflict	74
Framing the constitutional amendments in Slovenia	77
The ‘economic war’	82
The election campaign in 1990.....	83
The referendum campaign.....	91
Conclusions	99
III. Mobilization for independence in Croatia	103
Introduction	103
The political climate and discourse in Croatia before the spring of 1990.....	107
The discourse of the Croatian communist party in the late 1980s.....	115
The 1990 Elections.....	130
The parties.....	131
The campaign – the main themes.....	135
Campaign of the HDZ.....	138
<i>HDZ and the Croatian Serbs</i>	143
<i>The KNS</i>	146
<i>SKH-SDP</i>	148
<i>Perceptions of the Electorate</i>	150
The HDZ rule and the referendum on independence.....	152
Conclusion.....	157

IV. Discursive construction of the Montenegrin independence movement	160
Introduction	160
The beginning of the independence movement	163
1. Frame shift: the government adopts a pro-democracy position.....	169
2. Frame shift: from the goal of democracy to the goal of independence.....	182
3. Frame shift: after the fall of Milošević.....	193
4. Frame shift: the EU intervenes	205
5. Frame shift: the Belgrade Agreement takes independence off the agenda	214
6. Frame shift: referendum May 2006.....	220
Conclusions	232
V. Testing the model outside Eastern Europe: Spain and Indonesia as plausibility probes	
.....	239
East Timor	240
Aceh	248
Catalans	257
Basques.....	264
Conclusions	271
VI. Conclusions.....	274
Bibliography	287
Newspaper articles	300

I. Theoretical introduction

Research context

Ample attention has been given internationally to the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), as a result of which several theories have been constructed aiming to provide explanations for its break-up. Since its dissolution the successor state called Serbia and Montenegro faced further self-determination movements, namely in Montenegro, Voivodina, and Kosovo, which resulted in the break up of the remaining core state.

Interestingly, the various movements were framed very differently while political leaders tried to garner support for their state building ambitions. During the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Slovenia was the only country that claimed to seek independence mainly on economic grounds. In Croatia, historical and ethno-nationalist arguments dominated the discourse on independence. Among the more recent cases, economic arguments played a prominent role in Voivodina's autonomy movement and were also used in Montenegro during mobilization where, however, a reformist, pro-democracy rhetoric became the most salient. Kosovo is the only recent case in which self-determination elites have not tried to achieve their aims by emphasizing economic factors. The Albanians of Kosovo seeking independence hardly put forward claims based on economic reasons, but mostly advanced their demands on the bases of repression from Serbia, national identity, legal status and constitutional issues.

Unlike during the break up of Yugoslavia, now both poor and rich regions relative to the center began to employ economic arguments to support self-determination claims. During the disintegration of Yugoslavia, economic arguments also played a significant role, but were primarily used by the more developed republics. The question arises why in some

cases of self-determination elites push for a higher level of sovereignty in the name of economic advancement, whereas in other cases, self-determination movements refer to ethnic identity, human rights issues and other kind of rationale. Second, in some cases economic arguments do not correspond to economic realities – according to the World Bank, the IMF or other well-respected institutions. Instead, nationalizing elites have used questionable data, arguments and logic. As Yoshiko M. Herrera observed while studying the activism of Russian regions where economic arguments were used extensively, “one cannot escape the suggestion that in many cases regional elites did not see the same economic conditions and prospects for the regional economy as “objective” analysis would suggest. Over and over, regional leaders made statements about the economy that did not seem to match the observations of outside analysts. Instead, the expressed economic interests advanced by regional elites corresponded somewhat tenuously to the economic indicators contained for example in the data sets of the Russian State Statistical Committee (Goskomstat) or the Ministry of Finance.”¹

Therefore, the issue is especially puzzling, since several studies suggest that there seems to be no relationship between the usage and the validity of economic claims: sometimes elites press for higher degree of self-administration and obtain popular support on the basis of economic justification, when in the opinion of outside analysts such outcomes would be economically disastrous.²

Moreover, not only were the various movements anchored in a different kind of reasoning but by taking a closer look at them it becomes apparent that none of them relied

¹ Yoshiko M. Herrera, *Imagined Economies, The Sources of Russian Regionalism*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 9.

² Montenegro's independence movement in the early 2000s represented such a case in light of expert opinions about the state of the Montenegrin economy. See Daniel Gros, “Montenegro 2010”, in *The Future of Montenegro, Proceedings of an Expert Meeting*, ed. Nicolas Whyte (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 26 February 2001), 65-79; European Stability Initiative Report, “Rhetoric and Reform, A case study of institution building in Montenegro 1998 – 2001”, Podgorica and Berlin, 28 June 2001; Dragan Đurić, “The economic development of Montenegro”, in *Montenegro in Transition*, ed. Florian Bieber (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2003).

solely on a single type of discourse. It is true that in Slovenia the campaign before the independence referendum was dominated by a rhetoric referring to economic interests. Yet, throughout the course of the movement sometimes a discourse highlighting the uniqueness of Slovenian language and culture was the most salient while at other times a rhetoric arguing in the name of democracy and human rights. Similarly in Montenegro, during the whole ten-year course of mobilization, economic arguments acquired primacy only during certain periods, while at other times they were hardly mentioned. Most often independence was framed as the necessary condition of democratic development, economic reforms, the respect of human and minority rights and rejoining Europe. Therefore, it seems that instead of independence movements being rooted in a single type of discourse, mobilization rhetoric most often emerge from an ever changing discursive field densely populated by competing discourses. As a result, frames on sovereignty keep shifting over time; and actors during different periods employ different kind of arguments.

The fundamental question arises why some movements are framed by certain types of arguments and not by others. Why did the Montenegrin independence movement rely so heavily on a pro-democracy rhetoric and why did economic arguments become so central in Slovenia? How can it be explained that in Croatia ethno-nationalist themes dominated while references to economic reasons remained marginal?

The question should be also raised here why framing matters with respect to autonomy or independence movements in general and to the present cases of self-determination. In other words: why should we care about how a movement is framed? Are there different material consequences to a movement rooted in an ethno-nationalist discourse versus one based on economic or pro-democracy arguments?

This study is based on the assumption that framing influences inter-ethnic dynamics during the course of a self-determination movement in a multi-ethnic setting. V. P. Gagnon JR. makes a similar claim in his book *The Myth of Ethnic War*. He argues that ethnic mobilization carried out by HDZ alienated the Serbian minority from the Croatian majority, which was partially responsible for the radicalization of Croatian Serbs (the other reason was the Serbian government's support for Serbian extremists in Croatia). Gagnon argues that before HDZ came to power, during the elections in the spring of 1990 the majority of the Croatian Serbs supported the ex-communist SKH party as was reflected by the election results. These revealed that only a minority of them (13,5%) chose the Serbian nationalist party, the SDS.³ According to Gagnon, HDZ's and SDS' pursuit of "policies of violent conflict which they framed, explained and justified in ethnic terms" led to the creation of homogenous political spaces in which everything became defined as "anti-Croat" or "anti-Serb". One effect of these developments was the alienation of the Serbian minority from the Croatian majority thus the deterioration of inter-ethnic relations in Croatia.⁴

Therefore, while mobilization centered on ethnicity tend to exclude minorities from the national community, by contrast movements employing economic or pro-democracy arguments tend to express claims with reference to a territorial unit not to an ethnic group. Thus they are less likely to alienate minorities than so called "primordialist nationalist" arguments referring to ethnic identity. Consequently, it can be argued that a relevant aspect distinguishing mobilization discourses from each other is whether they define collective identity in ethnically inclusive or exclusive way. Thus, in the name of what independence is sought matters a great deal in a multi-ethnic society. Discourses creating ethnically

³ V. P. Gagnon Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War, Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s*, (Cornell University Press, 2004), 35-37.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

exclusive identities can alienate minorities and lead to inter-ethnic tensions and violent conflict, while an ethnically inclusive discourse can contribute to inter-ethnic peace, as the case of Montenegro demonstrates. Moreover, even in Croatia from the outsider's point of view framing the nationalist movement by a rhetoric that would have included the Croatian Serbs into the nation would have made more sense than excluding and alienating them by an ethno-nationalist discourse. Branka Magaš posed the question in 1988 speculating about the future of Croatia of "why not a movement centered on democratic and social demands?".⁵

Therefore, mobilization rhetoric have serious consequences on ethnic relations during secessionist movements, as they influence greatly whether the mobilization process internally will be marked by ethnic conflict or inter-ethnic peace. Secessionist movements are a particular type of social movements having a specific political goal: independence. The present dissertation aims to explain how and why certain discourses come to dominate some independence movements and not others. Thus my goal is to explain the dynamics of secessionist framing, that is how politicians interpret events and present arguments with the intention to mobilize their constituencies for independence.⁶ I argue that the perception of internal threat associated with the presence of an ethnic minority in the secessionist entity determines whether collective identity will be framed in an ethnically inclusive or exclusive way. Yet, before outlining the argument in detail, possible explanations will be introduced briefly in order to see to what extent the existing literature on ethnic conflict, the disintegration of Yugoslavia and social movements help us to answer this research question.

⁵ Branka Magaš, *The destruction of Yugoslavia, Tracing the Break-up, 1980-92*, (London: Verso, 1993), 129.

⁶ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, (2000): 611-39.

Possible explanations

Comparing events in Croatia and Slovenia can demonstrate well the importance of what kind of discourse politicians use during an independence movement. One might wonder why the two republics followed such different trajectories while pursuing secession as they shared a lot of similarities during the Yugoslav period. They were natural allies during federal debates in the 1980s due to shared economic interests in light of which it is surprising how much their independence movements differed from each other. Both republics belonged to the so-called more developed regions of Yugoslavia, fought for similar goals in the federal bodies and based upon their economic interests together became the proponents of further decentralization, seeking to transform Yugoslavia into a confederation. While in the 1980s Croatia and Slovenia presented the same economic arguments during debates about how to reform the federation, rhetoric referring to economic reasons became salient only in Slovenia while in Croatia remained marginal during domestic mobilization. The “pragmatic” economic image of the Slovenian movement coincided with a more peaceful outcome and less violence on the ground. At the same time, in Croatia an openly nationalist rhetoric accompanied rising tensions and violence, resulting in a civil war. In light of the different outcomes, it seems legitimate to ask why despite these visible structural similarities and common interests, mobilization for independence followed such a different course in the two republics.

The various explanations constructed to account for the disintegration of Yugoslavia fail to address this puzzle. Most of these approaches such as the ones presented by Susan Woodward, Laslo Sekelj or Ana Dević portrayed the different nationalisms which sprang up in the Yugoslav republics in the late 1980s as if these belonged to the same class of events, each being a manifestation of selfish ethnic nationalism. Hence these authors did not try to account for the different character of the movements, as they regarded the

nationalism of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as equally responsible for the country's collapse.⁷ Similarly, economic explanations of the Yugoslav disintegration such as those forwarded by Milica Uvalić and Milica Zarkovic Bookman did not aim to give reasons for why economic arguments were dominant in Slovenia but not in Croatia during popular mobilization, but were interested mostly in revealing the economic reasons fueling the break up.⁸ Likewise, Gagnon, who focused on the role of elites in forging ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia did not seek to answer the question as to why different arguments dominated in Slovenia and Croatia, but was concerned with explaining how and why ethno-nationalism became widespread in the country.⁹

Some primordialist accounts of the Yugoslav break-up such as the one presented by Ivo Banac do address the question of why Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian nationalism assumed such a different character. Yet, primordialists essentialize demands meaning that they assume that the arguments presented by nationalists are the reasons why they want to secede. Primordialists fundamentally take nationalist claims at face value presuming that people mobilize because of existing ethnic differences, thus promoting essentialist theories of secessionist framing.¹⁰ According to Banac for instance, while Croatian and Slovenian

⁷ Laslo Sekelj, *Yugoslavia: The Process of Disintegration*, (Boulder, Colorado: The Social Science Monographs, Columbia University Press, 1993); Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1995).; Ana Dević, "Ethnonationalism, Politics and the Intellectuals: The Case of Yugoslavia," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 11, no. 3 (1998).

⁸ Milica Uvalić, "Yugoslavia: The Economic Costs of Disintegration," EUI Working Papers, European University Institute, Florence, 1992; Milica Zarkovic Bookman, "Economic Issues Underlying Secession: the Case of Slovenia and Slovakia," *Communist Economies and Economic Transformation* 4, no. 1 (1992). For more economic explanation of Yugoslavia see: Daniel Ottolenghi and Alfred Steinherr, "Yugoslavia: Was it a winner's curse?" *Economics of Transition* 1 (2) (1993); Ivo Bićanić, "The Economic Causes of New State Formation During Transition," *East European Politics and Societies* 9, no. 1 (Winter 1995).

⁹ V. P. Gagnon Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War*.

¹⁰ Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History*, (New York: St. Martin's, 1993). For more examples of those that argued along similar lines see for instance Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," in *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, ed. Clifford Geertz (London: Free Press, 1963); Daniele Conversi, ed., *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the Study of Nationalism*, (New York: Routledge, 2002).

nationalism were rooted in a pro-democracy and human rights tradition, Serbian state building was greatly influenced by the inherently xenophobic, intolerant and authoritarian culture of Serbian small peasants, which also explains its expansionist tendencies.¹¹ Thus he accounted for the different character of Serbian and Croatian nationalist movements by pointing to the difference in national identities between Serbs and Croats. In a similar vein, Sabrina Ramet explained the aggressive nature of Serbian nationalism by drawing attention to the backward, inward looking culture of Serbian peasants, thus basing her argument on supposedly inherent, existing national characteristics. Although these essentialist theories differentiate between “progressive” and “backward” nationalism, they focus solely on the emergence of various ethnonationalist discourses, without saying much about alternative ones.¹² These approaches cannot explain, for example, why some movements are based on economic arguments if people mobilize for independence due to ethnic differences. In addition, the fact that the same group may press for independence at some times but not others, and the fact that some groups seek secession while others do not, suggest that secessionist mobilization and its discourse is driven by other factors besides identity.

However, not only these explanations of the Yugoslav break-up but most theories on ethnic conflict fail to address the question why people mobilize by different arguments. Most of the literature on ethnic conflict fails to problematize demands but is generally interested in explaining why and under what conditions mobilization takes place. Non-essentialist theories of secessionist framing such as those presented by constructivists maintain that group identities are fluid and can be manipulated by political entrepreneurs through political discourse, thus constructivists do not assume an automatic transmission

¹¹ Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

¹² Sabrina Ramet, “Nationalism and the ‘idiocy’ of the countryside: the Case of Serbia,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19, no.1 (1996).

from reality to claims.¹³ Yet, most constructivist scholars do not problematize demands either but raise the question as to the conditions under which groups tend to mobilize. Institutionalists for instance do not aim to explain the emergence of different discourses but try to identify what kind of institutional environment might fuel mobilization.¹⁴ Similarly, scholars focusing on structural conditions assign importance to how attributes such as group size, territorial concentration or location influence groups' engagement in separatism, but say nothing about what sort of arguments lead groups to mobilize.¹⁵ Likewise, while elite theories convincingly demonstrate that elites driven by strategic considerations are able to shape collective identities, they do not really explain how demands change over time and why certain type of discourse dominates in some places but not others.¹⁶ Although Rogers Brubaker's model of triadic relationship between a national minority, a nationalizing state, and an external national homeland and Erin K. Jenne's theory of ethnic bargaining aim to explain the changing dynamics of claim making (thus come close to addressing the central question of this dissertation), these theories account for the radicalization of demands without considering the kind of justification given by nationalists to support these demands.¹⁷ Altogether, while most constructivist theories recognize that identities are malleable, and take different forms based on structural conditions, the institutional

¹³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1991); Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

¹⁴ For institutionalist accounts see for instance Ronald Grigor Suny, *Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); and Philip Roeder, "Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization," *World Politics* 43 (1991):196-232; Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and Destruction of Socialism and the State*, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹⁵ Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," in *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, ed. Michael Brown, Owen Cote, Sean Lynn-Jones, and Steven Millers (MIT Press, 2001), 35-41; Monika Duffy Toft, *Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests and the Indivisibility of Territory*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97, no.1 (February 2003):75-76.

¹⁶ For elite theories see for instance: Paul Brass, *Language, Religion, and Politics in North India*, (Cambridge University Press, 1974); Michael E. Brown, "The Causes of Internal Conflict: An Overview," in *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, ed. Michael E. Brown, et. al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

environment and the interests of nationalist leaders, they fail to explain why ethnicity takes center stage in some cases of secessionist movements but not in others.

Yoshiko Herrera in her book *Imagined Economies* directly addresses this research question by asking why economic arguments became salient in some Russian regions but not in others despite very similar economic conditions. She argues that everything is a matter of interpretation, including the economic situation within each region. Thus economics – not just politics and culture – can be analyzed in terms of historically, socially constructed ideas. Herrera argues that economic advantages and disadvantages emphasized by self-determination elites are “imagined:” they may or may not correspond to economic reality, which helps explain why theories focusing on objective economic conditions and interests cannot account for secessionist outcomes. According to “imagined economies,” economic interests are formed via a process of interpreting economic data and conditions, and are not directly given by the region’s socio-economic position. This proposition finds support in the fact that economic conditions are often interpreted by economists themselves in various, often opposing, ways. In this sense, economic interests are not fixed, but rather are created to support certain political actions such as secession.¹⁸ The question therefore is why and how certain interpretations of the economy become dominant in particular situations.¹⁹ In order to understand a particular case of separatism, in other words, the evolving ideas about the economy held by regional elites must be analyzed.

However, some problems emerge regarding this explanation as well. In her discussion of the Sverdlovsk region, Herrera argues that the basis for the movement was a

¹⁷ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Erin K. Jenne, *Ethnic Bargaining*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007).

¹⁸ Yoshiko M. Herrera, *Imagined Economies, The Sources of Russian Regionalism*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹⁹ Herrera, *Imagined Economies*.

sense of economic inequality, which was activated by an emerging opportunity, that of the reformulation of the Russian Federal constitution. In her discussion she implies that this sense of inequality was already there, without explaining *how and why it got there* in the first place, to become the base of the movement of Sverdlovsk. This is an especially interesting question, given that there is no evidence that the Sverdlovsk region was disadvantaged compared to other Russian regions. Another question arises as to why the idea of inequality was not widely shared in other regions that had very similar economic features.²⁰ Confusingly, she also argues that the fight for greater sovereignty was launched to reach the region's economic goals, thereby implying that objective economic interests dominate the actions for mobilization after all.

Despite these problems, the concept of imagined economies is useful for exploring the research question here, in the sense that I will pose similar questions as to why and how a particular interpretation of economic conditions and interests become salient in mobilizing movements for self-determination. This will be the approach followed here in order to explain why economic arguments became salient in mobilizing for self-determination in some cases and not in others.

“Framing” nationalist movements

The question of why some movements are framed by certain arguments and not others is also relevant to the social movements literature, as it raises the question of framing choices of elites. Social movement theorists approach the main question of the social mobilization literature ‘why people mobilize’ in three broad ways. The resource mobilization theorists stress the importance of resources and organizations as the most

²⁰ The explanations that Herrera provides to interpret the Svedlovsk case seem to apply to more regions in Russia. Glasnost and perestrojka, a relatively better economic position with good economic prospects and the opportunity arising as a result of reformulation of the Russian constitution are rather general conditions equally affecting more regions than Svedlovsk.

essential preconditions of mobilization.²¹ Some scholars emphasize the significance of political opportunities – provided by political opening (as result of which society can participate in and influence the system more than before), weakening repression by the state, new stable political alignments and the presence of elites who want change – in prompting mobilization.²² Mark R. Beissinger, who applied social movement theory to nationalist mobilization while studying the Soviet disintegration, focused on changing political opportunity structures as the primary driver of mass mobilization. He demonstrated how early mobilizing groups provided opportunities for subsequent movements to emerge, which led to the spreading of nationalist contention trans-nationally, resulting in what he called the tide of nationalism. Although he convincingly argued that nationalist movements all over the Soviet Union influenced each other, leading to the escalation of demands, he did not address the *type* of claims different groups were making.²³

By contrast, followers of the constructivist approach underscore the importance of framing social and political problems, and consider framing to be at least as important as organization of resources or political opportunities to explain mobilization.²⁴ According to this perspective, the mere existence or absence of grievances does not explain mobilization; whether collective action ensues depends on how grievances are interpreted and how those interpretations are generated and diffused.²⁵ Scholars interested in how movements are

²¹ Mc Adam, Mc Carthy and Zald (eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²² Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edition, 1998); Doug McAdam, “The framing function of movement tactics: strategic dramaturgy in the American civil rights movement,” in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movement Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures and Framing*, ed. D. Mc Adam, J. D. Mc Carthy and M. N. Zald (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 338-55.

²³ Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*, (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²⁴ David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, “Ideology, Frame Resonance and Participant Mobilization,” *International Social Movement Research* 1 (1988): 197-218.

²⁵ David A. Snow et al, “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” *American Sociological Review* 51 (August 1986):464-481, 466.

framed understand framing as meaning construction, that is the production of mobilizing and counter mobilizing ideas and meanings, also called collective action frames. By framing, scholars of social movements mean “interpreting events and occurrences and guiding action, with the intention to mobilize potential adherents, to generate support and demobilize antagonists.”²⁶ Thus, focusing on framing allows us to “examine empirically the interpretative process through which extant meanings are debated and challenged and new ones are articulated and amplified.”²⁷

Clifford Bob in his book *The Marketing of Rebellion* emphasized the importance of mobilizational frames in explaining why certain ethnic groups capture world attention and attract international support while others do not. He argued that movements that manage to market their causes in an effective way will succeed. As movements strive to receive backing from influential NGO’s, they try to frame their struggle in a way that matches the interests and identities of international audiences. Therefore, those movements that manage to frame their goals so that it resonates most with interested third parties will be able to attract international attention and support. For instance, the Ogoni group in Nigeria reframed their ethno-nationalist struggle in terms of environmental grievances, recognizing the latter to be more attractive to international audiences. According to Bob, movement framing is largely driven by the need to mobilize international support. Yet, it should be noted also that attracting foreign support is not the only concern of group leaders, moreover it may not be even the most important one.²⁸ As Saideman et. al convincingly argued, nationalist leaders above all need to mobilize their own constituency, which limits their

²⁶ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611-639, 614.

²⁷ David A. Snow, “Framing Processes, Ideology, and Discursive Fields,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 383.

discursive maneuvering space to shape collective identities according to the interests of potential foreign patrons.²⁹ Moreover, even Bob recognizes that many groups fighting for self-determination do not care about attracting international sympathies. Therefore, while he powerfully demonstrates how ethnic groups sometimes reinvent their identity and change their rhetoric according to the interests of foreign audiences, his approach only partially explains movement framing, since it does not look into how domestic audiences influence framing choices.

Deborah J. Yashar directly raises the question why some movements define themselves in ethno-nationalist terms while others do not. She draws attention to an upsurge of indigenous struggles in Latin America during the last third of the twentieth century, which defined themselves in ethnic terms whereas previously groups used to mobilize as workers, women, leftist, and others. While explaining why indigenous movements emerged now and not before and why in some and not in other places, she draws attention to the significance of changing citizenship regimes.³⁰ She argues that Latin American corporatist regimes that focused on group rather than individual rights granted a certain degree of autonomy for Indians over their land, culture, and provided space for indigenous self-governance. Democratization in the 1980s and 1990s undermined corporatist protection as individual rights and freedoms came to be emphasized. The new citizenship regimes based on the individual threatened indigenous autonomy, which triggered the mobilization of indigenous groups as ethnic communities in order to preserve their autonomy. Although Yashar offers an appealing account of how and why Indians

²⁸ Clifford Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²⁹ Stephen M. Saideman, Beth K. Dougherty and Erin K. Jenne, "Dilemmas of Divorce: How Secessionist Identities Cut Both Ways", *Security Studies* 14, no. 4 (October-December 2005).

³⁰ Deborah J. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

began to mobilize by ethno-nationalist rhetoric in the late twentieth century, her explanation is very specific to the Latin American context, therefore less applicable to the analysis of independence movements in Yugoslavia.

Johnston's *Tales of Nationalism* which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5, also applies frame analysis to nationalist movements. Through conducting in depth interviews, Johnston explores the evolution of the Catalan nationalist movement during the Franco regime and traces the process of how Catalan nationalists, Marxists and Catholics formed an alliance with immigrant Spanish workers through combining the Catalan cultural nationalist frame with Marxism and Catholicism. Johnston powerfully demonstrates how this kind of frame alignment allowed for the emergence of a peaceful resistance movement based on an ethnically inclusive identity.³¹ In a critique of the book, David Laitin notes, "we may not yet know *why* working-class migrants into Catalonia were supportive of Catalan nationalism, or *why* the Catalan leftists and Catholics merged to form a unitarian nationalist movement in opposition to Franco, but from the astute and sensitive discourse analysis in this book, we get a clear sense of *how* this was accomplished."³² Therefore, Johnston's book does not provide a sufficient answer to the question of why certain movements come to be framed by ethnically inclusive or exclusive arguments.

While Herrera, Bob, Yashar and Johnston make an important contribution to our understanding of the framing process' functions in nationalist movements, none of these studies explain why different movements come to be framed differently. Therefore, the fundamental questions remain: what explains the use of different arguments to support self-determination claims and why do different movements adopt different identities.

³¹ Hank Johnston, *Tales of Nationalism: Catalonia, 1939-1979*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991).

³² David D. Laitin, review of *Tales of Nationalism: Catalonia, 1939-1979*, by Hank Johnston, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), *Contemporary Sociology* 21, no. 6 (Nov., 1992): 796-797.

Consistent with constructivist assumptions, it will be held here that identities are fluid, yet are constrained by particular social and institutional contexts, which strongly condition what kind of identities become salient in a given case.³³ It will be argued that although leaders have some degree of freedom to frame identities, their choices are limited by circumstances, particularly by whether the secessionist entity is home to an ethnic minority that is politically linked to the center or a neighbor that is hostile to the movement. If such a minority resides in the secessionist entity, it is likely to be perceived as an internal threat to the movement. In such cases, collective identity is likely to be framed by an ethnically exclusive discourse. However, if the minority is not linked to politically hostile external power, it is likely to be included into the national community that is seeking self-determination. In these cases, the movement will be framed by an ethnically inclusive discourse.

Three Mobilizational Frames

Since the present study aims to explain why different mobilizational frames evolve in different contexts, frame analysis will be the methodology applied here. Frame analysis is a useful analytical tool to trace discursive processes, in as much as it serves as an instrument to categorize statements according to their discursive content. The unit of analysis is thus the mobilizational frame. A mobilizational frame can be defined here as a set of discourses offering an interpretation of a single salient event or an issue with the aim of mobilizing a group of people. The principal types of mobilizational frames examined here are the ethnic security, the democracy and the prosperity frame, since these were the frames used by the movements which were selected as case studies. The ethnic security frame contains arguments that the group's ethnicity, history, culture, and language will be

³³ Stephen M. Saideman, Beth K. Dougherty and Erin K. Jenne, "Dilemmas of Divorce: How Secessionist Identities Cut Both Ways", 610.

better protected in an independent state, while the democracy frame presents independence as a means to realize such ideals as the respect of human rights and the fulfillment of democratic standards. The prosperity frame centers on the idea that secession will bring about economic benefits. Obviously there are many other kinds of frames employed by self-determination movements throughout the world. For instance, there are different types of ideological frames such as the nationalist frame in Catalonia, which combined Marxism, Catholicism and traditional Catalan culture.³⁴ Yet, the vast majority of self-determination movements utilize one or more of these three frames. They therefore serve as master mobilizational devices – generic organizational instruments employed by many movement leaders in a variety of national independence struggles.³⁵

As opposed to mobilizational frames, a discourse refers to a set of statements that express commonly shared understanding about an issue without the explicit aim of mobilizing people. It represents the larger narrative structure in which mobilizational frames (in this context) are embedded. Discourses are the stories we tell about events, actions, institutions that can help us make sense of the world and our role in it. Frames here have a more specific meaning and function.

A discourse becomes dominant if the interpretation it offers becomes the most widely-accepted way of “looking at things”, as citizens internalize the system of classification and mental structures offered by that discourse.³⁶ A frame is a collection of discourses that inform an argument as to why independence is necessary.

³⁴ Hank Johnston, *Tales of Nationalism, Catalonia*.

³⁵ David A. Snow and Robert. D. Benford, “Master frames and cycles of protest”, in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, ed. A.D. Moris and C. M. Mueller (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 133-155.

³⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 16-17.

The ethnic security frame

What is generally characteristic to ethnic security frames irrespective of their specific context is that they define the nation in ethnic rather than civic terms, emphasize distinct cultural, historical traditions, and/or language. Such rhetoric often – though as will be argued below not always – portrays minorities or immigrants as threats to the preservation of national culture, which consequently needs to be defended. The need for greater sovereignty is usually presented by this frame as a means to preserve national identity and/or to restore control over a territory, which is regarded as the historical homeland. It often draws parallels between past and present and interprets contemporary events in light of history, thus invoking national myths and symbols. In HDZ's rhetoric, for instance, constant references to history were meant to legitimate present demands for statehood. A central myth of HDZ ideology was that Croatian ethnonational consciousness was alive throughout history, which was one of the reasons why a Croatian state was a legitimate aspiration.³⁷

As Walker Connor noted, ethno-nationalism musters a high level of emotional commitment and it is a powerful allegiance, going beyond patriotism.³⁸ Ethno-nationalist language evokes a sense of shared blood and kinship among members of the nation, which it portrays as a big family bound together by common ancestors. Ethno-nationalist speeches, therefore, tend to have a strong emotional appeal suitable to mobilize people for great sacrifices. Such rhetoric can command great loyalty, thus is adequate to forge strong unity and solidarity. At the same time, it is an ideal tool to incite hatred against other ethnic groups. By defining the nation in ethnic terms, thus “based upon belief in common

³⁷ Siniša Malešević, *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State*, (Frank Cass, 2002), 103. 255.

³⁸ Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 207.

descent”, it “ultimately bifurcates humanity into ‘us’ and ‘them’”.³⁹ By setting up political battle lines on the basis of presumed primordial differences between groups, conflict is relatively easy to provoke.

In Montenegro, the opposition parties, which favored retaining a joint state with Serbia argued along ethno-nationalist lines and denied that a Montenegrin identity existed separate from the Serbian identity. By referring to this shared ethnic identity between Serbs and Montenegrins they questioned the legitimacy of Montenegrin independence aspirations. According to them, since the two republics were “connected by one people and one flesh and blood” the unity between Serbia and Montenegro was unbreakable.⁴⁰ In their view, Montenegro’s Orthodox majority had a Serb ethnic identity, to which minorities, among them Albanians and Bosniaks posed the greatest danger.

The democracy frame

The democracy frame is similar to the civil society master frame in John K. Glenn’s *Framing Democracy*. He called the pro-human rights rhetoric of civil society actors the civil society master frame because social movement leaders were mobilizing people against the communist regimes by referring to human rights issues. They drew upon the historical dichotomy of an oppressive state against society. It was a master frame because it was used in many countries across Eastern Europe. This frame was composed of three interrelated claims: “because the Leninist regimes were violating human rights [the claim of the injustice] held in common by citizens across classes [definition of national identity], one should support non-violent action designed to pressure the regime to reform itself by legal

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Gordana Borović, “The Orthodox New Year in Podgorica, A Concert with the Patriarch and a General,” *AIM*, Podgorica, 15-01-2001.

means [which was the agenda for action]”.⁴¹ In Montenegro where such a frame was used by the elites during mobilization, it was being argued that, independence was needed in order to ensure the respect of human rights, to carry out democratization and to join the European community. Thus, independence was presented as a precondition of reaching these ideals, the realization of which was not possible within the frames of the common state with Serbia. According to this logic, democratization represented the highest aspiration, and independent statehood was only a means of reaching them. The democracy frame, therefore, conveys a non-nationalistic image by suggesting that democratic and human rights struggles are higher aims than independence. Moreover, such rhetoric implies that all people living on the territory of a secessionist entity are accepted as co-nationals, thus defining the nation in inclusive terms. Since according to Glenn’s definition, the civil society master frame was targeted against communist regimes, the democracy frame has a slightly broader meaning because it denotes mobilizational frames, which are being used against autocratic regimes and not only against communists. Moreover, the democracy frame calls for independence while the civil society master frame does not.

The civil society master frame also dominated during certain periods in Slovenia, yet it was not really used to justify demands for sovereignty. It was employed the most by various social movements fighting for different human rights issues, which were not much concerned with Slovenian statehood. Still, since this frame mobilized Slovenian society on a mass scale, it ended up defining Slovenian national identity in the late 1980s. “The platform for homogenization of the Slovene nation has been the struggle for political democracy, the defense of fundamental human rights, the battle for a legal state,” is how

⁴¹ John K. Glenn, III, *Framing Democracy, Civil Society and Civic Movements in Eastern Europe* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 144.

Tomaz Mastnak described this process of national mobilization.⁴² Calls for greater autonomy were linked to this frame only implicitly. As Slovenia came under fierce criticisms for its liberalizing tendencies, sovereignty came to be viewed as necessary condition of democratization.

The prosperity frame

This frame justifies aspirations for secession by referring to economic reasons. It usually contains arguments of injustice based on exploitation by or inequality to the center.⁴³ The perception of and talk about economic injustices characterized the economic discourse both in Slovenia and Montenegro. It was argued in both republics that economic crisis and bad policies in the political center were holding back their economic development. Consequently, without Belgrade the republics could realize their economic potential much more effectively.

Notwithstanding the fact that Slovenia and Montenegro had very little in common from an economic standpoint, in both cases the economic discourse contained detailed calculations about the costs and benefits of independence. These estimates were meant to demonstrate the desirability of the secessionist agenda from an economic point of view. Frequent reports were published by well respected local economists who calculated the costs of separation while projecting the expected gains in numerical terms. Regardless of how dubious these estimates were in the view of foreign analysts, arguments referring to these results were meant to convince the population that the republics would be economically viable on their own. More importantly, this kind of reasoning gives the impression that independence is being sought on a rational basis.

⁴² Quote from Tomaz Mastnak in Branka Magaš, *The destruction of Yugoslavia*, 148.

⁴³ The same can be concluded by reading Herrera's book entitled *Imagined Economies*, where sovereignty movements in Russia were investigated. Yoshiko M. Herrera, *Imagined Economies, The Sources of Russian Regionalism*.

In terms of ethnic relations, if secession is desirable because of the expected absolute economic gains from independence, then it follows that every citizen will benefit from independence, and potential gains will not flow to just one ethnic group within the population. Therefore, economic arguments automatically create inclusive identities. Moreover, the prosperity frame portrays a non-nationalistic, pragmatic image as it alludes to pure material interests not to some kind of ideology, national ideals, collective belongings or emotions. By emphasizing economic arguments instead of talking about identity, movement leaders demonstrate their non-nationalist orientation. It should also be noted that the prosperity frame most often contains “prospective arguments”, meaning arguments that refer to future rewards. They rest on the premise that, freed from the federation, the republic could realize its full economic capacity. For instance, the Montenegrin president argued during the referendum campaign that “Montenegro, with its resources and population, would experience a fast and strong prosperity as an independent country”, which was an example of the prosperity frame.⁴⁴ Such claims concentrate on positive future opportunities rather than on how to resolve problems in the present. In Montenegro it would have been difficult to argue for secession by referring to current economic conditions, considering that the republic was as poor as Serbia itself. In Slovenia it was easier to claim that in light of the apparent development gap between the republic and the rest of Yugoslavia, independence seemed to be a rational decision. Yet, even in Slovenia, independence had many inherent economic risks, such as losing the Yugoslav market or membership in international financial institutions, the consequences of which were hard to predict. Therefore, no matter how well developed

⁴⁴ “Vuĳanović: We shall agree on the quality of the union of independent states”, *Pobjeda*, Mina News Agency, 16-05-2006.

Slovenia was, economic arguments expressed mostly unverifiable and uncertain expectations about the future.

THE ARGUMENT

Nationalist Frames

Mobilizational frames not only contain justifications for independence movements but also construct movement identities. As stressed earlier, how identities are framed is an important aspect of nationalist movements and is worth studying in itself considering that the type of frame chosen has consequences on inter-ethnic relations during the mobilization process and in the post-independence period.

Scholars categorized nationalist frames according to different criteria. Some scholars of nationalism have hypothesized the existence of different types of nationalism by drawing a distinction between the civic/political and cultural/ethnic variants. The civic conception of the nation, which is linked to the British and French political tradition as formulated by Ernest Renan or John Stuart Mill stresses political participation in a community of citizens who are bound together by sharing a common legal system, territory and a state.⁴⁵ This interpretation equates nationality with citizenship, which Anthony D. Smith called the “western standpoint”.⁴⁶ By contrast, the ethnic/cultural conception of the nation views nations as defined by descent rather than territory where membership in the community is determined by the identity of one’s parents. Thus people are born into the nation and cannot choose to be part of it. In the German tradition, for instance, the national community is based on members sharing a common language, traditions, culture and customs and the idea of common ethnic belonging.

⁴⁵ Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?” in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 41-55; John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1991).

It is relevant which interpretation is chosen because the civic conception defines national identity in ethnically inclusive terms while the ethnic/cultural version sometimes – though not always as will be seen later – reflects an ethnically exclusive understanding of nationhood, which has a serious impact on multi-ethnic harmony. As was argued earlier, giving national identity an ethnically exclusive interpretation alienates other ethnic groups in the society, who automatically become outsiders, non-members of the national community, which in the worst case scenario can lead to ethnic conflict. Yet, while nationalist frames can be categorized according to whether they construct national identity in civic versus ethnic/cultural terms, most often groups seeking self-determination do not fit into these categories neatly across space and time. It means that having an ethnically inclusive or exclusive identity is not a fixed, intrinsic attribute of particular communities. It will be demonstrated through case studies that several conceptions of the nation can coexist simultaneously as various political groups can uphold different ideas of collective identity. As these different interpretations compete with each other, sometimes the civic version, and at other times the ethnic version, acquires primacy. Therefore, following Saideman et al., it will be argued here that group identities are malleable and that individual agents sometimes succeed in changing the dominant group identity.⁴⁷ The present study will deconstruct the mechanism by which this occurs.

Another typology of nationalist frames was introduced by S. M. Saideman et al., according to which movement entrepreneurs can choose between three main categories of identities: territorial, communal or ideological. Forging a territorial identity includes everyone living on a certain territory, in a region distinct from the core, whereas communal identities are “tribal allegiances” relying on bonds defined by ethnicity, race, culture,

⁴⁶ Anthony D. Smith, “Definitions,” in *Theories of Nationalism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 177.

⁴⁷ S. M. Saideman, 611.

language and the like.⁴⁸ Ideological identity is the most malleable of the three because it is a matter of the individual's political choice and can be changed over time. The authors' main argument was that movement leaders strategically and consciously select these identities during mobilization for secession and that they "layer" different identities in order to maximize domestic and outside support at each point of the independence struggle.⁴⁹

Yet, communal identities can also be ethnically "inclusive" as the case of Macedonia demonstrates. The Macedonian elite chose a "Hellenic" communal identity for its nationalist movement in the early 1990s as opposed to a Slavic Orthodox identity in order not to alienate its Albanian minority.⁵⁰ Therefore, how a movement influences inter-ethnic relations depends not so much on whether a chosen identity is communal or territorial (in self-determination movements at least one of these two are almost always in use), but whether membership in a community is defined in ethnically exclusive or inclusive terms. As will be demonstrated in chapter 5 through the examples of Catalonia and the Basque country, even ethnic identity, which is a kind of communal identity, can be framed in an ethnically inclusive way. Therefore, I am reformulating the classic ethnic-civic dichotomy and favoring instead the ethnically inclusive-exclusive typology, which I found to be the most relevant to the analysis of how secessionist framing influences inter-ethnic relations. The central question is hence when i.e. under what conditions one type is more likely to be used than the other.

In order to understand why and how an exclusive or inclusive national identity becomes salient in a particular case, nationalist framing has to be examined during the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 614.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 607-636.

independence struggle. In order to realize their political ambitions, secessionist elites frame collective identities and put forward arguments for independence.⁵¹ Mobilizational frames thus set the agenda for the movement, contain arguments for persuasion and also define the movement identity. They develop a collective self-understanding and self-identification for the movement – an identity – which can serve as the basis for collective action, but also establishes the existential boundaries of the relevant national community.

The Framing Process

Social movement scholars disagree about how mobilizational frames emerge. Some interpret framing as a purposive action of “movement entrepreneurs,” who fundamentally construct collective action frames drawing on the “cultural tool-kit” (even if the same scholars admit that no one can be fully in control of the framing process).⁵² This does not imply, however, that movement leaders can ignore the constraint of the existing culture, but ultimately they produce frames “in response to the styles, forms, and normative codes of the target audience”.⁵³ Thus, according to this theoretical approach, frames that resonate more among the population will become dominant, so frame resonance explains ultimately which frames will be popular.

This dissertation follows a different understanding about how frames emerge and become widely diffused and accepted. Following the analytical approach of Vedres-Csígó, it will be shown that master frames are not formulated by political actors in a unified,

⁵⁰ Ibid., 627-32.

⁵¹ Ibid., 608.

⁵² Sidney Tarrow, 1998; D. A. Snow and P. E. Oliver, “Social movements and collective behavior, social psychological dimensions and considerations,” in *Sociological Perspectives on Social Psychology*, ed. K. S. Cook, G. A. Fine and J. S. House (Boston: Allyn&Bacon, 1995), 571-91.

⁵³ T. J. Kubal, “The presentation of political self: cultural resonance and the construction of collective action frames”, *Sociological Quarterly* 39 (1998), 539-54 .

automatic fashion.⁵⁴ Politicians cannot simply construct the best-fitting frame from the cultural repertoire based on some kind of rational calculation. It does not mean that movement entrepreneurs cannot act strategically during the mobilization process. Yet, essentially the frames that finally emerge are outcomes of “meaning contests” that come about as a result of a dynamic interaction, in the “course of discussion of and debate about contested issues and events [...] which [...] encompass not only cultural materials (e.g., beliefs, values, ideologies, myths and narratives, primary frameworks) of potential relevance, but also various sets of actors” who have a stake in the issues.⁵⁵

Framing implies a dynamic process since different representations of a given reality challenge, provoke each other and compete with each other. The emerging mobilization rhetoric is an outcome of such interaction between mobilizing events and challenging discourses, and assumes its form during a process of continuous re-articulation, as movement entrepreneurs are faced with new opportunities and challenges. Some empirical studies from the social movement literature have also found that the collective identity that evolves from such meaning contests “not only emerges from the interaction of activists within a specific movement or movement organization, but it is also produced from the relationships between allies, those opposed to the movement in some fashion, and bystander audiences...”.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Balázs Vedres and Péter Csigó, “Negotiating the end of Transition: A Network Approach to Political Discourse Dynamics, Hungary 1997,” Working Paper, Center on Organizational Innovation, Columbia University in the City of New York, September 2002.

⁵⁵ David A. Snow, “Framing Process, Ideology, and Discursive Fields”, 402.

⁵⁶ Rachel L. Einwohner, “Bringing the Outsiders in: Opponents’ Claim and the Construction of Animal Rights Activists’ identity,” *Mobilization, An International Journal* 7 (2002): 253-268; David S. Meyer, “Opportunities and Identities: Bridge Building in the Study of Social Movements,” in *Social Movements: Identity, Culture and the State*, ed. D. S. Meyer, N. Whittier, and B. Robnett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3-21; Stephen Valocchi, “Gay Collective Action Frames in the Gay Liberation Movement, 1969-1973,” in *Frames of Protest, Social Movements and the Framing Perspective*, ed. Hank Johnston and John A. Noaks (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 53-65.

In order to understand how the Slovenian independence movement developed, for example, the interaction among the communist leadership, the democratic opposition, civil society and Yugoslav authorities needs to be explained. In Slovenia, as the political elite began to put forward its rhetoric advocating higher sovereignty in 1988, it responded to the struggle of social movements fighting for all kinds of human rights issues, for democratic reforms and against communism. In addition, Slovenian demands for sovereignty were formulated against the background of unfolding Serbian nationalism, which Slovenes saw as threatening. The pro-independence frame was further influenced by certain events, which changed Slovenian public opinion, such as the military trial of the *Mladina* journalists and the strike of the Albanian miners in Kosovo. As social movement leaders and politicians responded to these events by offering their own interpretations of events, the discourse on sovereignty simultaneously underwent changes. The so called “Contributions to the Slovenian National Question” published in the literary journal *Nova Revija* in 1987 resembled the nationalist rhetoric adopted by the Croats and the Serbs, referring to ethnicity, history and the nation, yet this type of discourse had faded away by the referendum campaign in late 1990. By tracing events carefully over time, I show how a movement based on a democracy mobilizational frame developed and eventually switched to one based on the prosperity frame in the final phase of the struggle.

From this point of view, a promising insight of the social mobilization literature is the conceptualization of the relationship between political opportunities and frames. Political opportunities are external structural factors that affect the evolution of movements.⁵⁷ Scholars following the political opportunities line of thought focus on *changes* in the political and social structure, which can provide opportunities for

⁵⁷ John A. Noakes and Hank Johnston, “Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective,” 20.

movements to emerge.⁵⁸ Several studies from the framing literature demonstrate that political structure shapes movement framing significantly, and “different structural conditions are conducive to different [...] frames.”⁵⁹

Altogether it will be demonstrated throughout the case studies that often a dramatic transformation of the environment is necessary for the shifting of frames, as movement entrepreneurs view the changing context as an opportunity to alter the existing power-balance through framing. Actors very often adopt a new frame or switch between different frames in order to strengthen their position and increase their legitimacy. It will be described how politicians sometimes very skillfully managed to transform political realities on the ground through framing. This happened for instance in Montenegro in 1997 when Prime Minister Milo Đukanović used the opportunity provided by opposition demonstrations in Serbia to turn against Milošević. By embracing a pro-democracy, Western agenda he positioned himself not only personally against the Serbian president but against everything he symbolized - his authoritarian, anti-European, isolationist policy. Through making this rhetorical move, he quickly won the support not only of his party, but also managed to attract strong popular backing as indicated by his election victory at the 1997 presidential elections. As it will be explained in greater detail in the chapter 4, the demonstrations in Serbia that enjoyed considerable support in Montenegro provided the opportunity for Đukanović to turn against Milošević, which explains the timing of his decision. He used the democracy frame, because Milošević’s violation of democratic principles was the issue that caused public anger. By this discursive maneuver he changed

⁵⁸ Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, “Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes – toward a more synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements,” in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 12.

⁵⁹ R. Koopmans and J. W. Dyvendak, “The political construction of the nuclear energy issue and its impact on the mobilization of anti-nuclear movements in Western Europe,” *Social Problems* 42 (1995), 235-51; M. Diani, “Linking mobilization frames and political opportunities: insights from regional populism in Italy,” *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 6 (1996): 1053-69; Elena Zdravomyslova, “Opportunities and framing

Montenegro's political direction and set the republic on a Western oriented, eventually secessionist path. Therefore, framing can have a profound effect on the political environment, as it can change the political direction of a country, transform political dynamics and alter power relations. Findings of the framing literature also suggest that framing sometimes "has an independent influence on movement emergence", which provides another reason as to why it is worth analyzing the framing process of separatist movements.⁶⁰

As was highlighted before, framing is understood here to resemble a dialogue with challenging frames and critiques, "a polyphone discursive battle with mutually exclusive positions taken by various political groups".⁶¹ Mobilizational frames and movement identities emerge from these muddled, highly interactive discursive processes during which political players seek to produce frames with which their constituents can identify. Yet, as this dissertation argues the outcomes of these struggles during independence movements are greatly determined by the existing configuration of constraints, mostly by the internal perception of threats and the ethnic make up of a given territory. The case studies will provide detailed illustrations as to how existing constraints influence the formation of movement identities. It will be analyzed through specific examples of nationalist mobilization how existing circumstances guide the selection of arguments and the framing of identities.

in transition to democracy, The case of Russia," in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, ed. Doug McAdam, et. al.; John A. Noakes and Hank Johnston, *Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective*, 20.

⁶⁰ Holly J. McCammon, "Stirring Up Suffrage Sentiment: The Formation of the State Women Suffrage Organizations, 1866-1914," *Social Forces* 80 (2001); Daniel M. Cress and David A. Snow, "The Outcomes of Homeless Mobilization: The Influence of Organization, Disruption, Political Mediation and Framing," *American Journal of Sociology* 102 (2000).

⁶¹ Reference to Bourdieu's theory cited in Vedres-Csígó, 6.

Secessionist frames contain justifications as to why independence or autonomy is desirable. In setting forth a mobilization discourse, leaders talk in the name of a collective and thus automatically assign some sort of identity to the group in whose name they are speaking. In this way, they construct an identity for the movement, which can be continuously reconstructed throughout the independence campaign through subsequent speech acts.

During a secessionist movement, the national identity can be constructed in different ways i.e. in an ethnically inclusive or exclusive way. What kind of identity will dominate the independence discourse influences inter-ethnic relations in a multi-ethnic setting, since if identity is interpreted in ethnically exclusive terms, it can easily alienate minorities and trigger ethnic tensions and conflict. Furthermore, whether an independence movement is established on an inclusive or exclusive basis influences subsequent frame selection.

Frames and identities are mutually constituted. Existing identities influence frame selection in a later period while identities are constituted and transformed through framing. Framing a movement and defining national identity happen through the same speech act, i.e. each mobilizational frame presented during the course of a movement assigns an identity to the national collective in one way or the other. The central question is why in some cases ethnically exclusive while in others inclusive narratives become prominent. Therefore, the analysis in this dissertation will focus on the discursive processes through which leaders frame a movement in order to establish the defining paths accounting for the emergence of frames that contain and promote exclusive or inclusive identities (see graph1).

I argue here that from the standpoint of what sort of identity constitutes the basis of a nationalist movement, the most crucial factor is whether there is a widespread perception of internal threat associated with the presence of a local minority. Where such perceptions emerge and become widespread, collective identity is likely to be framed in an ethnically exclusive way. For instance, in the Baltic republics towards the late 1980s, Russians met with hostility from the majority because they came to be perceived as agents of the oppressive Soviet regime. Consequently, ethnically exclusive national identity prevailed and the ethnic security frame dominated, as a result of which inter-ethnic relations were marked by serious tensions.

However, minorities that are ethnic kin of a hostile regime are not always perceived as internal enemies. Internal threat is not an objective condition dependent only on whether a secessionist entity is home to a minority, which shares the same ethnicity with a threatening neighbor or the center. It is rather a matter of perception as the cases of Catalonia and the Basque country demonstrate. In Catalonia and the Basque country in spite of the Franco regime repressing the local language and culture, Spanish speaking immigrants were welcome to integrate, although in principle they could have been easily viewed as a threat to Catalan and Basque identity (which will be explained in detail in chapter 5).

Consequently, where a threatening neighbor or center has ethnic kin within a secessionist territory, the perception of internal threat might or might not emerge as the above-mentioned cases suggest.

It will be maintained here that the main factor which influences fundamentally whether minorities will be viewed as a source of internal threat or not is the kind of

relationship the minority has with the threatening power. Minorities tend to be viewed as a threat if they have political links with the center, and therefore can be easily regarded as agents of the regime from which secession is sought. In the Baltics, the Russian minority had obvious political links with the Soviet center. Immigration of Russians to the Baltic states had been orchestrated by Moscow with the intention to “dilute Baltic population and bolster Soviet loyalties”.⁶² In addition, Russians enjoyed political patronage and were privileged over the locals in their access to housing, services and certain commodities. Moreover, due to being concentrated in economic sectors, such as the heavy industry, which were completely avoided by the locals, Russians lived quite segregated lives from the majority population, and had no incentive to integrate or learn the local languages.⁶³ It has to be emphasized, however, that the fact that an internal minority is viewed as a threat by the majority does not mean that it objectively poses a threat to the secessionist struggle. Rather, the structural position of the minority makes mobilization of the majority by ethnically exclusivist claims possible.

Conversely, if ethnic minorities of a secessionist region have ethnic kin in the neighborhood who do *not* behave in a threatening way, the same minorities are less likely to be perceived as a source of internal threat. For instance in Macedonia, in the early 1990s Serbia represented the greatest danger to the country’s stability. Nonetheless, Macedonian political leaders forged an ethnically inclusive national identity framed by references to the country’s Hellenic heritage in order to foster unity through including the Albanian minority into the nation in the face of a mounting threat emanating from Serbia.⁶⁴ Had Albania or

⁶² David Laitin, “Language Normalization in Estonia and Catalonia,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 23, no.2 (Summer 1992): 159.

⁶³ Gershon Shafir, “Relative Overdevelopment and Alternative Paths of Nationalism: A Comparative Study of Catalonia and the Baltic Republics,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 113.

⁶⁴ S. M. Saideman et. al., 627-632.

Kosovo laid territorial claims on Macedonia during the same period, the Albanian minority could have been easily viewed by the Orthodox Slav majority as a danger to the country's integrity. Accordingly, an ethnically exclusive Slavic identity could have been expected to emerge.

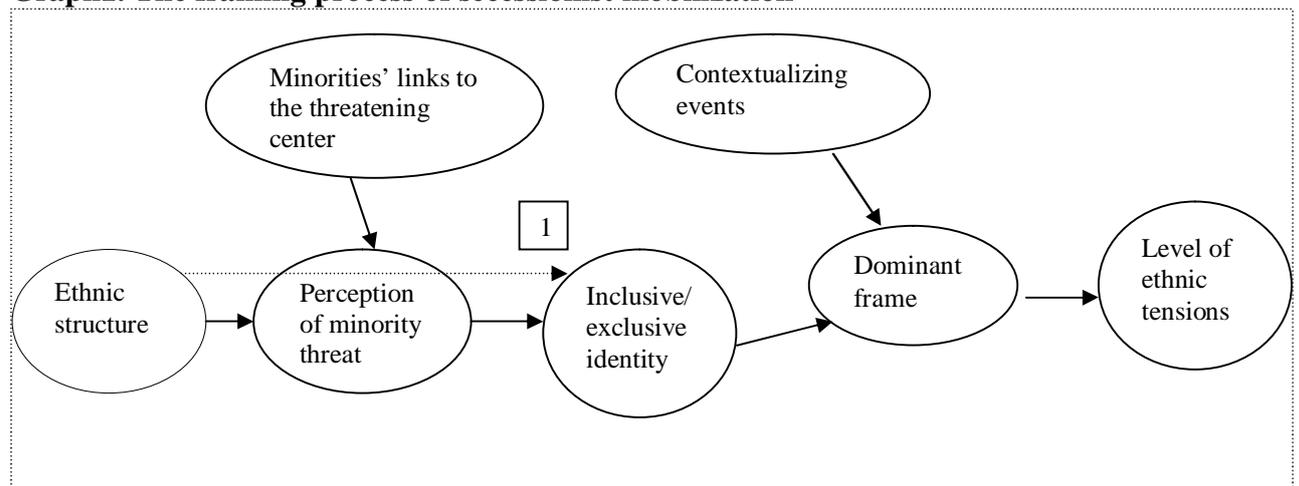
Furthermore, whether the perception of internal threat emerges is also influenced by the ethnic structure of the secessionist territory. Most secessionist entities are ethnically heterogeneous territories, thus representing the middle ground between completely homogeneous and fully fractionalized. This dissertation directly builds on the argument of Donald L. Horowitz addressing the relationship between ethnic structure and conflict he offered in his book *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. He argues that ethnic diversity does not increase the likelihood of conflict in a linear way, but societies with a substantial minority are at the greatest risk of civil conflict, while highly diverse populations are much less conflict prone, similarly to homogeneous ones. In a dispersed system, the state can satisfy a group without compromising the interests of others, thus can behave as a neutral arbiter. Moreover, groups are less likely to escalate their claims as they are hardly able to exert influence beyond their locality. While a high level of diversity encourages cooperation among groups, in societies divided among few large ethnic groups, the claims of one group tend to be made at the expense of others. In such cases, the political center becomes a subject of competition and it is much harder for the state to intervene as a neutral arbiter.⁶⁵ Collier and Hoeffler's findings also support Horowitz's thesis. For the purpose of their investigation they used the ethno-linguistic fractionalization index, which indicates the probability that two randomly selected individuals belong to the same ethnic group. By using statistical analysis they came to the conclusion that the relationship between civil wars

⁶⁵ Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (Berkeley, California; London: University of California Press, 2000), 38.

and ethnic diversity is non-linear, as homogenous and highly diverse societies face a similarly low risk of civil war while those which are polarized into two groups are the most conflict prone.⁶⁶

In line with Collier and Hoeffler’s and Horowitz’s argument, it will be maintained here that these “in between cases” of ethnic heterogeneity where a few large groups dominate are the most prone to ethnic conflict.⁶⁷ By contrast, where the population is nearly mono-ethnic, there is no ethnic minority which could be seen as a source of threat. Likewise, under conditions of high degree of heterogeneity ethnic peace tends to rule as no group can dominate the others. In these relatively rare cases of absolute heterogeneity or homogeneity, the perception of internal threat is less likely to emerge and ethnic exclusion is less likely to happen. Thus, the model to be introduced here builds directly on Collier and Hoeffler’s and Horowitz’s argument, yet goes one step further as it also tries to explain why ethnic exclusion or inclusion happens under conditions of relative ethnic heterogeneity.

Graph1. The framing process of secessionist mobilization



⁶⁶ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “On Economic Causes of Civil War,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 50, (1998); Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil Wars,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, (2004):663-595.

⁶⁷ Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 38.

The above graph summarizes the argument. If the population is ethnically homogeneous or highly heterogeneous, ethnic exclusion is not likely to happen. In the case of the former, homogenous ethnic structure implies that minorities do not reach the necessary size to become a political factor and remain mostly invisible. They will therefore not be viewed as an internal threat. In this case, collective identity is not likely to be established on an exclusive basis because there is no one to exclude.⁶⁸

Likewise, under conditions of high ethnic fractionalization, national identity tends to be framed in an ethnically inclusive way, which is necessary to embrace a high number of diverse groups. When the population is highly heterogeneous, national identity is expected to be framed in an ethnically inclusive way even if there is an ethnic group in the secessionist entity, which has political links with the threatening center, and which consequently could be viewed as a source of internal threat. Despite the presence of such a group, due to the fractionalized ethnic structure collective identity is likely to be set on an inclusive basis, and internal ethnic relations are expected to remain peaceful. In this case, ethnic structure is the key factor defining collective identity and not the perception of internal threat (arrow 1.).

By contrast, under conditions of relative ethnic heterogeneity where the majority of secessionist cases belong, minorities' political links with the threatening center influence fundamentally whether the perception of internal threat emerges or not. If minorities have political connections with the threatening center, they will be easily viewed as a source of internal threat and consequently, collective identity is expected to be framed in an ethnically exclusive way. In such cases, ethnic relations are likely to be tense. However, if

⁶⁸ However, it might be the case that in an ethnically homogeneous region national identity was framed in ethnically exclusive terms historically, *before* the emergence of the independence movement. During secessionist mobilization, especially if the movement faces external threat from the center this exclusive identity might remain dominant despite the fact that there is no minority living in the secessionist entity which might be perceived as a source of internal threat. However, in the absence of minorities living on the territory, in this case exclusivist framing will not result in ethnic exclusion and internal ethnic conflict.

the minority has no links with the threatening external power, national identity is likely to be framed in an inclusive way, and interethnic harmony can be expected.

It should be noted here that the definition of collective identity and the presentation of a mobilizational frame happen at the same time, usually by the same speech. As a mobilizational frame addresses an audience, it automatically defines the basis of membership in the nation. In practice when politicians put forward a frame through which they offer their interpretation of events and present specific arguments for secession, this usually implies a definition of national identity as well. Nevertheless, in the model (see Graph1) identity and the dominant frame are displayed as two separate variables, because as was argued above whether identity will be defined in exclusivist or inclusivist terms depends on two structural conditions i.e. ethnic structure and minorities' links with the threatening center. By contrast, dominant frames are the function of the combined effect of identity and contextualizing events. Contextualizing events are defining events, which provide opportunities for politicians to interpret political reality.

It will be shown through the case studies that some frames are more suitable for constructing inclusive identities than others. The case studies will demonstrate how different identities tend to link up with different kind of frames thus identity choices determine to a great extent what kind of arguments for secession will be used during mobilization. It will be shown that ethnically inclusive identities tend to go along certain discourses, such as the prosperity and the democracy frame or some other type of ideological frame, which create interests to every citizen living on a given territory as opposed to only an ethnic group, which is why such frames rarely accompany exclusive identities. When national identity is defined in an inclusive way as a result of structural

conditions – that is the minority has no links with the threatening center or the population is highly heterogeneous or almost homogeneous – it depends on contextualizing events which particular frame will be used at a certain point in time out of those frames which tend to go along inclusive identities. Contextualizing events strongly affect the content of a frame, as they define the subject of discussion. For instance, as it will be discussed in the chapter about Montenegro, in Montenegro the economic frame became dominant when negotiations with Serbia recommenced about the future of the state in the fall of 2001. As the EU put economic policy issues on the agenda, not only Montenegrin negotiators but also Montenegrin politicians addressing their domestic constituency began to frame the need for independence in terms of economic interests. Montenegrin politicians talked about economics because economic issues were at the center of the negotiations, yet also because economic arguments were suitable to frame collective identity in an ethnically inclusive way.

Finally, the likely consequence of inclusive framing is peaceful ethnic relations. When secessionist mobilizers argue for independence by using arguments which address each and every inhabitant of a secessionist entity regardless of ethnicity, ethnic minorities are more likely to be co-opted into the movement. This means that conflict along ethnic lines between the majority and the minority is less likely to happen.

By contrast, where national identity is defined in exclusive terms, different mobilizational frames are used: such frames that are suitable to address one ethnic group only within the whole population while excluding others. Under such circumstances the ethnic security frame tends to dominate excluding ethnic minorities from the national collective, and this makes ethnic conflict more likely.

It should be also added here that, where the secessionist movement is expected to encounter violent resistance from the center or when contextualizing events include violent incidents, the ethnic security frame will be more attractive as a mobilizational tool regardless whether collective identity is framed in inclusive or exclusive way. The bottom-line is that when secession is perceived as being very difficult, that is when people have to sacrifice their very lives for independence, the ethnic security frame may be an indispensable tool for mobilization, even if national identity is defined in ethnically inclusive terms.

It should be also noted that there is a dynamic relationship between collective identities and perceptions of internal threat. While the latter influences whether collective identities will be framed in an inclusive or exclusive way, existing identities influence whether a minority will be viewed as a threat or not. If national identity is set on an exclusive basis prior to the movement's emergence, minorities are easily viewed with suspicion at the outset of the movement. Thus these two conditions are mutually reinforcing: where perceptions of internal threat emerge, an exclusive identity is more likely to appear, and equally where identity is based on an ethnically exclusive interpretation, minorities are more likely to be perceived as a threat by the majority. Yet, while at first sight the relationship between the two might seem circular, identities do change sometimes throughout the course of a movement. Ethnically exclusive identities tend to shift towards an inclusive interpretation if minorities are politically not linked to the enemy regime, especially if their share reaches a substantial level*.

* Substantial level cannot be specified in numerical terms. When the minority is big enough so that it cannot be ignored, the majority has to define its relationship towards it. In such cases, the minority can be considered substantial. For instance, although in Slovenia immigrants from the rest of Yugoslavia constituted almost 10% of the population, they were below this necessary level of visibility. Not only was their number relatively few but they were dispersed and politically non-organized, therefore most accounts of Slovenian independence refer to Slovenia as an ethnically homogeneous state.

A shift in identities might happen if the share of a minority increases due to immigration, which might trigger the reconsideration of collective identities as happened in the Basque country to be discussed in chapter 5. When the size of a minority reaches a critical mass, meaning that they become visible so that their presence cannot be ignored by the majority any longer, nationalist leaders have to define their relationship to the minority. If the minority is not connected politically to the threatening center and is willing to integrate, nationalist leaders are likely to include them. Separatist enterprises are dangerous enough without having internal enemies. Nationalist mobilizers generally aim to forge national unity as they usually have to face an external enemy i.e. the center from which secession is sought. For this reason, they tend to include minorities if the same minorities have no political connections to the threatening center. At the same time, alienating the minority through an exclusivist discourse would bring additional risks onto the movement. So the critical question is whether this minority is seen as an internal threat during the period of the independence struggle.

The case of Eritrea is another illustration of where traditionally dominant identities were reformulated on the basis of the country's multi-ethnic conditions. In Eritrea, the movement was initially against Ethiopian occupation and led by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). It assumed a Muslim identity in the 1960s and excluded Christians from the nation it sought to liberate. ELF mobilized around a collective identity based on ethnic exclusiveness despite the fact that the population was ethnically diverse i.e. was evenly split between Muslims and Christians. Crucially, Christians also opposed the Ethiopian rule and wished to take part in the national struggle, yet were excluded from the movement by ELF's anti-Christian, Islamist rhetoric. Setting national identity on an exclusive basis by

ELF prompted ethnic tensions within the secessionist entity resulting in sporadic infighting between the ELF and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which promoted a territorially based, ethnically *inclusive* identity for Eritreans. The internal armed struggle ended in 1981 when EPLF prevailed over the Islamic oriented ELF, which was driven out of Eritrea by 1981.⁶⁹ In this case, collective identity could shift towards an inclusivist interpretation as Christians supported the secessionist struggle, were not allied with the occupying power Ethiopia and were numerous enough to successfully challenge the exclusive Muslim national identity. This case illustrates that if a minority is not connected to the threatening center politically, the inclusion of that minority into the national community is the likely tendency, at least on the long run.

Thus identity shifts occur either because separatist leaders recognize that co-opting minorities is useful from a strategic point of view, or because excluded groups contest the definition of that identity, which excludes them from the community as happened in Eritrea. Contesting groups might also succeed because the majority realizes that the minority's support will be critical for fighting a common enemy. Exclusive identities are often challenged when prove self-defeating from a strategic point of view in light of the heterogeneous ethnic make-up of the population.

It should also be mentioned that identities can shift into the other direction as well, from an inclusive to an exclusivist interpretation. If the political center adopts policies, which a regionally dominant group views as threatening to the preservation of its culture and identity, the same group might easily adopt an exclusive identity, especially if the threatening center has ethnic kin on the territory which it uses for its political purposes. The case of Aceh represents such a scenario, which will be explained in detail in chapter 5.

⁶⁹ S.M. Saideman et al, 622-626.

Research design and case selection

In order to establish why nationalist movements are framed in different ways at different times, this dissertation will use case analysis in the Balkans to examine how particular mobilizational frames developed. According to the literature on framing, frames are generated through discursive processes, which “connect events and experiences so that they hang together in a relatively unified and compelling fashion,” and throughout which certain beliefs, events, issues are highlighted and accented as being more salient than others.⁷⁰ The empirical chapters will carefully trace these discursive processes by especially looking at how the prosperity frame, the democracy frame and the ethnic security frame emerged and was used by the Slovenian, the Croatian and Montenegrin independence movements.⁷¹

As the central task of this research is to explain why certain types of frames emerge in some cases and not in others, the dependent variable will be the type of dominant mobilizational frame at each point in the independence movement: the ethnic security frame, the democracy frame and the prosperity frame.

Case selection

The cases to be selected have to fulfill two fundamental criteria in order to fit the scope conditions under which my theory should hold. First, the movements should be secessionist. Second, they have to represent a case of mobilization by the dominant ethnic group of the secessionist entity, as the subject of my inquiry is how the dominant group defines membership in the nation, and what drives the choice of the secessionist group’s mobilizational frames. To ensure variation on the dependent variable of secessionist frames,

⁷⁰ Benford and Snow, 2000, 623.

three cases were selected from the ex-Yugoslav context each presenting a case for the emergence of different mobilizational frames: the Slovenian and the Croatian independence movement during the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and the more recent independence movement of Montenegro. In comparing these three cases, many factors can be controlled for that could account for the choice of different frames. All three republics shared the historical legacy of having belonged to Yugoslavia, had the same history of authoritarian rule, fought against the same Serbian regime led by Milošević, had similar institutions of republican autonomy, and they all were led by secessionist elites. Therefore this selection of cases holds a lot of institutional and regional factors constant while allowing the dependent variable, the mobilizational frame to vary. In Slovenia the prosperity, in Croatia the ethnic security, in Montenegro the democracy frame was the most prominent mobilizational frame, thus they differ on the dependent variable. Also, frames varied over time within the cases, allowing me to test for the argument of how and why mobilizational frames shift over time. Economic arguments were extensively used both in Montenegro and Slovenia. Croatia presents an exception in this regard because there economic arguments were not salient during domestic mobilization. In Montenegro, where the movement started only towards the end of the 1990s, the pro-independence discourse relied the most on the democracy frame, while economic arguments were also used quite frequently. However, the Slovenian movement relied the most on the prosperity frame.

Despite their similarities, the three republics varied according to their ethnic structure considerably. Slovenia displayed the highest degree of ethnic homogeneity, Croatia had one sizeable ethnic minority while Montenegro was fairly multiethnic, there is thus variation on one of the key independent variables as well. Comparing these cases allows us

⁷¹ W. J. Swart, "The League of Nations and the Irish question: master frames, cycles of protest, and 'master frame alignment'," *Sociological Quarterly* 36 (1995): 465-81.

to examine how the variation of ethnic structure influences framing dynamics. In Slovenia, minorities have not become an issue during the independence movement. By contrast, in Croatia and Montenegro where minorities constitute a larger part of the population, inter-ethnic relations were a central issue in the movements. Although Montenegro and Croatia were both home to a sizeable Serbian population and both faced threats from Milošević, mobilization went in very different directions in the two republics. In Croatia the pro-independence discourse relied on an anti-Serb, ethnically exclusive version of Croatian identity, while in Montenegro just the opposite happened, i.e. the independence movement adopted an identity frame, according to which minorities were equal members of the national community.

In addition, by contrasting Slovenia with Croatia one can control for objective economic conditions as the economic position and interests of the two republics were very similar during the SFRY. Yet, economic arguments were used only in Slovenia. While in Slovenia the arguments raised to support independence were overwhelmingly economic in the final phase of mobilization, in Croatia the primary arguments related to ethnicity and history. By contrast, while comparing Montenegro and Slovenia, the dependent variable is the same i.e. both movements used economic arguments extensively. At the same time, the intervening variable of economic conditions varied considerably between these two cases, meaning that Montenegro and Slovenia shared very little in terms of objective economic situation, and yet economic arguments were salient in both republics during the course of mobilization.

It is important to note that the three cases represent two distinct time periods. While Slovenia and Croatia played a role in the disintegration process of the socialist Yugoslavia,

Montenegro did not attempt to secede at the same time, but embarked on the path of secession only in 1997. I divide the three case studies into time segments, each representing a shift in the dominant mobilizational frame. Thus, I examine the causes of shifts in the mobilizational frames not only across cases but also longitudinally. In my analysis, I focus on the transformation of mobilizational frames, which helps me to specify the conditions under which certain types of frames are likely to be used as opposed to others. As was explained above, mobilizational frames can be distinguished from each other based on their discursive content.

In the case studies, I show how the framing process explains the nature and development of each self-determination movement. By relying on newspaper articles and interviews, I examine shifts in salient public discourses that were dominant in these societies during the course of the movements. I sketch how these discourses developed and interacted with each other over time, challenged each other and ultimately facilitated the emergence or maintenance of a particular pro-independence frame. Naturally, the discourse on independence did not appear from scratch but had to be embedded in the discursive field of a particular public sphere at a specific time within a particular set of constraints. Therefore, tracking these discursive dynamics can help us understand how a movement gained a certain character.

The next chapters discuss the Slovenian, the Croatian and the Montenegrin movements, respectively. In order to test whether my theoretical argument holds outside of the Yugoslav context, chapter 5 examines cases of secessionist mobilization in Spain and Indonesia. Chapter 6 summarizes the main findings and closes the dissertation with concluding remarks.

II. Mobilization for independence in Slovenia

“We know from prewar history that 1st of December was the day when Serbs, Croats and Slovenes united into a joint state, this was the national holiday before the war. Now 1st of December is AIDS day. Be careful about your unions!”¹

Introduction

In this chapter, I will trace the mobilization process leading up to Slovenia’s independence. I examine how civil society actors and the political elite interpreted the political, social and economic situation, events and occurrences, identified certain problems, defined collective identity, and guided action.² The movement will be presented here as a rhetorical contest among the main actors who were leading the mobilization process and whose discourse will be analyzed here. These actors were the communist leadership, the conservative cultural elite and social movement leaders.

The discussion will focus on key political events that were salient in the media during these three years; how different actors presented their case for sovereignty by using the opportunity offered by events, while interacting with and challenging each other. I demonstrate that each and every event was used as an opportunity by actors to make a claim for sovereignty i.e. forwarding a frame by drawing on different discourses to forge their arguments. It will also be shown that most of the time they relied on the existing discursive traditions of Slovenia. They were using primarily three types of frames that drew on previous discourses that had been salient in Slovenia already before the independence movement – the *economic*, the *ethno-nationalist* discourse and the *civil society master*

¹ Delo commentary on Republic Day (held on the 29th of November) under the caption “Unification Day”, Dušan Damjanović, “‘Special jokes’ as present for the republic,” *Politika*, Belgrade, 06-11-1988.

² Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Process and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, (2000):611-39.

frame. The chapter will begin by introducing these three antecedent discourses in more detail. The economic discourse which the prosperity frame was based on had been present since the formation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. According to this discourse, Slovenia's economy was exploited by federal economic policies, its wealth being channeled to poorer regions, and its development held back by Yugoslavia. This perception of economic injustices fueled popular frustrations and repeatedly raised the question of Slovenia's status in the federation.

The ethnic security frame relied on the ethno-nationalist discourse which fed on widespread public perceptions according to which Slovenian culture and language were being threatened. Its main presenters were writers and conservative intellectuals around the literary journal *Nova Revija*, who besides taking a strong anti-communist line, stressed Slovenian cultural, historic and linguistic distinctiveness. They were the first to mention the possibility of secession as early as 1987. Lastly, the democracy frame was rooted in the civil society master frame that began to dominate the public debates by the second half of the 1980s. It was put forward by members of the so called Alternative scene – made up by various social movements – and especially by the journal *Mladina*. This frame also carried a passionate anti-communist tone, yet was at the same time anti-nationalist, and focused on the protection of human rights and the promotion of democratization.³ According to this frame, independence was necessary for the protection of democracy and human rights.

While actors were relying on these three kinds of discourses to interpret events, frames were naturally shaped by political events and prevailing public debates, which considerably constrained framing choices. For instance, at the protest meeting which was

³ John K. Glenn, III, *Framing Democracy, Civil Society and Civic Movements in Eastern Europe*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 144.

organized in support of the Kosovar miners in February 1989, a pro-human rights rhetoric was presented, since at issue was the violation of human rights of the Albanians by the Serbian government. Furthermore, during Slovenia's so called "economic war" with Serbia in late 1989, Slovenian politicians put forward economic arguments for sovereignty. In this way, frames shifted as the context changed.

However, some events brought more than one problematic issue to the fore, thus offered more room for framing. For example, during the military trial of the four journalists in 1988, two issues i.e. the violation of human rights of the accused and the right to use Slovenian language during the trial caused public outrage. These two problems offered two framing alternatives, one focusing on the human rights violation aspect through employing the democracy frame, the other on the violation of Slovenian national rights through using the ethnic security frame.

It will be explained throughout the chapter why actors opted for a particular discourse at times when they had more alternatives in principle, and why they shifted their rhetoric at other times. As political actors perceived that they were losing popularity, they often switched to another frame and employed a discourse through which they could strengthen their position and increase their domestic leverage. Framing independence was therefore a long interactive process at the end of which the prosperity frame became the most salient, serving as an effective mobilizational tool.

It should be emphasized that a distinction could be made between arguments presented to different audiences; here the focus will be arguments targeting the domestic public. Thus, arguments put forward in other forums – such the federal and international bodies – will not be concentrated upon.

During the discussion, the terms sovereignty, autonomy and independence will be used interchangeably, because Slovenian politicians usually emphasized Slovenian sovereignty and autonomy without specifying their intentions for the future of the republic. They demanded Slovenian sovereignty but kept an ambiguous stance on the legal status of Slovenia, and advocated confederation meaning the loosening of bonds without separation.

I demonstrate that up until the referendum campaign, frames based on the inclusive and exclusive interpretation of national identity were present simultaneously in public discourse. Frames communicating these two versions of national self-understanding competed with each other; however, during the referendum campaign, it was the civic and thus inclusive interpretation that gained prominence, while the ethnically exclusive version was marginalized.

It will be argued based on the model on secessionist framing that the movement for independence in Slovenia ultimately promoted an inclusive national identity because perceptions of internal threat associated with the presence of a minority were not credible. Yet, this outcome cannot simply be explained by the fact that Slovenia was ethnically almost homogeneous and thus had no minorities on which such a discourse could be based. In Slovenia in 1991 88,3% of the population was constituted by ethnic Slovenes. The rest were autochthonous minorities, among them Italians (0,15%), Hungarians (0,42%), and immigrant minorities from the other republics of Yugoslavia.⁴ As will be highlighted in the following section introducing the ethno-nationalist discourse, in the early 1980s immigrants were commonly viewed as a threat to the preservation of Slovenian identity and culture, indicating that ethnic exclusion was a rhetorical possibility.

⁴ Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, "Population by Ethnic Affiliation, Popis 2002," http://www.stat.si/Popis2002/en/rezultati_slovenija_prebivalstvo_dz.htm.

Yet, although Belgrade posed a true danger to Slovenia indicated by the brief war against the republic in 1991, Milošević never tried to mobilize Serbian immigrants who came to Slovenia to find better job opportunities. This implied that although the condition of external threat existed, it was not connected to the presence of immigrants or other minorities. In the absence of popular perceptions of internal threat, the independence movement could be framed by arguments that promoted an inclusive national identity. Interethnic relations accordingly were harmonious during the mobilization process.

It also should be noted that national identity could be best described as “non-exclusive” or “implicitly ethnically inclusive” in the Slovenian case, as frames which addressed people as citizens and not as co-ethnics were completely silent on the issue of ethnic inclusion or exclusion. For the proponents of these frames, immigrants were simply a non-issue. These frames, hence, never expressed the explicit intention to include immigrants or other minorities into the nation. Yet, the presenters of these frames were concerned about human rights, stressed the importance of citizenship, and at the same time were outraged by the parties that emphasized ethnic identities. They thus explicitly rejected the ethnically exclusive interpretation of national identity. For this reason, throughout the discussion I often use the term civic identity instead of calling it ethnically inclusive national identity.

The chapter will begin with a discussion of antecedent discourses, which were popular in Slovenia before the emergence of the independence movement and which facilitated the pro-independence frames. Then I turn to the presentation of the movement itself, which began with the military trial of the Mladina journalists in mid-1988. The frames that were used to interpret further events in 1989 – such as the protests against Serbian policies in Kosovo, the constitutional amendments and the so called “economic

war” between Serbia and Slovenia – will be also analyzed. Such transformative events captured public attention during these years; therefore, it will be explored how these events were communicated. The second half of the chapter will take a closer look at the election campaign between March-April 1990 and the referendum campaign in November-December 1990 which provided crucial opportunities for politicians to put forward arguments for independence.

It will be shown that until the first democratic elections in 1990, the republic’s communist leadership employed ethno-nationalist rhetoric to support claims for sovereignty, making frequent references to “the uniqueness and the cultural and historic legitimacy of the Slovene nation.” Thus they upheld the ethnically exclusive idea of Slovenian identity while stressing their role as the defenders of the Slovenian language and the nation. During the same period, social movement leaders belonging to the Alternative scene mobilized people via the democracy frame and through communicating the civic version of Slovenian national identity. The election campaign in 1990 brought about a major shift in the leadership’s discourse, as they adopted a more moderate, pragmatic language on sovereignty, and the new democratic opposition formed by conservative intellectuals became the main presenter of arguments stressing ethnic-cultural themes. Before the election campaign, economic arguments could hardly be heard. Yet, in a few months’ time during the referendum campaign economic – and threat based – arguments occupied the main ground.

While analyzing the discourse underlying calls for independence and the kind of national identity they communicated, I specifically look at arguments offered by politicians and social movement leaders that addressed the question of “why Slovenia should be independent”. While writing the chapter I relied heavily on primary material and news pieces collected from the Open Society Archives covering the period between 1988 and

1990, which contained English language translations of news about Slovenia from the Yugoslav Press and the international media. I reconstructed the discourse of the election and the referendum campaigns based on articles received from the FBIS-EEU database, which included daily news from the Yugoslav press (Delo, Borba, Mladina, Slovenian Radio, B-Wire, Tanjug News Agency, etc.) translated into English.

Antecedent discourses in Slovenia

In Slovenia, three types of discourses coexisted and competed with each other before mobilization for independence began: the economic, the ethno-nationalist and the civil society master frame. It is important to introduce these antecedent discourses because actors were relying on the understanding generated by them while constructed the pro-independence frame. Thus, before beginning the discussion on the independence movement, in the following the evolution of these preceding discourses will be outlined in detail. The analysis relies on primary sources mostly newspaper articles translated into English, which could be found in the Open Society Archives covering the period between the 1960s and 1988.

Economic discourse

The perception of and talk about economic injustices had a long history in Slovenia, which politicians drew on later while constructing the prosperity frame during the independence movement. A wide-spread feeling that the economic crisis of Yugoslavia was holding back their economic development and without the federal bureaucracy in Belgrade they could realize their economic potential much more effectively was already present in the early 1980s. Although nobody talked about an independent Slovenia at the

time, the desire to loosen contacts within the federation was already there.⁵ According to the opinion of foreign analysts from those times, Slovene dissatisfaction was fundamentally economic, rooted in a perception of economic exploitation, precipitating the emergence of Slovenian nationalism.⁶

However, the resentment over perceived economic injustices was not a novelty of the 1980s, but had much earlier roots. Economic grievances resurfaced more vocally toward the late 1960s when liberals came to power in the communist party, and as a consequence demands for reforms of the system were raised in Croatia and Slovenia. While in Croatia events led to the emergence of a nationalist movement including calls for independence, in Slovenia an economic scandal forged national unity when the so-called “Road Affair” triggered confrontation between the republican and the federal leadership. In 1969, Slovenia received funding from the World Bank to expend its road network, however, the money was redistributed by the federal leadership for road projects in other republics. The issue caused a public outcry in Slovenia, as people and the leadership saw this as a federal abuse. As a response, Slovenes were charged with nationalism from Belgrade. In 1972, Stane Kavčič, the Slovenian prime minister whose government launched the road project was accused with being a nationalist and had to resign.⁷

Turning back to the 1980s, opinion polls conducted in 1987 and 1988 revealed that the majority of the Slovene population thought that “new prospects of economic development would open in Slovenia, if it was outside of the framework of Yugoslavia.”⁸

⁵ Viktor Meier, “Slovenia suffering from Yugoslavia’s crisis,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27-12-1980.

⁶ Steve Reiquam, “Is Slovenian nationalism on the rise?”, RFE, RAD Background Report/190 (Yugoslavia), 09-08-1983.

⁷ James Gow and Cathie Carmichael, *Slovenia and the Slovenes*, (London: Hurts and Company 2000),56-57.

⁸ 53% of the respondents from the sample of 2000, Poll conducted by the Slovenian Public Opinion Research Institute, “Poll: Slovenes see better life outside of Yugoslavia,” *B-Wire*, 26-10-1987.

However, still a great majority (71,2%) rejected Slovenian secession from Yugoslavia.⁹ The way most Slovenes thought about their republic's economic situation was well described by a commentary from *The Times*, which quoted a Slovenian manager. He expressed the wide-spread sentiment of Slovenes by saying that "if we were alone, we would have no financial problems. We could be an eastern Switzerland or Lichtenstein; between Italy and Austria..."¹⁰ The common grievance fuelling Slovenian discontent was thus the conviction that they had been victimized by Yugoslavia's economic policies.¹¹

At the same time, Slovenes obviously took pride in their prosperous economy. One of the authors of *Nova Revija*, an influential literary journal, which also published the so-called Slovenian National Program in 1987, described Slovenia's economic strength and its economic viability the following way: "Considering that Slovenia embraces 7 percent of the Yugoslav population, [...] produces 18% of the Yugoslav social product and 27% of exports, [...] in the future it is no longer necessary for us to creep under the wings of larger state creations in order to survive as a nation. As figures testify, we have now been *economically defined* as a nation [italics added]."¹²

There was hardly any foreign commentary written about Slovenia that did not mention its remarkable economic performance, which was usually juxtaposed with the fact that Slovenia had to fund the poorer regions like Kosovo without much success. It was also noted that Slovenia's flourishing export activities were held back by federal limits on imports.¹³

⁹ V. Zagorac, "Smole most popular," *Borba*, 03-06-1988.

¹⁰ "Financial strength of republic envied," *The Times*, 13-11-1987.

¹¹ "In Slovenia, 'taboos are falling like dominoes'," *Newsweek*, 21-03-1988.

¹² Citation by Jože Snoj from *Nova Revija*'s 67-68th issue. "Nova Revija again weeps over the fate of Slovenia in Yugoslavia: smoke bombs of 'democracy'," *Borba*, 18-01-1988.

¹³ Most articles noted that although Slovenes do not make up even 10% of the federation's population, they contribute with 18% to Yugoslavia's GNP, 25% to all export and 35% to hard currency earning exports. Depending on the year the numbers have been changing: in 1988 *Der Spiegel* reported that Slovenia's population makes up only 8,4% of the whole Yugoslavia, but the republic contributes with 20% to the

This perception of economic injustice fuelled frustrations and repeatedly triggered debates over Slovenia's role in the federation. The main purveyors of the economic discourse were Slovenian politicians, who put forward economic arguments during debates in the federal institutions and sought higher degree of sovereignty on economic grounds. Slovenia's institutional leverage over the federation made it easier to assert republican interests, since no decision in the presidency could be adopted without Slovenian consent due to the rule of unanimity.¹⁴

Moreover, the debate within Yugoslavia about decentralization versus centralization also emerged in connection to the need of economic reforms. According to the Serbian position, increased federal authority could have allowed for the unification of the fragmented Yugoslav market, and could have made the implementation of national policies across the country easier. On such bases, Serbia fought for changing the voting system in the Federal Assembly, advocating majority voting system and limiting the interregional unanimity requirement.¹⁵ In contrast, Slovenian and Croatian politicians and intellectuals argued that "centralism will stifle economic initiative with administrative controls..." In their opinion, "the answer is a central power that will guarantee more economic freedom, self-management and democracy."¹⁶ They also reasoned that the uneven development level of the Yugoslav regions makes the implementation of a centrally led economic stabilization and reform policy impossible.¹⁷

national wealth and produces one third of hard currency generating exports. "Jugoslawien, Im Abwind," *Der Spiegel*, 27-06-1988.

¹⁴ Viktor Meier, "Self-confidence in Slovenia," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 02-11-1981.

¹⁵ Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds, The Disintegration of Yugoslavia*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 57-58.

¹⁶ Jackson Diehl, "Slovenia finds room for dissent," *Washington Post*, 15-02-1986.

¹⁷ Branka Magaš, 136.

The argument boiled down to a disagreement between Slovenes and Croats on one side and Serbs on the other. While the former wanted greater autonomy for the republics, the latter advocated greater centralization of Yugoslavia.¹⁸

Specific developments pointed to the gradual victory of con-federalist over the federalist in the constitutional battle. Slovenia took advantage of both its economic and institutional leverage. Despite the differences between Slovenia and Croatia – Slovenia being the most liberal republic and Croatia the most conservative – the two republics were fighting for greater autonomy together on grounds of similar economic interests. They blocked a bill together in early 1985 that would have obliged the enterprises to turn over their hard currency earnings to the Federal National Bank. Cooperation was driven by their common interest as Slovenia and Croatia together accounted for 70% of Yugoslavia's hard currency earnings, of which 60% went to the national budget that also subsidized the less developed regions.¹⁹

In 1987, Slovenia prevailed in the battle over the federal decision-making structures, and the rule of consensual decision-making was retained in the federal bodies.²⁰ In the same year, it rejected the application of wage restrictions ordained by federal income policy.²¹ In the name of efficiency, the Slovenian and Croatian governments refused in 1987 to pay their contribution to the army, and also withheld taxes from the federal government. As a result, the republics obtained de facto fiscal sovereignty with the exception of access to foreign credits and their distribution to the republics, which remained the only federal economic competence by 1987-88.²²

¹⁸ "Yugoslavia: Reform debate intensifies," RFE, RAD, Munich, 04-12-1984.

¹⁹ Henry Kamm, "Yugoslav republic jealously guards its gains," *B-Wire, New York Times*, 08-12-1985.

²⁰ Originally based on the 1974 constitution all decision-making in Yugoslavia was based on inter-republican consensus, according to which any decision could be vetoed by a single republic. Vojislav Stojanović and Robin Remington, "Bureaucracy and Socialism: The Experience of Yugoslavia," in *Public Bureaucracies Between Reform and Resistance*, ed. Jaroslav Piekalkiewicz and Christopher Hamilton (New York and Oxford: Berg, 1991), 180.

²¹ Susan Woodward, 74.

²² *Ibid.*

According to the widespread view in and outside of Yugoslavia, until 1988 Slovenian nationalism was of economic nature. In 1987-1988 not only Slovenian leaders, such as Milan Kučan, the leader of the League of Communists of Slovenia, but many foreign commentators interpreted Slovenian demands for more autonomy as economically grounded. Responding to the mounting charges of Slovenes being secessionist, Kučan argued that although Slovenes had no grounds for separatism, he stressed that “they feel exploited” and are very dissatisfied with current relations in the federation.²³ Similarly, according to analysts, such as Misha Glenny, the underlying motivation of Slovenia to loosen its ties with the federation was its wish to get rid of the under-developed southern republics, which held back Slovenia’s development. Moreover, he maintained that Slovenian leadership had a different vision of economic policy than the rest of the country, as it was trying to introduce reforms which would have encouraged the expansion of the private sector.²⁴

Economic reasons became key arguments for independence in 1990 during the referendum campaign due to four fundamental reasons. Slovenia had a tradition of economic nationalism and the economic discourse drew on real and wide-spread grievances among the population. It reinforced a self-image that was an essential part of Slovenian national identity, as Slovenians took pride in their economically well-developed position in Yugoslavia as a nation. Furthermore, economic interests could be relatively effectively pursued in the federal institutions due to Slovenia’s institutional leverage in Yugoslavia and also due to its economic weight. Lastly, economic arguments were linked with the

²³ “Die Slowenen fühlen sich ausgenutzt,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Munich, 12-06-1987.

²⁴ Misha Glenny, “Pressure for pluralism a threat to Belgrade,” *The Guardian*, 16-05-1988.

issue of statehood, as the question of Slovenian sovereignty emerged at the federal level in the context of discussions over economic reforms.

Ethno-nationalist discourse

However, besides economic frustrations, the perception that Slovenian language and culture were under threat were also very much present in Slovenian society. In 1983 a local analyst noted that “the share of those who say that there is a threat to the Slovenian language and a way of life has been rising drastically in the last few years.”²⁵ The first year was 1979 when the issue was seriously debated as the so-called language arbitration committee was set up in Slovenia, dealing with hundreds of complaints related to the perceived threat against the Slovenian language. The background of this growing discontent and the following activism was the steady immigration of people from other Yugoslav republics into Slovenia. In 1979, 9% of Ljubljana was non-Slovene; in 1981, it was 16%. According to an opinion poll from the early 1980s, 44% of Slovenes saw their language threatened by the rising share of immigrants.²⁶ In the spring of 1982, even the Communist Party Congress of Slovenia discussed the language problem, during which “speakers vied at each other in speaking a particularly pure Slovene.”²⁷ Thus, in the early 1980s, tensions between immigrants from other southern Yugoslav republics and Slovenes were on the rise, and the majority of Slovenes would have liked to put limits on economic immigration.²⁸

²⁵ Sliva Meznaric, Research Center for Self-management of the Slovenian Trade Union, in: Steve Reiquam, “Is Slovenian nationalism on the rise?”, RFE, RAD Background Report/190 (Yugoslavia), 09-08-1983.

²⁶ Reference to the results of this poll cited from *The Economist*, 02-05-1982.

²⁷ *The Economist*, 02-05-1982.

²⁸ In Slovenia in 1991 88,3% of the population was constituted by ethnic Slovenes. The rest were autochthonous minorities, among them Italians (0,15%), Hungarians (0,42%), and immigrant minorities from the other republics of the former Yugoslavia who made up almost 10% of population. Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, “Population by Ethnic Affiliation”, <http://www.stat.si/pxweb/Dialog/Saveshow.asp>.

The hostility against immigrants stemmed on the one hand from Slovenian fears of losing their jobs, and on the other hand from worries about the preservation of their language.²⁹

Belgrade weekly NIN saw these reactions as signs of existing “Slovenian defensive nationalism”: “Slovenians’ self-image and sense of uniqueness and identity have been threatened by the influx of non-Slovene elements, presumably giving rise to a defensive attitude.” The issue also prompted a debate about the existence of Slovenian nationalism among Slovenian journalists and intellectuals.³⁰

The language issue got picked up by the authors of the so-called Slovenian National Program, which was published by the literary journal *Nova Revija*. “The Contributions to a Slovene National Program”, as the (in)famous 57th issue was called, represented an ethnic-cultural version of Slovenian nationalism, “a bastion of *slovenstvo* (Sloveneness)” and was put forward by traditional-conservative intellectuals, who formed the core of the democratic opposition in 1989.³¹ According to Branka Magaš, the authors conveyed an openly nationalist discourse emphasizing the ethnically defined nation, stressing the importance of the family, language and values of the kind of Christian tradition that characterized Slovenian politics in the first half of the 20th century. The promotion of such national values went along with fervent anti-communism.³²

Thus, perceptions of internal threat associated with immigrants were very much present in Slovenia, which, however, were marginalized by the second half of the decade when people began to mobilize en masse for democracy and various human rights causes.

²⁹ “Gastarbeiter im eigenen Land,” *Franfurter Rundschau*, 06-12-1985.

³⁰ “Steve Reiquam, “Is Slovenian nationalism on the rise?”, RFE, RAD Background Report/190 (Yugoslavia), 09-08-1983.

³¹ Patrick Hyder Patterson, “The East is Read: The End of Communism, Slovenian Exceptionalism, and the Independent Journalism of *Mladina*,” *East European Politics and Societies* 14, no.2 (2000): 411-459, 417.

³² Branka Magaš, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, 132.

In line with the model of secessionist framing, such perceptions could disappear because immigrants came for purely economic reasons and had no political links with Serbia.

Civil society master frame

Although both the economic and the ethno-nationalist discourses were present in the 1980s, the civil society master frame as defined by Glenn became the most popular one, which addressed people in Slovenia as citizens, thus promoting an ethnically inclusive interpretation of national identity.³³ Yet, as was noted in the introduction of this chapter, this civic version of national identity said nothing about immigrants in Slovenia.

Immigrants were viewed as a problem and as a threat in the late 1970s/early 1980s, but such concerns were not widely expressed any longer by the late 1980s when the civil society master frame dominated. As argued above, perceptions of internal threat could disappear because immigrants had no political links to the Yugoslav centre or Serbia, which posed a potential danger to Slovenia. In addition, due to immigrants' minor share in the population and their dispersed and unorganized structure, their presence could be easily ignored. This meant that politicians and social movement entrepreneurs did not have to take an open stand about whether they preferred to include them into or exclude them from the nation. Had immigrants constituted a larger, more concentrated and organized minority such as the Serbs in Croatia, they would have become an unavoidable political issue which would have to be addressed one way or the other.

The civil society master frame was unique in the sense that it mobilized people in a visible way and was represented by various grass roots organizations, not only by a small group of political or cultural elites. The economic and the ethno-nationalist rhetoric also drew on widely held popular beliefs and grievances, but did not motivate people to

³³ John K. Glenn, III, *Framing Democracy, Civil Society and Civic Movements in Eastern Europe*, 144.

participate in protest events or popular movements. The pro-democracy, human rights discourse began to surface with the pluralization of Slovenian society in the mid 1970s with the emergence of the punk movement, followed by various artistic and cultural activities. From the early 1980s, several groups appeared in Slovenia, such as the environmentalists, the peace movement, new age spiritual movements, and feminist and gay rights activists. Tomaz Mastnak called these new social movements the “alternative scene,” which together represented a “democratic front”, opposing the repressive nature of the communist system.³⁴ This “alternative scene” was not a united political opposition, but “a plurality of struggles for a number of concrete, everyday, particular, specific issues and concerns.”³⁵

If *Nova Revija* was the principle voice of the ethno-nationalist frame, then the youth newspaper *Mladina* was the most influential presenter of the “other pole” of Slovenian politics.³⁶ While both magazines were strongly anti-communist, *Mladina*’s brand of opposition and the discourse it conveyed was “typically anti-nationalist and progressive, consistently stressing the values of pluralism, secularism, and human rights...”³⁷

At first, there were attempts to suppress these initiatives by the Slovenian communist authorities, demonstrated by the example of a show trial in 1981 against a theatre group. However, from the mid 1980s the Slovenian leadership took a new step as it started to tolerate and later support grass roots civil society initiatives in Slovenia. In 1986, as Milan Kučan became the head of Slovenia’s communist party, liberals came to the forefront of the party and adopted a reformist, modernizing attitude.

³⁴ Tomaz Mastnak, “Civil Society in Slovenia, From Opposition to Power,” *Studies in Comparative Communism* (Autumn/Winter 1990): 306-8.

³⁵ Tomaz Mastnak, “From Social Movements to National Sovereignty,” in *Independent Slovenia, Origins, Movements, Prospects*, ed. Jill Benderly and Evan Kraft (MacMillan Press LTD, 1997), 95.

³⁶ Branka Magaš, 132.

³⁷ Patrick Hyder Patterson, “The East is Read,” 417.

Social movements in Slovenia strongly criticized the Yugoslav army, which in 1988 led to a serious crisis (as will be discussed in the next section of this chapter in detail). Only a few examples of anti-communist and anti-army mobilization will be mentioned here for the sake of illustration. In 1985, Slovenian students organized a counter event against the military parade in Belgrade celebrating the 40th anniversary of WWII, which was a sign of the evolving peace movement.³⁸ In January 1987 signatures were collected in Ljubljana for various petitions. Slovene youth leaders demanded that ceremonies celebrating Tito's birthday should be stopped, they called for a better treatment of political prisoners, demanded that social work would be allowed instead of military service and that the further construction of nuclear plants be put to referendum.³⁹ The Socialist Youth Alliance of Slovenia, which was the official youth organization, also demanded the abolishment of Article 133 of the Penal Code, which allowed prosecution of people for their opinions.⁴⁰ Especially *Mladina* published a lot of articles on taboo subjects, such as Tito and the Yugoslav army, among others. The newspaper also argued that undemocratic election procedures make the authority of the federal prime minister illegitimate. As another illustration of how the media was breaking taboos in Slovenia, a televised debate compared the ritual commemorating Tito's death – a torch bearing youth race – to Nazi celebrations and to the worship of the North Korean president, Kim Il Sung.⁴¹

Such open criticism of the communist and federal establishment from the mid 1980s was possible in the republic because the liberal party leadership in Slovenia created a climate of tolerance.⁴² These movements gradually changed the political atmosphere in Slovenia, open discussion and dissent became usual and accepted. As a commentator assessed the

³⁷ Branka Magaš, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, 132.

³⁸ "Slowenen: Selbstbewusst und wirtschaftlich vorn," *Die Welt*, 07-06-1985.

³⁹ "Generating liberal ideas," RFE – Research Yugoslav SR/1, 22-01-1987.

⁴⁰ George Fodor, "Slovenian idiosyncrasies," *South-East European Service*, 18-02-1987.

situation, the Slovenian leadership allowed dissent and pluralization despite the protest of ideological hardliners, because this way they could foster public support, which could aid them in retaining Slovenia's relative prosperity against the deepening Yugoslav crisis.⁴³

Some dailies in Yugoslavia have likened the developments in Slovenia to the Prague Spring of 1968, although Kučan dismissed such parallels, arguing that "he would be afraid that it would [also] end like it".⁴⁴

Foreign editorials of the time noted that "there are few places, if any, in the communist world where an official organization like the socialist youth organization would call for independent trade unions, for legalization of strikes, for a better deal for draft resisters, and open elections." "Similarly, there are few if any communist countries where a government authorized magazine like *Mladina* would undertake a campaign against the alleged torture of political prisoners. And nowhere else would such a campaign be likely be taken up by the local political hierarchy, as the Socialist Alliance, a front organization dominated by the communist party, did last year."⁴⁵

Thus, the civil society master frame defined the claim of injustice as the violation of human rights. The notion of human rights was embodied in the collective identity of the citizens, while communists represented the "other".⁴⁶ Concrete demands were raised such as prosecution of people for their opinions should not be allowed, military conscripts should have the right to choose civil service, strikes should be legalized, elections should be democratic, etc. Presenters of the civil society frame did not care much about Slovenian sovereignty, and were inherently anti-nationalists. Still, ironically this was the frame which

⁴¹ Henry Kamm, "Slovenes of Yugoslavia speak feely and thrive financially," *New York Times*, B-Wire, 17-06-1987.

⁴² "Slovenia hands political shocks to Yugoslav authorities," Reuter, B-Wire, Maribor, 03-06-1988.

⁴³ George Fodor, "Slovene and Eastern European talks, Slovenian alternatives," 03-04-1987.

⁴⁴ "A 'Prague Spring' in Slovenia?," Press comments, *Tanjug*, 22-04-1988.

⁴⁵ "Slovenian youth march to a different communist drummer," *Los Angeles Times*, B-Wire, 16-03-1987.

ended up mobilizing and homogenizing Slovenian public opinion thus defining Slovenian national identity. As Mastnak argued, “The platform for homogenization of the Slovene nation has been the struggle for political democracy, the defense of fundamental human rights, the battle for a legal state.” He contrasted this type of nationalism with Serbian mobilization, which had its starting point in “Blut and Boden: Kosovo and Serb blood spilled on that piece of land.”⁴⁷ As Slovenia came under fierce criticisms for its liberalizing tendencies, democratic movements became inherent part of Slovenian national identity.

Democratic developments were deemed dangerous to the federation and were met with considerable hostility from Belgrade and the army. What disturbed Yugoslav conservatives the most was that the Slovenian leadership did not suppress the manifestations of the democratic movements.⁴⁸ Therefore, pluralization in Slovenia contributed to a growing confrontation between the Slovenian communists and the federal leadership, the army and Serbia. Slovenia’s political leaders until late 1988 quietly tolerated the democratic movements, and at the same time vehemently defended Slovenia’s interests at the level of federal institutions. According to Dimitrij Rupel, local communists tolerated dissent, because this way they tried to promote Slovenia’s independent standing within the federation in the face of the threat of centralism and domination by Belgrade.⁴⁹ In the beginning of 1988, Serbia changed its own constitution to strengthen its power over the provinces, Kosovo and Voivodina, and pushed for increasing the power of the federal government at the expense of the republics’ autonomy. This raised fears in Slovenia that they could suffer the same fate if Belgrade had the desire to intervene against them.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ John K. Glenn, 144.

⁴⁷ Quote from Tomaz Mastnak, in: Magas, *The destruction of Yugoslavia*, 148.

⁴⁸ George Fodor, “Slovenian idiosyncrasies,” *South-East European Service*, 18-02-1987.

⁴⁹ Jackson Diehl, “Slovenia finds room for dissent,” *Washington Post*, 15-02-1986.

⁵⁰ Viktor Meier, “Nur die Albanischen Eisverkaufers sind in Ljubljana wohlgekommen,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Munich, 21-08-1986.

Nevertheless, attacks on the Slovenian leadership and the democratic movements reinforced the view that defending republican sovereignty was the path toward pluralization and liberalization. As a result, by 1988 it became normal in intellectual circles to talk about Slovenia's right to secession. *Nova Revija* called for the protection of Slovenian people's right for self-determination and their right to secede from Yugoslavia.⁵¹ In April 1988 during a debate about amendments to the Yugoslav constitution, Slovenian writers and sociologists called for political pluralism and Slovenia's right to "join a union of states or secession from such a union of states." There had been occasional demands for separation from Yugoslavia and closer ties with the European Community.⁵² In June 1988, there was a meeting of 500 intellectuals in Ljubljana where participants discussed Slovenia's place in the federation, some suggesting that Slovenia should have the right to secede.⁵³

Slovenian identity became closely associated with the promotion of democracy, human rights, and the freedom of opinion. Yet, this democratic self-image and the civil society frame that conveyed it became dominant as a result of the trial of the Mladina journalists in the summer of 1988, which was the single most important mobilizing event in Slovenia, and which will be discussed in the following as the event marking the beginning of the independence movement.

Event: "The trial of the four"

Shift in the leadership's discourse: from pragmatic to ethno-nationalist

The event

⁵¹ "Slowenen stellen Bundesstaat offen in Frage," *Die Welt*, Munich, 21-01-1988.

⁵² "Writers and sociologists demand multi-party system for Slovenia," AP, Belgrade, 26-04-1988.

⁵³ "Slovenia hands political shocks to Yugoslav authorities," Reuter, B-Wire, Maribor, 03-06-1988.

The military trial of the three journalists of *Mladina*⁵⁴ marked the beginning of the independence movement in Slovenia. The event led to – in Branka Magaš’ words – “a virtually complete national mobilization in Slovenia.”⁵⁵ James Gow noted that the trial “forged Slovenian solidarity”, “catalyzed Slovenian democracy” and set the country on the path to eventual independence.⁵⁶

In the spring of 1988 three Slovenian journalists of *Mladina* with the help of a Slovenian army officer disclosed a secret military document revealing a plan about a list of people to be arrested in Slovenia, to declare a state of emergency and replace the liberal Slovene leadership with conservative figures more acceptable to the Yugoslav army (JNA).⁵⁷ Before the infamous military document was published, which led to the arrest and the trial of the journalists, articles criticizing and discrediting the army had already been in the Slovenian press, especially in the first half of 1988. *Mladina* depicted Branko Mamula, minister of defense as a “merchant of death,” denounced the army as an anti-democratic institution, “always ready to stage a military coup...” The magazine was even banned for a few days in March 1988.⁵⁸

The journalists and the Slovene sergeant major of the JNA were brought before a federal military court and sentenced to prison. The way the trial was conducted caused a public outcry. It was carried out in Serbo-Croatian and not in Slovenian, the proceedings were closed to the public, and the defendants were not allowed to have civilian lawyers. The trial triggered a series of large protests all over Slovenia starting from June 1988, continuing until the spring of 1989.⁵⁹ The republican leadership protested against the violation of the republic’s constitutional rights and demanded that the trial be conducted in

⁵⁴ It was called often as the “trial of the four” meaning the three *Mladina* journalists who published the document and the sergeant who leaked it from the military.

⁵⁵ Branka Magaš, *The destruction of Yugoslavia*, 145.

⁵⁶ James Gow and Cathie Carmichael, 150.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁵⁸ Andrejevich, “Some aspects of the Slovenian situation,” RFE/RAD, Munich, 19-07-1988.

Slovenian. The Federal State Presidency rejected the appeal, thus effectively siding with the army.⁶⁰

The democracy frame

After the journalists were arrested, social movement representatives began to mobilize people by using the democracy frame, since it concerned the violation of the rights of the accused to a fair and free trial. In June 1988, twenty-five thousand people protested in Ljubljana in support of the three Slovenian journalists arrested a few days before. The Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR) demanded the release of the accused. The Committee managed to gather 100 000 signatures in a month, and 500 organizations joined it from all spheres of Slovenian society, such as universities, party organizations, enterprises, etc.⁶¹

Although the CDHR and the demonstrators demanded that the “three be released immediately, allowed civilian lawyers and the right to defend themselves from the position of freedom,” claims of the protestors went well beyond demands related to the fate of the journalists. People called for “greater freedom, democracy and human rights in Yugoslavia and curbs on the army’s power.” They waved banners inscribed with “military courts, no thank you”, “Free Janša, Borštner, Tasič!”, “For democracy, human rights, freedom of expression”.⁶²

The trial fostered popular unity and solidarity in Slovenia. The editor of *Mladina*, Robert Botteri, noted that “it is amazing because people are working together who before

⁵⁹ Susan Woodward, 95.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Branka Magaš, 144-45.

⁶² “Evening agency reports on today’s protests in Ljubljana,” *B-Wire*, 21-06-1988.

could never speak with each other.” Dimitrije Rupel said “the army will have to back down or take on an entire nation.”⁶³

At the same time, the trial raised the issue of republican sovereignty. Bavčar, the head of CDHR noted that the conduct of the military organs against the three men was “virtually damaging the sovereignty of the Slovenian state.”⁶⁴ Still, social movement leaders drew attention to Slovenian sovereignty on grounds of the violation of human rights by the federal leadership and the army by employing the democracy frame. Tone Remc, a member of the Committee, concluded that “the trial was a political diversion and an attack on Slovenia in order to prevent its liberal ideas from infecting other parts of Yugoslavia.”⁶⁵ Thus, mobilization occurred through the democracy frame based on the civic version of national self-expression. However, it was soon taken over by a rhetoric stressing the uniqueness of Slovene identity.

Ethno-nationalist themes enter the mobilizational discourse

This event demonstrates well the strong effect of contextualizing events on framing. Initially, before the trial started the rights of the accused for a free and fair trial and civilian lawyers was at issue. Thus, the trial was seen in Slovenia mainly as a crack-down on the liberal tendencies in the republic and was thus framed in legalistic and human rights terms. However, once the trial opened and people learned that it would be conducted in Serbo-Croatian and not in Slovenian, public attention was directed at the status of Slovenian language. At this point, the demonstrations started to gain a nationalist overtone, which marked “the beginning of the emotional part of the story”.⁶⁶ As the trial resumed, hundreds

⁶³ Jackson Diehl, “Yugoslavs try a dose of social democracy,” *Washington Post*, B-Wire, Washington, 22-06-1988.

⁶⁴ “War veterans condemn Ljubljana rally,” B-Wire, 22-06-1988.

⁶⁵ “Slovene leader quoted criticizing Yugoslav army,” AP, B-Wire, Ljubljana, 28-07-1988.

⁶⁶ Author Interview, Ali Žerdin, editor-in-chief of the national daily *Dnevnik*, Ljubljana, 13-02-2008.

of people kept demonstrating not only for a fair conduct of legal procedures but against the “abolition of Slovene in the Slovenian capital.”⁶⁷ They gathered in front of the military court singing the Slovenian national anthem.⁶⁸ The speakers argued that use of Serbo-Croatian “violates the rights of the Slovenian people and deprives them of their freedom.”⁶⁹ Thus, as soon as the language issue emerged, civil society activists put forward the ethno-nationalist frame that had a much stronger and broader emotional appeal among Slovenes of all walks of life. This frame defined the nation as a community based on a common culture and language, and stressed the need to protect republican autonomy. According to Pavel Gantar, a Slovenian sociologist, “the silent majority” of the population was moved by the nationalist ideology. He also asserted that during the 1988 protests, the language issue became the strongest mobilizational theme.⁷⁰

At the end, both frames could be heard at the demonstrations. The first one stressing human rights dominated initially, yet freedoms and equality of the nation as a whole ultimately received greater emphasis. This was the frame that was adopted by the Slovenian leadership, leading to the effective marginalization of the democracy frame. As a result, the ethnic security frame got amplified.

Shift in the leadership’s discourse

The Slovenian communist leadership was at first unwilling to speak about the arrests or take sides in the battle. Kučan distanced himself and the party from the mounting anti-army sentiments and activities in the republic and warned of “excesses against army

⁶⁷ Franci Zavrl was the editor of Mladina and the fourth journalist facing prosecution, yet finally he was not arrested. “The trial ends, Zavrl comments,” Ljubljana Domestic Service, 26-07-1988, FBIS-EEU, 27-07-1988.

⁶⁸ “Demonstrations show solidarity with accused in Yugoslav secret trial,” AP, B-Wire, Ljubljana, 19-07-1988.

⁶⁹ “Thousands protest in Ljubljana,” Tanjug, Ljubljana, 22-07-1988.

⁷⁰ Author Interview, Pavel Gantar, current member of parliament and sociologist, Ljubljana, 13-02-2008.

personnel and non-Slovenes [...] in order not to lose true allies and sympathizers in Slovenia and in other parts of Yugoslavia.”⁷¹ Slovenian communists also tried to demonstrate their neutrality by offering a pragmatic interpretation of the events based on economic and social problems. As mass protests were going on, the Slovene Assembly assessed the situation the following way: “[...] a fall in industrial production, the much too slow restructuring and modernization of Slovenia’s economy, lack of liquidity, uncurbed inflation and the series of social problems which arise as a result of all this also give cause for concern. This led to the aggravation of security and political events”.⁷²

The leadership had to take a stand on these issues, as attacks from the other republics on Slovenia – both on the democratic opposition and the communist leadership – were intensifying. Yugoslav military representatives, Yugoslav authorities and communist party leaders outside of Slovenia accused Slovenian youth newspapers of being part of a “counter-revolution” and classified them as “special warfare propaganda.” General Veljko Kadijević described critics of the army as “enemies whose ultimate goal is the destruction of Yugoslavia.”⁷³ The demonstration in Ljubljana prompted harsh reactions also in Yugoslavia, especially by the Serbian media.⁷⁴

⁷¹ “Slovenian party leader blasts hardliners,” AP, 27-06-1988 .

⁷² “Slovene presidency discusses situation,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 14-07-1988.

⁷³ “Evening agency reports on today’s protests in Ljubljana,” B-Wire, 21-06-1988.

⁷⁴ *Jedinstvo*, a Serbian newspaper, wrote about the demonstrations that “one gets the impression that the ‘Janša case’ is a good shield behind which poisonous arrows are launched with a definite target: to undermine the social system and the anti-fascist council of the national liberation of Yugoslavia, and weaken the defense power of the armed forces [...] What has been happening recently in Slovenia goes beyond ‘uncultured and uncivilized behavior.’ *Politika*, the semi-official Belgrade daily published a furious and ironic article about the trial and about the reactions which followed it in Slovenia, criticizing Slovenia’s so-called democratic processes. “Following this shameful case, the accused, who have already been sentenced by the Ljubljana military court, became media stars. [...] Their ‘credit’ for this seems to be negligible: they are the protagonists of the already proven and sanctioned criminal act.”

“*Jedinstvo* on ‘uncultured’, ‘uncivilized’ Ljubljana meeting,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 22-06-1988; Bogdan Ibrajter, “The court resisted pressure,” *Politika*, Belgrade, 29-07-1988.

Moreover, not only the Slovenian press, but also Slovene leaders came under increasing criticism from other parts of Yugoslavia.⁷⁵ Retired defense minister, Branko Mamula criticized Kučan for liberalizing the economy too rapidly.⁷⁶ The authorities and media in other parts of Yugoslavia demanded that the Slovenian leadership be held accountable for allowing the demonstrations to happen. The Official Serbian Socialist Youth Union insisted that “Slovenian officials, especially its youth union leadership should be called to account” for “their tacit support” of anti-army feelings.⁷⁷

However, not only the federal leadership and the army, but also the protestors in Slovenia passed judgment on Slovenian leaders. At one of the demonstrations, with some 8000 attendees, speakers “criticized the Slovenian leadership for allowing this ‘shameful and humiliating’ trial to take place and the military court for “infringing on the sovereign rights of the Slovenian people and the state...”⁷⁸ *Delo* noted “...because of the feeling of being endangered, many demand with justification that the Slovene political representatives should make a more resolute stand.”⁷⁹

At this moment, the previously secure position of Slovenian communists seemed to be under threat. They needed domestic support not only to continue their liberal policies but also to protect themselves, especially in the face of threats coming from Belgrade and the army. According to the document revealed by *Mladina*, Slovenian leaders had just escaped a military coup, thus pressure coming from the Yugoslav center seemed quite credible and intimidating.⁸⁰ The Slovenian leadership’s domestic standing was based, on

⁷⁵ “Slovene assembly on security,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 23-06-1988.

⁷⁶ Henry Kamm, “Yugoslav region looks at loyalty”, *New York Times*, B-Wire, Washington, 12-06-1988.

⁷⁷ “Army-Slovene rift seen deepening,” B-Wire, 01-07-1988.

⁷⁸ “Thousands protest in Ljubljana,” Tanjug, Ljubljana, 22-07-1988.

⁷⁹ Danilo Slivnik, “Overheated politics,” *Delo*, Ljubljana, 27-07-1988.

⁸⁰ According to James Gow, Kučan not only knew about the document before it was published but he himself leaked it to the press. In: Gow, 154

the one hand, on allowing liberalization and pluralization in Slovenia, and on the other hand, on vehemently defending Slovenia's interests in the federal institutions. Yet, their policy of quietly tolerating democratic developments and their pragmatic discourse seemed insufficient to maintain their domestic legitimacy under the new circumstances.

Responding to mounting criticisms from various corners, by the end of July Slovenian communists adopted the ethnic security frame while arguing for the defense of Slovenian language and Slovenian sovereignty.

As was explained above, this particular contextualizing event could be interpreted in two ways: through the democracy or the ethnic security frame. Civil society activists emphasized the human rights violation aspect of the trial, yet also attacked the military court for "infringing the sovereign rights of the Slovenian people and the state..." by the use of Serbo-Croatian, which "violates the rights of the Slovenian people and deprives them of their freedom."⁸¹ This second theme was picked up by Slovenian leaders, as they started to ally themselves with the protesters openly. They emphasized the right to use Slovenian language as a national issue by making references to "the uniqueness and the cultural and historic legitimacy of the Slovene nation", thus embracing the ethnically defined version of national identity. Kučan, at a meeting of the Slovene League of Communists Central Committee entirely devoted to the language issue, said: "...the Slovenes identify the language very closely with the people and its political sovereignty. The Slovene nation has formed itself through its culture, and its language has been threatened by Italians, Germans, and Hungarians throughout history. So far we have not had our state that would protect this language. The struggle for a new socialist Yugoslavia [...] has therefore been the struggle for our language. The Slovenes cannot regard as theirs

⁸¹ "Thousands protest in Ljubljana," Tanjug, Ljubljana, 22-07-1988.

any state which fails to guarantee the free use of the Slovene language and its equality, and they cannot consider it a state that guarantees the freedom, sovereignty, and equality of the Slovene people and a state that protects their sovereignty.”⁸²

From the communists’ point of view, Slovenian sovereignty was at stake. After the verdict was proclaimed Kučan said “the verdict usurped the republic’s sovereignty.”⁸³ Altogether, the leadership was successful in its attempt to strengthen its legitimacy and popularity through this rhetorical maneuver. According to Susan Woodward, the conflict with the army was the instance that “unified Slovenian public opinion behind the republic’s communist party and government leadership without destroying the seeds of political pluralism.”⁸⁴

As to why they settled on an ethno-nationalist frame, it could be argued that it was their only real option. Regardless of Slovenia’s liberal leaning, they were still part of the communist establishment, thus adopting the democracy frame by taking on the role of anti-communist human rights activists would have been an awkward choice. Arguing for sovereignty on economic grounds would have been ineffective considering that economic problems were not at issue in the demonstrations (and in light of the emotional intensity of the protests). Emphasizing ethnic and cultural themes was easier because the language issue during the trial was probably the most important source of public resentment. Furthermore, claiming to defend Slovenians’ national and cultural rights was not just empty rhetoric from their side. Due to their monopoly over the government, they could potentially fulfill such promises. They were in a position to assert Slovenian national rights in the

⁸² Another speaker, Božidar Debenjak added that “[...] the decision to conduct the trial in Serbo-Croatian [...] hit below the belt in order to injure the national pride in the most sensitive area.” Slavko Gajević, “A dispute grows into a political trial,” *Borba*, Ljubljana, 28-07-1988.

⁸³ “Fragile freedoms, Slovenes acquire taste for living life well, but party may be over,” European Edition of the *Wall Street Journal*, 08-09-1988.

⁸⁴ Susan Woodward, 96.

federation, thus they could credibly pose as the defenders of the nation. Moreover, their main source of legitimacy was confronting Belgrade.⁸⁵ Therefore, this rhetoric seemed most likely to increase their domestic credibility and legitimacy. They utilized this discourse until the first democratic elections in 1990. It will be shown that they were partially successful in their efforts to protect Slovenia's national rights. Although they could neither defend the journalists from prosecution nor ensure that the trial be conducted in Slovenian, they managed to amend the constitution in the fall of 1989, which placed Slovenian constitution over federal one. This legislative move guaranteed (in theory) that neither the federal leadership nor the army could intervene in Slovenia without the consent of the Slovenian government; this was primarily meant to provide protection against future coups.

Framing the Kosovo conflict

Event: mass demonstration for the Kosovar miners

Frame: Democracy frame presented by the "Alternative Scene"

Ethnic security frame forwarded by the communist leadership

The next issue that triggered grass root mobilization in Slovenia was the Albanian miners' protest in Kosovo in February 1989. Already in late 1988, the Slovenian leadership was getting worried about Serbian policies in Kosovo. Franc Šetinc, the Slovenian member of the Yugoslav presidency resigned from his post in September 1988 over the Kosovo crisis. This happened at the time when Milošević was pushing through his constitutional amendments to create a centralized Serbia, against the backdrop of around 50 protest rallies taking place over three months all over Serbia involving more than 800 thousand people in support for Serbian party leaders. Šetinc said after his resignation that "madness is obviously pushing us all toward disaster." He expressed serious concerns over the slogans

⁸⁵ Interview with Ali Žerdin.

used during those protests in Serbia such as “we want weapons” or “death to Skipetars” [pejorative reference to Albanians].⁸⁶

In February 1989, 1300 Kosovar Albanian miners went on a hunger strike in the depth of a mine to protest against the suspension of Kosovo’s autonomy. Serbian authorities refused to negotiate with them for more than a week. In Ljubljana, a group belonging to the “Alternative Scene” which was generally concerned about the respect for human rights in Yugoslavia organized a demonstration to express sympathy with the miners and protest against the actions of the Serbian authorities. Representatives from the political opposition and of the ruling party joined the meeting as well, thus all the three main actors were present together. It was another occasion for the Slovenian communist leadership to demonstrate that it has taken the side of the Slovenian public against Yugoslav conservatives. This episode again showed the strong influence of contextualizing events on framing choices since as the issue at stake was human rights of the miners, the civil society master frame dominated, at least initially.

The speakers at the protest meeting condemned the Serbs for repressing Albanians in Kosovo.⁸⁷ Around one million signatures were gathered in a country of two million people to sign a declaration that demanded the respect of the rights of Albanians. Again, national identity grounded in the civil society master frame “compelled Slovenes to reject Milošević’s tactics and insist that human rights norms be respected throughout the country,” not just in their republic.⁸⁸ Thus, Kosovo’s plight was so compelling to Slovenians because the defense of human rights became an essential part of their self-identification, (as since the mid 1980s various human rights struggles managed to mobilize Slovenian society en masse, which indicated a high salience of the civic version of national

⁸⁶ Milan Andrejevich, “Party leader from Slovenia resigns over Kosovo dispute,” RFE/RAD, 27-09-1988.

⁸⁷ Jože Školjč, head of the Slovene Youth organization, quoted in Laura Silber and Allan Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, TV Books, distributed by Penguin USA (1996), 66.

identity). Kučan who first of all raised his voice in the defense of human dignity and human solidarity, also emphasized at the meeting:

“We feel that if the miners’ case becomes a tragedy, that would be our defeat as well, and a vocal intimation of minority nations and nationalities being driven to the margin or even foreign parts afterwards.”

He further said:

“We Slovenes are a small nation: this is why solidarity with a threatened minority is close to our hearts. This is, no doubt, how the Albanians feel as they clash with hegemonist tendencies, especially greater-Serb ones.”⁸⁹

Thus, mobilization to express solidarity with the Kosovar miners became an opportunity “for drawing parallels between Serbia’s treatment of Kosovo and its likely treatment in the future of Slovenia.”⁹⁰ Milošević’s moves against Kosovo were interpreted as a “foretaste of his intentions toward the other republics”, which was to impose hegemonic rule over the whole of Yugoslavia.⁹¹ A protest which was initially based on the democracy frame was interpreted through the ethnic security frame by the communist leadership stressing the ethnic distinctiveness of Slovenes.

It should be noted, however, that opinions concerning these events were far from homogeneous in Slovenia. On the contrary, the youth magazine, *Mladina*, criticized the “hypocritical identification of Slovenes with Kosovo Albanians” and noted that “pluralism in Slovenia is being introduced via ethnic populism.” The hypocrisy in question referred to the fact that Slovenia had sought to curb its contributions to the development aid targeting

⁸⁸ Patrick Hayder Patterson, “The East is Read: The End of Communism, Slovenian Exceptionalism, and the Independent Journalism of *Mladina*,” 440.

⁸⁹ “Meeting held in Ljubljana,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 27-02-1989, FBIS-EEU, 01-03-1989.

⁹⁰ Paul Stubbs, “Nationalisms, Globalisation and Civil Society in Croatia and Slovenia,” Leeds Metropolitan University, UK, International Social Policy Research Unit and the University of Zagreb, Croatia, August 1995, Paper presented to Second European Conference of Sociology ‘European Societies: fusion or fission?’, Budapest, 30 August - 2 September 1995, 7.

⁹¹ RFE Report on Eastern Europe, 5 January 1990.

poorer regions – among them Kosovo.⁹² This criticism voiced by Mladina clearly indicated the existing tension between the two competing ideals of national identity i.e. between the ethnically exclusive and the civic interpretation.

Framing the constitutional amendments in Slovenia

by the ethnic security frame

The way the Yugoslav leadership was handling the crisis in Kosovo revealed how the federal communist party was losing power against Milošević. The LCY presidency approved the constitutional changes in Serbia initiated by Milošević and did nothing against his policies in Kosovo.⁹³ Hundreds of Albanians were arrested after the strike, and Kosovo was practically put under military rule. In order to protect itself from similar policies, Slovenia adopted amendments to its constitution in September 1989 that gave supremacy to republican law over federal law and guaranteed Slovenia the right of secession. These amendments were meant to ensure that no state of emergency could be introduced in Slovenia without the consent of the republic's assembly.⁹⁴

Political mobilization in opposition to the federal constitution in Slovenia had started much earlier, in the beginning of 1988. Developments leading up to the amendments of the republican constitution in September 1989 reveal that the initiative again came from below, primarily from conservative intellectuals around *Nova Revija*, many of whom later became the founders of opposition parties. In the beginning of 1988, the Yugoslav presidency intended to implement federal constitutional changes aiming at the centralization of political power in Yugoslavia in order to tackle economic problems.⁹⁵

⁹² Ana Dević, 343.

⁹³ Branka Magaš, 189.

⁹⁴ Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds*, 63.

⁹⁵ "Slovenian leader defends republic's autonomy," Reuter, B-Wire, Belgrade, 18-04-1988.

In February 1988, a new coalition appeared in Slovenia formed by the new social movements, *Nova Revija*, *Mladina* and the writers association. They demanded a referendum on the federal constitutional amendments, which they feared would curb Slovenia's autonomy. In March 1988, a petition signed by 50 000 people was published in *Mladina* in support of the referendum.⁹⁶ Yielding to such pressures, Slovenian communists decided that Slovenia would not accept the federal constitutional changes. However, the leadership did not go ahead with the plebiscite either.⁹⁷

In November 1988, during the third wave of the protests against the “trial of the four”, demands for a referendum on the Yugoslav constitution re-emerged in the context of the need to protect Slovenia's sovereignty.⁹⁸ The Slovene Writers Association which was a forum of conservative intellectuals was the loudest promoter of this issue. They demanded that the Slovenian constitution be adopted before the Yugoslav constitution, as they feared “an infringement upon Slovene sovereignty.”⁹⁹

In May 1989, the (proto)-parties which later formed the DEMOS coalition signed the *May 1989 declaration*, which called for the creation of a “sovereign state of the Slovene people” besides the general demand for democratization. The document also called for the amendment to the Slovenian constitution that would protect Slovenian sovereignty.¹⁰⁰

Besides the adoption of the May declaration, other events took place within the same month that pushed the leadership towards enacting the amendments. A new gap appeared between the opposition and the leadership as Janez Janša, one of the “Ljubljana

⁹⁶ Interview with Ali Žerdin.

⁹⁷ “Slovenian leader defends republic's autonomy,” Reuter, B-Wire, Belgrade, 18-04-1988.

⁹⁸ “Janša addresses protest meeting in Ljubljana,” Tanjug, Ljubljana, 21-11-1988.

⁹⁹ “Demonstrations on constitution set for Ljubljana,” *Borba*, 11-11-1988, FBIS-EEU, 15-11-1988.

¹⁰⁰ The signatories were: Slovene Writers Society, Slovene Democratic Alliance, Slovene Peasant Union, Slovene Christian Social Movement, Social Democratic Alliance of Slovenia. “Slovene Alternative Presents May Declaration,” *Delo*, 10-05-1989, FBIS-EEU, 19-05-1989.

four”, was suddenly arrested to serve his prison sentence.¹⁰¹ This triggered the fourth wave of protests connected to the trial in Slovenian cities. Some leaders, such as Jože Školjč, president of the Socialist Youth Federation, and those representing the liberal wing of the political opposition, framed events again in the defense of human rights by relying on the democracy frame and civic identity. They spoke in the name of “young people” (not the nation), and stressed “the duty to ensure basic civil rights to the people...[and]...the constitutional right to the freedom of thought and of gatherings.”¹⁰² Others that belonged to the more conservative faction of the opposition who set up DEMOS later upheld the ethnically exclusive version of Slovenian identity as they spoke of the “Slovene people” and called for a new Slovenian constitution.¹⁰³ For Dimitrije Rupel, the trial represented the “Slovene cause” and Slovenian sovereignty. Essentially, however, protest leaders called the leadership to account for having failed to defend the journalists from prison. Rupel stated that “the Slovene politicians cannot decide whether they should yield to pressure [from Belgrade] or struggle for the sovereignty of their own people.”¹⁰⁴

By this time, it became apparent that the interpretation of sovereignty within the democratic block reflected two different political traditions, one based on ethnic and the other on civic national identity. People around the Socialist Youth Federation, those affiliated with former social movements, and *Mladina* supported sovereignty because they saw it as necessary to ensure the respect of human rights, yet for them the latter was most

¹⁰¹ Although the trial took place in 1988, serving of the sentences was postponed. In May 1989 Janša was suddenly arrested to serve his sentence.

¹⁰² Školjč could talk in the name of the youth also because Janez Janša was a one of the candidates to the post of president of that organization before he was arrested. It should be mentioned here that the Socialist Youth Federation formed latter the Liberal Party which competed also during the first democratic elections. “Youth Federation Školjč on protest meetings,” *Delo*, 09-05-1989, FBIS-EEU, 15-05-1989.

¹⁰³ For instance France Tomšič, the president of the Social Democratic Alliance, Dimitrije Rupel, founder of the Democratic Alliance and Christian Democrats at this particular event. “Youth Federation Školjč on protest meetings”. *Delo*, 09-05-1989, FBIS-EEU, 15-05-1989.

¹⁰⁴ “Youth Federation Školjč on protest meetings.”

important.¹⁰⁵ Conservative intellectuals employed the opposite logic. From their point of view, independence was the key priority, a consequence of which would be democracy and the respect of human rights. This reflected a fundamental divide within the “Slovenian critical intelligentsia that was split into a nationalistic and a liberal faction.”¹⁰⁶ Between the two groups, nationalists seemed to hold the momentum from mid-1988 until the elections in 1990. As sovereignty increasingly gained a nationalist interpretation, liberals lost their enthusiasm for the issue, and only reluctantly supported independence during the election campaign. Gradually, the democracy frame became marginalized within the sovereignty discourse.¹⁰⁷

Altogether, Slovenian communists yielded to the pressure of the opposition and through accepting the amendments demonstrated their commitment to defend Slovenia from Yugoslav pressure.¹⁰⁸ Amending the constitution meant legal protection at least. The amendments introduced political pluralism, guaranteed the right of secession to Slovenia from the Yugoslav federation and barred any federal intervention on Slovenian territory.¹⁰⁹ The leadership maintained that the main function of the amendments was self-defense. They repeatedly referred to the growing threat emanating from Serbia as a justification:

“the same people who are today attacking the proposed amendments [...] advocated the use of Serbo-Croat language in the military court in Ljubljana [...]. Did they not constantly contemplate the meaningless comparisons of the situation in Kosovo with that in Slovenia, or even threaten Slovenia with tanks in the polemics within the LCY?”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Author Interview, Vlado Miheljak, a columnist and psychologist, Ljubljana, 11-02-2008.

¹⁰⁶ Niko Tos and Vlado Miheljak, “Transition in Slovenia: Toward Democratization and the Attainment of Sovereignty,” in *Slovenia Between Continuity and Change, 1990-1997*, Niko Tos and Vlado Miheljak (Berlin, 2002), 25.

¹⁰⁷ Author Interview, Ali Žerdin.

¹⁰⁸ NCA Special/Robert Tilly, “Yugoslav crisis deepens as Slovenian assembly meets,” B-Wire, Munich, 27-09-1989.

¹⁰⁹ “Serbs launch attack on Slovene autonomy bid”, *London Times*, 27-09-1989.

¹¹⁰ Quote from Ciril Ribiric at a League of Communists Central Committee session, “Slovene presidium rejects accusation,” Belgrade, Tanjug, 18-09-1989.

The leadership radicalized its political discourse by employing ethno-nationalist rhetoric. As previously, this contextualizing event also played a key role in which frame could become dominant: as the function of the amendments was national self-defense in the legal sense, it was logical to use the ethnic security frame under which the republican leadership could pose as the defender of the nation. Frequent references were made to growing threats from the Serbian center. Identity was defined in terms of the nation as an ethnic community. Kučan stated that “carrying out the so-called Kosovization of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia is not easy. We Slovenes do not have another motherland. Our motherland is the Socialist Republic of Slovenia.”¹¹¹ *Delo* wrote: “to them [Slovenia’s opponents] we can only say, we are Yugoslavs, but we are Slovenes first...and the constitutional changes reflect our national interests.”¹¹² A commentator described the adoption of the amendments in Slovenian parliament with the following words: “Amid tearful scenes and the singing of the Slovene national anthem, the Slovene parliament yesterday voted overwhelmingly in favor of 68 constitutional amendments which will reaffirm the republic’s sovereignty.”¹¹³

After the amendments were adopted, the atmosphere in Yugoslavia indeed felt threatening. *Delo* commented that “this time things are serious” that “the suddenly increased political pressure on Slovenia” has for the very first time “openly demonstrated that speculations about emergency measures in Yugoslavia might have a very real base.”¹¹⁴ Critics all over Yugoslavia, but primarily in Serbia and Montenegro, called the act of the

¹¹¹ Speech by Milan Kučan, president of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia, at the 27th Session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, on 26 September – live, “Kučan addresses plenum,” Belgrade Domestic Service, 26-09-1989.

¹¹² “Reuter on Controversial amendments and Slovenia,” AP, B-Wire, 28-09-1989, Belgrade.

¹¹³ “Slovenian vote on sovereignty sparks threats,” *London Times*, London, 28-09-1989.

¹¹⁴ “Slovenia challenges federal authorities, secession amendments set for vote,” AP, Belgrade, 27-09-1989.

Slovenes a “political diversion”, “a senseless act breaking up Yugoslavia”.¹¹⁵ Many anti-Slovene demonstrations took place all over Serbia and Montenegro. In Titograd, protesting crowds threatened to take up arms against Slovenia. A speaker warned: “We already have weapons in our hands and if defense of the Yugoslav Constitution requires them, Belgrade can count on us.”¹¹⁶ Demonstrators chanted “arrest Kučan”. In Novi Sad, thousands of protestors shouted “we want the army”, and “the next rally in Ljubljana”.¹¹⁷ Only the Croatian cities of Split, Kardeljevo and Zagreb sent telegrams of support to Slovenian leaders.¹¹⁸

The ‘economic war’

Frame of the leadership: prosperity frame

After the amendments were enacted in September 1989, confrontation between Slovenia and Serbia continued. In November 1989, the Slovenian government refused to allow a rally in Ljubljana initiated by Serbs and Montenegrins. The official justification of the planned protest was to “inform Slovenes about events in Kosovo”. In response to this ban, the Serbian government broke its economic relations with Slovenia.¹¹⁹ Consequently, in a couple of months economic exchange dramatically decreased between the two republics, constituting the so-called economic war between Serbia and Slovenia.¹²⁰

The popular view in Slovenia was that the planned demonstrations and the embargo was part of the general plan to topple the Slovenian leadership.¹²¹ This instance in particular, commonly labeled the “economic war” by politicians and the media, served as a concrete

¹¹⁵ “Yugoslav press analyzes Slovene decision,” *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 28-09-1989.

¹¹⁶ “Slovenian vote on sovereignty sparks threats,” *London Times*, London, 28-09-1989.

¹¹⁷ “Outrage in Serbia over Slovene vote on secession,” *Independent*, London, 29-09-1989.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ More precisely, the Serbian Socialist Alliance of Working People – a close ally of Milošević’s communist party – called on Serbian businesses to cut ties with Slovenian enterprises.

¹²⁰ Sabrina Ramet, 871.

¹²¹ RFE Report on Eastern Europe, 8 December 1989.

justification for increased Slovenian sovereignty. Since the “war” raised serious economic concerns, claims for sovereignty were justified as a means of protecting Slovenia’s economic interests, which again demonstrated the strong effect of contextualizing events on the choice of frames. At the session of the Slovenian League of Communists, one of the speakers, inspired “by the latest insane moves by the Serbian regime,” vehemently argued for Slovenia’s economic sovereignty. He further emphasized that “the robbery of the Slovenian economy should be prevented, [...] the fund for the underdeveloped abolished [...] and a national currency introduced.”¹²² The Slovene assembly in a statement interpreted the blockade also as an attack on Slovenian sovereignty.¹²³

Milan Kučan noted, “After the declaration of the blockade on Slovenia, Yugoslavia no longer is, and cannot be, what it was. We all [have to determine] afresh our mutual relations in our common state”, because “one thing is sure: The notion of Yugoslavia as an extended Serbia [...] is not acceptable to us.”¹²⁴ This statement supports the thesis of Sabrina Ramet, who argued that the growing tension between Slovenia and Serbia, and in particular the policies of Milošević pushed Slovenia to the point of complete alienation from the federation and eventually secession.

Not long after this conflict, talks between federalists and confederalists broke down in January 1990. The Slovenian delegation walked out of a meeting of the League of Communists after its proposal for transforming the League into a confederation of “free and independent republican communist parties” was rejected.

The election campaign in 1990

Ex-communists drop their ethno-nationalist rhetoric

DEMOS becomes the main champion of the ethnic security frame

¹²² Tanjug, Belgrade, 15-12-1989, FBIS-EEU, 08-01-1990.

¹²³ “Slovene executive council on blockade,” Tanjug, 07-12-1989.

¹²⁴ “Kučan Opens Belgrade Congress,” Belgrade, Tanjug, 22-12-1989, FBIS-EEU, 8-01-1990.

Prosperity frame utilized by all political parties

On the whole, the issue of independence dominated the campaign. Not only politicians, but also people perceived this to be the principal political issue at stake. According to a series of polls carried out at the Kardelj University in Ljubljana, 74,1% of voters considered the status question – secession or confederation – to be the most important campaign issue.¹²⁵ There were three main political groups competing for power: the ex-communists that had reconstituted themselves as the Party of Democratic Renewal, the DEMOS coalition made up by conservative opposition parties, and the Liberal Party, which grew out of the previous Socialist Youth Alliance.

Although every party and candidate advocated Slovenian “sovereignty”, there was a significant difference between DEMOS’ and the ex-communists’ stance on the status issue. In general, the practical meaning of independence remained blurred, and could refer to anything ranging from confederation to full secession. However, the parties of DEMOS often hinted at the idea of full secession. Their presidential candidate, Jože Pučnik, noted that, “I can imagine an independent Slovenia within one year.”¹²⁶ Although Pučnik in theory favored an independent Slovenia within a future Yugoslav confederation, he doubted it would ever be accepted by Serbia. “So secession is inevitable, and Slovenia should begin planning to print its own money and create its own army,” he asserted. The ex-communists also advocated independence, yet, at the same time favored continuing the negotiations on forming a confederation. “Independence for Slovenia – yes, secession – no!” was their slogan.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ “Slovenia appears ready to elect communist president,” B-Wire, *Chicago Tribune*, Washington, 08-04-1990.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ “Slovene LC wants independence, not secession,” Tanjug, Ljubljana, 27-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 28-03-1990.

The ethno-nationalist language practically disappeared from the ex-communists' discourse. They instead adopted a pragmatic language; "the respect for human rights, free elections, easing tensions with Kosovo and the right of all Yugoslav republics to self-determination" were the main points of their program. This frame shift can be explained by the fact that it would have been difficult for them to compete against DEMOS by sticking to the ethnic security frame. Many of the leaders of DEMOS belonged to those intellectuals who used to be contributors of *Nova Revija* and thus represented the "most authentic" voice of exclusivist ethnic nationalism. During the campaign, representatives of DEMOS simply continued with their usual rhetoric. DEMOS' candidates were also more radical in their goals as they did not exclude the possibility of full secession. Altogether, the ex-communists came to represent the more moderate and pragmatic political option compared to DEMOS, with their campaign focusing on economic issues, democratic transition and the external threats Slovenia was facing.

DEMOS was campaigning on the statehood issue using populist anticommunism. As the *Chicago Tribune* pointed out on DEMOS' campaign poster, "Jozef Stalin, Nicolae Ceausescu, and Enver Hoxha have come back from the grave to join Li Peng, Erich Honecker, Kim Il Sung and Fidel Castro [...] bearing the single word: communism." Jože Pučnik, head of the coalition noted accusingly that Slovenian communists "use their privileges in order to win elections at any costs [...]" He also warned that "they should not expect that they can win elections, simply because they have ceased to oppress the Slovene people."¹²⁸

Besides anti-communism, ethno-nationalist themes featured prominently in their campaign rhetoric, reflected by their politicians "worrying over perceived threats to

¹²⁸ "Slovenia appears ready to elect communist president," B-Wire, *Chicago Tribune*, Washington, 08-04-1990.

Slovene identity and culture (*slovenstvo*)”.¹²⁹ Thus, DEMOS continued to frame Slovene national identity in ethnically exclusive terms by using the ethnic security frame. Pučnik advocated the confederation “as a condition for having a future and protecting the identity of the Slovene people...” He also spoke of the significance of the “Slovene spirit”. He further noted that “unless we speed up our drafting of the scenario for an independent statehood, we will not be up to our historic task.”¹³⁰ Similarly, Dimitrije Rupel, president of the Slovene Democratic Alliance, called for independence due to apparent threats to Slovenia’s national identity. He described Yugoslavia as an imperialist creation under which Slovenes had been variously threatened with assimilation by the Croats or the Serbs, already having suffered under Germanization. On such bases, he argued that “we must constitute ourselves as a national state either within a confederation or completely autonomous.”¹³¹ Thus, DEMOS’ ethnically exclusivist view on national identity was based on the perception that that identity was threatened by other peoples of Yugoslavia. This view stood in sharp contrast to the national identity promoted by *Mladina* which furiously condemned the new parties “for their indulgence in nationalist rhetoric.”¹³²

Economic sovereignty became an important element of the independence movement, and economic arguments were raised in favor of independence on all political sides.¹³³ According to the main argument adopted by all the parties, the federation cost Slovenia too much, and federal economic policy was hurting Slovenian economy, therefore

¹²⁹ Patterson, 441.

¹³⁰ Pučnik, *Delo*, Ljubljana, 10-01-1990, FBIS-EEU, 02-03-1990.

¹³¹ “Slovene opposition leader discusses elections,” *Delo*, 13-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 13-03-1990.

¹³² Patterson, 452.

¹³³ For instance, the Social Democrats demanded that “the first working session of the Slovene Assembly should adopt measures to counter the acute economic crisis that imperiled the material welfare of the Slovene people, in particular measures to proclaim a temporary suspension of all the federal laws that restricted Slovene economic sovereignty, increase the powers of the Slovene state bank, ensure the introduction of a Slovene means of payment, and stop payments to the federation.” In “Social Democrats Hold Congress,” Ljubljana Domestic Service, 24-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 02-03-1990.

Slovenia could remain within Yugoslavia only if it was reconstituted into a confederation.¹³⁴

These arguments may have had some factual basis as in the late 1980s /early 1990, Slovenia had undergone a period of economic recession, when real domestic product was falling and unemployment was on the rise.¹³⁵ The Slovenian Chamber of Economy blamed federal economic policy measures, such as “the unrealistic exchange rate” of the national currency, a restrictive monetary policy, inadequate interest rates and finally the blockade of Slovene enterprises by Serbia.”¹³⁶ Similarly, representatives of the ex-communists said that “the state is holding the economy by the throat” and blamed Marković’s politics of restricting bank credits.¹³⁷ Yet, the timing of the emergence of such discourse was peculiar. Interestingly, economic arguments became dominant at a time when the federal government finally managed to curb inflation drastically. While in 1989 inflation accelerated to 2500%, the Marković government cut it to nil in January 1990 and kept it under control until the second half of 1990. (However, in September, October the monthly rate began to climb again reaching 8%.¹³⁸)

One reason for the timing of this rhetoric was the economic war with Serbia having started in November 1989 that brought the economy into the focus of attention and generated incentives to achieve sovereignty. The communist-controlled parliament proclaimed in March 1990 that

¹³⁴ As the Slovenian Trade Union asserted, sustaining the federal state costs so much for Slovenia that “the confederation is a key condition for a normal conduct of the economy.” In “Independent Slovene Union Founding Congress Held,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 30-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 02-04-1990; Summary of Tanjug from a press conference of Slovenian parties, “Slovenian parties favor Yugoslav confederation,” Tanjug, 05-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 06-04-1990.

¹³⁵ The annual change of the GDP was -4.7% in 1990, -8.1% in 1991. The unemployment rate grew from 5.9% in 1990 to 10.1% in 1991.

Source: EBRD, *Transition Report: Economic Transition in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, (London: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, October 1994).

¹³⁶ Tanjug, 06-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 13-03-1990.

¹³⁷ “Slovene Party recognizing losing members,” *Delo*, 05-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 13-03-1990.

¹³⁸ John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 355-56.

“because of the one sided break in economic relations by the Socialist Republic of Serbia with the Republic of Slovenia [...] the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia will independently adopt economic self-protection measures [...]” in order to prevent irreparable consequences of the economic system.¹³⁹

For that reason, within the same month, the assembly passed five constitutional amendments establishing the “economic independence” of the republic. Furthermore, it was also stated that Slovenia will stop contributing to the Federal Fund for Underdeveloped Regions through which regions such as Kosovo received financial assistance.¹⁴⁰

The significance of economic issues was also demonstrated by a debate of the presidential candidates, which turned into a discussion about the economy, and about Slovenia’s material interests. DEMOS’ candidate, Pučnik, vehemently argued for independence on economic grounds: “What pays is that Slovenia should stand on its own, because it is an economic necessity that it should stand on its own...”¹⁴¹ Similarly, Kučan stressed the importance of the economic sovereignty: “Independence, sovereignty, confederation: it is clear that there is no economic sovereignty without them.”¹⁴²

Besides the perception of an approaching economic disaster, the chance of a military threat had been lingering during the campaign. The presidential candidate of the Liberal Party, Marko Demšar noted, “I also hope that Slovenia would not need to defend its independence with the army.” A *Delo* commentary in March wrote that it “could happen that they hit us with some heavy federal weapon ...” particularly since there were calls in the Belgrade press that “somebody [...] finally bang his fist on the table”- and restore order in Slovenia.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ “Slovene Assembly’s declaration on relations,” FBIS-EEU, 20-03-1990.

¹⁴⁰ “Is Slovenia heading towards independence?” RFER/Milan Andrejevich, Munich, 9-03-1990.

¹⁴¹ FBIS-EEU, 09-04-1990.

¹⁴² “Slovene presidential candidates’ views,” *Delo*, 24-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 29-03-1990.

¹⁴³ Danilo Slivnik, “Slivnik of the confederation issue,” *Delo*, 10-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 14-03-1990.

Thus, the sense of physical threat became an important argument for independence. The president of Slovenia also justified demands for confederation as a means of defending against pressure from Serbia:

“daily insults, unprecedented allegations, organized economic pressure and threats to use arms cause doubts about a possibility for further life together in a such a Yugoslavia...The political developments in Serbia [...] have convinced us that the preservation of formal federal equality is impossible [because of Serbian tendencies to dominate the whole country].¹⁴⁴

In the course of the election campaign, the democracy frame could also be heard occasionally, from all political sides. Accordingly, independence was necessary “to secure values incompatible with those of what was quickly becoming Milošević’s Yugoslavia.”¹⁴⁵ For instance, Milan Kučan said that Slovenia would secede from Yugoslavia if other parts of the country do not follow democratic reforms. Pučnik argued that independence was needed because “it is a risk f...] to remain in this Yugoslavia and to bear moral and legal responsibility for the shooting of citizens in Kosovo [...]. We Slovenes cannot bear this risk any longer.”¹⁴⁶ *Delo* wrote in the spring of 1990 along the same lines that “Yugoslavia, the way it is today is not ready for Europe, [... if changes do not happen] we Slovenes have to enter Europe on our own.”¹⁴⁷

This self-image based on a civic identity, rooted in the civil society master frame was at odds not only with the nationalism represented by Milošević but also with the nationalist rhetoric of some Slovenian politicians, especially from DEMOS. *Mladina* was becoming anxious about Slovenia’s international political image, jealously watching democratization in other parts of Central-Eastern Europe, while harshly criticizing DEMOS.¹⁴⁸ One of their

¹⁴⁴ “Stanovnik’s speech,” Ljubljana Domestic Service, 29-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 30-03-1990.

¹⁴⁵ Patterson, 414.

¹⁴⁶ FBIS-EEU, 09-04-1990.

¹⁴⁷ M. Laketic reports: “We Slovenes will have to go to Europe on our own,” *Politika*, Belgrade, 18-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 22-03-1990.

¹⁴⁸ See the article of Patterson.

authors wrote after the elections that the new Slovenian government “was shoving Slovenes into a national state...” and likened the coalition to the “national bolshevik” movement under Milošević.¹⁴⁹

Although the DEMOS coalition won the elections by gaining a slight majority of 126 seats in the 240 seats national assembly, the ex-communists got the most votes as a single party, 17,3%. Moreover, their candidate became the first democratically-elected president of Slovenia. The second highest vote (14,5%) was won by the Liberal Democratic Party, which rejected DEMOS’ nationalist line. Despite DEMOS’ election victory, this amount of support for the former communists and for the liberals signaled the citizens’ cautious approach to independence, as they failed to give all the power to the democratic opposition propagating secession. The ex-communists strategically positioned themselves in the issue space to capture the greatest share of popular support by mobilizing around the democracy and the prosperity frame. These frames resonated with somewhat less than half of the electorate (45%), which preferred moderation, rejected DEMOS’ ethnic nationalism, and shared the civic version of Slovenian identity.

Altogether the election campaign offered a relatively open space for framing compared to previous contextualizing events. Contextualizing events were relevant occurrences, which usually pushed a single issue into the focus of public attention. Thus they were about particular issues, and of a specific content. By contrast, the election campaign was about party competition bringing up a myriad of topics. While contextualizing events played a crucial role in which frame gained dominant status at each point, the elections in Slovenia served as an occasion for the open competition of all the frames that had emerged

¹⁴⁹ Darko Štrajn, “Kavkasko-Kosovski presek,” *Maldina*, no. 6, 09-02-1990, 14.

previously throughout 1988/89. The different political groups presented these frames during the campaign, as each group utilized a frame by which it could distinguish itself from the others and by which it hoped to attract more votes than competitors. Therefore, the election campaign was a rhetorical contest, in which the electoral results showed the relative resonance of the discourses. Only DEMOS opted for using the ethnic security frame propagating the exclusivist version of national identity, and obtained the support of slightly more than half of the electorate. Although this was not a failure, yet indicated that the other half of the voters that chose the other parties accepted a different kind of rhetoric. The prosperity frame was common to all parties' electoral platforms (just as the democracy frame, which was also voiced by everybody but was not as salient.) Although the prosperity frame did not say much about national identity explicitly, when talking about economic issues the parties implicitly addressed all the people living in the republic, not only ethnic Slovenes. For this reason, the prosperity frame was an appropriate tool to frame national identity in ethnically inclusive terms and to appeal to that part of the electorate, which preferred civic identity and moderation as opposed to ethnic nationalism and radicalization. Since during the subsequent referendum campaign the aim was to convince as many people as possible to vote 'yes' for independence, those arguments had to be accentuated that were more likely to be approved by the whole body of voters. While during the election campaign the parties emphasized their differences, before the referendum those arguments had to be highlighted which represented the national common denominator. This explains the subsequent fundamental shift towards the prosperity frame in the pro-independence rhetoric.

The referendum campaign

Frame shift to the common ground: economic and threat based arguments

After the new government was formed by DEMOS, it began to push the independence project. The new government was often accused of having initiated the referendum on independence because it could not deal with the difficult economic situation. The Liberal Democrat Janez Kopac, MP of the opposition, noted that [the government] “is creating a national euphoria, while fearing an economic disaster”, that is why it was running on the national question.¹⁵⁰ According to outside analysts such as Dennison Rusinow, the referendum was a move to shift the attention of the public from economic matters and to seize the momentum through directing public attention on the nationalist agenda.¹⁵¹ *Mladina* harshly criticized the new leadership for being “antidemocratic, discriminatory and uncaring” and accused it of “setting out on a crazy witch hunt to purge all things communist from Slovenian society.” According to the magazine, the Slovenian government was hurting “Slovenia’s image as the vanguard of democracy”.¹⁵² For *Mladina*, the new enemy after the communists were gone became national chauvinism, which indicated that the controversy over the definition of national identity continued.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, contributors to *Mladina* also supported sovereignty since they saw democracy, pluralism and Western traditions as the fruits of greater autonomy and equated Yugoslav centralism with authoritarianism.¹⁵⁴ Altogether, all major political actors, including the government and the opposition, supported independence. There was no considerable difference in the discourse employed by the parties either. On the whole, economic and threat-based arguments dominated while ethno-nationalist themes almost disappeared, signifying that civic identity had more traction with the voters than the ethnically exclusive version. (I use the term threat based arguments here in order

¹⁵⁰ “Opposition Says DEMOS Fears ‘Economic Disaster’,” Belgrade Domestic Service, 13-12-1990, FBIS-EEU, 14-12-1990.

¹⁵¹ Dennison Rusinow, 154-155.

¹⁵² Patterson, 451.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 443-444.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 446.

to differentiate these arguments from the ethnic security frame. If threat is not interpreted as targeting one ethnic group only but all inhabitants of a given territory then it concerns the security of everyone regardless of ethnic affiliation, in which case it is not about ethnic security but security in general of all inhabitants.)

The calling of the referendum prompted harsh reactions from the Yugoslav presidency, which deemed it unconstitutional and interpreted it as an act of secession. The Slovene Presidency protested against this reading of the situation and maintained that the plebiscite did not mean secession from Yugoslavia. Yet Slovenian politicians sent mixed messages about the meaning of the referendum. Top-ranking officials (Milan Kučan, the president, France Bučar, the president of the assembly, and Lojze Peterle, the prime minister) often emphasized that “even if Slovenes declared themselves for autonomy in the plebiscite, Slovenia would still be a constituent part of Yugoslavia.”¹⁵⁵ Similarly, foreign minister Rupel, president Kučan and Janez Drnovšek, the Slovenian member of the Yugoslav presidency repeated many times that Slovenia neither has the intention to secede nor any interest in such a move.¹⁵⁶ At the same time, other politicians such as Pučnik, chairman of DEMOS, said that “the plebiscite is the only opportunity for Slovenia to finally get rid of Yugoslavia. He advocated that Slovenia be fully independent without any confederal arrangements with anyone.”¹⁵⁷

Altogether, a “yes” vote - as explained by the Constitutional Commission - meant that “Slovenia is becoming [...] independent [...] and ceases to be associated within

¹⁵⁵ “Slovene officials explain plebiscite,” *Tanjug*, Ljubljana, 18-11-1990, FBIS-EEU, 19-12-1990.

¹⁵⁶ “Slovenia to hold key independence vote,” *Reuter*, B-Wire, Ljubljana, 21-12-1990.

¹⁵⁷ “Slovene officials discuss secession,” *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 17-12-1990, FBIS-EEU, 20-12-1990; “Slovenian president on the future of republics,” *Tanjug*, 10-11-1990, FBIS-EEU, 13-11-1990; “Drnovšek discusses situation in country,” *Borba*, 27-28-10-1990, FBIS-EEU, 14-11-1990.

Yugoslavia [...] and can conclude international treaties and confederal treaties with the democratic states of other Yugoslav peoples”.¹⁵⁸

In the run-up to the referendum, the government launched a fervent media campaign for independence. “A flood of media propaganda has been aimed at persuading Slovenes to vote for independence and local radio stations regularly play pro-independence rock songs,” noted a commentator.¹⁵⁹

The authorities gave three reasons for holding the referendum. The first was that “it was impossible to solve the constitutional crisis within the framework of [...] a firm federation.” The second pointed to “Serbian measures aimed against Slovenia”, and the third stressed “Slovenia’s catastrophic economic position as a consequence of federal policies.”¹⁶⁰ In line with these justifications, the campaign was dominated by references to threats and economic grievances. Ethno-nationalist themes remained marginal. Only a few claims were drawing on the democracy frame. When Kučan explained why the referendum was necessary, he referred mostly to economic arguments, but also pointed to human rights violations in Kosovo, and the lack of democracy in other republics.¹⁶¹ The former communist party stressed that remaining in the current system threatens the democratic development of Slovenia.¹⁶² Similarly, Rupel asserted that “Slovenes are not separatists [...] they wish to join Europe” but “Yugoslavia is holding them back”, underscoring Slovenia’s European identity.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Tanjug, 23-11-1990.

¹⁵⁹ “Slovenia to hold key independence vote,” Reuter, B-Wire, Ljubljana, 21-12-1990.

¹⁶⁰ Janko Saradjen reported from a session of the Republican Constitutional Commission of Slovenia, “Constitutional group discusses plebiscite,” Ljubljana Radio Slovenia Network, 13-11-1990, FBIS-EEU, 15-11-1990.

¹⁶¹ “Slovene Presidency President views plebiscite,” Tanjug, 06-12-1990, FBIS-EEU, 07-12-1990.

¹⁶² “Democratic Renewal Party want Slovene plebiscite,” Tanjug, 18-11-1990, FBIS-EEU, 19-11-1990.

¹⁶³ “Rupel distances self from Jović CSCE speech,” Tanjug, 20-11-1990, FBIS-EEU, 21-11-1990.

However, economic interests were the main rationale for the referendum. There was a lot of talk about the economic consequences of secession. *Delo* regularly published different calculations about the costs and benefits of secession emphasizing that the costs would not mean an economic and financial catastrophe.¹⁶⁴ However, Mencinger, deputy prime-minister of Slovenia warned in a report that independence could bring about some unwanted consequences: “the loss of Yugoslav markets, blockade by international financial institutions, and lasting negotiations about the division of Yugoslav property.” He also drew attention to the current deterioration of the economic situation in Slovenia. There were many publications in the media suggesting that “Slovenia was facing a financial collapse”.¹⁶⁵ The Slovene Economic Chamber reported about a drastic fall in production, growing trade deficit, growing number of employed in loss-making companies.¹⁶⁶

Reflecting this perception of the economic situation, the former communists mentioned “economic collapse” as the first reason on their list as to why the referendum was necessary, besides international isolation of Yugoslavia and the threat of civil war.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, Peterle, the prime-minister, often argued for independence on economic grounds. “Some 80% of the Slovene economy was controlled by the federal leadership, which was why the republic should gradually depart from the federal legislation.”¹⁶⁸ The Assembly of Slovenia issued a statement outlining the reasons for holding the referendum. The document exclusively talks about economic reasons, and gives a detailed account of the expected economic advantages. It concludes that “the autonomy of Slovenia would facilitate a more rapid establishment of a normal economic policy, which suits the Slovene economy...”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ “Predicted costs of Slovene secession viewed,” *Borba*, 12-11-1990, FBIS-EEU, 19-11-1990.

¹⁶⁵ “Mencinger views costs of independence,” *Tanjug*, 21-11-1990, FBIS-EEU, 23-11-1990.

¹⁶⁶ “Slovene economy reportedly in ‘state of collapse’,” *Tanjug*, 22-11-1990, FBIS-EEU, 23-11-1990.

¹⁶⁷ “Democratic Renewal Party want Slovene plebiscite,” *Tanjug*, 18-11-1990, FBIS-EEU, 19-11-1990.

¹⁶⁸ “Peterle cited on secession”, *Tanjug*, 25-11-1990.

¹⁶⁹ “Slovene Executive Council approves plebiscite,” *Tanjug*, 30-11-1990, FBIS-EEU, 03-11-1990.

Kučan also emphasized that there were strong economic reasons for holding the referendum. “The Yugoslav economy is approaching chaos with accelerated speed. This could have unforeseeable economic, social and political consequences.” He made it clear that ultimately “the fact that the Slovene economy base is being undermined [and the threat of international isolation] is not allowing Slovenia to postpone its moves towards the process of state independence.”¹⁷⁰

The importance of economic arguments during the campaign was further demonstrated by a government document submitted to the Assembly about the reasons to hold a plebiscite. Economic issues appeared already in the opening sentence and were presented as the main justification for organizing the referendum. The largest part of it was devoted to the economy, outlining the potential economic advantages and risks.¹⁷¹ The document concluded, however, that “an independent Slovenia will enjoy two advantages in the long run. Macroeconomic management would be easier and more effective and more funds will be left for its own current and investment use.” It also noted that it did not make sense to further finance the federation because it would only put Slovenia into international isolation.

¹⁷⁰ “Slovene Presidency President views plebiscite,” Tanjug, 06-12-1990, FBIS-EEU, 07-12-1990.

¹⁷¹ “The present Yugoslav institutional framework does not allow Slovenia to make independent decisions concerning the vital interests of the Slovene economy. This fact has a particular dimension in a state as heterogeneous in its regional economic development as Yugoslavia.” [In the government’s opinion independence would allow for] “a quicker establishment of a normal economic system, independent economic policy suitable to the Slovene economy, a normal flow of capital between Slovenia and the world, a better use of geographic position, a more efficient use of developmental potential, an accelerated adjustment to European norms, and a cease in keeping an expensive federal state.” Yet, the document stressed that except for the abolition of federal funds, all the listed advantages were of potential nature.

The document also drew attention to potential risks of independence, such as those deriving from possible interruptions of connections with other parts of Yugoslavia. The Slovene economy could be threatened by “a blockage of financial flows because of joint debts, the loss of Yugoslav market and foreign trade connections that Slovenia now has through Yugoslav enterprises and institutions, the loss of property in other parts of Yugoslavia, the reduction of the market size that is less interesting to foreign investors, an unfavorable attitude of the World Bank, the IMF, GATT [...], and the large costs of developing an individual economic system.” In Veso Stojanov, “The advantages of becoming independent involve risks,” *Delo*, Ljubljana, 04-12-1990 “Slovene government on Consequences of Independence,” FBIS-EEU, 17-12-1990.

Besides bringing about economic benefits, the document also argued that a decision on independence would strengthen Slovenia's security position, as after the plebiscite an army intervention would mean an attack on a sovereign state. Thus it was assumed that after a referendum Slovenia would less likely be attacked by the JNA.¹⁷²

The latter calculation was important because the feeling of threat was intensifying during the campaign. There were media reports about "unusual army activities in Slovenia", which were generally denied by the army and federal authorities, but created a tense atmosphere.¹⁷³ Defense minister Janez Janša reported a secret army document on solving the crisis in Slovenia by the use of arms.¹⁷⁴ The Yugoslav State Presidency rejected allegations about possible military intervention and argued that "Slovenian leaders want to create an atmosphere of fear from the Yugoslav Army ahead of the plebiscite."¹⁷⁵ The fear of Serbia and of a potential army attack thus became crucial arguments in the independence campaign. Kučan emphasized that "a draft for a federation presented by the president of the Yugoslav presidency, Jović, only stipulates Serbia's old hegemony of interests." He further added: "As far as Kosovo is concerned, prospects are slim that reason and compromise will prevail one day. For this reason, we are afraid of a civil war. And therefore, our suitcases are packed".¹⁷⁶ He noted that there were good reasons to assume that the JNA might interfere in the political process in Slovenia.¹⁷⁷

Altogether, the prosperity frame and threat based arguments were the most salient during the campaign. DEMOS apparently changed its position from its previous rhetoric. Before the elections, ethnic populism and radicalism on the status issue distinguished

¹⁷² "Plebiscite's effect on Slovene Development Viewed," *Delo*, Ljubljana, 04-12-1990, FBIS-EEU, 21-12-1990.

¹⁷³ "Unusual army activity in Slovenia denied," Tanjug, 06-12-1990, FBIS-EEU, 07-11-1990.

¹⁷⁴ "Janša views army document," Ljubljana Radio Slovene Network, 07-12-1990, FBIS-EEU, 10-12-1990.

¹⁷⁵ "Presidency Accuses Slovene Leaders of Threats," Tanjug, Belgrade, 14-12-1990, FBIS-EEU, 17-12-1990.

DEMOS' rhetoric from that of the others. Yet, in the elections, half of the votes were cast for parties (primarily for the former communists and the liberals) that utilized frames that promoted civic version of national identity. Furthermore, the former communists won the presidential elections. This indicated that the DEMOS' ethnonationalist discourse deeply divided the population and its popularity was far from overwhelming, especially in light of the sweeping victory of opposition groups in other ex-communist countries, such as in Poland, Czechoslovakia or Hungary.

Thus, the independence frame shifted between the elections and the referendum because the political situation was different. While before the elections the goal was to highlight differences among the contestants, this time the aim was to achieve national unity, as the government needed the whole nation to support independence in order to produce a legitimate result. The possibility of an army attack was also a reason why the government had to foster united domestic support. The uncertainty of DEMOS about the referendum outcome was shown by its attempt to set a low threshold for a successful result.¹⁷⁶ It wanted to introduce special rules according to which a majority of those who participated would have been enough to produce a valid result. However, the opposition, especially the Liberal Party, did not let the government implement this rule, and insisted that the threshold for passage be the majority of all registered voters. Consequently, if the government wanted a strong result, those arguments had to be accentuated, which were accepted by all the parties and the voters. Indeed, the common ground between the rhetoric of Kučan's party, the liberals and of DEMOS was economic and threat-based arguments, and the civic version of national identity.

¹⁷⁶ "Slovenia's Kučan sees federation's disintegration," *Der Spiegel*, 26-11-1990, FBIS-EEU, 27-11-1990.

¹⁷⁷ "Slovene Presidency President views plebiscite," *Tanjug*, 06-12-1990, FBIS-EEU, 07-12-1990.

¹⁷⁸ Author Interview, Darko Štrajn, President of Liberal Academy, former editor of *Mladina*, Ljubljana, 11-02-2008.

The referendum was a big success for the pro-independence camp. At a 93,5% turnout 88,5% voted yes “for an independent and autonomous state of Slovenia.”¹⁷⁹

Conclusions

Until secession was proclaimed in June 1991, Slovenian politicians emphasized that their movement for sovereignty was grounded in economic reasoning. Drnovšek, however retrospectively concluded that fear – “fears of further yogurt revolutions, of civil war, of military takeover, of economic chaos” – was the ultimate factor that led to Slovenia’s secession in the summer of 1991.¹⁸⁰ According to a poll that tried to address the question on what grounds people supported secession, a plurality – 36.9% of the respondents – thought that due to economic reasons Slovenia’s independence was necessary; 19,7% to political reasons, 10,8% because “Yugoslavia was falling apart”, 11,1% “due to all kinds of repressions” and 14,6% due to international isolation.¹⁸¹ It would be, therefore, hard to establish why people chose independence. However, the main research question to be answered here is why economic arguments gained such an important role during the last phase of mobilization and not before, and what caused the previous shifts in the independence frame.

Table1. Discourse dynamics of the independence movement

Event	Frames
“The trial of the four”	Issue 1: violation of the rights of the accused to a fair and free trial => democracy frame (presented by social movement leaders) Issue 2: the trial would be conducted in Serbo-Croatian and not in Slovenian =>

¹⁷⁹ “Results of Slovene Plebiscite Reported,” Belgrade Domestic Service, 26-12-1990, FBIS-EEU, 27-12-1990.

¹⁸⁰ Drnovšek, Janez. “The Political Reasons for the Dissolution of SFR Yugoslavia,” in *Slovenia, From Yugoslavia to the European Union*, ed. Mojmir Mrak, Matija Rojec and Carlos Silva-Jáuregui, Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2004, 7.

¹⁸¹ Opinion poll conducted by Delo-Stik: “In your opinion, what are the essential reasons to propose Slovenia’s independence?”, in “Public About Plebiscite,” *Delo*, 17 November 1990, “Slovene Poll Shows Majority Supports Independence,” FBIS-EEU, 30 November 1990.

	ethnic security frame (presented by civil society activists + communist leadership) Frame shift: from pragmatic discourse to the ethnic security frame (communist leadership)
Mass demonstration for the Kosovar miners	Democracy frame (presented by social movement leaders) Ethnic security frame (forwarded by the communist leadership)
Amending the Slovenian constitution	Ethnic security frame (presented by conservative intellectuals + communist leadership)
The 'economic war'	Prosperity frame (communist leadership)
The election campaign	Ethnic security frame (DEMOS) Prosperity frame (all political parties) Frame shift: Ex-communists drop their ethno-nationalist rhetoric, and adopt the democracy and the prosperity frame
The referendum campaign	Economic and threat based arguments (every party) Frame shift: DEMOS drops its ethno-nationalist discourse

The table above summarizing the discourse dynamics of the independence movement demonstrates that the framing process was strongly influenced by contextualizing events. During the first event called “the trial of the four”, right after the journalists were arrested and were about to be tried by a military court in the absence of civilian lawyers, the democracy frame dominated the pro-independence discourse. Yet, as people learned that Slovenian language cannot be used during the trial the democracy frame quickly became marginal relative to arguments stressing the importance of Slovenian language, culture and the nation. Already in 1988, the ethnic security frame was the most salient in Slovenian public discourse. It dominated the pro-independence rhetoric also while politicians interpreted the constitutional amendments in 1989. Since the purpose of the amendments was national self-defense, the ethnic security frame seemed like an ideal

tool for framing this event. Economic arguments appeared during the economic war with Serbia. Thus, various contextualizing events prompted the emergence of specific frames at certain points of the mobilization process and these were the frames which reappeared during the election and the referendum campaign.

Altogether, as a result of early pluralization and liberalization, actors had the possibility and the time to try out different types of frames. Due to the liberal political climate, different movements sprang up around various issues, producing a vivid public space. The free competition of frames lasting three years ultimately fostered moderation in Slovenia, since actors had the time and the chance to cultivate collective solidarity and to find the national common denominator, producing a less confrontational independence frame. By the time of the referendum, it was quite obvious which discourse divided the electorate and which united it. However, it took a while until it became visible that economic arguments were the ones acceptable for the widest majority of the population, (while the ethnic security frame was rejected by a great proportion of the people).

Moreover, by tracing the movement it becomes visible that the inclusive and exclusive versions of national identity were simultaneously present throughout the whole mobilization course. People associated with movements in the Alternative Scene, founders of the Liberal Party and *Mladina* upheld the civic idea of the nation, while politicians of DEMOS represented the exclusivist interpretation. The ex-communists in the run-up to the elections shifted their stance on national identity from the ethnic version to the civic one. While during the whole mobilization period these two versions of national identity competed with each other, by the end of the movement the inclusive interpretation became dominant. As Slovenian leaders realized that civic identity represented the national common denominator rather than ethnic identity, they forged a collective national identity, which was based on the idea of citizenship and not on ethnicity. Accordingly, the

mobilization process was marked by the absence of ethnic exclusion or xenophobia against internal minorities including immigrants. Although contextualizing events played a key role in which frame(s) and what kind of identity gained dominant status at each point in time, the overall mobilization process tended towards ethnically inclusive framing as perceptions of internal threat associated with a minority had not emerged in Slovenia. This outcome supports the predictions of the model of secessionist framing, according to which if minorities living in a secessionist entity are not politically connected to the threatening center, perceptions of internal threat are unlikely to become widespread and collective identity is expected to be framed in ethnically inclusive terms. Although a contextualizing event, i.e. the economic war with Serbia prompted the emergence of economic arguments within the pro independence discourse, yet the dominance of civic identity explains ultimately why they became so popular with politicians while justifying claims for independence, as economic arguments were well suited for ethnically inclusive framing as was explained above.

It can also be argued that economic arguments took on such a prominent role due to their relative non-combativeness. As at the end of 1990, Slovenes seriously feared an attack from the Yugoslav army – which explains the frequency of fear-based arguments – it made sense to tone down the discourse while arguing for independence. When the movement for independence must be conducted through violence it may be necessary to use stronger arguments than economic interests to mobilize the population. However, in a case such as Slovenia where politicians still thought that conflict can be averted, more moderate mobilization made sense in order to avoid confrontation.

III. Mobilization for Independence in Croatia

Introduction

Croatia, the second-most economically advanced republic of Yugoslavia, was secessionist like Slovenia, and like Slovenia, its politicians also used economic arguments to argue for a higher degree of republican sovereignty. However, in Croatia, economic arguments during domestic mobilization were not salient. In the federal debates, Croatia repeated the same arguments for confederation as Slovenia, many of which were economic. As Milica Uvalić described the internal debate in the federal structures, the more developed republics of Slovenia and Croatia felt exploited by the federal system, since they contributed the greatest to the Federal Fund for the Development of Less Developed Republics and Regions, yet they had no control over how those resources were used. In addition, they lamented the fact that they could not retain a significant portion of their foreign currency earnings from export and tourism. On such grounds, they argued for transforming Yugoslavia into a confederation. These arguments became crucial during the confederation-federation debate in the second half of the 1980s.¹

In Croatia's political sphere, however, economic arguments for independence were rather marginal, even though the argument, "we are exploited by the poor South" was widely accepted. Croatia was the "silent republic" until 1989: demands for greater Croatian sovereignty only appeared in the public discourse after pluralization and preparation for the first multiparty elections had begun. Thus, not much was said about independence before the campaign preceding the first democratic elections.

Croatia presents an interesting case, since despite the fact that it took a common position with Slovenia in the federal debates on grounds of its similar economic interests,

¹ Bruno Dallago and Milica Uvalić, "The Distributive Consequences of Nationalism: The Case of Former Yugoslavia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no.1 (January 1998): 4.

during domestic mobilization arguments referring to ethnicity, identity and history took upper stage. In Slovenia, in contrast, the political discourse during the referendum campaign was mostly framed by economic arguments. In the case of Slovenia, the language and style of the discourse was pragmatic and moderate, while in Croatia it was exclusivist and ethno-nationalist. The aim of this chapter is to explain why the movement towards independence took such a different route in Croatia as compared with Slovenia by exploring the political developments leading up to secession.

It will be argued that Franjo Tuđman's party, the HDZ's (Croatian Democratic Community) victory was crucial to the escalation of violence despite the fact that the HDZ's coming to power did not necessarily mean secession from Yugoslavia. Public opinion was not in favor of independence and the government of Tuđman did not advocate such an agenda either; they were for the creation of a confederal Yugoslavia.² Prior to the first elections, only 15% of Croats preferred independence to establishing a confederation, while the latter option was favored by 64% of the public. Even the referendum on independence was worded in a way that implied the possibility of a confederal solution.³ Moreover, not only the rhetoric but also the actions of the Tuđman government indicated that the leadership of Croatia was trying to avoid a civil war and considered secession a last resort. From July 1990 until March 1991, General Martin Špegelj tried to persuade Tuđman of the necessity to "use force to disarm the rebellion" in Knin.⁴ Despite a tense situation leading to armed clashes, Tuđman kept rejecting Špegelj's proposals, because he did not want an open confrontation indicating his intention to solve the situation through

² Mirjana Kasapović and Nenad Zakošek, "Democratic Transition in Croatia," in *The 1990 and 1992/93 Sabor Elections in Croatia*, ed. Ivan Šiber (Berlin, 1997), 17.

³ V.P. Gagnon Jr., 134-136.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

negotiations.⁵ As will be demonstrated in the second half of this chapter, “Croatia was pushed towards independence” rather than driving the process.⁶

Despite all this, it will be shown that the policies and rhetoric of HDZ and of Tuđman himself greatly contributed to the emergence of violence, which directly led to Croatia leaving Yugoslavia. Before and during the elections in the spring of 1990, the majority of Croatian Serbs supported the former communists rather than the Serbian nationalist party, the SDS, which played a major role in the instigation of violence and sought secession from Croatia. In light of this, avoiding a violent confrontation and civil war with the Serbian minority was theoretically possible. Only after HDZ came to power and its policies reinforced the fears of the local Serbs, did SDS begin to attract supporters in greater numbers.⁷ Moreover, the secession of Croatia began to appear inevitable only after the outbreak of violence verging on civil war. Continuing the federal debate with a Serbia that had already started an aggressive campaign against Croatia was deemed futile and hopeless.

This dissertation challenges the account of V. P. Gagnon Jr. on the Croatian case as he presented in his book *The myth of an ethnic war*. In it, he argues that the war in Croatia was the result of republican elites’ instigating ethnic violence in order to demobilize the population from a reformist agenda and shift public attention away from liberalization towards threats of existence. Here, it will be demonstrated that one has to go a step further and ask how these elites came to power in the first place before violence broke out and how they could win democratic elections on an exclusivist nationalist platform in a multiethnic society. Therefore, the fundamental question is what explains the coming to power of the

⁵ Ibid., 146-47.

⁶ Vesna Pusić, “Croatia’s Struggle for Democracy,” *Revija za sociologiju* 23, no. 1-2 (1997):95-110, 96.

⁷ Mirjana Kasapović and Nenad Zakošek, “Democratic Transition in Croatia,” 23.

HDZ, the success of their nationalist rhetoric and the popular support they enjoyed. The key question is how an exclusivist nationalist rhetoric could succeed in a multi-ethnic environment, such as Croatia. Possibly, if another, more moderate party had taken control of Croatia in 1990, the independence movement could have been different, and violence on the ground might have been reduced. Certainly, the aggressive, nationalist style of the HDZ aggravated inter-ethnic tensions, at the same time, made HDZ popular with the Croatian electorate. Therefore, if we want to understand why the Croatian sovereignty movement was framed the way it was, the focus of inquiry should be the HDZ's election victory and the mobilization campaign prior to it.

For that reason, I will trace the evolution of public discourses from the late 1980s and analyze in greater detail the election campaign. Although mobilization for independence in Croatia had begun during the campaign preceding the first democratic elections in the spring of 1990, without looking at some developments from earlier periods, it would be hard to understand what led to the victory of HDZ. Therefore, I begin with reviewing political developments from the late 1960s focusing on the Croatian Spring and on the late 1980s that helped to prepare the ground for nationalist mobilization.

As the focus of my analysis is the late 1980s/early 1990s, I tracked the daily news from the Yugoslav press related to Croatia by relying on FBIS-EEU reports covering the years of 1988, 1989, and the spring of 1990 in order to reconstruct the dominant political discourses on statehood, the nation and independence. These articles included English translation of news from *Borba*, Zagreb Domestic Service, *Tanjug*, *Vjesnik* and other newspapers. I used additional news articles related to Croatia found in the Open Society Archives.

It will be fundamentally argued by this chapter that HDZ's exclusivist nationalist rhetoric gained dominance due to the particular structural setting, which was conducive to the emergence of perceptions of internal threat associated with the presence of the Serbian minority. Croatian Serbs came to be viewed as a threat by the majority since Serbia was trying to mobilize them against the Croatian government. It did not mean, however, that the Serbian minority objectively represented a threat to Croatia considering that the majority of them backed the Croatian ex-communists rather than the SDS during the first democratic elections. Yet, some radical groups within the minority responded to Belgrade's call for mobilization indicating that political links between the minority and the threatening center Belgrade, existed. Consequently, as the model on secessionist framing would predict, perceptions of internal threat emerged among the Croat population, which made mobilization based on an exclusivist rhetoric successful while other frames remained ineffective. According to the present theoretical framework, under circumstances when mass fears are widespread, alternative frames expressing ethnically inclusive identities and moderation, such as the democracy or the prosperity frame are unlikely to resonate with the audiences.

The political climate and discourse in Croatia before the spring of 1990

The Croatian Spring

The Croatian Spring will be described in more detail here, because many of the leading themes and figures of this movement reappeared during the independence campaign in 1990. It will be demonstrated that the idea that Croatian culture and identity are threatened by the Yugoslav system and particularly by the Serbs became widespread during the Croatian Spring and was further reinforced by subsequent political repression. Afterward, the Croatian public sphere was characterized by silence i.e. the lack of open public discussions, which is one reason why the ideological legacy of the Croatian Spring

was so influential. During this period, the Catholic Church became the main stronghold of dissident resistance against the communist establishment, which upheld the idea of a traditionalist, ethnic version of Croatian identity. Consequently, defensive nationalism and an ethnically exclusive national identity characterized Croats up until the first democratic elections.

Towards the late 1960's liberals came to power in the communist party. As a consequence, demands for reforms of the system were raised in Croatia and Slovenia. From the mid-1960s, the Croatian and the Slovenian communist leadership began to oppose centralization and called for reforming the redistribution system of economic resources. Initially, the leadership in both republics demanded economic change, yet in Croatia the movement soon became openly nationalist and secessionist. Although the Slovenes put forward similar demands to that of the Croats, they distanced themselves from the Croats as the Croatian movement took an ethno-nationalist turn.⁸

In the 1960s, grievances in Croatia also centered on economic issues, at least initially. One such grievance was the perceived exploitation of Croatia according to which, although Croatia attracted about half of foreign capital flowing into Yugoslavia, it controlled only 15% of it. Croats demanded to keep a larger share of their locally earned foreign exchange earnings. Further complaints were raised about Belgrade “draining away” Croatia’s resources.⁹ Allegedly as a result of this policy, not enough funds remained to be invested in Croatia. This led to a high rate of labor migration from Croatia and an influx of

⁸ Peter Vodopivec, “Seven Decades of Unconfronted Incongruities: The Slovenes and Yugoslavia,” in *Independent Slovenia, Origins, Movements, Prospects*, 38-39.

⁹ For instance, it was argued that the reason why the profitability of the Croatian tourist industry slumped between 1965-69 despite growing investments in the sector was Serbian manipulation of investment credits and terms. *Hrvatski tjednik*, 26 November 1971, 7, Quoted in Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nationalism and federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962-91* (Indiana University Press, 1992), 99.

Serbs and Montenegrins who replaced the missing workforce, which was interpreted as a demographic threat to Croats.¹⁰

Thus, according to the general thesis of Croatian nationalism, Croatia suffered not only economically but also culturally. Perceptions of internal threat were an important factor fueling the evolution of the nationalist movement in the late 1960s. Allegedly, Serbian nationalism dominated Yugoslavia, and Croats became the main sufferers of Serbian hegemony.¹¹ Fears emerged in the context of alleged Serbian pressure on Croatian culture, including “Serbianization” of the Croatian language. In 1967, 130 leading intellectuals in a petition demanded the separation of Serbian and Croatian languages and that “Croatian language” be taught in schools in Croatia.¹² Croatian students began to call for the army units stationed in Croatia to be trained in the Croatian language.¹³ At the heart of all these allegations was the perceived threat of Serb domination of Croatia in different spheres of life, which seemed to call for national self-defense. The movement leaders requested greater rights for Croatia as a republic, “to establish Croatia as a sovereign, national state of the Croatian people.” The Zagreb students demanded Croatia’s acceptance in the UN as well as its own army.¹⁴ In the summer of 1971, the Croats developed their own orthography to stress the distinctiveness of the Croatian language and campaigned for the recognition of Croatian literary language in its own right (and not “Serbo-Croatian”). Matica Hrvatska, a Croat cultural organization that took on the cause of promoting the Croatian language, became the leading force of the new Croatian nationalist movement, which spread further to the Croatian mass media, cultural and student organizations.¹⁵

¹⁰ George Schöpflin, “The Ideology of Croatian Nationalism,” *Survey* 19, no.1 (Winter 1973): 130.

¹¹ Schöpflin, 127.

¹² See “Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika: 1967,” *Telegram* 359, no. 17 (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1967).

¹³ Dan Morgan, “Yugoslavia faces an identity crisis,” *Washington Post*, 13-07-1971.

¹⁴ From a resolution of the Zagreb students in November 1971, in “Yugoslavia’s students: Their successes and failures,” Radio Free Europe, 09-12-1971.

¹⁵ “Tito intervenes in Croatian affairs,” Radio Free Europe, 03-12-1971.

Thus, the grievances generated actions by various groups of society, including the Croatian party leadership. A significant turning point came at the end of 1969, as the Croatian communist leadership, among them Miko Tripalo, Savka Dabčević-Kučar, Pero Pirker, the party president and Dragutin Haramija, the president of the government – a coalition of liberals and nationalists – gradually embraced this nationalist ideology.¹⁶ In November 1971, Zagreb students led a 10-day strike with 30,000 participants in support of the Croatian leadership, which wanted to bring banks and export companies under republican control and retain foreign exchange earnings of the republic.¹⁷

Traditionalism and separatism characterized the new Croatian nationalism. One manifestation of mounting national sentiments was the rediscovery of old figures from Croatian history who had been forgotten during communism. This revisionist history was aimed at demonstrating the historical continuity of the Croatian state.¹⁸ Statues and monuments were erected to historical figures such as to Stjepan Radić, founder of the Croatian Peasant party, and Petar Krešimir IV, a Croatian king. Demands were made to put Jelašić's – a Croatian ban* who led the Austrian forces to oppress the Hungarian revolution in the 19th century – statue back on the main square of Zagreb. These aspirations also found favor with the Catholic Church; several priests became active supporters.¹⁹

Events began to spiral out of control when in the summer of 1971 claims were put forward by Croatian nationalists (Matica Hrvatska in particular) to incorporate the Western part of Bosnia-Herzegovina into Croatia. This was presented as the only solution

¹⁶ "The Croatian CP after Tito's December 1 Speech," Radio Free Europe, 09-12-1971; *Nationalism and federalism in Yugoslavia*, 98-109.

¹⁷ Schöpflin, 130.

¹⁸ Schöpflin, 133.

* Ban was the title of chief government official of Croatia until 1918.

¹⁹ Ramet, *Nationalism and federalism in Yugoslavia*, 106-110.

to the low status of Croats in Bosnia as indicated by their alleged under-representation in the federal administration. Matica Hrvatska started to mobilize Croats in Bosnia and Voivodina in 1971 and demanded the expansion of Croatian territories. In the same year, in the central committee of the Yugoslav League of Communists, the Croats ratcheted up their claims by demanding their own currency, national bank, and a Croatian army. Matica Hrvatska went so far as to call for Croatian independence. (Although their exact goals were never specified, they did not necessarily seek secession from the federation, as a loose confederation would have probably satisfied their demands).²⁰

This was too much for Tito. The Croatian leadership was forced to resign in December 1971, which prompted protests in Zagreb with the participation of 3000-5000 people singing the Croatian anthem and clashing with the police.²¹ Over the coming two years, literally tens of thousands of party members were expelled: between two and five thousand people were imprisoned (including Franjo Tuđman), periodicals were shut down, and Matica Hrvatska was closed.

However, the majority of Croatian demands – especially economic ones – were granted, largely to ease tensions. Croatia was allowed to retain a higher percentage of its export earnings than before, the dinar was devalued, and Belgrade officially admitted that Croatia was economically exploited.²² The end of the Croatian Spring was followed by decentralization of the SFRY to satisfy the most important aspiration of the movement, which was far-reaching autonomy for the republics.

After the movement was repressed, pragmatic bureaucrats replaced the former leadership who had remained fairly unpopular, but kept the republic quiet. Thereafter,

²⁰ Schöpflin, 142.

²¹ “Croatian nationalists threaten Yugoslav unity of Yugoslavia,” Open Society Archives, RFE, New York, 17-12-1971.

²² Ramet, *Nationalism and federalism in Yugoslavia*, 128-32.

Croatia was called the “silent republic”, characterized by political repression and apathy, where hardly any public discussion took place.²³ Nevertheless, the purges and penalties had deeply embittered the Croats; according to the best estimates, the penalties affected more than 100,000 people in one way or the other. Despite the repression, the movement was not eliminated. The Catholic Church became “the only guardian of the Croatian spirit in the national apathy that spread during the 1970s”.²⁴ The Church became the “only guardian” since all other fora representing dissenting voices had been silenced. The communists persecuted clergymen as well, but they could not close down the Church as they had Matica Hrvatska. The Church was successfully mobilizing people en masse for its events; for instance, between 300 and 500 thousand took part at a national eucharist congress in September 1984. According to reports, people “enthusiastically applauded any mention of the name of the late Aloysius Cardinal Stepinac” who was regarded as a war criminal by the communists and sentenced for 16 years in prison due to his alleged collaboration with the Ustasha.²⁵ At the meetings, Croatian national symbols were displayed and people sang the national anthem, which was otherwise forbidden.²⁶

The Church in Croatia adopted a pro-human rights language, while priests and believers fought for the free practice of religion.²⁷ Priests and bishops spoke out openly for amnesty of political prisoners. Moreover, they framed the practice of religion as a human rights issue. The archbishop of Zagreb referred to the Yugoslav constitution and international documents as he argued for religious rights. He called state interference in the life of the Church a violation of human rights.²⁸

²³ “Klima der Apathie in Kroatien,” *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 10-02-1982.

²⁴ Ivo Goldstein, *Croatia: A History*, (Montreal : McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 195.

²⁵ “Croatian Catholic Church Anniversary,” RAD, Munich, 13-09-1984.

²⁶ Lampe, *Yugoslavia as history*, 343.

²⁷ Zdenko Antić, “Catholic Church under fire in Croatia,” RFE, RAD Background Report, 20-02-1980.

²⁸ Zdenko Antić, “Archbishop of Zagreb pleads for full respect for human rights,” RFE, RAD Background Report, 12-04-1978.

The repression of the movement had at least two consequences. Since there was no other forum left for national expression, Croatian national identity became even more intertwined with religion.²⁹ As a Radio Free Europe report noted from 1979, “the Church was trying to identify religion with the nation,” and it clearly had a strong influence given that some Church events attracted vast crowds. The communists repeatedly attacked the Church, accusing it of nurturing the legacy of Croatia’s Ustasha past (for instance by cultivating the memory of Cardinal Stepinac). Admittedly, seeing the Church as an instrument of political opposition was behind these attacks.³⁰

The other consequence was the unusual unpopularity of communists in Croatia and a low level of participation of ethnic Croats in the establishment; as a result Croats felt they “had no stake in the system”.³¹ Croats had turned their back on politics in general, as indicated by their shrinking numbers in the communist party: Whereas the proportion of Croats in Yugoslavia was 21%, their share in the party was only 16%; and a majority of these were ethnic Serbs from Croatia.³² As George Schöpflin quite prophetically assessed the Croatian situation in 1973, the crushing of the Croatian Spring meant the failure of the pan-Slav version of Croatian nationalism, after which he expected Croats to turn to the isolationist type of nation-building by seeking a way out of the Yugoslav framework.³³ After 1972 the conviction strengthened among Croats that creating their own state would be the way to guarantee their nation’s survival.³⁴

²⁹ Ramet, *Nationalism and federalism in Yugoslavia*, 201-207.

³⁰ Zdenko Antić, “Catholic Church under fire in Croatia,” RFE, RAD Background Report, 20-02-1980.

³¹ Schöpflin, 145.

³² Goldstein, *Croatia: A History*, 204.

³³ Schöpflin, 146.

³⁴ Bogdan Raditsa, “Nationalism in Croatia Since 1964,” in *Nationalism in the USSR and Eastern Europe*, ed. George W. Simmonds (Detroit: The University of Detroit Press, 1977), 467.

Thus, perceptions of internal threat in Croatia were not a novelty of the late 1980s when Milošević began to mobilize the Serbian populations living outside of Serbia and in Kosovo, but had been widespread during the period of the second Yugoslavia.

Importantly, transition in Croatia was motivated by fear as well; that is, Croatian communists launched democratic changes because of perceptions of growing threat from Serbia. According to Gagnon JR., Sabrina P. Ramet, and others, Serbia's attempts to ignite Serbian nationalism in Croatia was the main reason for launching political transition.³⁵ After Milošević came to power, he centralized Serbia by depriving Voivodina and Kosovo of their autonomy and by toppling Montenegro's leadership. His next moves targeted Croatia. In July 1989, the Serbian leadership orchestrated the first demonstrations in the Serb-inhabited areas of Croatia with the help of people transported to the sites by buses from Serbia.³⁶ The protesters held posters of Milošević and blamed the Croatian government for oppressing the Serbs. At the same time, the Serbian media were full of images of "genocidal Croats" making references to WWII events. Already in 1989, Croatian Serbs had stepped up their demands for political autonomy within Croatia, demands that were met with fierce resistance from the Croatian communist authorities. There was a widespread view in Croatia that the true intention of Croatian Serbs was to break up Croatia and make a "Greater-Serbia".³⁷ Since Croatian communists did not feel strong enough to oppose Milošević's policy, they decided to prepare democratic elections in order to strengthen their domestic legitimacy in the face of Serbian attempts to destabilize the republic.³⁸ This indicates that perceptions of internal threat were prevalent

³⁵ Mirjana Kasapović and Nenad Zakošek argued the same, in "Democratic Transition in Croatia"; Ramet, *Nationalism and federalism in Yugoslavia*, 244.

³⁶ Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (Yale University Press, 1997), 218.

³⁷ *Nedelja Dalmacia*, 6-7 September 1989, FBIS-EEU, 21-09-1989, 56-57.

³⁸ V.P. Gagnon Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s*, 80-83.

within the elite and the population already before transition began, which reinforced the ethnically exclusive interpretation of national self-understanding, which in turn explains the success of the ethnic security frame utilized by HDZ.

In the following section, I will show how the atmosphere of fear developed in Croatia gradually in 1988-89. In the summer of 1989, when Milošević first orchestrated a demonstration of Serbs on Croatian territory, Croats' existing fears seemed even more justified. This was the case regardless that the majority of the Croatian Serbs had not yet backed the radical groups connected to Milošević. Nevertheless, as perceptions of threat seemed validated, the emergence and the popularity of a radical ethno-nationalist rhetoric could be seen as almost inevitable. I will also demonstrate that the ethnic security frame was crowding out more moderate frames, which failed to gain salience in the political sphere. This discourse in turn accomplished the job that Milošević could not achieve i.e. completely alienating the Serbian minority from the Croatian state, which prepared the ground for inter-ethnic violence.

The discourse of the Croatian communist party in the late 1980s

The communist party in Croatia was repressive, cracked down on the opposition and did not tolerate dissent. This resulted in a suppressed public environment where there was hardly any public discussion, which is why Croatia was called the 'silent republic'. Until the 1989 transitions in the rest of Central-Eastern Europe, the Croatian party in the political sense was hardly "liberal"; the leadership allowed little pluralization because it feared that it would give rise to Croatian nationalism. As Ivo Goldstein noted, "the struggle against nationalism" was in Croatia the main purpose behind repressing dissent by the communist leadership.³⁹ This fear was based on the experience of 1968-71, when westernizing market reforms prompted nationalist sentiments in Croatia. Thus, local

leaders were trying to hold back social mobilization until 1988/89 by repressing nonconformist voices and activities. For instance, the party cracked down on any of its members caught attending church, and the media were tightly controlled.⁴⁰ Banning of newspapers was a usual practice as late as 1988 in response to publishing oppositional and/or nationalist views. The paper *Omladinska Iskra*, for instance, was banned for publishing part of a lecture given by the dissident, Milovan Đilas.⁴¹

In this regard, Croatian communists significantly differed from their Slovenian counterparts, who not only allowed, but (from the mid-80s) also fostered pluralization, and joined the opposition in emphasizing Slovenian national rights. As will be shown later in this chapter, Croatian leaders opposed the Slovenes on most political issues apart from economic policy and decentralization and until late 1989 sided with Milošević. At the same time, reflecting the fact that Croatia's economic interests coincided with that of Slovenia, the Communist leadership despite its ideological conservatism pursued liberal economic policies together with Slovenia and fought for greater rights for the republics in the federal institutions.⁴² In May 1988 Slovenian and Croatian deputies together sought to remove the federal prime minister Branko Mikulić by initiating a vote of no confidence, because they disapproved of the government's economic policies (the attempt failed at the time, the government resigned only in January 1989).⁴³ In December 1988 the assemblies of Croatia and Slovenia together voted down the draft federal budget as they regarded it as far too extensive.⁴⁴ Croatian communists like the Slovenes strongly opposed centralizing tendencies in the federation. They stressed Croatia's right to self-determination and the

³⁹ Goldstein, *Croatia: A History*, 196.

⁴⁰ Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War*, 206.

⁴¹ "Split youth paper temporarily banned," *Tanjug*, Split, 24-06-1988, FBIS-EEU, 28-06-1988.

⁴² "Verbreitetes Unbehagen in Kroatien," *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 20-11-1985.

⁴³ "Croatia TU's have no confidence in government," *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 22-12-1988, FBIS-EEU, 29-12-1988.

⁴⁴ "Slovenia, Croatia reject draft federal budget," *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 27-12-1988, FBIS-EEU, 29-12-1988.

importance of the principle of republican equality in the federation, which meant that the republics would retain their veto power in the federal decision-making system.⁴⁵

The discourse of the Croatian communists was characterized by “apparatchik-like” language.⁴⁶ This meant using a lot of communist clichés - such as “we are building self-management socialism.” They also warned of the “increased activity of class enemies,” which is “undermining the revolution” etc. They typically talked in very general and vague terms without specifying what and whom they were talking about. Their language also tended toward paranoia, as they continuously talked about “enemies”: meaning opposition groups promoting “anti-socialist and anti-communist concepts”, nationalists, or the “increased activity of the bourgeois right”.

By looking at the discourse employed by the Croatian party from the late 1980s one might get the impression that they were *anti*-nationalists. At almost every occasion, they gave elaborate and detailed warnings about the dangers of nationalism “undermining the heritage of the revolution and the socialist project”.⁴⁷ In fact, in 1989 most of their speeches, statements and interviews were dominated by themes related to inter-ethnic relations and nationalism. They hardly talked about anything else but “inter-ethnic” relations, the phenomenon of national homogenization, the dangers of separatism, the causes of the rise of nationalism, national equality guaranteed in Yugoslavia, etc.⁴⁸ The theme of nationalism was often brought up in more concrete terms especially in the context of references to Croatian nationalism. They warned about “the protagonists of Croat nationalism in 1971 and of the mass movement,” and repeatedly made remarks about

⁴⁵ “Croatian League Central Committee Session Held,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 25-07-1989, FBIS-EEU, 27-07-1989.

⁴⁶ Term borrowed from Glenn, 146.

⁴⁷ “Croatian LC Central Committee Plenum Reported,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 22-05-1989, FBIS-EEU, 24-05-1989.

⁴⁸ “Račan addresses plenum,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 30-07-1989, FBIS-EEU, 31-07-1989.

the threat of “enemy structures” such as the Catholic Church.⁴⁹ The party was nervous about activities of the Church, which allegedly used its social influence to disseminate oppositional political materials and to organize non-religious oppositional political activities.⁵⁰ Fears about the revival of the Croatian Spring were very explicit, mirrored by the frequent mentions of the movement. Croatian communists stressed that “the protagonists of Croatian nationalism” (without naming them specifically) “advocate the rehabilitation of the creators of the well-known Declaration on Language and the revival of the work of the Croatian Cultural Center.” These references explicitly hinted at the events of the Croatian Spring, as the Declaration meant a document from 1967, which called for the recognition of Croatian as an independent language from Serbian by the Yugoslav constitution. Croatian Cultural Center was Matica Hrvatska, which was the most openly outspoken nationalist voice during Maspok.⁵¹

While Croatian communists were equally frightened by Serbian nationalism, especially due to its potential for spreading to Croatia, they failed to explicitly condemn its concrete manifestations and those responsible for it. They warned that “there are attempts to misuse events in Kosovo to inflame Serbian nationalism in Croatia”, and pointed out that Serbian nationalism has been very strong in recent times, which “undermines the heritage of the revolution.”⁵² Yet, until late 1989, they failed to distance themselves from Milošević’s policies, even while noting that “his methods were not the correct ones.”⁵³ As early as 1985, intellectuals in Serbia began to accuse Croatian communists of “committing ‘cultural genocide’ against the Serb community” in Croatia. In 1986, the infamous

⁴⁹ “Croatian interior secretary on ‘crisis’,” Tanjug, Zagreb, 26-02-1988, FBIS-EEU, 29-02-1988.

⁵⁰ Sava Tomašević, “Church activity in Croatia examined,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 28-02-1988, FBIS-EEU, 29-02-1988.

⁵¹ Maspok (abbreviation of masovni pokret in Croatian) is another name of the Croatian Spring, meaning mass movement. “Croatian Assembly Assesses Security Situation,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 24-03-1988, FBIS-EEU, 31-03-1988.

⁵² “Croatian LC CC session on ‘difficult situation’,” Tanjug, Zagreb, 14-10-1988, FBIS-EEU, 17-10-1988.

⁵³ “Croatian LC Central Committee Plenum detailed,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 24-01-1989, FBIS-EEU, 26-01-1989.

Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Science concluded that “but for the period of the existence of the NDH, Serbs in Croatia have never been as threatened as they are now.”

This was written at a time when Serbs in Croatia were actually overrepresented in the party, judiciary, police, state enterprises, etc.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, although by the late 1980s reformists entered high party ranks in Croatia such as Ante Marković (next to dogmatic hardliners grouped around Stipe Šušvar), the Croatian official position was supportive of the Serbian government in their repressive policies, such as their crack down on Albanians in Kosovo, signaling their conservative stance and their reluctance to confront Serbia.⁵⁵ In May 1989, it was concluded at a Croatian party meeting that “today in Yugoslavia there are two centers from which moves are made against everything Serbian: One is in Pristina and the other is in the so-called central European part of Yugoslavia [a reference most likely to Ljubljana]”.⁵⁶ Altogether, Croatian communists were trying to shield themselves from the growing threat of nationalism by holding on to Tito’s legacy through their atavistic style and language and through trying to stay on good terms with Milošević.⁵⁷

In early 1989, the first alternative political organizations began to be formed in Croatia. In January 1989 the Association for the Yugoslav Democratic Initiative (UJDI) was founded in Zagreb. This was not a political party but a unique initiative as it aimed to represent an all-Yugoslav platform and transform Yugoslavia into a democratic federation and thus to counterbalance national homogenization at the level of the republics.⁵⁸ The organizers invited people from other republics as well in order to initiate a Yugoslavia wide

⁵⁴ Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War*, 212.

⁵⁵ “Kroatien will nicht auffallen,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 05-07-0988.

⁵⁶ “Croatian LC Central Committee Plenum Reported,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 22-05-1989, FBIS-EEU, 24-05-1989.

⁵⁷ Croatian LC CC session on ‘difficult situation’, Tanjug, Belgrade, 14-10-1988, FBIS-EEU, 17-10-1988.

– as opposed to the republic-level – dialogue about democratization and promote the democratic reintegration of the country.⁵⁹ In early 1989 another party was set up, the Croatian Social Liberal Alliance led by Slavko Goldstein.⁶⁰ In March 1989 the Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ) was founded with a nationalist and anti-communist orientation.⁶¹ There were attempts in October 1989 to bring the parties of the Croatian opposition into closer cooperation. The Croatian Democratic Community, the Croatian Social Liberal Alliance, and some other smaller parties established the so called “coordination committee of the Croatian pluralist-democratic movements” in order to coordinate their efforts aimed at democratic transition.⁶² Yet, it was already clear at that time that the parties had very little in common, apart from the fact that all agreed about the need for democracy and free elections.

Events in Yugoslavia and discursive reactions in Croatia

As noted above, in Croatia there was no mobilization for independence before the election campaign in the spring of 1990. Consequently there was no discourse on independence either (at least none open and public) that could be analyzed. At the same time, events in Kosovo and Serbian nationalist mobilization became the central themes of public discussion, especially as Serbian mobilization began to reach Croatia. As a result, the general threat of nationalism became the most dominant topic in Croatia by late 1989 dictating the themes of public discussion.

⁵⁸ “New association expected to be founded in Zagreb,” Belgrade Domestic Service, 08-01-1989, FBIS-EEU, 09-01-1989.

⁵⁹ “Zagreb association establishes goals,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 14-15-01-1989, FBIS-EEU, 18-01-1989.

⁶⁰ “Croatian Socialist-Liberal Alliance head speaks,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 15-06-1989, FBIS-EEU, 23-06-1989.

⁶¹ “Paper criticize ‘Croatian Democratic Community,’” *Tanjug*, Zagreb, 02-03-1989, FBIS-EEU, 03-03-1989.

⁶² “Croatian alternative groups plan ‘unification’,” Belgrade Domestic Service, 01-10-1989, FBIS-EEU, 06-10-1989.

The civil society master frame was present in Croatia as well, although it was much less salient in public debates than in Slovenia. Although the civic initiatives in Croatia were not comparable to those in Slovenia, from the mid 1980s signs of pluralization appeared, reflecting a general weakening of communist rule throughout Eastern Europe. From the early 1980s Croatian intellectuals initiated many petitions for various democratic causes such as the freedom of speech, or against the imprisonment of dissidents. Yet, this so called petition movement included very few people; the number of signatories hardly ever reached a 100.⁶³ In addition, some independent high quality newspapers emerged, such as *Danas*, *Start*, and Split's *Nedjeljna Dalmacija*, and the first alternative radio began to function (Radio 101). *Danas* published articles which openly questioned the legitimacy of the communist party. In 1987-88, a film critical of communist rule came out and was shown country-wide. The weakening of communist party control was also indicated by a strike of some 1000 coal miners in 1987, whose basic demands were met by the republican leadership.⁶⁴ Strikes were very frequent; in the first 5 months of 1988, 129 were recorded with the participation of 14 448 workers.⁶⁵

Yet, as Vesna Pusić concluded about the state of civil society in Croatia in the late 1980s, "it was almost non-existent in its defiant, dissident sense of the communist era, and started developing as an area of independent political and cultural life only after the changes."⁶⁶ Similarly Lino Veljak noted that "civil society did not play a crucial, essential or even mentionable role in the transition from the single-party to the multiparty system."⁶⁷ This implied that the civil society master frame was marginal and hardly audible before

⁶³ Author Interview, Lino Veljak, university professor, Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy, 06-06-2008.

⁶⁴ Goldstein, *Croatia: A History*, 195-97.

⁶⁵ "129 strikes recorded in Croatia in 1988," Tanjug, Belgrade, 05-07-1988, FBIS-EEU, 07-07-1988.

⁶⁶ Vesna Pusić, "Croatia's Struggle for Democracy," 108.

⁶⁷ Lino Veljak, "Civil Society and Politics in Croatia," *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Vol. II*. (Belgrade: CEDET, 2005), 331.

democratic transition started, and even afterwards remained marginal compared to the ethno-nationalist discourse.

Events that triggered mass mobilization in Slovenia did not go unnoticed in Croatia, yet, reflecting Croatia's more constrained and less liberal climate, reactions were much more inhibited. The trial of the four in Ljubljana did not provoke big reactions in Croatia, although the Croatian Writers' Society expressed solidarity with the accused journalists.⁶⁸ In June 1988, *Nedeljna Dalmacija* was sometimes banned as well, such as in August 1988 for "denigrating" the trial procedure of the Ljubljana Four and "insulting" Ivo Latin, Stipe Šušvar and other prominent communists.⁶⁹ On this occasion, as usual, Croatian communists sided with Yugoslav conservatives and criticized Slovenia for the "frequent attacks on the Yugoslav army" calling it a "hostile activity undermining the country's security".⁷⁰ They also condemned the Slovenes for declaring their "absolute autonomy" within the party, alleging that the Slovene leadership was fighting for the break-up of the LCY and not for its democratization.⁷¹

Events in Kosovo also attracted considerable attention. While the Croatian leadership talked about the need to "thwart the counter-revolution" in Kosovo where "separatists have been terrorizing" the Serbian population, Croatian media and civil society gave voice to different opinions. *Vjesnik* attacked Serbia for its treatment of the Albanians.⁷² The Catholic Church in line with its human rights stance expressed its solidarity with the Albanian miners in February 1989. "We stand resolutely by the ethic[al]

⁶⁸ "Croatian writers view case," Zagreb Domestic Service, 14-06-1988, FBIS-EEU, 16-06-1988.

⁶⁹ "Temporary ban imposed on Split weekly," Tanjug, Belgrade, 26-08-1988, FBIS-EEU, 29-08-1988.

⁷⁰ "Croatia's Latin on economy, nationalism," Tanjug, Belgrade, 27-07-1988, FBIS-EEU, 27-07-1988.

⁷¹ "Croatian plenum views reform, falling membership," *Borba*, Belgrade, 28-06-1989, FBIS-EEU, 06-06-1989.

⁷² "Croatian newspaper defends ethnic Albanians, attacks Serbia," DPA, Zagreb, 21-11-1988, B-wire, 21-11-1988.

principles that human rights of all the inhabitants of Kosovo [...] be constantly respected ...”⁷³ The Croatian Writers Association demanded Milošević to resign over the “tragedy of the Albanian miners” and because he brought Kosovo to the brink of civil war.⁷⁴ They expressed their fear of Milošević exporting his “counterrevolutions” to Croatia as well, after Kosovo, Voivodina and Montenegro. The Croatian Trade Union started a collection for the Kosovo miners.⁷⁵

The developments in Kosovo continued to be a hot topic in 1989 especially among the opposition. There were small protests in Zagreb against the charges brought against Azem Vllasi, one of the Albanian leaders that were ousted by Milošević in Kosovo. The Croatian Society for the Protection of Human Rights was collecting signatures for a petition demanding the dropping of the charges.⁷⁶ The Croatian Authors’ Society also protested against political trials and the arrest of former Kosovo politicians.⁷⁷ Several articles were published in Croatian media about the trial. *Vjesnik* wrote that if Yugoslavia lets such a “criminal trial” to proceed, it can “no longer dissociate itself from the policy of the Serbian leadership.”⁷⁸

Despite the fact that Serbian policies were threatening Croatia, and were strongly condemned by Croatian public opinion, Croatian leadership – at least initially – stood with Serbia regarding the Kosovo question, probably because they feared a confrontation with Milošević and potential repercussions in Croatia. Their weakness was particularly apparent during the protest of the Trepca miners in February 1989. The Serbian leadership had laid a trap for Stipe Šušvar, a Croatian communist who at the time was the leader of the federal

⁷³ “Archbishop pleads for resolution,” Vatican City International Service, 25-02-1989, FBIS-EEU, 27-02-1989.

⁷⁴ “Advise Milošević to resign,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 28-02-1989, FBIS-EEU, 03-03-1989.

⁷⁵ “Croatian Trade Union collects money,” *Politika*, Belgrade 03-03-1989, FBIS-EEU, 15-03-1989.

⁷⁶ “Croatian pro-Vlasi petition prevented in Zagreb,” Belgrade Domestic Service, 05-11-1989, FBIS-EEU, 06-11-1989.

⁷⁷ “Croat authors denounce trial,” *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 07-11-1989, FBIS-EEU, 08-11-1989.

⁷⁸ Jadranko Sinković, “Political trial,” *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 31-10-1989, “Vjesnik views Vlasi’s ‘staged trial’,” FBIS-EEU, 17-11-1989.

communist party. During the protest of the miners, Šuvar was invited by the Serbian leadership to go into the mine and negotiate with the miners. When he proceeded to do so, the Serbian media launched a fierce campaign against him accusing him of aiding “Albanian counter-revolutionary nationalism and separatism.”⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Croatian communists still “supported the current measures of the state and party leadership” aimed at “eradicating the counterrevolution in Kosovo”, and again called for a “united front” against “the destructive activity of nationalism”.⁸⁰

Yet, from the spring of 1989 when Serbian protests started in Croatia, the perceived threat posed by Milošević and Serbian nationalist mobilization began to overshadow all other issues in Croatian political debates. The issue of the Croatian Serbs also had a history, leading back to the period earlier than the 1970s. The matter deserves a short explanation here because the Serbian minority had a key role in the outbreak of the war in Croatia. Relations in Croatia between the majority and the local Serbs had been marked by mutual fear and suspicion already from the beginning of the socialist Yugoslavia. Although Serbs constituted a mere 12,2% of the population, they were obviously a visible, political factor living in concentrated areas, which had to be attended to.⁸¹ While Croats feared Serbian domination, Serbs claimed they were oppressed and mobilized for their own autonomous unit within Croatia. Already during WWII, the Serbian partisans had tried to persuade Tito to grant them a Serbian autonomous province within Croatia after the war. The request was rejected at the time, but the idea reemerged in 1971 in the midst of the Croatian Spring when Serbs called for the federalization of Croatia in the face of growing Croatian

⁷⁹ Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War*, 217.

⁸⁰ “Zagreb LC discusses Kosovo developments,” *Tanjug*, Zagreb, 04-03-1989, FBIS-EEU, 06-03-1989.

⁸¹ 78% of the population was ethnic Croat, 12,2% ethnic Serb, while the rest being other minorities most of them individually constituting less than 1% of the population, while some 3% was non-determined or undefined. Data from 1991, from the Minority Rights Group International, *Report, Minorities in Croatia*, 2003, 7, <http://www.minorityrights.org/1005/reports/minorities-in-croatia.html>.

nationalism which they saw as threatening.⁸² In addition, the Serbs had their own grievances, including the lack of their own cultural institutions, newspapers, and the relative economic backwardness of the regions where they resided.⁸³

Very soon after the death of Tito, in 1981 the Serbs of Serbia began to raise nationalist issues, such as the oppression of Kosovar Serbs. From 1982, some Serbian writers began to publish revisionist pieces on WWII, the communist prison camps and the Chetnik movement. Tensions in Croatia were getting serious by early 1989 when the first nationalist demonstrations were organized by Belgrade against the Croatian government. The Kosovo events had repercussions in Knin, center of the region in Croatia inhabited by the Serbian minority. In February 1989 in Knin, 2000 workers went on strike in a factory and 3000 people took part in a protest meeting.⁸⁴ The Croatian Assembly was getting worried because “all types of nationalism have appeared on the public scene.” At the same time, the thesis about the “genocidal nature of Croats” and the identification of Croats with the Ustasha could be heard again from Serbia in the context of the alleged anti-Serbian policies in Croatia.⁸⁵ A Zagreb television commentary analyzing Serbian nationalism stated “they recount the dead, exaggerate the otherwise horrific numbers of victims”. It further added that “this is only part of a real campaign which wants to accuse the entire Croatian people...”⁸⁶

The Croatian media naturally followed developments in Serbia closely. For example, *Vjesnik* carried a detailed report about Milošević’s Gazi Mestan speech, which marked the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo; half a million were in attendance.⁸⁷ At this time Milošević had already toppled the governments of Voivodina, Kosovo, and

⁸² Schöpflin, 141.

⁸³ Ramet, *Nationalism and federalism in Yugoslavia*, 206-7.

⁸⁴ “Croatian reaction to Stari Trg events viewed,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 4-5-03-1989, FBIS-EEU, 14-03-1989.

⁸⁵ “Croatia’s Mulc criticizes rise of nationalism,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 24-03-1989, FBIS-EEU, 04-04-1989.

⁸⁶ “Zagreb television attacks Belgrade newspaper,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 08-05-1989, FBIS-EEU, 15-05-1989.

⁸⁷ “Vjesnik on Milošević’ Gazi Mestan speech,” *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 30-06-1989, FBIS-EEU, 06-07-1989.

Montenegro, and thus controlled half of the votes in the federal presidency.⁸⁸ The pressure was growing on the Croatian communists to adopt a clear position on the events in Serbia, especially because Milošević's speech contained references to the possibility of war.⁸⁹ Yet, they still refused to take a stand.⁹⁰

Previous fears began to materialize, as in July of 1989, Krajina Serbs seriously began to mobilize inside Croatia. They held their celebration of the 600th anniversary, although a lot of participants came from Serbia. The demonstrators carried pictures of Milošević and the Serbian coat of arms, waving the Serbian flag and chanting pro-Milošević lines. They were singing Serbian nationalist songs, the banners read “we want equality in Croatia”, “who is representing us in Zagreb”, and “Slobodan, freedom, come here, we are waiting for you.”⁹¹ While the Croatian communists condemned the nationalistic “incidents,” they tried to play down their significance by trying to distinguish between Croatian Serbs and the “others”. According to their assessment, the people of Knin “expressed their national pride in an appropriate manner”, while outsiders arriving from other republics represented “greater Serbian nationalism”.⁹² Ivo Latin, the then-president of Croatia, however, concluded that there was a danger of “severe confrontation” which “could have had tragic consequences”⁹³. Jovo Opačić, founder of the Serbian Cultural Society *Zora* who had a key role in organizing the celebrations argued for the need of autonomy for Serbs in Croatia.⁹⁴ These events did stir up emotions in Croatia, and a rally –

⁸⁸ The presidency was the highest organ of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which had eight members. Each republic and autonomous province had one representative, which meant that after Milošević's allies came to power in Kosovo, Montenegro and Voivodina, Milošević effectively controlled four votes out of the total eight.

⁸⁹ “Stojević addresses Korčula political Aktiv,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 03-07-1989, FBIS-EEU, 07-07-1989.

⁹⁰ “Clarification is to come,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 03-07-1989; “Stojević addresses Korčula Political Aktiv,” FBIS-EEU, 07-07-1989.

⁹¹ “Croatian Serbs mark anniversary,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 10-07-1989, FBIS-EEU, 12-07-1989.

⁹² “Croatian presidency studies Knin celebration,” *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 12-07-1989, FBIS-EEU, 17-07-1989.

⁹³ “Croatia's Latin on Knin,” *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 16-07-1989, FBIS-EEU, 18-07-1989.

⁹⁴ “Knin Serb grants interview, goes to prison,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 15-16-07-1989, FBIS-EEU, 21-07-1989.

which was banned by the authorities – was planned in Split to protest “against attempts to destroy peace in Croatia”.⁹⁵ *Vjesnik* in a detailed commentary about the event warned that the fact that Serbian nationalists are allowed to express their ideology freely can have dangerous consequences, especially if Croatian nationalists choose to do the same.⁹⁶

In mid 1989 Croatian leaders admitted that they were afraid of Serbian nationalism, yet still did not dare to stand up or at least speak up against Milošević who had started to destabilize Croatia. “The threats of force and arms which could be heard give no grounds for saying that we are not afraid” said Dragutin Dimitrović, secretary of the League of Communists of Croatia. Responding to the question of why they had not reacted more firmly to the nationalist outburst of the Serbs during the celebration, the official admitted that they feared that it could have been interpreted as a “rash anti-Serbian reaction intended to desecrate the manifestation”. They were worried that repression could aggravate inter-ethnic relations in Croatia and thus destabilize the republic.⁹⁷ At the same time, they tried to give their pragmatic explanation of the rise of nationalism in Yugoslavia. Ivica Račan argued that the lack of market economy, the domination of the economy by the state and social crisis are the factors most responsible for the deterioration inter-ethnic relations.⁹⁸

As Serbian minority mobilization in Croatia escalated, the Croatian leadership finally began to show some resistance and finally decided to give up its monopoly over power as it realized that cannot keep the situation under control. In August the Knin celebrations had further consequences. A protest was organized in Batajnica (Serbia) with the participation of 2000 people, among them Serbs from Dalmatia, to demonstrate for the

⁹⁵ “Split interior secretariat bans protest rally,” *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 21-07-1989, FBIS-EEU, 24-07-1989.

⁹⁶ “Press reactions, commentaries on Knin celebrations,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 14-07-1989, FBIS-EEU, 24-07-1989.

⁹⁷ “Croat official interviewed on Serbian nationalism,” *Slobodna Dalmacija*, FBIS-EEU, 28-07-1989.

⁹⁸ “Račan addresses plenum,” *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 30-07-1989, FBIS-EEU, 31-07-1989.

rights of Serbs in Croatia.⁹⁹ In September 1989, Croatian communists described the situation in Croatia in quite dramatic terms. They argued that “inter-ethnic discord” encourages destabilization, which is “turning Croatia into an area of open conflicts...”¹⁰⁰ This was a turning point when the Croatian leadership finally spelled out clearly that they had to stand against the “nationalistic position and actions in the Socialist Republic of Serbia.”¹⁰¹ From then on they began to talk about the “aggression by greater-Serbian nationalism” which aims to destabilize Croatia, by convincing Croatian Serbs that their homeland cannot be Croatia and to change the borders.¹⁰² It did not pass unnoticed in Croatia that during the adoption of the Slovenian constitutional amendments the Montenegrin party chief called for the use of arms.¹⁰³ After the Knin protest in the summer of 1989, the Croatian leadership slowly realized that their conciliatory approach to Milošević had not prevented the Serbian president from destabilizing Croatia. Thus they finally turned against him openly. In late 1989, the Croatian communists sided with the Slovenes during their confrontations with Milošević. They supported the Slovene leadership when it banned the planned demonstration of Serbs and Montenegrins in Ljubljana, and condemned Serbia for launching the economic blockade on Slovenia. They stressed they knew “how to defend the sovereignty and integrity” of Croatia.¹⁰⁴

In the face of the growing threat posed by Serbia, in October 1989 Račan openly called for a democratic transformation.¹⁰⁵ “There is a need to react quickly” Croatian communists argued when they finally decided to introduce multiparty pluralism in

⁹⁹ “Solidarity meeting in Batajnica,” Belgrade Domestic Service, 29-08-1989, FBIS-EEU, 31-08-1989.

¹⁰⁰ “Croatian LC Central Committee Presidium meets,” Zagreb Domestic Service, 08-09-1989, FBIS-EEU, 14-09-1989.

¹⁰¹ “Croatian League Central Committee session held,” Tanjug, Zagreb, 25-07-1989, FBIS-EEU, 27-07-1989.

¹⁰² “Zagreb party session notes nationalist problems,” *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 14-09-1989, FBIS-EEU, 20-09-1989; “President Stojević addresses Croat LC plenum,” *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 22-09-1989, FBIS-EEU, 03-10-1989.

¹⁰³ “Račan on army’s task, Slovene amendments,” *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 05-10-1989; “Croat daily criticizes Montenegrin party chief,” *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 29-09-1989, FBIS-EEU, 11-10-1989.

¹⁰⁴ “Croat SAWP supports Slovenia,” *Tanjug*, Zagreb, 06-12-1989, FBIS-EEU, 07-12-1989.

¹⁰⁵ “Račan speaks,” *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 21-10-1989, FBIS-EEU, 24-10-1989.

December, and turned the party leadership over to the reformist Ivica Račan from the hardliner Stipe Šuvar.¹⁰⁶ In December 1989 the party took steps to organize democratic elections and adopt legislation to promote democratic reforms, such as laws on political parties, enterprises, free association, etc.¹⁰⁷

Thus, Croatia's relatively suppressed discursive environment was opened up suddenly at a time when Serbian nationalism was threatening Croatia in a quite credible way. As was argued above, prior to the democratic changes due to political repression civil society in Croatia was less developed than in Slovenia, and there was much less public discussion on issues related to democratization, human rights or economic interests. As Vesna Pusić emphasized, it was very significant that the transition in Croatia started only in late 1989 without any previous experience of roundtable negotiations and that no political group could claim a history of struggle for democracy.¹⁰⁸ This implied that no alternative discourses developed before transition, which could have challenged the ethnonationalist rhetoric of HDZ effectively. Although the election campaign in the spring of 1990 in theory presented a real possibility for an interactive public discussion to develop about subjects related to democracy, human rights, economic issues or liberalization, the threat of nationalism was by then overshadowing all other issues.

By the time the elections in Croatia were announced in December 1989, fear of Serbia was on the rise in the republic. Serbia was indeed behaving in a threatening way and was directly trying to mobilize Croatian Serbs. Despite the political changes in 1989 that opened the way for democratic movements, the democracy frame never gained significant political influence. On the contrary, as the model on secessionist framing would predict,

¹⁰⁶ "Reportage on Croatia party congress LC," *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 12-12-1989, FBIS-EEU, 21-12-1989.

¹⁰⁷ "Croat rights group," *Tanjug*, Zagreb, 12-12-1989, FBIS-EEU, 13-12-1989.

¹⁰⁸ Vesna Pusić, "Croatia's Struggle for Democracy," 104.

these conditions created fertile ground for the emergence of a movement based on an ethnically exclusivist national identity.

As fears of an internal threat mounted within the majority population, the exclusivist national identity in Croatia was reified. In line with the present theoretical framework, among such circumstances alternative discourses forging an ethnically inclusive identity did not have much chance to succeed. Viewing subsequent events from this perspective, HDZ's election victory came as less of a surprise, as this was the party which forwarded frames based on the ethnically exclusive national identity in the most radical way. While the former communists decided to call democratic elections because they were admittedly afraid and unable to stand up against growing threats emanating from Serbia, HDZ was the only political force that seemed capable and willing to confront it.

The 1990 Elections

This chapter's main focus is the 1990 elections, since arguments for sovereignty were made primarily in the context of the 1990 election campaign rather than earlier or later. In Croatia, as in Slovenia, arguments were presented in favor of sovereignty – without defining the exact content of sovereignty; nevertheless, secession was not promoted openly by any of the parties. In contrast to Slovenia where there was a serious campaign before the referendum on independence, in Croatia there was little campaigning before the plebiscite in May 1991 – as will be explained in the last section of this chapter. Prior to the referendum, the country was occupied with the unfolding war; the referendum therefore faded from view, and was hardly reported on in the media, which were saturated with news about the ongoing violence.

It should be stressed that the time frame of mobilization in Croatia was very short, as only four and a half months passed between the announcement and the first round of the

elections. This also implied that without much prior social and political pluralization, change came quite suddenly, leaving not much time for the parties to organize themselves. The rapidity of events might be also relevant from the point of view of explaining their radical nature. This reaffirms Beissinger's model, according to which "latecomers" in the mobilizational tide mobilize relatively quickly, (where Slovenia was the frontrunner in mobilization). The main impetus for change in Croatia's case came from the outside unlike in some other parts of Eastern Europe such as Poland, Czech Republic or Hungary, which also meant that the international pressures for change foreshortened the political debates for sovereignty in Croatia.

The parties

Between December 1989 and April 1990, several political parties were formed in Croatia, out of which three dominant political formations emerged as the main competing forces during the elections. The Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) was set up as a party for all ethnic Croats, stressing nationalist themes using historical, national symbols and rituals, including references to the Ustasha. Its main aim was establishing Croatian sovereignty within the framework of Yugoslavia. The HDZ fostered close connections with the Croatian emigrant communities, which provided the party with considerable financing. This was certainly one reason for its electoral victory, capturing 41,93 per cent of the votes.¹⁰⁹

The main challenger of HDZ was the reformed communist party, the SKH-SDP. As noted earlier, the party was not particularly popular and did not have a long reformist tradition, unlike its counterpart in Slovenia. This was the only party promoting a federal Yugoslavia, although focused mainly on democratic transition. It tried to take credit for the

¹⁰⁹ Nenad Zakošek, "Political Parties and the Party System in Croatia," in *The 1990 and 1992/93 Sabor Elections in Croatia*, ed. Ivan Šiber (Berlin, 1997), 39-40.

peaceful transition of Croatia from communism to democracy and for organizing the first democratic elections. They won 33,9% of the votes cast and attracted the majority of votes of the Serbs.¹¹⁰

The third strongest political force was a coalition of four parties – the Croatian Democratic Party (HDS), the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLs), the Croatian Christian Democratic Party (HKDS) and the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDH).¹¹¹ It was called the Coalition of People's Agreement (KNS) representing the liberal-nationalist option, which gained 14,3%.¹¹² The KNS ran on a democratic and nationalist program, promoting market economy and democratic transition, yet stressing the importance of Croatian sovereignty. It was led by prominent, well-respected figures who had played important roles during the Croatian Spring: Savka Dabčević-Kučar, Ivan Supek, Mika Tripalo, Dragutin Haramija and Srećko Bijelić.¹¹³ KNS represented the moderate version of Croatian nationalism.

Both HDZ and KNS were led by people who played a leading role during the Croatian Spring. A weakness of KNS was that the coalition was formed quite late, in April 1990. By the time the coalition was finally created, "Tuđman had won the support of the people and the church."¹¹⁴ According to analysts, as opposed to HDZ's populist but simple message, KNS's message was unclear, and their campaign started not only late but was also unorganized, whereas HDZ was "more concrete and consistent about what it was offering, about its desires and promises," one commentator noted at the time.¹¹⁵ KNS' leaders, especially Savka Dabčević-Kučar, relied overly on their own personal charisma

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 42-43.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 44.

¹¹² Nenad Zakošek and Goran Čular, "Croatia", in *The Handbook for Political Change in Eastern Europe*, ed. Stern Berglund et. all (Cheltenham: E. Elgar, 2004), 453.

¹¹³ Milan Andrejevich, "Croatia Goes to the Polls," *RFE Report*, 4 May 1990, 35.

¹¹⁴ Quote by Ivan Supek, a Croatian academic, who was also an active participant in the Croatian Spring. In: Tanner, *Croatia*, 222.

which they thought would be sufficient for electoral success. In addition, the coalition had an intellectual image, which was not an asset in connecting with the wider electorate.¹¹⁶ As a Croatian journalist noted, the “elitist-intellectual image” of the coalition was one reason for its defeat.¹¹⁷

The final major contender was the radical nationalist Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), which received only 1,6% of the votes due to the majority of the Serbs choosing the communists.¹¹⁸

The HDZ’s electoral victory can be explained by several factors. One was the money the party received from the Croatian diaspora, which made HDZ the best-financed and best organized opposition party. Another reason was the majority electoral system adopted by the Croatian communists. As a consequence, HDZ over-represented the first democratic parliament; although it received 41,9% of the votes cast, it gained 68,8% of the seats in the Sabor.¹¹⁹ This outcome effectively gave HDZ control over the government. The third factor was its campaign strategy and rhetoric, which proved to be the most popular with the Croatian public. The deteriorating political climate marked by widespread perceptions of internal threat greatly facilitated HDZ’s discourse based on the ethnic security frame and an exclusivist national identity.

Moreover, HDZ enjoyed moral support of the Catholic Church which, although not campaigning openly for HDZ, called on the faithful to vote for “the Croatian option”.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ See Hudelist, “Izborna java između dva sna,” *Start*, 28 April 1990, p. 22. Cited in Sharon Fisher, *Political Change in Post-Communist Slovakia and Croatia: From Nationalist to Europeanist*, Chapter 2 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 40.

¹¹⁶ According to Ivo Goldstein, Savka Dabčević-Kučar trusted too much her personal charisma and also refused to speak on rallies until the last moment, while Miko Tripalo, another leader of the coalition, was ill, visibly lacking political energy. Author Interview, Ivo Goldstein, Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb, 05-06-2008.

¹¹⁷ See Hudelist, “Izborna java između dva sna,” 40.

¹¹⁸ Nenad Zakošek, “Political Parties and the Party System in Croatia,” 44-47.

¹¹⁹ Mirjana Kasapović, “Parliamentary Elections in Croatia,” in *The 1990 and 1992/93 Sabor Elections in Croatia*, 55-56.

The role of the Church was especially decisive, as it “came out as one of the major proponent of Croatian national autonomy, strongly connecting Catholic religious identity with anti-communism and Croatian nationalism.”¹²¹

At the time of the campaign, the general situation in Yugoslavia was getting worse, and if the level of fear was high at the end of 1989, in early 1990 it intensified even further, which certainly improved the electoral chances of HDZ. In January 1990, a new wave of demonstrations was launched by Albanians in Kosovo related to the ongoing trial of their former leader, Adem Vllasi. The protests dragged on for two months and were marked by intensive violence. At least 14 people were shot dead and hundreds injured in successive clashes between protestors and the police.¹²² While in Croatia the opposition and the media condemned the Serbian crack-down on the Albanians, Croatian ex-communists supported the maintenance of the state of emergency in Kosovo “because of the deeply disturbed interethnic relations and activities by separatists,” meaning the Albanians.¹²³ On the heels of these incidents, HDZ hinted at the possibility of a similar scenario in Croatia.¹²⁴ In the same month, the Serbian Democratic Party held its founding assembly in Croatia, where participants were chanting Milošević’s name and shouted “down with traitors” whenever somebody mentioned Communists of Croatia or Slovenia’s or Croatia’s attitude to Kosovo.¹²⁵ Moreover, In March 1990, in the middle of the election campaign, Croatian Serbs held a huge rally in Petrova Gora, with 50 000 protestors demonstrating against Croatian opposition who allegedly wanted to “tear Yugoslavia apart”. They hailed

¹²⁰ Author Interview, Lino Veljak.

¹²¹ Nenad Zakošek and Goran Čular, “Croatia”, 460.

¹²² Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo, A Short History*, (London: Papermac, 1998), 345.

¹²³ “Croatian communists do not support the lifting of extraordinary measures in Kosovo,” *Politika*, Belgrade, 18-02-1990; “Croat party backs presidency measures,” FBIS-EEU, 22-02-1990.

¹²⁴ “‘Croat Democratic Community’ on Kosovo effects,” Tanjug, Blegrade, 03-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 06-02-1990.

¹²⁵ FBIS-EEU, 23-02-1990.

Slobodan Milošević and shouted “We will kill [Franjo] Tuđman,” who just the previous week gave voice to his support for Croatian independence.¹²⁶

Against this backdrop, the parties sharpened their knives for the campaign. The next section will explore the main themes of the election campaign as political arguments were put forward by the three dominant political formations.

The campaign – the main themes

There were three dominant subjects of the campaign around which parties formulated their discourse: Croatia’s statehood and its position in Yugoslavia, transition to democracy and relations between the Croatian majority and the Serbian minority. The relative emphasis each party placed on the three topics was telling. HDZ focused very much on the first. According to a content analysis of its campaign, the most frequently repeated word was “Croatia” (33 per cent).¹²⁷ Democracy was a secondary issue, important as long as it helped to solve the national question. Tuđman said in an interview, “[democracy] must be carried out in all Yugoslav republics [...] because it is the only chance to solve the nationality issue.”¹²⁸ Otherwise, HDZ did not talk much about the details of democratic transition. This clearly distinguished HDZ from the other two groups, as the latter two parties put greater emphasis on the democratic transition, employing a version of the civil society master frame.

The style of discourse was also a distinguishing feature. In principle, there were no huge differences between the parties’ position on the future of Croatia in Yugoslavia. None of them was openly secessionist. The KNS did not even have a clear position on the matter;

¹²⁶ “Angry Serbs protest Croatian nationalism,” *The Washington Times*, 05-03-1990, Pg. A2.

¹²⁷ Ivan Grdešić, “Building the State: Actors and Agendas,” in *The 1990 and 1992/93 Sabor Elections in Croatia*, 110.

¹²⁸ “Tuđman Favors Independent Croatia,” *Neue Kronen Zeitung*, Vienna, 21-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 23-04-1990.

all they said was that they were neither for nor against Yugoslavia, only after transition to democracy should the republics conduct talks about the future of the country. They focused on establishing democracy, although they also stressed the republics' right to self-determination, including secession.¹²⁹ The ex-communists and the SDS were for maintaining a federal Yugoslavia.

The HDZ was not for full independence either. However, it argued for Croatian sovereignty. Tudman repeatedly stressed that he preferred a confederation and not full secession. "Croatia's near future can only lie in a Yugoslav confederation."¹³⁰ In an interview given to *Borba* he insisted that he wanted a confederation, despite the fact that some of his party members were more radical in some of their statements.¹³¹ Nevertheless, HDZ's true intentions regarding Croatia's future were questionable in light of their prodigious use of the ethnic security frame. According to this narrative, Serbia was a threat and Yugoslavia was repressing the Croatian nation, thus one could wonder why would they want Yugoslavia to be preserved in any form, especially given HDZ members' nostalgia for the Ustasha past when Croatia had statehood.

Curiously, the prosperity frame was hardly heard during the campaign. None of the parties employed economic arguments, despite the fact that economic grievances were pronounced in the Croatian Spring, featuring as one of the main demands of the nationalist movement at that time. Moreover, the Croatian nationalist literature, from which HDZ propaganda also drew heavily, focused a lot of attention on economic issues as well.¹³² In a

¹²⁹ "Coalition's Tripalo Discusses Elections," *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 8-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 18-04-1990.

¹³⁰ "Croat Democratic Community Holds First Congress," *Borba*, 26-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 12-03-1990.

¹³¹ "Tudman Comments on Party Aims," *Borba*, Belgrade, 18-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 24-04-1990.

¹³² When I use the term nationalist literature, I rely on MacDonald's analysis of Croatian propaganda. In his book *Balkan Holocaust*, MacDonald organized the writings of Croatian nationalists into subject categories, and summarized their main ideas and arguments. [This intellectual tradition seems to be quite important from the aspect of the election campaign, since the nationalist rhetoric of HDZ drew on this nationalist literature. For instance, what Tudman meant by "Great Serbian expansionism" was anchored in the interpretations accumulated through decades by various Croatian writers. David Bruce MacDonald, *Balkan Holocaust?*

leaflet published by the University of Zagreb, three main reasons were mentioned for Croatia's dissatisfaction with Yugoslavia, which were also given as arguments for secession.¹³³ Besides noting that Croatia had been demoted to an administrative territory during the Yugoslav period and subdued by Belgrade, which harmed its culture and identity, the pamphlet focused on Croatia's economic exploitation. The authors argued that Croatia was even more exploited than Slovenia, "having in mind its [Croatian economy's] potential and structure, the inflow of resources from its diaspora and the anti-Croatian federal leadership."¹³⁴ Serbia's aggression against Croatia was also explained by some of the authors in economic terms. It was argued that Serbia wanted to overcome its underdevelopment by annexing territories and thereby gaining new economic resources.¹³⁵

The HDZ program at the same time supported Marković's free market reforms, yet opposed economic centralization, and the party's ads called for "an end to the outflow of the national income of Croatia."¹³⁶ Yet, while many arguments and theories from the nationalist literature trickled down to the campaign and were used especially by HDZ, economic arguments on the whole remained negligible. As economic arguments usually create territorial thus ethnically inclusive identities they did not have a high mobilizing potential amid mass fears of internal enemies.

Serbian and Croatian victim-centered propaganda an the war in Yugoslavia, (Manchester University Press, 2002).

¹³³ Bože Ćović ed., *Croatia Between War and Independence*, (Zagreb: The University of Zagreb and OKC Zagreb, November 1991).

¹³⁴ Ćović ed., *Roots of Serbian Aggression: Debates, Documents, Cartographic Reviews* (Zagreb: Centar za Strane Jezike / AGM, 1993), 39-40. Cited in MacDonald, 194.

¹³⁵ Besides the contributors of the cited book edited by Ćović, – Dušan Bilandžić, Pero Jurković, Mladen Klemenčić, Slaven Letica, Radovan Pavić, Zdravko Tomac, Stanko Žuljić, – Miroslav Brandt argued along similar lines. See Miroslav Brandt, "The Antimemorandum", in Ćović, 232. Cited in MacDonald, 194.

¹³⁶ Sharon Fisher, *Political Change in Post-Communist Slovakia and Croatia*, 34.

Campaign of the HDZ

HDZ mobilized by the ethnic security frame rooted in an exclusivist blood and soil ideology. One of the most important sources of Croatian nationalism was traditionalism: by making references to the medieval independent state of Croatia and redeeming the Ustasha state, the HDZ took on the mission to realize the “1000 year old Croatian dream”.

Historical references were being made by creating parallels between past and present, invoking old medieval kings and heroes, celebrating traditional values such as heroism and masculinity, and by creating new traditions including the mythologization of the Croatian Spring and Croatian political émigrés. Traditionalism of the HDZ asserted itself also through the extensive use and reinvention of national symbols.¹³⁷

Besides traditionalism, the other main source from which HDZ gained legitimacy was Tuđman’s personal charisma. As a hero of the Croatian Spring, he claimed to have given his life to crusade for Croatianhood.¹³⁸ In addition, he was a father-like figure, enjoying true devotion of his followers. While identifying with the masses (“we are all Croats”), he also demonstrated his superiority (“it is I who knows best what the Croatian state should look like”).¹³⁹ The main themes of the discourse will be explored in detail in the following section.

HDZ was the only party that drew on discursive traditions in Croatia, which were discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The nationalist rhetoric put forward by HDZ closely resembled the discourse of 1970/71, such as the reinterpretation of WWII events and statistics, historical and religious symbolism and an amplified fear of Serbian dominance, which called for national self-defense. This was far less characteristic of the KNS, despite its nationalist stance. Furthermore, also unlike KNS, the campaign rhetoric of

¹³⁷ Malešević, *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State*, 225-7.

HDZ relied heavily on the tradition of Croatian nationalist writers, Tuđman being one of them. As mentioned earlier, Tuđman had been jailed for his participation in the Croatian Spring and also for his nationalist writing, which later added to his image as a national hero.¹⁴⁰ He had contributed to the creation of those myths on which nationalism in Croatia was based in the beginning of the 1990s. In his speeches he frequently made references to Croatian history (particularly WWII), and displayed strong anticommunism, promising to recreate the Croatian state, and made claims on Bosnian territories – referring to the “unnatural shape” of Croatia, as it looked like “an apple with a bite taken out of it.”¹⁴¹ Stressing such radical views greatly contributed to his becoming popular among the Croatian diaspora, which poured vast amounts of money into his coffers.¹⁴²

National sovereignty and Croatian state building was the central theme of HDZ rhetoric.¹⁴³ Almost every element of their discourse served to legitimize the pursuit of a Croatian state. One such justification was the threat posed by Serbia.

The position of HDZ on the status issue was not very unique or radical in principle. The actual content of the desired sovereignty – something less than full independence – was never clearly defined. However, the style and rhetoric by which it was presented was carefully constructed. The central idea behind nation-building was that establishing sovereignty would be the only protection from Greater Serbian expansionism. Greater Serbian expansionism, under the leadership of Slobodan Milošević, was blamed for the

¹³⁸ Ibid., 230.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 232.

¹⁴⁰ Some of his most important works from before 1990: *An Endless Multitude of Historical Truth* (1977), *Croatia on Trial* (1981), *Wastelands of Historical Reality* (1987). In MacDonald, *Balkan Holocaust? Serbian and Croatian victim-centered propaganda on the war in Yugoslavia*, 100.

¹⁴¹ Norman Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of 'Ethnic Cleansing'*, (TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), 88, Quoted in MacDonald, *Balkan Holocaust?* 100.

¹⁴² MacDonald, *Balkan Holocaust?* 100-101.

¹⁴³ Sharon Fisher, *Political Change in Post-Communist Slovakia and Croatia*, 31.

worsening of inter-nationality conflicts within Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁴ Tuđman called for a Croatia “that would represent a territorial entity of the Croatian nation within its historic and natural borders” because “plans for creating a greater Serbia had been made”. He added that he was aware that this could ignite a bloody civil war, yet this did not prevent him from making such statements.¹⁴⁵ He presented himself as “the only one to offer resistance to Belgrade hegemonism and unitarism...”.¹⁴⁶

The mobilization of HDZ capitalizing on mass fears led to quite radical, militaristic statements, responding to the perceived danger with threatening claims. Tuđman made it clear that his party was ready for war: “The party wants nothing but to be its own on its own land, and all who threaten even with armed force to stop us may know that we are soldiers too”.¹⁴⁷ His claims to Bosnian territory further confirmed his radical agenda. On several occasions, he made comments such as “Bosnia-Herzegovina was a national state of the Croatian nation,”¹⁴⁸ “Muslims are a constituent part of the Croatian national corpus,”

¹⁴⁴ “Croatian Democratic Community’ Assembly,” Tanjug, Zagreb, 24-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 2-03-1990.

¹⁴⁵ “Croat Democratic Community Holds First Congress,” *Borba*, 26-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 12-03-1990.

¹⁴⁶ “Tuđman’s Independence Efforts Criticized,” *Politika*, Belgrade, 26-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 8-03-1990.

This kind of anti-Serbian attitude also drew on the Croatian literary tradition. There was a belief according to which Serbian expansionism was an inherent characteristic of the Serbian nation. Croatian historians alleged that expansion and repression had belonged to Serbian national identity since the beginning of their history and that the present developments were only the most recent manifestations of this age-old behavior. This approach served as the bases for drawing continual parallels between the past and present. It was argued that “nothing has changed” because Serbs were only following their natural pattern of aggression and Croats their natural pattern of the victimization. As presented by HDZ, the main reason for Croatian statehood was the fear of Serbian aggression. Dušan Kecmanović, *The Mass Psychology of Ethnonationalism* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996);

Dragutin Pavličević, “South–Eastern Europe and Balkan Peninsula on the Margin of the Worlds: Forward,” in *Southeastern Europe 1918-1995*, ed. Aleksander Ravlic (Zagreb: Croatian Heritage Foundation/ Croatian Information Centre, 1998). Cited in MacDonald, 106;

The victimhood of Croats served as another justification for an independent Croatian state, which was another expression of facing existential threats as a nation. Historical references were made to support the idea of constant persecution. “In the last 45 years, Croatianism has not only been exposed to pressure but also to persecution. The persecution of Jelacic (the monument) was not merely accidental...” “Tuđman Comments on Party Aims,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 18-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 24-04-1990;

The enemy was not only the Serbs, but Yugoslavia in general, which in both periods – before and after WWII – allegedly facilitated the oppression of the Croats. As Sime Djodan, HDZ committee member put it: “The pre-war kingdom of Yugoslavia was created through violence [...] through which we were “occupied”. “Croats have been plundered in both pre-war and post-war Yugoslavia and especially so since the government of Marković ...” “Croatian Election Campaign Continues,” Tanjug, Pula, Zagreb, 8-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 11-04-1990.

¹⁴⁷ “Croatian democratic Community Holds Meeting,” Tanjug, Zagreb, 8-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 11-04-1990.

¹⁴⁸ “Croatian Democratic Community’ Assembly,” Tanjug, Zagreb, 24-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 2-03-1990.

and the “Croatian people cannot be confined within the borders of the present Socialist Republic of Croatia.”¹⁴⁹

It is notable that Tuđman refrained from explicitly demanding Croatian independence but made irredentist claims on behalf of the as-yet non-existent state. It made HDZ’s militaristic rhetoric even more credible that already in 1989 the party established the so called national guard (Zbor Narodna Garda), a martial self-defense organization.¹⁵⁰

Constant references to history also appeared to legitimate demands for statehood. A central myth of HDZ ideology was that Croatian ethnonational consciousness was alive throughout history, which again explains why a separate Croatian state was perceived as a legitimate demand.¹⁵¹ HDZ reinterpreted the nation’s role in the events of WWII, creating myths about Croatian persecution and heroism and downplaying the crimes committed by the Ustasha. At a party meeting, for instance, Tuđman said that “crimes were committed by the Independent State of Croatia,” yet he added that “crimes were committed against the Croatian people [...] above all by the chetniks and the partisans.”¹⁵² Moreover, while admitting that the Ustasha were fascists, he emphasized on several occasions that in reality they were genuine Croatian patriots:

“The Ustasa Independent State of Croatia [...] represented the continuation of the realization of the Croatian historical right to statehood”[...] “The Independent State of Croatia was not a mere ‘quisling’ fabrication and a ‘fascist crime’, but an expression of the historical quest of the Croatian people for an independent state, and it [the Independent State of Croatia] also gained recognition on the part of the international actors, in this case the government of Hitler’s Germany.....”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ “Tuđman’s Independence Efforts Criticized,” *Politika*, Belgrade, 26-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 8-03-1990.

¹⁵⁰ Author Interview, , Dražen Budiša, founder of the Croatian Social Liberal Party, Zagreb, 03-06-2008.

¹⁵¹ Malešević, *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State*, 255.

¹⁵² “Tuđman applauded at CDC Imotski Meeting,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 14-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 19-03-1990.

¹⁵³ “Tuđman’s Independence Efforts Criticized,” *Politika*, Belgrade, 26-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 8-03-1990.

Most analysts of the Yugoslav conflict maintain that Tuđman was neither fascist nor Ustasha. Yet, statements such as the one above explain why he was accused as such. Referring to Nazi Germany as a source of legitimacy for the wartime Croatian State does suggest fascist leanings, and raises questions as to whether he really rejected the crimes committed by the Croatian fascists [and German Nazis]. HDZ meetings gave rise to similar concerns. For instance, a delegation from the US at a HDZ congress “called on all sons of the Croatian home guard, Croatian Ustashes and Croatian partisans to fight for the interests of the Croatian state!”. No objections were reported.¹⁵⁴ At a meeting in Pula, Tuđman promised that if HDZ won the elections, they will “reopen the trial of some Ustasha collaborators”.¹⁵⁵ It was little wonder that many thought HDZ was trying to rehabilitate the Ustasha past of Croatia. Although pro-Ustasha views mainly came from circles belonging to the Diaspora, Tuđman did not discourage them.¹⁵⁶

The frequent use of symbolism was another feature of HDZ’ s rhetoric, often imported from Ustasha times or connected to religion. At the first general assembly of HDZ in February 1990, several resolutions were adopted, most of which had symbolic content: they demanded that the words of the national anthem be changed and a monument be erected to those who gave their lives for the freedom and independence of Croatia.¹⁵⁷

Party meetings started and ended with the anthem “Our Beautiful Homeland.” The Croatian

¹⁵⁴ “Croat Democratic Community Holds First Congress,” *Borba*, 26-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 12-03-1990.

¹⁵⁵ “Croatian Election Campaign Continues,” *Tanjug*, Pula, Zagreb, 8-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 11-04-1990.

¹⁵⁶ MacDonald, 137; This discourse drew on an ongoing debate between Serbs and Croats over WWII. This debate intensified especially after the May elections in 1990 and the referendum in 1991 when violence was on the rise. By linking the past and the present, both Serbs and Croats suggested implicitly that events during WWII were direct antecedents of the current conflict. Links were created between the 1940s and the 1990s, and the horrors of the past were not only emphasized but put into today’s context. MacDonald, 132-133; Another way of rehabilitating Croatian history was by stressing the role of Croatian communists in creating Yugoslavia. This was a curious action by Tuđman, since he was known for his anti-communism. At a HDZ congress, he praised Croatian communists and partisans, stating, “Croatian people have paid dearly for the establishment of Tito’s Yugoslav federation”. “Croat Democratic Community Holds First Congress,” *Borba*, 26-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 12-03-1990.

¹⁵⁷ “Croatian Democratic Community Elects Leaders,” *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 26-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 15-03-1990.

flag and the traditional coat of arms were prominently displayed at these events; Yugoslav symbols were nowhere in sight.¹⁵⁸ Slogans like “God and Croats” or “Croats get together” were common, which incidentally were also frequently used by leaders of the Ustasha Independent State of Croatia. Although the Catholic Church itself did not officially support any political party, its anti-communist and conservative/nationalist stance was clear. Furthermore, at the local level, the Church’s standing was far from neutral, as priests often campaigned together with HDZ activists.¹⁵⁹

Altogether, the HDZ’s discourse was simple, had a strong emotional appeal, and “evoked fears, desires, material and symbolic benefits.”¹⁶⁰ In addition, it included the most important elements for those voters who were fed up with the communist system and desired the restoration of Croatian sovereignty, while drawing on Croatian nationalist traditions.¹⁶¹ HDZ, the best organized and financed party in Croatia before the elections, hence offered a radical ethnic security frame communicating an ethnically exclusive version of Croatian national identity. As was noted before, this rhetoric could become popular among the Croat majority as internal perceptions of threat had been widespread during the election campaign. The election victory of HDZ signaled the success of this discourse, which frightened and alienated the Croatian Serbs thus contributing to the escalation of ethnic tensions and the outbreak of war in Croatia.

HDZ and the Croatian Serbs

HDZ’s official rhetoric about Croatia’s Serbian minority was no worse than that of any other party. The official position of the party was similar to that of the other parties’, usually stressing that Serbs be guaranteed their national rights. However, all forms of minority autonomy – be they cultural or territorial – were rejected. Although the content of

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ivan Grdešić, “Building the State: Actors and Agendas,” 108-109.

¹⁶⁰ Malešević, *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State*, 264.

the statements was not anti-Serbian, anti-Serbian sentiments were often manifested. At the first general assembly of the HDZ, when Reverend Ante Bakovic proposed that a “message of peace, love and friendship” to be sent to the Serbs, many booed in the hall. Tuđman intervened by saying that he accepts the message but only with certain corrections, “...that Serbs respect our sovereignty”¹⁶²

As was noted already, a fundamental feature of HDZ’s ideology was that it was ethnically exclusive. It never recognized the plurality of identities when addressing Croatian citizens, but articulated social reality in totalizing categories, viewing citizens of Croatia as Catholic Croats.¹⁶³ Serbs were naturally excluded from this category, which partly explains why they did not see themselves as part of a HDZ-governed Croatia.

Besides its ethnically exclusive approach, many elements of HDZ’s rhetoric were understandably threatening from the Croatian Serbs’ point of view, which certainly contributed to their alienation from the Croatian state after HDZ came to power and to the general worsening of ethnic relations within Croatia. As explored above, one fundamental component of the discourse was the imminent threat of Serb expansionism, which served as an important justification for demanding Croatian sovereignty. Presumably the HDZ statement in which the party claimed their readiness for war was also quite intimidating to the Croatian Serbs. The implicit approval of Croatia’s Ustasha past reinforced these militaristic and the anti-Serb attitudes. Regardless of the fact that most of the time Tuđman talked about Belgrade and Milošević as the Serbian enemy and not about the Serbian minority, this distinction could easily evaporate in case of war.

Moreover, some HDZ politicians tried to link Croatian Serbs with Milošević’s grand plan. The other parties – among them parties of the nationalist KNS – did not suggest such a link. For instance, in a piece of HDZ campaign literature one reads, “Serbs cannot

¹⁶¹ Ivan Grdešić, “Building the State: Actors and Agendas,” 109.

¹⁶² “Croatian Democratic Community Elects Leaders,” *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 26-02-1990, FBIS-EEU, 15-03-1990.

be the live coal by which Croatia is set on fire and destroyed from within.”¹⁶⁴ Later on, this portrayal of Krajina Serbs as “Milošević’s agents” became a self-fulfilling prophesy, as partially due to the election victory of the HDZ, the hardliners of SDS, who were directly supported by Belgrade, took over the party leadership in the fall of 1990.

Nevertheless, as already noted, until the elections, Croatian Serbs demanded only autonomy and not secession, and during the elections voted overwhelmingly for the SKH-SDP, not for the ethnically defined SDS that had been founded with the help of Milošević’s local allies.¹⁶⁵ This suggests that Croatia was not doomed to sectarian warfare, and that the Croatian Serbs aimed at peaceful coexistence within Croatia. Moreover, opinion polls indicate that the majority in Croatia made a distinction between Milošević’s policies and the Serbian minority. According to a poll from late 1989 – despite the ethnic mobilization attempts coming from Belgrade – most people perceived relations “within their own communities as very positive,” yet thought that “relations between nationalities at the level of Yugoslavia” were mostly bad.¹⁶⁶ Another survey taken by the Institute for Social Research of Zagreb University prior the 1990 elections showed that 79,3% of Croats disagreed that Serbs had a privileged position in Croatia. Among Serbs, 79,4% thought that Croats were not privileged.¹⁶⁷ As indicated by these polls, before the elections inter-ethnic relations remained quite good, despite the fact that the Serbia-based media was full of provocations and negative images of Croatia. Thus, inter-ethnic peace in Croatia was not ruled out, even at this point, and was largely a consequence of the process of nationalist framing in the context of secessionist mobilization.

¹⁶³ Malešević, *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State*, 290.

¹⁶⁴ “Za demokratski preobrazaj,” *Jedinstvo*, 29-03-1990, 3; “Za dostojan zivot svakog covjeka,” *Jedinstvo*, 19-04-1990, 4.

¹⁶⁵ V. P. Gagnon Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War*, 139.

The KNS

If the triumph of anti-communist parties was the general rule in Eastern Europe, and could be expected in Croatia as well, then in principle the KNS offered an alternative to HDZ in the election for those voters that were attracted to an anti-communist electoral platform. The KNS also strongly favored Croatian sovereignty – including Croatia’s right of secession – yet they reiterated on several occasions that borders should not be changed, in pointed contrast to Tuđman’s claims on Bosnian territories. The coalition distanced itself from Tuđman’s radicalism; one of their slogans was that “if you don’t want civil war, vote for us!”, and “Croatia won’t be Kosovized”. They emphasized that for them, “the independent state of Croatia was a fascist creation,” and militant nationalism was just as bad as communism:

“The failure of one party system and of Bolshevik ideology in general has set off an avalanche of democratic processes in the countries of ‘real socialism’ [...] the historic project of Marxism-Leninism is falling apart everywhere, so maintaining a political monopoly would be pushing us backward, and some militant myths have in fact already been fomenting irrational passions and threatening civil war.”¹⁶⁸

KNS’s campaign centered on the democracy frame. The themes of tolerance and democracy dominated their campaign, making it clear that democracy and not the issue of statehood was their first priority. Tripalo emphasized that “if it is a Yugoslavia based on democracy, pluralism, a market [economy], and full equal rights, then we want to enter that Yugoslavia. If Yugoslavia is not like that, we will not enter it.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Nikola Dugandžija, “The Level of National Absorption,” in *Croatian Society on the Eve of Transition*, ed. Katarina Prpić, Despot Blaženka, and Nikola Dugandžija, 136, 138., Quoted in V. P. Gagnon Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War*, 36.

¹⁶⁷ Dugandžija, “The Level of National Absorption,” 141.

¹⁶⁸ “Croat party Leaders Attend Munich Gathering,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 7-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 11-04-1990.

¹⁶⁹ KNS press conference, 1 March 1990, Quoted in D. Đurić et al, p. 131. In Sharon Fisher, *Political Change in Post-Communist Slovakia and Croatia*, 22.

Their discourse focused on issues related to the democratic transformation, such as supporting human rights, joining Europe, free expression of opinion, rule of law, democratic foundations, or market economy.¹⁷⁰ With regard to the Serbian minority, they did not have a very different position from that of the HDZ, since they did not support any form of autonomy for the minority either. Yet Salvko Goldstein, head of the Social Liberal Party, which was a member of the coalition, stressed that they “wanted a normal dialogue with the Serbian population and that he does not generalize the pro-Chetnik attack on Tuđman and equate it with the aspirations of Serbs in Croatia.”¹⁷¹ His statement came as a reaction to the assassination attempt on Tuđman during the election campaign when a Croatian Serb tried to shoot him in a HDZ party meeting.

Yet, the KNS utilized some traditional nationalist themes as well, such as the victimization of Croatia and the idea about the inherent anti-democratic nature of the Serbs. Tripalo said in an interview that Serbs aim to destabilize Slovenia and Croatia because they represent “the germ of democratic option”.¹⁷² However, he also said at another occasion that “Croats and Serbs have lived together in this area for a long time, and each has had good and bad experiences,” adding that policies “should not be implemented that would be to the detriment of the Serbs” and that “each Croatian leadership should have the support of the Serbian people in Croatia.”¹⁷³

One element in KNS’ program that reflected their nationalism was their emphasis on the Croatian diaspora and the declining Croatian population. To address this problem they argued that the return of Croatian immigrants and their full reintegration should be made possible. This was a salient theme for HDZ as well. Arguments about economic exploitation of Croatia could also be heard from politicians belonging to the coalition,

¹⁷⁰ “Croat party Leaders Attend Munich Gathering,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 7-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 11-04-1990.

¹⁷¹ “Croatian Opposition Condemns Tuđman ‘Attack’,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 20-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 3-04-1990.

¹⁷² “Coalition’s Tripalo Discusses Elections,” *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 8-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 18-04-1990.

reflecting their nationalist stance.¹⁷⁴ They also criticized Marković's reforms on the bases that the reforms "support a tendency towards centralization [...] and further burden the economy."¹⁷⁵

Altogether the KNS coalition firmly rejected the aggressive, radical nationalism offered by the HDZ, yet was still nationalist. They were more moderate and pragmatic in their style and language: symbolism and historical rhetoric were lacking from their discourse. In their meetings, the Croatian flag was displayed together with the Yugoslav, demonstrating their pro-Yugoslav stance.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, themes related to democratic transition were much more pronounced in their campaign than in that of the HDZ.

SKH-SDP

As one commentator noted during the election campaign, the former communists offered the most elaborated economic and social program, focusing on issues such as democratic transformation to a pluralist democracy, establishing the rule of law, market economy, and so on. Therefore, they primarily relied on the civil society master frame. A significant part of their campaign was indeed aimed at convincing the public that they are not the "same old communists", but had been reformed and no longer relied on a communist ideology.¹⁷⁷ They did not fail to emphasize that they were the ones who had managed the process of transition to democracy, holding multi-party elections.¹⁷⁸ Their political discourse centered on issues related to the details of democratic transition, such as the promotion of a democratic federation, the guarantee of political rights and freedoms,

¹⁷³ Interview with Miko Tripalo, *Danas*, 13 March 1990, p. 11. Cited in Sharon Fisher, *Political Change in Post-Communist Slovakia and Croatia*, 25.

¹⁷⁴ "Croat Democratic Party Assembly Meets," *Tanjug*, 4-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 21-03-1990.

¹⁷⁵ "Coalition's Tripalo Discusses Elections," *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 8-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 18-04-1990.

¹⁷⁶ In meetings of the Croatian Democratic Party, however, which represented the most nationalist wing of the coalition, only Croatian symbols were shown for instance and some more radical views could be heard such as "no kind of Yugoslavia is our aim" and "in realizing a sovereign Croatia nothing can stop them and they will use all means". Marko Veselica from the Croatian Democratic Party, "Croatian Election Campaign Viewed," *Borba*, Belgrade, 14-15 April 1990, FBIS-EEU, 23-04-1990.

¹⁷⁷ "Program noted," *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 10-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 12-03-1990.

establishing a peaceful transition to democracy, achieving market reforms and close cooperation with the EC.¹⁷⁹ Thus they tried to connect their rhetoric with the ideas of peace, tolerance and rationality.¹⁸⁰

The party strongly campaigned on an anti-HDZ platform. Ivo Latin, the then-communist president of the republic, said that “extreme nationalist declarations, revanchist messages, territorial pretensions, and the advocacy of a neo-Nazi vision [...] dominated the meeting of the HDZ”¹⁸¹ They defined themselves in contrast to the HDZ as a multiparty, democratic alternative to extreme nationalism, which could lead to civil war.¹⁸² Račan portrayed the HDZ as an “anti-reform and anti-democratic force – those who do not need democracy, but power in the name of the people and the fulfillment of primarily national aspirations ...” He added that their victory “would open up an unimaginable confrontation and create a crisis in Yugoslavia and Europe.”¹⁸³

The former communists talked much more about democracy than statehood, and promoted the vision of a federal Yugoslavia, thus they were the only party which clearly wanted to keep Croatia within Yugoslavia. In line with the other parties, they also advocated the sovereignty of Croatia, but not as a state of Croats, but also of Serbs, thus they came closest to promoting an ethnically inclusive version of national identity. They envisioned a Yugoslavia “where all nations’ and nationalities’ equality is guaranteed”¹⁸⁴ Like the KNS, the ex-communists were against establishing Serbian autonomy within Croatia, yet they were most sympathetic to the interests of the Serbian minority.¹⁸⁵ While most of the Croats that voted for the nationalist parties “preferred a stronger national position of Croatia as a means [of] countering the Serbian dominance [...] and to secure the

¹⁷⁸ “Croatian Election Campaign Viewed,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 14-15 April 1990, FBIS-EEU, 23-04-1990.

¹⁷⁹ “Program noted,” *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 10-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 12-03-1990.

¹⁸⁰ Sharon Fisher, *Political Change in Post-Communist Slovakia and Croatia*, 22.

¹⁸¹ “Croat Presidency on Tudman’s Party,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 1-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 9-03-1990.

¹⁸² “Croatia’s Račan on Forthcoming Elections,” *Borba*, Belgrade, 19-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 27-03-1990.

¹⁸³ “Račan Discusses Party’s Chances in Elections,” *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 8-04-1990, FBIS-EEU, 16-04-1990.

Croatian's rule over their own territory," Croatian Serbs wanted to keep Croatia within Yugoslavia to ensure protection from Croatian dominance. This was a very important reason why the Serbian minority supported the SKH-SDP, and why only 0,9% of Croats voted for them, splitting the vote along ethnic lines.¹⁸⁶

Altogether the most crucial distinguishing feature of HDZ was their focus on the threats coming from Belgrade. It was the only party that relied heavily on the ethnic security frame, playing up the notion of an internal threat that was very much felt within the population. According to V. P. Gagnon Jr., what made HDZ's campaign successful was the party's ability to convince people that it would and could defend Croatia in the face of Serbian threats.¹⁸⁷ In light of this, Račan might have been right when Tuđman he noted that "Milošević's aggressive policy was the strongest propaganda for Tuđman", which meant that contextualizing events reinforced perceptions of internal threat, which emerged due to structural traits i.e. the ties between Krajina Serbs and Serbia.¹⁸⁸ Thus the atmosphere of threat was the key mobilizing factor that made the discourse of HDZ even more persuasive. Smaller parties and their coalition did not look strong enough, whereas Tuđman demonstrated his capability to defend the Croatian nation from both internal and external threats.¹⁸⁹

Perceptions of the Electorate

The fact that HDZ won the election is not conclusive proof of public attitudes; we must also ask why people voted for them. However, looking at the results of opinion polls,

¹⁸⁴ "Program noted," *Tanjug*, Belgrade, 10-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 12-03-1990.

¹⁸⁵ "Latin Discusses Croatian Elections," *Tanjug*, Zagreb, 28-03-1990, FBIS-EEU, 29-03-1990.

¹⁸⁶ Ivan Šiber and Christian Welzel, "Electoral Behaviour in Croatia," in *The 1990 and 1992/93 Sabor Elections in Croatia*, 85.

¹⁸⁷ V. P. Gagnon, Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War*, 137.

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in Silber and Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, 84.

¹⁸⁹ Author Interview, Dražen Budiša.

some inferences can be made about voters' preferences. Some polls suggest that strong anti-communism of HDZ was an important reason for their success, meaning that voters chose HDZ not solely due to the party's radical stance on the national question.¹⁹⁰ At the same time, there was an obvious ethnic cleavage between the electorate of HDZ and the SKH, as 45% of the Croats and 21% of the Serbs voted for HDZ, while only 20 % of the Croats but 46% of the Serbs voted for the former communists.¹⁹¹ This could be explained by the fact that in Croatia, the communist regime was associated with Serbian dominance – as Serbs were over-represented in the communist party and Croats withdrew from political participation after the Croatian Spring. Thus, anti-communist attitudes may have coincided with anti-Serb sentiments and nationalism.¹⁹² However, the fact that the majority of Serbian voters did not vote for SDS, and indeed that a fifth of them voted for HDZ, indicates that Croatian Serbs were focused on representation within Croatia, and were not necessarily oriented toward Belgrade. This also suggests that conflict was not unavoidable.

There were further clues to voters' preferences as well. Party membership was one factor. Unsurprisingly, former members of the communist party were strongly underrepresented among HDZ voters, slightly less underrepresented among KNS voters and over-represented among the SKH-SDP voters. Religious commitment was also significant, as people who considered themselves believers were strongly over-represented among HDZ voters, slightly less among KNS voters and underrepresented among voters of the former communist party.¹⁹³ Some other cleavages could be identified as well, as HDZ was more popular among rural voters and the SKH-SDP among city dwellers. However, it

¹⁹⁰ Nenad Zakošek and Goran Čular, "Croatia", 453; During a poll, which asked why people voted against the ex-communist 65% responded by choosing the option "responsibility of SKH for the crisis and to give opportunity to govern to others", while 14% opted for the answer "the SKH does not sufficiently represent the interests of my nation". In Dražen Lalić, "Pohod na glasače. Analiza sadržaja poruka predizbornih kampanja stranka u Hrvatskoj 1990., 1992. i 1993. godine," in *Pohod na Glasače: Izbori u Hrvatskoj 1990-1993.*, ed. Srđan Vrcan et al. (Split: Plus, 1995), 247-48, Cited in V. P. Gagnon Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War*, 138.

¹⁹¹ Ivan Šiber and Christian Welzel, "Electoral Behaviour in Croatia," 85.

¹⁹² Ibid.

can be concluded that ethnic and religious affiliations were the most decisive in influencing electoral behavior, while socio-economic cleavages were much less important.¹⁹⁴ The elections clearly showed the triumph of the ethnically exclusive interpretation of national identity which was promoted not only by HDZ but was to some extent upheld by KNS as well, thus by the two parties most ethnic Croats voted for.

The HDZ rule and the referendum on independence

HDZ's electoral victory was a crucial factor leading the country down the path to war, since it contributed to the rapid deterioration of inter-ethnic relations between Serbs and Croats at the domestic level. The referendum on independence was held in the midst of wide-spread violence, which soon escalated into full-scale war. By looking at the news and media reports in the preceding period of the referendum, the Croatian media was overwhelmed by reports about "terrorist attacks", death casualties and bomb blasts. The obvious mobilizer for secession was ethnic violence and Serbian attacks on Croatia. In Croatia, there was simply no campaign for independence prior to the referendum. We cannot point to specific arguments by which politicians tried to convince people to vote yes in the referendum, as in Slovenia. However, HDZ's policies were partially responsible for the escalation of violence. Had KNS or SKH-SDP come to power and pursued a more reasonable and moderate policy concerning the Croatian Serbs, perhaps war could have been avoided. That is why this chapter concentrated on the elections that brought HDZ to power, since HDZ was largely responsible for radicalization of events on the ground. In the next section, it will be explored why this was the case.

¹⁹³ Ivan Šiber and Christian Welzel, 91-92.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

The discourse Tuđman and his party propagated locked him in a course of action, which directly led to a violent confrontation with the Serbian minority. One of the first acts of the new HDZ-led government was to adopt a new constitution, which was accomplished in December 1990. Besides establishing a parliamentary democracy and enshrining Croatia's sovereignty in the constitution, the new constitution downgraded the status of Serbs to that of a minority from that of a nation-building people.¹⁹⁵ This became one of the main grievances of the local Serbs and was an important theme in their negotiations with the Tuđman -government throughout the summer and fall of 1990.

After the party came to power, radicals within HDZ and among the Croatian Serbs aggravated the situation on the ground considerably. The everyday life of local Serbs was affected very much by the anti-Serb policies of HDZ and also alienated those who were not connected to the SDS. Many Serbs were purged from their jobs because of their ethnicity. They also had to pledge their loyalty to the Croatian state, Serbian police officers had to wear an Ustasha symbol – the sahovnica - on their hat, and so on. While the HDZ right provoked violence and intimidated local Serbs in Dalmatia, Lika, Baranja and the Kodrun regions, and portrayed local Serbs as having direct links to Milošević, thus trying to establish their collective guilt, at the national level the Croatian government was making some efforts to avoid war.¹⁹⁶ As Gagnon noted, the HDZ at the national level and Tuđman personally wanted to negotiate and sought compromise, indicated especially by Tuđman's repeated refusal of Špegelj's proposals to use force against SDS's paramilitaries.¹⁹⁷ Marcus Tanner similarly argued in his book *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* that Tuđman and the government opposed using force against the Knin rebels until the end of 1990 fearing a military attack from Belgrade and also because Croatia lacked weapons as right before the

¹⁹⁵ Grdešić, "Building the State: Actors and Agendas," 116.

¹⁹⁶ V. P. Gagnon, Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War*, 147.

¹⁹⁷ V. P. Gagnon Jr., 144.

elections the Yugoslav army disarmed the territorial defense units in Croatia.¹⁹⁸ According to Tanner's account, until the end of that year the Croatian leadership was still hoping to reach an agreement with the other republics about transforming Yugoslavia into a confederation. When in late 1990 Špegelj began buying weapons and military equipment from abroad, his efforts were not appreciated by the government which feared that the arm purchases might "irritate Belgrade". Consequently, in February 1991 the task of purchasing weapons was taken away from him.¹⁹⁹ Thus, HDZ's ethnonationalist discourse took on a life of its own dictating events, which were beyond Tuđman's control.

The HDZ promised to grant cultural autonomy to the Serbs and revise the draft constitution so that it would not define the Croatian state as the "national state of the Croatian people". However, those SDS members that negotiated with HDZ were ultimately labeled as traitors, and in October 1990 the hard-liner Milan Babić became the head of the party. Belgrade's radical allies then took over the SDS, and were provided with arms from Serbia.²⁰⁰

The HDZ's rise to power thus triggered the radicalization of the local Serbs. From the summer of 1990, Serbian hard-liners stepped up their activities with the help of Belgrade, provoking conflict with the Croatian police. They also organized rallies in the Knin area with the participation of Serbs imported from other parts of Yugoslavia, and they declared territorial autonomy first, later independence.²⁰¹

From the fall of 1990, SDS and HDZ radicals gradually pushed the country into civil war; with the help of violence and fear, they managed to construct homogeneous

¹⁹⁸ Tanner, *Croatia*, 225.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 235.

²⁰⁰ V. P. Gagnon Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War*, 146.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 142-144.

political spaces along ethnic lines.²⁰² Violence escalated from February-March 1991 in the region of Knin and Western Croatia and reached Eastern Croatia by May – instigated by paramilitaries and fueled from the outside. In March, for instance, Croatian Serbs attacked and took over Lika at the Plitvice Lakes, as a result of which local Croats were forced to flee from the area. Not long afterwards, the Krajina Serbs decided to join Krajina to Serbia. In the spring of 1991, as Croatian media covered the armed clashes and the secession of Krajina Serbs, Tuđman still talked about the possibility of confederation. It is difficult to see how he could have believed in the possibility of reaching an agreement about a confederation, as Serbia was igniting a civil war in Croatia.

Altogether, as was explained above, perceptions of internal threat associated with the Serbian minority derived mostly from the minority's structural position meaning that some people within the minority had links with Milošević who beyond doubt posed a threat to Croatia. At the same time, the attitude and the behavior of the majority of the Croatian Serb population demonstrated by their electoral support for the former communists as opposed to SDS did not substantiate these perceptions. As events unfolding after the elections showed, however, the victory of HDZ proved to be decisive, as its policies and rhetoric completely alienated the Serbs and contributed to the radical wing overtaking SDS, which eventually led to the outbreak of civil war.

In the meantime, it had become obvious that Slovenia would declare independence; several laws were being prepared for transferring all functions to the republic. Moreover, Slovenia was conducting discussions with international institutions. At the time, Tuđman still talked about the possibility of forming a confederation of sovereign republics, while he made clear that Croatia would not stay “in the remnants of the present federation”.²⁰³ Hopes for an agreement in the federal bodies further evaporated when on May 15th, Stipe

²⁰² Ibid., 148.

²⁰³ “Tuđman, Kučan Discuss National Question,” Tanjug, Ljubljana, 8-04-1991, FBIS-EEU, 9-04-1991.

Mesić was prevented by the Serbian-Montenegrin block from taking over the head of the Yugoslav presidency, which was the highest post of the federation. Besides humiliating Croatia, this was an open obstruction of the Yugoslav constitution, which regulated the rotation among the presidency members.²⁰⁴

This was the atmosphere in which the referendum on Croatian independence was held in May 1991. It should also be noted that a couple days earlier the Krajina Serbs had organized their own referendum about Krajina joining Serbia, in which 99 per cent voted yes. Thus, at the time of the referendum in May 1991, the Croatian Serbs had already declared secession from Croatia. Armed conflict had been on the rise fuelled by Belgrade, the election of the Croatian candidate for the Yugoslav presidency was obstructed by Serbia and Montenegro, and it was obvious that Slovenia was leaving Yugoslavia. These events together constituted the “mobilization campaign” for Croatian independence.

In the Croatian referendum, citizens were asked the following question:

“Are you in favor of Croatia, as an independent and sovereign state, guaranteeing cultural autonomy and full civil rights to the Serbs and the members of other nationalities in Croatia, forming an alliance of sovereign states with other republics (based on the proposal of the Republics of Slovenia and Croatia for the solution of the Yugoslav crisis)?” 93% voted yes with a 78% participation rate, legitimating Croatia’s secession from Yugoslavia. Not long after Slovenia and Croatia proclaimed their independence in the summer of 1991, full scale war broke out by August 1991.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Goldstein, *Croatia: A History*, 220-21.

²⁰⁵ Ivan Grdešić, “Building the State: Actors and Agendas,” 120-121.

Conclusion

Table2. Discourse dynamics of the independence movement

Actor	HDZ	KNS	SKH-SDP
Frame	Ethnic security frame (for independence)	Civil society master frame (unconcerned with independence)	Civil society master frame (against independence)

In Croatia, we witnessed a fear-based nationalist mobilization, which led to the proclamation of independence and the outbreak of war. Mobilization for sovereignty began during the election campaign in the spring of 1990 when arguments for sovereignty were presented (see Table2 above). Such discourse promoting Croatian statehood was the most salient in the HDZ rhetoric, which might be an important reason for its success, while the other political parties were less concerned with the issue of state sovereignty. Independence came as Croatian and Serbian politicians politically played out escalating minority-majority tensions. Since the victory of HDZ was quite decisive in determining the latter course of events with regard to independence, the key question to be raised here is what explains the success of the party's mobilizational frame. In other words, it can be asked why were Croats – unlike the Slovenes – most receptive to a radical ethno-nationalist rhetoric.

It was fundamentally argued that due to widespread perceptions of internal threat, Croatian people were most receptive to the ethnic security frame communicating an ethnically exclusive national identity. As the election campaign showed, under circumstances marked by mass fears of internal enemies, the civil society master frame/democracy frame had a much lower mobilizing power. Due to the peculiar structural situation characterized by the presence of the Serbian minority which had connections to Milošević, internal perceptions of threat developed within the Croat majority that made

other types of frames communicating an inclusive identity unlikely to succeed. This implies that even if Croatia could have followed the more moderate path toward independence taken by Slovenia, providing room for alternative discourses to develop on national identity, the ethnic structure in Croatia in addition to certain contextualizing events during the 1990 election campaign favored the emergence of the ethnic security frame, promoting an exclusivist national identity.

Therefore, the model illuminates the nature of the Croatian independence movement because the ethnic structure was conducive to perception of internal threat, which provided the basis for success of the ethnic security frame. The contextualizing events of the Kosovo uprising and Croatian Serb radicalization in the context of the 1990 campaign lent further appeal to the ethnic security frame, which HDZ championed. Then, once HDZ came to power, the die was cast, and ethnic violence became almost inevitable. It is important to stress that violence was not unavoidable in the beginning as the Croatian Serbs were interested in compromise, but by the time HDZ had won the elections in the context of escalating conflict in other parts of the Federation, violence started to become inevitable.

Although other issues could have emerged in the political sphere, by the time of the 1990 election campaign, issues to do with the economy or democratic transition were overshadowed by the fear of Serbian nationalism. HDZ was the only party that addressed this concern. Its rhetoric was aggressive and radical enough to measure up to the perceived danger. It is hard to imagine how a moderate discourse could have succeeded under such circumstances. If mass fears are substantial, political rhetoric that does not address them cannot succeed, as seen the KNS, because fear trumps all other motives.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Malešević, *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State*, 306.

Economic arguments did not have the chance to enter the discourse due to their moderate and inclusive nature. In the face of popular fears, moderation was unjustified. It seems logical that economic arguments are not used at a high level of threat, since it would probably be hard to get people to fight and die over net transfer payments or budgetary autonomy.

IV. Discursive construction of the Montenegrin independence movement

Introduction

Montenegro declared its independence more than a decade after signing the Dayton Peace Accords, as the last former republic of the socialist Yugoslavia. State independence was reached as a result of a ten year long mobilization process, which started in 1997 when the republic's leadership turned against Slobodan Milošević. This chapter presents Montenegro's road towards independence, yet not as a series of events but as the evolution and interaction of different discourses, by focusing on how actors framed Montenegro's political status in the course of these ten years. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to map the discursive dynamics of the independence movement in order to show how actors used different frames to support their position on the statehood issue and how their arguments were changing over time. I ask what combination of frames were chosen at different times by which actors, and how and why different frames were used in different time periods.

It will be shown that the Montenegrin independence movement was fundamentally rooted in the democracy frame, as independence was presented as a condition for democratic and economic development and faster accession to the EU. This pro-independence rhetoric was based on the civic concept of the nation promoting the inclusion of ethnic minorities into the national community. Montenegro's case supports the basic theoretical argument of this dissertation, according to which the discursive content of mobilization frames has significance in a multi-ethnic environment. In Montenegro the evolving pro-independence frame created the political dynamics that helped to keep multi-ethnic peace. Montenegro – home to several ethnic minorities, among them Bosniaks and Albanians – managed to avoid violence while pursuing independence despite the growing threat from Serbia and the deepening division between self identified

Serbs and Montenegrins who together constitute Montenegro's Orthodox majority.

Although this cannot be solely explained by discourse dynamics, the fact that the dominant pro-independence discourse promoted an inclusive national identity certainly contributed to the preservation of relatively calm relations among different ethnic groups. That is why it is worth investigating why independence came to be framed this particular way, and what kind of frames could be symbolically linked to an ethnically inclusive interpretation of the nation. It will be analyzed which frames tended to be connected, and which ones could not go together.

Fundamentally, I argue that the diverse ethnic structure of the Montenegrin population accounts for this inclusive framing of the movement. In line with the model of secessionist framing, under conditions of high ethnic fractionalization ethnic structure has the most crucial influence on how collective identity is defined and not the perception of internal threat. In such cases where the population is ethnically very heterogeneous inclusive framing is absolutely necessary to embrace a high number of diverse groups. National identity was thus set on an inclusive basis by the pro-independence political forces despite the fact that the Serbian minority had political links with the threatening center, Belgrade, and as a result perceptions of internal threat had emerged in Montenegro especially in 1999-2000. Yet, in spite of this, collective identity was framed in an inclusive way and internal ethnic relations remained peaceful.

In contrast, the anti-independence rhetoric drew on an ethno-nationalist discourse hostile to minorities. Moreover, pro-Serbian political forces concentrated most of their framing efforts on undermining the pro-independence parties' credibility by accusing them of involvement in organized crime and corruption (instead of providing arguments against independence). These were the primary frames of the two sides, which had been fairly constant throughout the ten years to be analyzed. However, frames kept shifting as

circumstances changed while actors tried to use new opportunities to strengthen their position through presenting their interpretation of events.

Throughout the discussion it will be also demonstrated that while discursive networks, which are symbolic ties between different statements can be established relatively easily, creating such connections cannot be done in an arbitrary way. Moreover such links are not easy to dissolve, especially in the case of political discourse, which has a relatively high visibility. Once such ties were constructed, they tend to be “sticky”.¹ As the pro-Yugoslav position was initially set on an ethno-nationalist platform which presented minorities as enemies of the Serbian Orthodox nation, latter attempts to construct a civic identity for the pro-Yugoslav movement failed. Thus it will be illustrated throughout the chapter how actors’ framing choices limited their discursive maneuvering space.

The discussion below will focus on key events, which provided opportunities for politicians to talk about Montenegro’s desired status within the Yugoslav federation. Thus, election campaigns before parliamentary and presidential elections and the campaign before the independence referendum will be analyzed. In addition, the six months leading up to the signing of the Belgrade Agreement in March 2002 were also included in the analysis as during this period the issue of independence strongly dominated public discussions. The chapter will be arranged according to frame shifts structuring the paper into different sections. The analysis relies on Montenegrin daily newspaper articles collected from the online BBC Monitoring Service and Mina News Agency’s website, each sample covering a monthly period before election times and the referendum, as well as the six months preceding the Belgrade Agreement. By using these data bases a vast amount of

¹ Vedres-Csígó, “Discourse Dynamics,” 5.

daily news translated into English were collected from all the main Montenegrin daily newspapers. Mina News Agency's website contains articles of the main Montenegrin newspapers thus of *Pobjeda*, *Vijesti*, *Dan*, *Republika*, *Monitor*. BBC Monitoring Service covers a larger variety of sources, in addition to these newspapers it contains translated news pieces of Montenegrin TV, Montenegrin Radio, Beta News Agency, Montena Fax News Agency, Serbian Radio, Radio B92, Tanjug News Agency, Serbian TV among others. Thus, some television and radio broadcast program excerpts were also included in the sample. In addition, I used news analysis from the online Alternative Information Network (AIM Press) from the period between 1997 and 2002.

The beginning of the independence movement

–The need for sovereignty framed by economic arguments

Communism ended in Montenegro as a result of the so called 'anti-bureaucratic revolutions,' the nationalist mobilization of Serbs facilitated by Milošević in Voivodina, Kosovo and Montenegro during the years of 1988 and 1989. The revolts meant to express anger against the bureaucratic and corrupt leaderships of the republics and provinces, which is where the name 'anti-bureaucratic' comes from. Yet, in reality, they were orchestrated by Milošević who wanted to remove the local leadership in Voivodina, Kosovo and Montenegro thus to create a centralized Serbia and to bring the neighboring Montenegro under his influence. In the summer of 1988, the protest wave reached Montenegro leading to the fall of the republican leadership, being replaced by Milošević's loyalists. The two key figures of Montenegrin politics, Milo Đukanović and Momir Bulatović both emerged to the top of Montenegro's communist establishment in 1989 on the waves of the mass mobilization led by Milošević.² Up until 1997, Montenegrin politics was characterized by the duality of protecting the republic's autonomous rights while

² That part of the Montenegrin political elite that disliked Belgrade's political line left the ruling Democratic Party of Socialist (DPS) in the early 1990s.

remaining loyal partners of the Serbian leadership. This meant that Montenegrin leaders on the whole had remained faithful to their Serbian mentor, even if they often pursued a different political course from that of Belgrade. In October 1991 for instance the Montenegrin president Bulatović, supported the Carrington Plan thus going against Milošević and demanded the withdrawal of Montenegrin soldiers from Croatia. However, under pressure of the Serbian leadership, he eventually retreated from his opposing stance. Moreover, DPS, the ruling ex-communist party, at first supported Milan Panic's reformist Yugoslav government and Panic's candidacy for the Serbian presidency. There was a temporary cooling of relations between Serbia and Montenegro which lasted from late 1991 until mid 1993. This period was marked by serious tensions also because Serbian paramilitaries infiltrated the northern part of Montenegro inhabited by the Bosniak minority. During this time, the DPS allied itself with the Montenegrin opposition parties, the Social-democrats (SDP), the Liberal Alliance (LSCG) and People's Party (NS) in order to create unity in the face of its worsening relations with Belgrade. Even after 1993 Montenegrin politics somewhat differed from that of Serbia, for instance Montenegro tried to normalize its relations with Croatia, Albania and Italy, which was met by obstruction from Belgrade and an increased army presence in the republic.³

However, on the whole the Montenegrin government had stayed an ally of Serbia and had not questioned Montenegro's membership in the Yugoslav federation. Yugoslavia also enjoyed the support of the majority population as indicated by the referendum held in March 1992, in which 95,4% of the voters opted for Montenegro staying in Yugoslavia (albeit at a turn out rate of 66,04%, which meant that almost two-thirds of the population expressed its support for sustaining the federation).⁴ The crucial turning point came in

³ Florian Bieber, "Montenegrin politics since the disintegration of Yugoslavia," in *Montenegro in Transition*, ed. Florian Bieber (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2003), 18-24.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

1997 when Milo Đukanović, the then prime minister, re-oriented the republic towards democratization and the west, which marked the beginning of the Montenegrin independence movement.⁵

Before the break with Belgrade, the mainstream political forces of Montenegro vehemently opposed the idea of secession, but nonetheless tried to preserve the autonomous standing of Montenegro. When Đukanović turned against Milošević in early 1997, no one in the ruling political establishment was yet talking about independence; demands instead centered on calls for economic sovereignty. However, the break with Milošević came to be framed by a pro-human rights/pro-democracy/pro-EU discourse by Đukanović and his associates, while economic arguments faded away. This represented the first frame shift of the government, which will be explained in more detail below. First, the emergence of the economic frame will be explored.

The lifting of sanctions at the end of 1996 in the wake of the Dayton Peace Agreement raised hopes and optimism within the impoverished population of Montenegro that after almost four years of isolation the FRY can reintegrate into the world economy. By that time the economy had been devastated by the hyperinflation of the early 1990s, falling living standards and high unemployment, putting an ever growing pressure not only on the population but also on the ruling elite.⁶ The share of the poor in the total population grew from 14.1 per cent to 30 per cent between 1990 and 1996.⁷ Yet, as it soon became evident, the lifting of sanctions did not mean that the country could reintegrate into the world economy. Importantly, the so-called outer wall of sanctions preventing the FRY from joining financial institutions was left in place because of the election fraud in Serbia.

⁵ Florian Bieber, "Montenegrin politics since the disintegration of Yugoslavia," 13-14.

⁶ Beáta Huszka, "The dispute over Montenegrin independence," in *Montenegro in Transition*, 45-46.

⁷ Dragan Đurić, "Lost hopes," *AIM* Podgorica, 07-01-1997.

During the 1996 local elections, the Serbian government invalidated the results in cities won by the democratic opposition. As people began to realize that the suspension of sanctions did not ease pressure on the Montenegrin economy, a wave of workers' protests swept through Montenegro as a clear sign of the mounting social discontent.⁸ Once it became clear that the end of sanctions did not bring about the much desired normalization of relations with international institutions, the Montenegrin leadership grouped around the prime minister Đukanović began to lose patience with Milošević, and started to blame Serbian policies for the economic hardships affecting Montenegro. Svetozar Marović, chairman of the Montenegrin Assembly commented on the controversial events surrounding the Serbian local elections the following way:

“It [the election fraud] all costs us tremendously, it conflicts the FRY with the world again, postpones return of our country into international institutions, prevents prospects of revival of our economy and creation of conditions for normal life of our citizens. Nobody has the right to do that. Not even the President of Serbia has the right to do that [...]”.⁹

In sum, the Montenegrin leadership initially explained in economic terms as to why change was needed in Yugoslav politics. At this point, no one complained yet about the Serbian regime's undemocratic record. The Montenegrin prime minister, Đukanović warned that “in case Montenegro does not soon, as urgently as possible, integrate in the international flow of goods and capital, the government will no longer be in the position to secure social peace.”¹⁰ Not only Đukanović drew attention to the rapidly approaching economic crisis, but rumors spread about business deals falling through as foreign investors were allegedly pulling out of businesses on account of the events in Serbia.¹¹ Economic experts also pointed to the potentially harmful economic consequences of Serbian political

⁸ Dragan Đurić, “Water up to the neck,” *AIM* Podgorica, 07-04-1996.

⁹ Darko Suković, “Commotion in the ruling party,” *AIM* Podgorica, 14-01-1997.

¹⁰ Draško Đuranović, “SPS-DPS: Đukanović strikes at Milošević,” *AIM* Podgorica, 26-02-1997.

¹¹ For instance, allegedly the London Bank “Berliner” postponed granting a credit to the Kotor shipyard in response to the Serbian local elections. In Dragan Đurić, “Calculation accomplice,” *AIM* Podgorica, 05-02-1997.

developments. Nebojša Medojević warned that the lack of normalization of relations with international financial institutions would mean that privatization had to proceed without any foreign capital; moreover the rehabilitation of the banking system would be impossible. The director of the privatization fund similarly stressed that “events in Serbia are also a trap for the privatization process in Montenegro. Privatization is our priority interest and no one has the right to deny us that right”. The perception that Montenegro was suffering economically because of political events in Serbia soon became widespread in Montenegro.¹²

Therefore, on economic grounds part of the Montenegrin leadership around Đukanović began to seek ways to distance itself from Belgrade and establish contacts with the international community. The government increasingly started to emphasize its intention to “activate its constitutional capacity for direct re-establishment of relations with the international community” and announced that it would introduce a separate currency by referring to fears that inflationary pressure might be coming from Serbia.¹³ In January 1997, Đukanović announced that in order to protect Montenegro’s economic interests, “Montenegro will directly communicate with international financial institutions”.¹⁴

However, ultimately mass protests in Serbia provided the opportunity for the Montenegrin government to confront Belgrade directly. In the winter of 1996/1997, mass demonstrations organized by the democratic opposition in Serbia forced Milošević to accept the election results. Initially, the Montenegrin authorities did not allow reporting

¹² Dragan Đurić, “Calculation accomplice,” *AIM* Podgorica, 05-02-1997.

¹³ Dragan Đurić, “Lost Hopes,” *AIM*, Podgorica, 20-01-1997.

¹⁴ Draško Đuranović, “Foreign policy of Montenegro within FRY,” *AIM* Podgorica, 15-01- 1997.

about the protests and tried to hold back demonstrations in Montenegro, which sought to follow the Serbian opposition's example. Yet, as mobilization against the regime gained strength and size in Serbia, the Montenegrin government decided to side with the protestors, and allowed state media to fully report about the protests.¹⁵

The protests in Serbia sent the signal to the Montenegrin socialist leadership that Milošević's rule was shaking in Serbia. Some part of the Montenegrin political elite clearly did not wish to be associated with a regime in Belgrade whose power seemed to be weakening.¹⁶ At the same time, as explained above many in the political elite were tired of Milošević's policies which kept the country in international isolation and economic poverty.

As an AIM analysis noted, reactions were mixed in the Democratic Party of Socialists to Milošević losing popularity in Serbia. The report said that on the one hand, "sources close to the top of the DPS say that, after publication of the unofficial results of the second round of the local elections, in the building of the Government of Montenegro, there was joyful cheering to 'sovereign DPS in FRY'". Thus, a faction of the DPS saw Milošević's power weakening as an opportunity to strengthen their influence in Montenegro and get rid of Serbia's control. At the same time, it also seemed risky not to make a clear stand against Milošević, if he was truly about to fall. What obviously worried some in the DPS was that if they do not dissociate themselves from Milošević, "by the logic of connected vessels" they will jeopardize their own position in Montenegro.¹⁷ Driven by such calculations and building on public anxieties caused by the deepening economic crisis, part of the DPS elite led by Milo Đukanović grabbed the opportunity

¹⁵ Florian Bieber, "Montenegrin politics since the disintegration of Yugoslavia," 29.

¹⁶ Draško Đuranović, "Washing Hands," *AIM*, Podgorica, 11-12-1996.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

offered by the protests, and in early 1997 openly turned against the Serbian president. “Mr. Milošević is a man of obsolete political ideas, lacking ability to strategically view the challenges facing our state.” [...] “I am convinced that it would be a grave mistake for Slobodan Milošević to continue to occupy any position in the political life of Yugoslavia” Đukanović said.¹⁸ A crack soon began to appear within the DPS as well, as a division emerged between the republic’s president Momir Bulatović who chose to side with Milošević, and the prime minister, Đukanović. The subsequent power struggle between the president and the prime minister ended with Đukanović’s victory. After three months of turmoil within DPS, in July 1997 the main board of the party removed Bulatović from his post as party president, and elected Đukanović to be DPS’ candidate for the upcoming presidential elections.¹⁹ At the same time, the majority of the Montenegrin public also turned against Milošević. According to a poll, 64% of the population did not want him to be the future president of FRY.²⁰ Not only did the leadership split into two opposing camps but also their support bases split along a deep social divide. While Đukanović enjoyed the backing of intellectuals, students, young people, most of the middle class and minorities, Bulatović was supported by poor people, Serbian nationalists and pensioners.²¹ Altogether it can be concluded that ironically, whereas in Serbia despite the massive grassroots mobilization regime change had not come about, in Montenegro it had been achieved through an internal elite struggle.²²

1. Frame shift: the government adopts a pro-democracy position and shifts from the economic prosperity frame to the civil society master frame.

¹⁸ *Vreme*, 22-02-1997.

¹⁹ Nebojša Redžić, “Climax of the Conflict in DPS, President Bulatović relieved of duty,” *AIM Podgorica*, 12-07-1997.

²⁰ Poll taken by Podgorica agency Damar, Cited by Marko Vuković, “Bulatović outvotes Đukanović again,” *AIM Podgorica*, 25-06-1997.

²¹ Marko Vuković “The End of the Campaign – On the Eve of the Elections, Montenegro – Voters in Knockdown,” *AIM Podgorica*, 03-10-1997.

²² European Stability Initiative, “Autonomy, Dependency, Security: The Montenegrin Dilemma,” Podgorica, 04-08-2000, 5, www.esiweb.org.

The opposition sets itself on a pro-Yugoslav position. It presents the anti-independence frame of “self-serving nationalist elites” and the ethnic security frame.

Presidential elections, October 1997

Presidential elections were held in October 1997. Interestingly, mobilization against independence preceded mobilization for independence, as the issue of statehood was put on the agenda by the pro-Belgrade incumbent, Momir Bulatović. Bulatović positioned himself as the guarantor of preserving Yugoslavia, and challenged Đukanović by accusing him of corruption and secessionism. He also relied on a Serbian ethno-nationalist discourse excluding minorities by stressing Montenegrins’ Serb ethnic identity. At the same time, Đukanović who latter became the icon of Montenegrin independence aspirations campaigned by promising economic, democratic reforms and integration into the international community while he avoided talking about Montenegro’s status. Thus he rallied support by calling for democratic changes and not by setting himself on a pro-independence platform. Even as Bulatović insisted that Đukanović was secessionist, the premier denied these allegations and used the civil society master frame in his campaign by promising a democratic turn.²³ He stressed the importance of human rights and the rights of minorities and promoted a civic concept of society.²⁴ He dismissed allegations about secessionism by maintaining that his government was not against the FRY but the issue was “what our common state should be like – whether it should always remain adapted to the ideas of one man who wants to rule it, or whether it should develop according to international standards, as a democratic and economically efficient state.”²⁵ He

²³ Petrović Njegoš II., the Montenegrin prince, who openly supported Đukanović also presented this election as a choice between “national-socialism which has been leading the country towards destruction for 10 years” and “a promise of reforms and openness to the world” rather than as a chance to restore Montenegro’s statehood. In “King's descendant says Serbian election candidates will destroy Yugoslavia,” Montena-fax news agency, Podgorica, 05-10-1997, BBC Monitoring, 06-10-1997.

²⁴ Marko Vuković “The End of the Campaign – On the Eve of the Elections, Montenegro – Voters in Knockdown,” *AIM* Podgorica, 03-10-1997.

continuously shifted attention from the state issue to that of democracy and reforms arguing that not Yugoslavia as a state but Yugoslav democracy should be protected against Milošević.²⁶ He stressed the need to have equal relations with Serbia and emphasized the multi-ethnic nature of Montenegro, repeatedly pointing out that Bulatović was allied with Milošević.²⁷

It should be noted here that Đukanović's reformist, pro-European rhetoric strongly resembled the discourse the Montenegrin pro-independence opposition had been presenting from the early 1990s. This group of parties led by the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (LSCG) included the Social Democratic Party of Reformers and other smaller parties, which were opposed to Serbian nationalism and Montenegro's involvement in the Yugoslav wars on Serbia's side.²⁸ They envisaged an independent, multi-ethnic Montenegro based on 'European values' and fiercely opposed Montenegro's military engagement in Croatia, particularly the attack against Dubrovnik. LSCG, as the strongest opposition party, had its stronghold in Cetinje, Montenegro's historical centre, and drew heavily on historical arguments.²⁹ It stressed the distinctiveness of Montenegrin identity and emphasized the historical legacy of an independent Montenegro. The party together with the Social Democrats also supported the successful re-establishment of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church in 1993, exemplifying Montenegrin separateness from

²⁵ "Premier on differences with Yugoslav president," *Danas*, Belgrade, 26-09-1997, BBC Monitoring, 30-09-1997.

²⁶ "Presidential contenders meet in first public debate," Beta news agency, Belgrade, 01-10-1997, BBC Monitoring, 02-10-1997; "President accuses premier of not reporting assets," Beta news agency, Belgrade, 01-10-1997, BBC Monitoring, 03-10-1997.

²⁷ "Premier 'convinced of victory' in election runoff," Beta news agency, Belgrade, 06-10-1997, BBC Monitoring, 08-10-1997.

²⁸ Besides these small parties, Crnogorska Matica, a Montenegrin writers association advocated Montenegro's independence. The association's main aim was the preservation of the historical and cultural identity of Montenegrins. In Kenneth Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History* (London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2009), 107-112.

²⁹ LSCG received 12,4% of votes during the December 1992 general elections. In 1996 it joined a coalition with the Social Democratic Party and the People's Party, which gained 25,6% of the votes. In Vladimir Goati, *Izbori u SRJ od 1990 do 1998: volja građana ili izborna manipulacija* (Beograd: CeSID, 1999), 299-301.

Serbia. It was friendly to minorities, and strongly criticized the Serbian Orthodox Church.³⁰

Yet, most importantly, as the advocates of Montenegrin independence positioned themselves against Serbian nationalism and violence, the pro-independence agenda got closely linked to the promotion of democratic ideals, ethnic diversity and human rights.³¹ After 1997, Đukanović embraced this mobilizational frame without calling for independence openly and without adopting the historical, culturalist elements of this opposition frame.

In the early 1990s, however, Serbian nationalism was the dominant political discourse in Montenegro also endorsed by the authorities. As a result, relations between Bosniaks, Croats and Orthodox Montenegrins seriously deteriorated in the early 1990s. Serbian paramilitaries carried out violence including kidnappings and murder of Bosniak civilians especially in the municipality of Pljevlja close to the border with Bosnia which had a 30% Muslim population.³² Although Montenegrin authorities were not directly involved in the atrocities, their inability to defend Bosniaks as Kenneth Morrison explained “made it look as if the Montenegrin authorities were tolerating Serbian extremisms”.³³ Moreover, in 1994 26 members of SDA, a Bosniak party, were arrested by Montenegrin police, 21 of whom were sentenced to 87 years in prison allegedly for planning the forceful secession of Sandžak from the FRY. The trial had an obvious political character as the accused were arrested without a formal charge, and “the police found no weapons in the

³⁰ Bieber, “Montenegrin politics since the disintegration of Yugoslavia,” 20.

³¹ Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 107-112.

³² Attacks on Muslims were not constrained to the villages in Pljevlja. Serbian paramilitaries killed Muslims and a Croat traveling on the Bar to Belgrade train at Strpci station in 1992. Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 120-122.

³³ Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 121.

homes of several of them,” as the Humanitarian Law Center reported. Finally in 1996, the Montenegrin president gave amnesty to the convicted.³⁴

Not only Bosniaks, but also Croats became targets of the official propaganda. Especially before the Montenegrin attack on Dubrovnik, besides the pro-government media, Milo Đukanović the then prime minister and Svetozar Marović who in 1994 became the speaker of the Montenegrin parliament were stirring up anti-Croat sentiments, by making statements such as there was time to “draw the demarcation lines vis-à-vis the Croats once and for all”.³⁵ Due to verbal attacks and intimidation, most of the tiny Croat minority had fled from the Boka Kotorska region where they traditionally resided.³⁶ After the international shock over the barbaric attack on Dubrovnik, president Momir Bulatović and prime minister Đukanović distanced themselves from those that supported the war in the Montenegrin parliament. Their intent to dissociate Montenegro from Milošević’s war policy was reflected also in Bulatović’s support of the Carrington peace plan. Yet, on the whole until 1996 a general “pro-Serbian consensus predominated in Montenegrin politics”.³⁷ Therefore, it represented a major rhetorical turn especially for Montenegrin minorities when Đukanović through forwarding an ethnically inclusive political discourse co-opted them into the Montenegrin political community. This rhetorical strategy paid off for Đukanović as Montenegrin Bosniaks and Albanians overwhelmingly backed him during the 1997 elections and onwards.³⁸

³⁴ Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 123.

³⁵ Statement by Đukanović, cited by Morrison, 92.

³⁶ Kenneth Morrison, 97.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 111.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 125. During the 1997/1998 presidential and general elections and in the subsequent elections, Bosniaks usually supported DPS and its various coalitions more than their ethnic parties representing special minority interests, while Albanians tended to split their votes more or less equally between their ethnic parties and DPS’ coalitions. This trend can be substantiated by parliamentary election data from the municipalities, which was available for the 1998 and 2002 general elections on the website of CEMI (<http://www.cemi.co.me/english/razno/onama.php>). In the two municipalities where Bosniaks constitute a majority – Plav (50%) and Rožaje (82%) – Milo Đukanović’s coalition won the most votes in both years. In

This was the first frame shift in Đukanović's rhetoric, as the previously dominant economic nationalism frame was replaced by the civil society master frame which had been part of the Montenegrin pro-independence opposition's discourse since the fall of communism, as was explained above. Championing Montenegro's economic autonomy was already a challenge to Belgrade, yet did not provoke direct conflict with the Serbian leadership. Protests of the Serbian democratic opposition provided the foundation around which a movement for Montenegrin sovereignty could be mobilized. As Đukanović grabbed this opportunity, he confronted Milošević over the question of democracy not over economic interests. The fact that he openly turned against Milošević in the name of defending democratic principles became his symbolic asset during the subsequent presidential campaign given the unpopularity of the Serbian president among average Montenegrins. Moreover, the democracy frame addressed all people in Montenegro regardless of their ethnic background thus was an ideal tool to construct an ethnically inclusive national identity. Đukanović needed the votes of minorities as self identified Serbs who supported Bulatović and favored staying in a close alliance with Milošević constituted 30% of the population, which is why framing an inclusive identity made sense from his side. Given that ethnic minorities among them Bosniacs, Albanians, Croats,

1998 in Plav, Đukanović's "For a better life" coalition received 52% while SDA representing ethnic Bosniaks 9%. In Rožaje, Đukanović's coalition got 85% and SDA 2%. In 2002 in Plav, Đukanović's "Democratic List for a European Montenegro" attracted 54,1% of the votes cast while the Bosniak Coalition 11%. In Rožaje 68,9% supported Đukanović's group and only 6,7% the Bosniak Coalition. In the Albanian municipality of Ulcinj (where 72% of the population is Albanian) similarly in 1998 the highest share of the votes (37%) was cast for the DPS led "For a better life" coalition. Yet, the Albanians split their support between DPS' coalition and their ethnic parties, as a result out of the five seats that were reserved for Albanians in the Montenegrin parliament Albanian parties won two, while DPS' "For a Better Life" coalition three mandates. During the April 2001 elections the three Albanian parties won around third of the Albanian votes while two thirds were cast for the DPS-SDP coalition. In 2002, the "Democratic List for a European Montenegro" won 35,3% in Ulcinj while the "Democratic Coalition – Albanians Together" received 46,8%. However, at the country level the Albanian coalition gained half of the Albanian votes again, thus two mandates out of the four guaranteed places of Albanians in the parliament. (Before the October 2002 election, the number of guaranteed seats of Albanians was reduced from 5 to 4). Data for the years of 1998 and 2002 was retrieved from CEMI's website. For the year of 2001, information was received from a study by Frantisek Sisteck and

Romanians made up around 25% of the people living in Montenegro, it would have been self-defeating from Đukanović's point of view to alienate minorities through a discourse stressing Montenegrins' Serbian Orthodox ethnic origin. His potential constituency were those that opposed Milošević thus ethnic Montenegrins who made up 40% of the inhabitants and minorities with their 25% population share.³⁹ Thus he had a quite multiethnic target group which is why it made sense to opt for the democracy frame.

Bulatović and the Socialist People's Party (SNP), the party he later founded primarily appealed to ethnic Serbs of Montenegro or more precisely those that asserted their Serbian identity within the Montenegrin population. It should be noted though that ethnic identification of Orthodox Montenegrins was ambiguous since many self-identified Montenegrins felt no contradiction in asserting their parallel Serbian ethnic identity, while others stressed the distinctive nature of their Montenegrin-ness. The share of self-declared Serbs grew considerably between 1991 and 2003, from 57 000 to 202 000 (from 9.34% to 30.01%), while the number of those that claimed to be Montenegrins decreased from 380 000 in 1991 to 273 000 in 2003 (61.86% to 40.64%). During the same period, the total population grew by 57 500.⁴⁰ Population growth was concentrated in seven coastal municipalities, while seven municipalities in the North which are traditionally Serb inhabited areas witnessed a population decline.⁴¹ Therefore, the size of the total population's growth cannot explain how the number of Serbs could have increased four

Bohdana Dimitrovova: "National minorities in Montenegro after the break-up of Yugoslavia," in *Montenegro in Transition*, 165, 171.

³⁹ Data from "2003 Population Census of Montenegro," *Survey Republic of Serbia*, 2003/4, <http://www.pregled-rs.com/article.php?pid=205&id=19255&lang=en>.

⁴⁰ In 1999 in the height of the Kosovo conflict, Montenegro was home to 120,000 refugees from Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo, yet only 45,000 remained in Montenegro by 2001. Out of the tens of thousands of refugees coming from Kosovo, the overwhelming majority were Albanians especially before the NATO bombings. At the same time, approximately 3500 Muslims fled Montenegro in 1999, and only a few hundred returned afterwards. In Marijana Kadić, "Montenegrin Refugees: Back home – By force," *AIM Report*, 7 October 2001; Frantisek Sistek and Bohdana Dimitrovova, "National minorities in Montenegro after the break-up of Yugoslavia," 171.

fold that is by 145 000 persons between 1991 and 2003, even if population growth on the coast was largely due to the arrival of ethnic Serb refugees.⁴²

This radical growth of the Serbian population could be explained by a shift in identities, which was possible because of the malleable nature of Montenegrin identity.⁴³ Before Đukanović split with Belgrade, the two identities were not polarized, thus being a Serb and a Montenegrin were not exclusive categories, and people did not have to choose between them. As Kenneth Morrison noted in his recent book *Montenegro, A Modern History*, until the 1990s most Montenegrins saw no contradiction in defining themselves both as Serb and Montenegrin. The vast majority of Montenegrin citizens declared themselves as Montenegrins during previous censuses (thus between 1971 and 1991) because they were the citizens of the Montenegrin Socialist Republic. However, as Montenegro began to seek independence from Serbia, the difference between Serbian and Montenegrin identities was emphasized, and “the term ‘Montenegrin’ no longer implied a wider Serbian identity”.⁴⁴ This was especially the case as the goals of the two nationalist projects became mutually exclusive, since the eventual aim of Montenegrin nationalist movement was the separation from Serbia. People had to make a choice whether they supported the Montenegrin government’s independence drive. It seemed as if people’s stance on independence determined their choice of identity, and not the other way around.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Data from “2003 Population Census of Montenegro,” *Survey Republic of Serbia*, 2003/4, <http://www.pregled-rs.com/article.php?pid=205&id=19255&lang=en>.

⁴² Although in the summer of 1999 around 100,000 refugees arrived from Kosovo to Montenegro, 60,000 finding safety in the Albanian majority municipality of Ulcinj situated on the Montenegrin coast, most of these Kosovar Albanian refugees returned home after a few months time. In addition, according to census results, between 1991 and 2003 the ethnic Albanian population grew only by 7000 people, from 6,6% to 7,1%. Jovan Nikolaidis, “Multiculturalism in Montenegro and the city of Ulcinj,” in *Managing Multiethnic Local Communities in the Countries of the Former Yugoslavia*, Nenad Dimitrijević, (ed.) (Budapest: LGI, 2000), 455. <http://lgi.osi.hu/publications/books/mmcpxyu/30.PDF>; Additional sources: Federal Statistical Office; “2003 Population Census of Montenegro,” *Survey Republic of Serbia*, 2003/4.

⁴³ International Crisis Group, “Montenegro’s Socialist People’s Party: A Loyal Opposition?” Europe Report N°92, 28 April 2000, 5.

⁴⁴ Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 10-12.

⁴⁵ International Crisis Group, “Montenegro’s Independence Drive,” Europe Report N°169, 7 December 2005, 11.

This explanation seems to be supported by the fact that the census in 2003 was much politicized and according to local analysts it practically became a referendum on Montenegro's future political status.⁴⁶ In 2003 open mobilization for independence had been going on for three years already; as a result identities became highly politicized. As Judy Batt explained, while earlier people in Montenegro had overlapping Serbian/Montenegrin identities "those in favor of independence are now redefining Montenegrin identity as a separate identity, while Montenegrin supporters of the federation with Serbia increasingly insist on their Serbian identity."⁴⁷ Therefore, the government's secessionist policies activated Serbian nationalism and Serbian national identity in Montenegro.

Bulatović's pro-Yugoslav position was built on two key statements. According to the first, Đukanović wanted to destroy Yugoslavia. According to the second, the government was utterly corrupt, and was involved in criminal businesses. Thus he led a negative campaign targeted personally against Đukanović without offering a positive program for the union. These two messages about corruption and Yugoslavia were linked by the logic according to which the prime minister and his government were after breaking up the state because thus they wanted to strengthen their "positions, their privileges and their shady deals."⁴⁸ He claimed that the "so called reformists [...] want to nationalize illegally-acquired assets".⁴⁹ He added that the people "feel the created national wealth is

⁴⁶ Miodrag Vlahović, director of the Center for Regional and Security Studies in Podgorica, told Radio Free Europe: "The census was very politicized. It was understood, actually, as a kind of de facto referendum, since [one of the most confusing aspects] in Montenegrin political life and culture [is that in most] cases, very political attitudes are translated into the understanding of the national identity". In Julia Geshakova, "Montenegro: Census Stirs Political Passions," RFE/RL, 19-11-2003, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1105053.html>.

⁴⁷ Judy Batt, *The Question of Serbia*, Chaillot Paper No. 81, August 2005, cited in Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 192.

⁴⁸ "President renews attack on premier," Tanjug, Belgrade, 30-09-1997, BBC Monitoring, 02-10-1997.

⁴⁹ "Bulatović addresses election rally near Podgorica," excerpts from report by Serbian Radio on 19th of September, BBC Monitoring, 22-09-1997.

being distributed unjustly; the number of those who are undeservingly rich increases while many are unfairly poor”.⁵⁰

Statements about government corruption as will be seen throughout the chapter remained dominant elements of the pro-Yugoslav campaign during the whole ten years mobilization cycle. These statements were used as important arguments against independence thus they constituted an actual anti-independence frame, that of “self-serving nationalist elites”.

Moreover, Bulatović presented Đukanović as an enemy of the Serbs who “threatened” the people’s will to live with Serbia, and wanted to divide the Montenegrin people. At a rally he said “The people have realized that their will to live with Serbia has been threatened and they stand in firm opposition to this”.⁵¹ He further argued,

“It [the government] does not have the right to divide us, because the program of the FR Y [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] is what our people want [...] The government does not have the right to threaten us that [...] what they claim to be the enemy capital of Belgrade will subjugate us. It will not. In this way, the government only wishes to flee from its own responsibility and a confrontation with the truth.”⁵²

The pro-Yugoslav rhetoric was colored by ethno-nationalist themes, as it included “national and folklore elements of the entire Serbdom” and demonstrated xenophobia against minorities. Although usually unionist frames including the Yugoslav frame under the Tito era are anti-nationalist, the pro-Yugoslav idea under the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was framed in ethno-nationalist terms as it rested on the idea that the two people i.e. Serbs and Montenegrins shared the same ethnicity. It was characterized by frequent references to “Blut und Boden”, evoking “the unbreakable unity of Serbia and

⁵⁰ “President attacks rival ruling party faction,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 23-09-1997, BBC Monitoring, 25-09-1997.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² “President says government ignoring will of the people,” Serbian Radio, Belgrade, 22-09-1997, BBC Monitoring 24-09-1997.

Montenegro, of one people and one flesh and blood, or the Serb Montenegro.”⁵³ Bulatović promoted an ethnically exclusive Serbian identity for the Orthodox majority, indicated by his frequent references to the alleged threats minorities posed to Montenegro. According to Bulatović, the first round of the elections “looked more like a referendum of members of various national and ethnic groups than an expression of the citizens’ free will”. He continued by saying that “The obvious support from the Party of Democratic Action, being only a branch of its central body led by [President of the Bosnian Presidency] Alija Izetbegović, or from the Democratic Alliance of Albanians or the Democratic Union of Albanians, whose political priorities are determined by [Kosovo Albanian leader] Ibrahim Rugova, has its political and other price.”⁵⁴ After Đukanović won the elections, a Bulatović supporter commented in *Politika Ekspres* in a similarly xenophobic way: “In Plav they hoisted Albanian and SDA flags. People are afraid that the massacre of the Orthodox population like in ‘41 and ‘44 in Velicija and Murin will be repeated”.⁵⁵ Suggesting that Bosniaks and Albanians of Montenegro wanted to massacre Orthodox Montenegrins practically meant inciting ethnic hatred.

While Đukanović’s faction often courted minorities and sought their support, the pro-Belgrade block presented them usually in a very negative light. Bulatović repeatedly suggested that Muslims and Albanians in Montenegro were mere “satellites” of Alija Izetbegović and Ibrahim Rugova respectively and thus posed a danger to Montenegro.⁵⁶

⁵³ Gordana Borović, “The Orthodox New Year in Podgorica, A Concert with the Patriarch and a General,” *AIM* Podgorica, 15-01-2001.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Philip Schwarm, “Serbian Media War against Đukanović, Slavo from all guns and arms,” *AIM* Belgrade, 23-10-1997.

⁵⁶ “President’s party says “Greater Serbia” pamphlets forged by secret police,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 12-10-1997, BBC Monitoring, 14-10-1997.

Ultimately, Bulatović warned that Đukanović has to pay the price for the support of minorities if he wins, which “would be catastrophic”.⁵⁷

It will be seen throughout the discussion that this was the most likely pattern of interaction of frames; the government’s democracy frame being challenged by claims about corruption charges and connections to organized crime on behalf of the opposition. This was an understandable tactic of the pro-Yugoslav opposition, as on the one hand it would have been difficult to argue against democracy and the respect of human rights. On the other hand, it would have been also challenging for the pro-Yugoslav parties to portray themselves as the true representatives of democracy given their close connection to Milošević. Thus, as they could not challenge the arguments, they tried to undermine the personal credibility of those who presented them. This seemed to be a reasonable strategy given that there was ample evidence indicating that the government was really corrupt and involved in smuggling businesses, (some of which I will mention throughout the chapter).

Furthermore, I should also address here why Serbian ethno-nationalism became an inherent part of the pro-Yugoslav position. Since confrontation between the government and the opposition was prompted by their diametrically opposing attitude towards the Milošević regime, it made sense for the pro-Yugoslav parties to draw on a Serbian ethno-nationalist discourse, which was primarily represented by the Serbian leadership. Bulatović and the party he later created, the SNP was not only rhetorically but also politically linked to Belgrade as they remained Milošević’s allies in the federal assembly. Their position reflected the pro-unionist nationalist tradition in Montenegro, according to which Montenegrins were ethnic Serbs thus there was no need to create a separate state for

⁵⁷ “President warns of dangers of premier becoming head of state,” Serbian Radio, Belgrade, 13-10-1997, BBC Monitoring, 15-10-1997.

Montenegro. As the Serbian writer Dobrica Ćosić summarized, “Montenegrinism is the most Serbian part of the Serbian nation...”⁵⁸ Opposed to them stood those who represented the other strand of Montenegrin nationalism which supported Montenegrin independence in order to protect a separate Montenegrin identity.⁵⁹ Thus these two visions of the Montenegrin nation which had been historically present underpinned the two opposing state building agendas.

The discursive positions of the two opposing sides remained in place until the spring of 1999 when Milošević deprived Montenegro of its federal rights through a constitutional coup d'état. That was the turning point when the Montenegrin leadership's position began to change, and the government started to advocate the idea of independence, which will be explained in detail in a latter section of this chapter.

Turning back to the presidential elections in 1997, citizens were mobilized on an unprecedented scale. During the second round, 75 per cent of registered voters participated, bringing Đukanović to a narrow victory with 50,8 per cent of the votes against 49,2% received by Bulatović. Đukanović achieved the biggest success in municipalities inhabited by minorities and in Cetinje, the historical centre of Montenegro, signaling that his rhetorical strategy aiming at ethnic inclusion managed to attract minorities into his camp.⁶⁰ Bulatović did not easily accept defeat, however. In January 1998, he tried to prevent the inauguration of Đukanović as president by organizing protests against his rival, which were marked by violent clashes. The few thousand demonstrators used automatic

⁵⁸ Dobrica Ćosić, “Uspostavljanje istorskog uma,” *Književne novine*, No. 779-80, July 1989, 3, cited in Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 85.

⁵⁹ This division had historical roots going back to the period right after WWI when the pro-union Bjelasi (the Whites) and the pro-independence Zelenasi (the Greens) fought a bloody civil war over the future status of Montenegro. The green uprising ended with the incorporation of Montenegro into Serbia within the frames of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Morrison, 41-46.

⁶⁰ Dragan Đurić, “Outcome of Presidential Elections in Montenegro, Đukanović president of Montenegro,” *AIM* Podgorica, 21-10-1997.

weapons and explosive devices against the police. As a commentator noted, “the three day protest turned into a classical attempt of coup d’état.”⁶¹

2. Frame shift: from the goal of democracy to the goal of independence

The civil society master frame is replaced by threat based arguments.

General elections, May 1998

The change of political course in Montenegro was praised by Western governments and in the spring of 1998 the USA began to advocate exempting Montenegro from sanctions against the FRY.⁶² Not only the west stood on Đukanović’s side, but also the whole state apparatus including the police was under his control, while enjoyed the support of the media as well. As a news commentary noted, Bulatović almost disappeared from the screen right before the elections signaling the obvious media bias towards the government.⁶³ Đukanović’s DPS entered into a coalition under the name “For a better life” with the Social-democrats (SDP) and the People’s Party (NS).⁶⁴ Bulatović’s wing of DPS renamed itself the Socialist People’s Party (SNP).

Both blocks built their campaign on the same frames as before. Bulatović stressed the importance of sustaining Yugoslavia while presenting corruption charges against the government.⁶⁵ It gave some additional weight to his allegations that just a few months

⁶¹ Draško Đuranović, “Bulatović’s Attempt of a Re-Run of 1989, Usurpation of power by force failed,” *AIM* Podgorica, 15-01-1998.

⁶² Nebojša Redzic, “The West and Montenegro, A Thorn in Milošević’s Side,” *AIM* Podgorica, 24-03-1998.

⁶³ Milka Tadić, “Milošević’s Games with TV,” *AIM* Podgorica, 05-05-1998.

⁶⁴ SDP is a progressive, pro-independence, pro-Western, reformist party, which became a stable partner of DPS in government after 1997. The People’s Party (NS) is a moderate reformist party representing ethnic Serbs who were against Milošević. The party was an ally of Đukanović until the fall of Milošević, yet afterwards it could not tolerate the increasingly open pro-independence stance of the government any longer.

⁶⁵ Marko Vuković, “Bar Chief of Police Arrested by Italian Police, Chasing the Octopus,” *AIM* Podgorica, 10-04-1998. Everybody knew in Montenegro that the republic survived the hard years of sanctions owing to cigarette smuggling. This was not denied by the authorities. Smuggling helped the government top up the budget and to pay salaries and pensions, besides enriching much of the political elite. The smuggling business was protected and organized by the state, which even made its warehouse in the Port of Bar and Zelenika available for that purpose. Moreover, public companies were also involved in these transactions. In Gordana Borović, “Italian-Montenegrin Police Cooperation, Cooperativeness Under Pressure,” *AIM* Podgorica, 14-12-1999.

before parliamentary elections, a high ranking Montenegrin police officer was arrested by the Italian police for providing shelter for the Italian mafia. This instance further reinforced the widespread view among the public that Montenegrin authorities fostered links with the mafia and were involved in smuggling businesses. Such perception were not without basis as the Italian police revealed a chain of smugglers in 1996 and reported about the vast scale of cigarette smuggling, which had been going through Montenegro during the years of sanctions. Montenegrin police were reluctant to cooperate with the Italian authorities until the end of 1996. After the Montenegrin government began its rapprochement to the west, the smuggling business was cut to half of what it was two years before. Thus as during the presidential campaign, Bulatović's main rhetorical strategy was to undermine the credibility of the government by accusing Đukanović of "building an independent Montenegro," an allegation which at the time was denied by Đukanović and by describing the authorities as "a mafia gang involved in smuggling."⁶⁶ In addition, the party kept its anti-minorities stance by making it explicit that "the SNP is not counting on the votes of Moslems and Albanians."⁶⁷

As during the presidential election, Đukanović's coalition campaigned by the democracy frame thus continued its anti- Milošević, reformist rhetoric.⁶⁸ The democratization of Yugoslavia was still their proclaimed goal and not independence.⁶⁹ They emphasized their commitment to sustaining Yugoslavia and to the Serbian people,

⁶⁶ Marko Vuković, "Bar Chief of Police Arrested by Italian Police, Chasing the Octopus," *AIM* Podgorica, 10-04-1998; "Bulatović comments on relations with Montenegrin authorities," Radio B92, 20-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 22-05-1998.

⁶⁷ Seki Radončić, "1998 Elections - Before the Beginning of the Campaign, Who will be the one?" *AIM* Podgorica, 24-04-1998.

⁶⁸ "Montenegrin president says Yugoslav president working against common good," Radio B92, Belgrade, 05-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 06-05-1998.

⁶⁹ "President urges dialogue in Kosovo conflict," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 02-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 05-05-1998.

also trying to appease Serbian voters in Montenegro.⁷⁰ By using the civil society master frame, they not only tried to avoid antagonizing Serbs but to build a maximally large coalition of supporters, including minorities.

The liberals were the only party campaigning for independence. They mostly drew on historical arguments. “Montenegro is 1000 years old, but it has begun to straighten its back and hold up its head after everything that has happened over the last eight decades”. Their leader, Slavko Perović further said, “we are not separatists but Montenegrin patriots [...] who wish to resurrect our old mother Montenegro.” Perović offered what he called “projects of love and Montenegro as the homeland of all people regardless of faith and nationality”.⁷¹ At the same time, similarly to SNP, the liberals also mounted attacks on the government.⁷² They alleged that the government wanted to rig the elections, and threatened a boycott “unless something changes in the next few days.”⁷³ SNP and the Serb People’s Party (NSS) also shared their concern about the legality of the forthcoming elections and SNP repeatedly warned about the danger of election fraud.⁷⁴

The leadership’s position on the statehood issue began to change, however, in the middle of the election campaign, in response to a constitutional conflict with Serbia.

⁷⁰ In his letter sent to opposition demonstrators in Belgrade to express his support, Đukanović again confirmed his commitment to Yugoslavia: “We shall preserve Yugoslavia and democracy through the united efforts of all of the unstoppable progressive forces of this country.” In “Montenegrin president supports Belgrade student protest,” Radio B92, Belgrade, 25-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 26-05-1998; Đukanović repeatedly pointed out that “there were no problems between the Montenegrin and Serbian people.” In “Montenegro: 40,000 people attend pro-president rally in capital,” Radio B92, Belgrade, 27-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 28-05-1998.

⁷¹ “Montenegrin liberal party leader says Yugoslavia choking Serbia and Montenegro,” Montena-fax news agency, 12-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 12-05-1998.

⁷² Seki Radončić, “1998 Elections - Before the Beginning of the Campaign, Who will be the one?” *AIM* Podgorica, 24-04-1998.

⁷³ “Montenegrin opposition party says ruling party ‘preparing rigged elections’,” Montena-fax news agency, Podgorica, 06-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 07-05-1998.

⁷⁴ “Montenegrin party warns of electoral roll irregularities,” Tanjug news agency, Belgrade, 08-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 09-05-1998; “Bulatović doubts fairness of upcoming Montenegrin elections,” Tanjug news agency, 20-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 22-05-1998.

Against the will of the Montenegrin parliament at the height of the election campaign, the federal prime minister, Radoje Kontić was removed from office at the initiative of Milošević and was replaced by Momir Bulatović.⁷⁵ Milošević's moves were interpreted by the Montenegrin leadership as an "attack on constitutional order and on Montenegro's equal status in Yugoslavia".⁷⁶ The new federal government was considered "unconstitutional, illegal, illegitimate and non-Yugoslav", as Montenegro was not a part of it.⁷⁷ This represented a turning point when politicians in the ruling DPS started to hint at the idea of independence.

The Đukanović -bloc stepped up its rhetoric, stressing Montenegro's equal position in the federation while still emphasizing that "we must not break up Yugoslavia which is in the best interest of both peoples and citizens of both republics".⁷⁸ However, the possibility of independence was put forward as a last resort means of self-defense. Marović, speaker of the Montenegrin parliament during a citizen's forum hinted at the option of holding a referendum about independence because, as he said, he "favored an equal Montenegro in the FRY".⁷⁹ Thus as a response to Milošević violating Montenegro's constitutional rights, the idea of independence and the theme of statehood entered DPS' discourse. "They wish to bring Montenegro to its knees and bring that most holy of Montenegrin holies – the Montenegrin statehood – to Milošević as a sacrifice" said Đukanović in a quite elevated tone of language during a campaign rally and added that "no-one will sell or debase

⁷⁵ In the Chamber of the Republics where each republic had 20 votes, the removal of Kontić succeeded with the support of six SNP deputies whose mandates were suspended previously by the Montenegrin parliament. "Montenegrin ruling party refuses to recognize decision to oust federal premier," Radio B92, Belgrade, 18-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 19-05-1998.

⁷⁶ "Montenegrin ruling party refuses to recognize new federal premier designate," Radio B92, Belgrade, 19-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 20-05-1998.

⁷⁷ "President says Montenegro under fiercest federal attack so far," Montenegrin Radio, Podgorica, 21-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 23-05-1998.

⁷⁸ "Montenegrin premier criticizes Milošević's 'convoluted view of politics'," Beta news agency, Belgrade, 01-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 01-05-1998.

⁷⁹ "Montenegro: Parliament speaker pledges to comply with independence calls," Montena-fax news agency, Podgorica, 29-04-1998, BBC Monitoring, 30-04-1998.

Montenegro's statehood".⁸⁰ In line with the dominant political discourse, public opinion about Montenegro's status was changing as well. While in early 1997 still over 65% of the population supported the joint state with Serbia, by mid-1998 this share fell below 50%.⁸¹

The aftermath of the elections

After the elections which brought Đukanović's bloc to another victory, the constitutional stand off with Serbia further escalated. According to the Yugoslav constitution, the newly elected Montenegrin governing coalition was supposed to send its deputies to the Federal Chamber of Republics where each republic had 20 deputies. Yet, the Serbian regime did not let the winning parties to take their seats in the federal parliament, but SNP members could keep their mandates, thereby ensuring that the federal parliament will keep on rubberstamping Milošević's decisions. Consequently, Montenegro lost all meaningful connection with the federal institutions, as Montenegrin seats were filled with Milošević's loyalists.⁸² Initially, Montenegrin authorities tried to come up with a solution to the constitutional deadlock. They put forward their own proposal in August 1999 for a confederative arrangement of two sovereign states, yet in July 2000 the Serbian government eliminated the problem by pushing through its amendments to the federal constitution, which secured the exclusion of the Montenegrin government from federal decision-making.⁸³ After Milošević's "constitutional coup d'état", Montenegrin authorities began to say that Yugoslavia ceased to exist for them. "After these constitutional

⁸⁰ "Montenegrin president says outsiders will not bring Montenegro to its knees," Montena-fax news agency, 25-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 25-05-1998; "President says Montenegro will 'defend federal equality'," Beta news agency, 27-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 30-05-1998.

⁸¹ Poll by Damar Agency. In Draško Đuranović, "1998 Elections: Triumph of the Coalition 'For a Better Life', Milošević's Crushing Defeat," *AIM* Podgorica, 03-06-1998.

⁸² ESI, "Autonomy, Dependency, Security: The Montenegrin Dilemma," 13.

⁸³ The amendments introduced direct election of the federal president and of the federal chambers, which given the size of Montenegro as compared to Serbia, significantly lowered the chances of a Montenegrin becoming the president of Yugoslavia. In addition, Montenegro was reduced to a collection of electoral districts from the status of an equal partner. ESI, "Autonomy, Dependency, Security: The Montenegrin Dilemma," 18-19.

amendments, Yugoslavia is not the same any more. It is not the country designed by the 1992 Constitution any more”, said Marović.⁸⁴ Montenegrin non-recognition of federal order served as a justification later on as to why Montenegrin ruling parties did not participate in the 2000 general elections on the side of the Serbian democratic opposition and why they did not recognize the federal government led by Vojislav Koštunica.

As a response to Belgrade’s violation of the federal constitutional order, Montenegro ceased to recognize federal laws, and started to distance itself from Belgrade through economic policies. As a result, by the time democratic changes took place in Serbia in the fall of 2000, the two republics practically constituted separate economic spaces. Already in 1998, federal authorities stopped channeling revenues from sales and excise taxes to Montenegro that were due to the Montenegrin budget, upon which Montenegro stopped budgetary exchanges with the federation and began to take control of revenue sources in the republic.⁸⁵ In 1999, Montenegro stopped requiring a FRY visa from foreigners entering the republic and began collecting customs duties on its external borders, while Serbia erected customs posts on its border with Montenegro.⁸⁶ After Montenegrin authorities were excluded from the work of the Yugoslav central bank, Montenegro introduced the German mark in November 1999. In retaliation, Belgrade terminated electronic payments with Montenegro. In early 2000, Serbia put Montenegro under a trade blockade except for aluminum and steel. In return, Montenegro assumed full formal control over matters related to foreign trade and customs, and opened its own diplomatic representations in Washington, Brussels, Rome, Sarajevo, Ljubljana, London and Berlin.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Draško Đuranović, “Montenegro After Federal Constitutional Amendments, FRY Exists No More - No Sovereignty Either,” *AIM* Podgorica, 09-07-2000.

⁸⁵ International Crisis Group, “Montenegro: Which Way Next?,” Europe Briefing N°16, 30 November 2000, 3; ICG, “Montenegro: Settling for Independence?,” Europe Report N°107, 28 March 2001, 5.

⁸⁶ ESI, “Autonomy, Dependency, Security: The Montenegrin Dilemma,” 19.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

In addition, as the Kosovo conflict intensified and the Serbian Radical Party joined the government in Serbia, the Serbian government stepped up the army's presence in Montenegro. Until the fall of Milošević, tensions between Montenegro and Serbia steadily escalated and the outbreak of conflict often seemed imminent.⁸⁸ Although Montenegrin authorities tried to keep a neutral stance on the Kosovo conflict, in practice they received tens of thousands of Albanian refugees from Kosovo and in general opposed the Serbian military crack down on the province. In addition to the units of the federal army which were operating on the territory of Montenegro, the Seventh Battalion was formed that was an army unit filled with SNP members. As a result, the fear was rising that Montenegro was on the brink of an armed conflict with Serbia.⁸⁹

The Montenegrin state and media frequently talked about the possible outbreak of conflict.⁹⁰ A media analyst warned, "there is reason to be afraid", as "one could even see this [Milošević's actions] as pure election propaganda, were it not for the dark shadow of death that is hovering over Montenegro, the demon of SM's [Slobodan Milošević] power, the experience of 10 years of post Yugoslav wars."⁹¹ The US promised help to Đukanović in case Milošević provoked violence in Montenegro, which also indicated that the threat of conflict was perceived to be real at the time.⁹² Especially during the NATO bombings, there were some serious stand-offs between the Yugoslav army and the Montenegrin police.⁹³ In the spring of 1999, reports about the presence of Serbian paramilitaries in

⁸⁸ Not only local sources reinforced this perception, but also foreign analysts, such as ICG. See ICG, "Calm Before the Storm", Europe Briefing N°10, 18 August 1999, 4; "Montenegro: In the Shadow of the Volcano," Europe Report N°89, 21 March 2000.

⁸⁹ Kenneth Morrison argued the same. See Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 171.

⁹⁰ ICG, "Montenegro: In the Shadow of the Volcano," Europe Report N°89, 21 March 2000, 13.

⁹¹ Cited from an article of Milan Popović, "Yugoslav president bringing 'shadow of death' to Montenegro," Beta news agency, 20-05-1998, BBC Monitoring, 21-05-1998.

⁹² Draško Đuranović, "Montenegro vs. Serbia after Milošević's Cout d'etat, War Drums," *AIM* Podgorica, 21-05-1998.

⁹³ ESI, "Autonomy, Dependency, Security: The Montenegrin Dilemma," 22.

Montenegro were frequent as well.⁹⁴ Moreover, even after the Kosovo conflict ended, the situation remained tense. Vukasin Maras, head of the Montenegrin police has “reassured Montenegrin citizens that the ministry of interior is prepared to defend in case of a civil war in Montenegro.”⁹⁵ Carl Bildt, the United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Balkans announced that “Serbia and Montenegro, slowly but continuously, are moving towards a conflict”.⁹⁶ In face of this perceived threat, the Montenegrin government built up a police force up to 24 000 members equipped not only with automatic weapons but also with combat vehicles.⁹⁷

The general fear in Montenegro that Milošević might solve problems with the smaller republic through a coup was present all the way up until the federal elections in September 2000, as was apparent from the Montenegrin media. Statements by army commanders also made it clear that the army would intervene if Montenegro went ahead with the referendum on independence.⁹⁸ While the fear of an approaching war with the Yugoslav army was intensifying, the ethnic Serbian population in the northern part of Montenegro also mobilized. In September 1999 the northern “tribes” – as they called themselves – organized gatherings in a protest against the government’s pro-independence moves.⁹⁹ Their rhetoric threatened the use of force and expressed an ethnically exclusive common identity intolerant towards other nationalities. The protestors warned that “under

⁹⁴ There were sporadic security incidents such as in December 1999 when the Yugoslav military seized the Podgorica airport for a short time, or in February 2000 when the army established a checkpoint on the Montenegrin-Albanian border, after Montenegro opened a crossing without the consent of federal authorities. In ESI, “Autonomy, Dependency, Security: The Montenegrin Dilemma,” 22. News commentators at the time seriously feared an approaching armed conflict, see: Goran Vujović, “Army Barriers on Montenegrin Border, War Trumpets”, *AIM* Podgorica, 02-03-2000.

⁹⁵ ICG, “Montenegro Briefing: Calm Before the Storm,” 4.

⁹⁶ Draško Đuranović, “Montenegro and the International Community, Ringing the Alarm,” *AIM* Podgorica, 15-03-2000.

⁹⁷ Draško Đuranović, “Montenegro Threatened by a Coup, How to remain in the Saddle,” *AIM* Podgorica, 08-04-1999.

⁹⁸ Goran Vujović, “Army of Yugoslavia and Montenegro, Military Units on the Alert, *AIM* Podgorica,” 15-07-2000.

⁹⁹ As the author of an AIM analysis explained these gatherings were formally organized and chaired by local, semi-anonymous so called “tribal committees”. Zoran Radulović, “‘People’s Assemblies’ In Montenegro, Tribal Threats,” *AIM* Podgorica, 06-09-1999.

no condition shall we accept separation of Montenegro from Yugoslavia, the community of states of the Serb people which we inseparably belong to ethnically, historically and spiritually". The demonstration was also a show of force as it was proclaimed that "the call for sovereign Montenegro is the same as a call to take up arms". Demonstrators in Zeta stated that they would not "give up on what their ancestors dreamt of for centuries: that all the Serbs would unite in a single state". They also sent a clear message to the non-Orthodox population of Montenegro: "We shall not allow that the decisive role in decision-making about our state be given to those against whom our ancestors have fought for freedom for centuries".¹⁰⁰

Indeed, not only the protestors but also the leader of SNP, Momir Bulatović, took on a belligerent tone after the idea of a referendum began to be floated by the government. He plainly declared that a referendum would mean war.¹⁰¹ Thus in addition to perceptions of external threat emanating from Serbia, perceptions of internal threat had also emerged connected to the presence of the Serbian minority which had obvious political links to Milošević. However, Đukanović maintained the civic idea of the Montenegrin state and did not frame this conflict in ethnic terms, but blamed the allies of Milošević and the SNP in particular for the gatherings. He talked about the participants in the tribal meetings as "some people" and not as "Serbs". He said "The organizers are still blindly loyal to Mr. Milošević. [...] This evidently shows that they [the SNP] never really had a policy of their own and that by protecting Slobodan Milošević they have broken their ties with Montenegro. [...] Second, such behavior indicates that these people are prepared to provoke a conflict, a war in Montenegro, just for the sake of Mr. Milošević's and their own

¹⁰⁰ Cited from Zoran Radulović, "'People's Assemblies' In Montenegro, Tribal Threats", *AIM* Podgorica, 06-09-1999.

¹⁰¹ Esad Kočan, "Future of Montenegro in FRY, Who Forgot Milošević?" *AIM* Podgorica, 17-01-2000.

power.”¹⁰² The government was continuously emphasizing that their struggle was against Milošević and not against the people of Serbia and Montenegro.¹⁰³ As Morrison noted, “Đukanović made broad appeals intended to bridge the ever-widening divisions within Montenegrin society” including addressing ethnic Serbs through utilizing “the rhetoric of pan-Serbian and Yugoslav sentiment”.¹⁰⁴

The rhetoric of the Montenegrin government was also changing in the face of a growing threat. The previous argument according to which the lack of democracy in Serbia was forcing Montenegro to pursue its own ways changed into a claim which said that the threat of Serbian aggression pushes Montenegro to defend itself by moving towards independence. An advisor of the Montenegrin president also stressed that while “defending ourselves from manifold aggressions and [the] negative influence on Montenegro from Belgrade, we are forced to withdraw a part of the sovereignty we have transferred on the federal state”.¹⁰⁵ In the summer of 1999, the government began to accelerate its talk of independence and began to float the idea of a referendum.¹⁰⁶

Yet, even though perceptions of internal threat emerged in Montenegro, this threat was not associated with Montenegrin Serbs in general but with particular groups within the Serbian community, as was argued above. Consequently, Montenegrin collective identity had not come to be framed in a way which would have excluded ethnic Serbs from the nation. Importantly, before the fall of Milošević, not all the parties representing self-identified Serbs were Milošević’s allies. The People’s Party (NS) which stressed the

¹⁰² “President says Milošević possibly trying to destroy federation,” Radio Montenegro, BBC Monitoring, 04-09-1999.

¹⁰³ Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 171.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁰⁵ Draško Đuranović, “Montenegro and the International Community, Ringing the Alarm,” *AIM* Podgorica, 15-03-2000.

¹⁰⁶ AP, 06-08-1999, cited in ICG, “Montenegro Briefing: Calm Before the Storm,” Europe Briefing N°10, 18-08-1999.

Serbian identity of Montenegro and advocated sustaining Yugoslavia, participated in the DPS led government until Milošević was ousted in 2000. Although in light of its stance on the statehood issue NS should have been a partner of SNP, because its opposition to Milošević it became an ally of DPS. This could happen because before 2000 not only the parties' position on Montenegrin independence structured the political sphere but more so their attitude towards Milošević and democratization.¹⁰⁷ Consequently, the exclusion of Serbs on ethnic basis from the national community did not happen regardless that some of their representatives i.e. the SNP had political connections with Belgrade. The fact that the government promoted a civic identity implied that the political stand off between them and the pro- Milošević opposition was not framed in ethnic terms. As the ruling parties framed this internal political conflict, the main division was not between Montenegrins and Serbs in Montenegro but between those that opposed and those that supported the Milošević regime.

Furthermore, it is important to note that Montenegrin elites began to seek outright independence only after Milošević was ousted. Until Milošević's fall, the possibility of a referendum was not seriously considered and the official Montenegrin rhetoric remained relatively moderate as compared to later periods. This ambiguous behavior made sense considering that independence was supported only by half of the population and more importantly, the international community clearly opposed Montenegrin secession.¹⁰⁸ Political and financial support of the EU and USA for Montenegro was conditioned on Montenegro not seeking full independence. The EU and the US did not mind Montenegro building up a quasi state; on the contrary, they granted substantial financial help to the

¹⁰⁷ Florian Bieber, "Montenegrin politics since the disintegration of Yugoslavia," 34.

¹⁰⁸ Zoran Radulović, "Montenegrin Public Opinion at a Turning Point, Nobody Believes in the Federation," *AIM* Podgorica, 24-09-1999.

Montenegrin government practically bringing Montenegro to the brink of having an independent state. Yet, they clearly did not approve of Montenegro moving towards formal independence. It was believed in international circles that it would be easier to keep Kosovo in the federation if Montenegro stayed as well.¹⁰⁹ Lastly, the chance of an armed conflict fostered moderation on the Montenegrin side. Thus the perceived threat coupled with the absence of international support for secession was the most important factor that kept the Montenegrin leadership under control. This seemed to be the case given that when the threat was gone, Montenegrin demands radicalized. At the same time, the two other factors, the conditionality of international support and the deeply divided public opinion remained the same after Milošević's fall.¹¹⁰

3. Frame shift: after the fall of Milošević

Frame shift of the government: After the fall of Milošević, the government's main goal becomes independence. As the threat posed by Milošević is gone, ruling parties switch back to the democracy frame. At the same time, their rhetoric turns increasingly against Serbia.

Frame shift of SNP: While their goal stays the same (sustaining Yugoslavia), they present new arguments, which refer to security concerns. At the same time, they shift towards a pro-European stand. In addition, ethno-nationalist themes and corruption charges against the government remain part of their discourse.

Frame shift of the liberals: Change their emphasis from the goal of independence to the goal of a clean state.

As mentioned earlier, Montenegrin claims for independence ironically escalated only after the regime change in Serbia, whereas they had been relatively moderate while

¹⁰⁹ Milka Tadić, "Initiative on Alliance of Sovereign States of Serbia and Montenegro, In the Vicious Triangle," *AIM* Podgorica, 03-01-1998.

¹¹⁰ The share of those who supported an independent Montenegro was almost the same right after the ousting of Milošević as in April 2000 when the previous survey was conducted. Besides the sympathizers of SDP and LSCG, more than half of DPS voters supported the referendum and independence (57.3% wished to have a referendum on independence, and 54.3 per cent supported Montenegrin sovereignty). The majority of SNP followers (54.8%) wanted to preserve Yugoslavia in its present form and a minority (28%) promoted the idea of a unitary state. Besides them, NS sympathizers were also against the referendum and independence. These divisions also reflected ethnic divides further supporting the claim that ethnic affiliation and position on independence neatly overlapped. While most Montenegrins advocated the referendum and sovereignty, the majority of Serbs were for the preservation of FRY or a unitary state and against the referendum. Source: Poll of CEDEM, Cited by Zoran Radulović, "Public Opinion in Montenegro, Majority in Favor of Referendum and International Recognition," *AIM* Podgorica, 01-11-2000.

Milošević was still in power. Considering that during the Milošević era seeking Montenegrin state sovereignty was primarily justified by arguments referring to the undemocratic nature of the Serbian establishment, Montenegrin leaders had to explain why Montenegro could not live with a democratic Serbia. As Nenad Dimitrijević pointed out, the answer lay in the constitutional illegitimacy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was the fundamental argument made by Montenegrin leaders. As Svetozar Marović explained, “Yugoslavia, as it was created in 1992, does not exist anymore, because it was destroyed in a constitutional coup d’état”, which was why Montenegro and Serbia should be both recognized as “states on their own”. They further argued that mutual relations could be redefined only after this condition is fulfilled in a democratic way.¹¹¹ This was the Montenegrin explanation as to why with the fall of Milošević and the beginning of democratic transition in Serbia, the issue of democracy became irrelevant at the level of Yugoslavia, and Montenegrin independence was necessary.¹¹² According to this logic, due to Milošević’s violation of the federal constitution, the federation was set on a non-democratic foundation, i.e. on a constitution which was forced on Montenegro in an illegal way disrespecting the smaller republic’s constitutional equality. Therefore, before the federation could be reconstituted in a democratic manner, first it had to be dissolved into its republican entities.

Koštica’s government was not pleased with the Montenegrin offer of a confederation of two independent states, as the Serbian side wanted to preserve a minimum degree of common statehood. Koštica responded with a plan for a “functional federation” which would have granted the republics the right to have their own army and

¹¹¹ “Montenegrin interests will not be forfeited, Speaker,” TV Crna Gora, Podgorica, 22-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 23-03-2001.

¹¹² Nenad Dimitrijević, “The Paradoxes of Constitutional Continuity in the Context of Contested Statehood,” [Paper for inner distribution], CEU, Budapest, Hungary, 4 April 2001, 282.

diplomatic relations.¹¹³ While the ruling DPS seemingly was trying to forge an agreement with the new government in Belgrade, in practice it showed little willingness for compromise, and at home was preparing the ground for a referendum on independence. DPS proposed its coalition partners to hold early elections after which the referendum on independence could be organized.¹¹⁴ By January 2001 when it was decided that early elections will be held in April, the state issue had become the most important topic of political discussions. It structured the political field along a pro-independence and a pro-Yugoslav divide, which is why some analysts called the elections a “mini referendum”.¹¹⁵ Altogether it can be concluded that the idea of independence entered the government’s discourse in the context of self-defense in response to Milošević’s attack on Yugoslavia’s constitutional order and in response to the growing fear of a military conflict. Paradoxically, Montenegrins began to advocate outright independence only after the threat had disappeared and the political pressure stemming from Serbia had decreased considerably. The timing of this turn could be best explained by the fact that after the regime change in Serbia promoting independence openly did not involve the risk of a military conflict any longer.

General elections, April 2001

While the issue of democracy was the main theme of the ruling parties during previous elections, this time independence became the most important goal, indicating a change in their position. At the same time, they kept relying on the democracy frame and

¹¹³ Roksanda Ninčić, “Serbia and Montenegro, Platform vs. Platform,” *AIM* Belgrade, 13-01-2001; Montenegrin authorities rejected the platform using a very harsh tone. The vice president of SDP, DPS’ coalition partner claimed that Koštunica wanted to “abolish Montenegro”, offered a “unitary state” and represented the “dreams of Greater Serbia”. Milka Tadić Mijović, “Montenegrin Reactions to Koštunica’s Offer, No Foundation for a Dialogue,” *AIM* Podgorica, 14-01-2001.

¹¹⁴ Dragoljub Vuković, “Montenegro About to Resolve a Dilemma, Democratic Party of Socialists Wants the Elections,” *AIM* Podgorica, 09-01-2001.

¹¹⁵ Draško Đuranović, “Montenegro Faced with a Decision, Elections – Yes, Referendum – Maybe,” *AIM* Podgorica, 25-01-2001.

promoted the idea of a multi-ethnic Montenegro. Yet, the status issue became the most decisive, also defining coalition formation. The anti- Milošević but pro-Serbian NS, which used to be an ally of DPS, this time joined the pro-Yugoslav coalition led by SNP, because the governing coalition embraced the idea of independence and because the question of Montenegro's statehood was the most important topic in these elections.¹¹⁶ These were the first elections which were completely dominated by the statehood issue reflected also by the slogans of the two competing blocks. Now that Milošević was gone, the parties could openly campaign for an independent Montenegro. While SNP named its coalition "Together for Yugoslavia", DPS campaigned with the slogan "Victory for Montenegro".¹¹⁷ The pro-independence government promised that it will call a referendum at the first working session of the parliament. From this moment on, for a whole year the theme of independence overshadowed all other issues in Montenegro. The republic began to live under the constant excitement of the ever approaching referendum. Until the signing of the Belgrade agreement in March 2002 it seemed that the plebiscite could be held at any time, which, however, did not happen until May 2006.

The pro-Yugoslav block, as always, kept campaigning for Yugoslavia. Yet, this time they faced a new situation as for the first time they had to withstand a serious mobilization for independence. Consequently, the frames supporting their position changed considerably while their goals remained the same: keeping Montenegro in Yugoslavia and toppling the current leadership. While during previous elections they mostly focused on efforts to undermine the government's credibility without providing reasons as to why preserving Yugoslavia was desirable, this time they also presented arguments against independence by mostly referring to security threats. They did not fail to emphasize that

¹¹⁶ ICG, "Time to Decide: A Pre-election Briefing Paper," Europe Briefing N°18, 18 April 2001, 2.

independence might lead to instability. The SNP presented the option of preserving the common state with Serbia as a guarantee for a “normal, peaceful life” in contrast to choosing the “way towards secession” marked by “danger and unrest.”¹¹⁸ They further stressed that, since Serbia had become democratic, there was no reason to secede, and also drew attention to the negative consequences citizens could experience in their everyday life after raising “hard barriers” with Serbia.¹¹⁹ Simultaneously, as always they kept accusing the authorities of involvement in organized crime and sustained their hostile attitude towards minorities.

Moreover, they frequently pointed out that the international community also did not support independence out of fear of potential instability. As SNP began to echo security concerns voiced by western powers, primarily the EU, it increasingly started to communicate a pro-European message. The pro-Yugoslav parties began to stress that Montenegro as a part of Yugoslavia needed to join Europe, which was a new element in their rhetoric. Voicing pro-European arguments constituted a frame shift, which was somewhat surprising considering that not more than a year ago they were allied with Milošević.¹²⁰ Yet, this change in their discourse made sense given that the EU opposed Montenegrin independence, which added force to the coalition’s arguments for sustaining Yugoslavia.¹²¹ SNP representatives drew attention to the potential spill-over effects, which might trigger the secession of Kosovo, the Bosnian Serb Republic, and the Croatian entity

¹¹⁷ “Montenegro: opposition party announces slogans for April election,” Tanjug news agency, Belgrade, 27-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 27-03-2001.

¹¹⁸ “Main ruling coalition party kicks off its election campaign,” Radio B92, Belgrade, 27-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 28-03-2001; They argued that independence could provoke a civil war as it would “divide Montenegro into tribes and clans in the north and south” since “the majority of Orthodox people do not support an independent Montenegro.” In “Independent Montenegro to spell new crisis, opposition party says,” SRNA news agency, Bijeljina, 08-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 08-04-2001.

¹¹⁹ “Montenegrin opposition leader warns that independence could divide country,” SRNA news agency, Bijeljina, 28-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 29-03-2001; ICG, “Time to Decide: A Pre-election Briefing Paper”, Europe Briefing N° 18, 18 April 2001, 4.

¹²⁰ “Opposition, former ruling party agree to enter election coalition,” Radio B92, Belgrade, 24-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 26-03-2001.

of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is why the “geostrategic interest of world powers was to preserve Yugoslavia”.¹²² Their argument was strengthened by international declarations, such as the one presented by the Contact Group during the election campaign, which clearly said that great powers – USA, Russia, France, Italy, Germany and Great Britain – supported “a democratic Montenegro within democratic Yugoslavia”.¹²³ SNP also stressed that receiving financial aid from the EU required sustaining the federation.¹²⁴

At the same time, by adopting a European stance, SNP might have hoped to distance itself from Milošević’s legacy. The SNP leadership probably thought that its electoral chances were weakened by the fact that it had fostered a close alliance with Milošević until his extradition. This happened in April 2001, at the height of the election campaign. The pro-independence bloc never missed a chance to remind voters of SNP’s close ties with the former president.¹²⁵ Recognizing this handicap, Momir Bulatović, the most faithful supporter of Milošević was pushed out of SNP in January 2001, after which he founded his own party, the People’s Socialist Party (NSS).

Thus as the pro-Yugoslav coalition recognized the rhetorical opportunity hidden in the fact that they shared the same goals with the EU, it gradually embraced a pro-European agenda, which had further consequences. This frame shift towards a “European” rhetoric created an irresolvable tension within the pro-Yugoslav discursive position as the ideals promoted by the EU were in a sharp contrast with the xenophobic ethnic nationalism of the

¹²¹ According to a poll carried out a year later, 80% of all Montenegrins were for EU membership, while 74,8% of SNP voters also supported it. Source: Center for Democracy and Human Rights, “Political Opinion in Montenegro 2002,” April 2002, 10-11, http://www.cedem.co.me/opolls/images/CEDEM_april02_eng.pdf.

¹²² “Independent Montenegro to spell new crisis, opposition party says,” SRNA news agency, Bijeljina, 08-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 08-04-2001.

¹²³ “Vijesti: Contact Group discusses Serbia-Montenegro relations,” MNNNews-Online, Podgorica, 12-04-2001, in “Montenegrin press review for Thursday,” BBC Monitoring, 12-04-2001.

¹²⁴ “Montenegrin president says independence ‘half step away’,” Radio B92, Belgrade, 14-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 14-04-2001.

¹²⁵ “Serbian agency says future of Montenegro to be decided in referendum Beta news agency,” BBC Monitoring, 05-04-2001.

coalition's base. This tension by late 2002 motivated part of the leadership to try to endow the coalition with a civic identity. The attempt failed however, which will be explained in a latter section in this chapter.

The liberals also changed their arguments, and tried to run a campaign based on a cleaner and better government, which might be explained by the difficulty to distinguish themselves from the government solely by campaigning for independence.¹²⁶ Together with SNP, they questioned the fairness of the elections given that “the police and the media were under the control of the authorities”.¹²⁷ LSCG also doubted the reliability of opinion polls, which showed the lead of the governing coalition parties arguing that “the polls are a method of maintaining a one-party system”.¹²⁸ Yet, the Liberals campaigned vehemently against both coalitions, and reminded people of the fact that the present leaders of both blocks including Bulatović, Marović and Đukanović used to be allies of Milošević and “exponents of the militant greater Serbian nationalism”.¹²⁹

As was mentioned before, DPS adopted a clear pro-independence stance after the fall of Milošević, which meant a shift in their position. Yet, the arguments they presented still relied heavily on the civil society master frame.¹³⁰ Thus they kept talking about the nation as the people and the citizens of Montenegro, upholding the civic idea of national identity. Đukanović included Serbs also into his notion of the nation, even though his main enemies were those that claimed to represent the interests of self-proclaimed Serbs in Montenegro. Yet, while he attacked SNP and Serbia in particular in his speeches, he still

¹²⁶ ICG, “Montenegro’s Local Elections: Testing the National Temperature,” Europe Briefing N° 11, 26 May 2000, 12.

¹²⁷ “Montenegrin opposition leader says elections important but not crucial,” Montena-fax news agency, Podgorica, 22-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 22-04-2001.

¹²⁸ “Montenegro: opinion poll not reliable means of testing views – official,” TV Crna Gora, Podgorica, 29-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 29-03-2001.

¹²⁹ “Pro-independence party calls new Montenegro TV documentary ‘fabrication’,” Radio Montenegro, Podgorica, 09-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 09-04-2001.

¹³⁰ ICG, “Montenegro: Settling for Independence?” Europe Report N° 107, 28 March 2001, 21.

addressed Montenegrin Serbs as part of the Montenegrin people. Although at a rally he accused leaders of the opposition “Coalition for Yugoslavia” of being “the bad pupils of the political teachers from Belgrade”, he also said that “Montenegrins, Serbs and Muslims will together favor a democratic and multiethnic Montenegro, because this is not an issue of religious or national affiliation, but of common sense and morality”.¹³¹

The main argument of the “Victory for Montenegro” coalition for independence was that an independent Montenegro was the condition of carrying out reforms and joining Europe. The coalition’s campaign was dominated by themes such as European development, modernization, reforms, democracy and European integration. They repeatedly argued, however, that in order to achieve these goals Montenegro needed to become sovereign.¹³² According to their argument, Montenegro’s democratization required independence because staying with Serbia meant choosing “what happened two years ago [NATO bombings] when an erroneous policy led them [the people of Montenegro] to the brink of biological annihilation.” Framing independence in such a way suggested that fundamentally nothing has changed in Serbia and the new Yugoslav government continued the policies that provoked the NATO bombings.¹³³ Even if this claim had little truth to it, Koštunica was indeed focusing very much on trying to keep Kosovo within the federation.¹³⁴ According to the Montenegrin government, however, Kosovo was lost, and it “will be just an enormous waste of energy” to continue fighting for it. On such grounds

¹³¹ “Multiethnicity a fundamental basis of the Montenegrin state, president says,” SRNA news agency, 12-04-2001, BBC Monitoring.

¹³² “Montenegro set to join EU in 2010 – president,” Radio Montenegro, Podgorica, 15-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 15-04-2001; “Our goal is to develop democracy and the economy in an independent Montenegro” [...] “Đukanović also said that Predrag Bulatović, chairman of the Socialist People’s Party SNP, and the other leaders of the Together for Yugoslavia coalition, could hardly lead Montenegro on the road to democracy and that his coalition, Victory is Montenegro’s, is the one which will secure independence and prosperity for Montenegro.” Quote from: “Montenegro’s Đukanović believes coalition will win 39 seats in elections,” Radio Belgrade, 16-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 16-04-2001.

¹³³ “Montenegrin press review for Thursday 22 March,” MNNNews-Online, Podgorica, BBC Monitoring, 22-03-2001.

¹³⁴ “Montenegrin leader explains independence drive, confident of election victory Radio B92,” Belgrade, 17-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 19-04-2001.

they claimed that “the nationalists in Belgrade whose circles have not changed” have not given up on their Greater Serbian dreams. According to this reasoning, nothing has changed fundamentally in Serbia, which was the argument as to why it was in Montenegro’s best interest to step out of the federation.¹³⁵ The need for independence was presented to the international community also in this context namely, that “Montenegro will not be a victim of any unresolved regional problem [Kosovo]”.¹³⁶ It should be noted though that while the Montenegrin government tried to present Serbian leaders as ardent nationalists, both Koštunica and Đinđić emphasized that if Montenegrins opt for secession, their decision will be respected. Their stance was moderate and pragmatic, even if they favored sustaining the joint state.¹³⁷

Yet, at this point, independence was still presented in the context of creating a confederation, a union of two independent, internationally recognized states. Svetozar Marović stressed that “the future of Serbia and Montenegro lay in an alliance and not separation”.¹³⁸ The governing coalition represented a less radical option as compared to the Liberal Alliance, which conditioned its pre-election support for the government on dropping the idea of any sort of future union with Serbia. Consequently, LSCG ran alone during these elections.¹³⁹

As was noted before, the pro-Yugoslav block kept advocating an ethnically exclusive Montenegrin identity confined to the orthodox population. SNP and its allies

¹³⁵ “Montenegrin deputy premier: no border changes in Balkans,” BH Press news agency, Sarajevo, 24-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 24-03-2001.

¹³⁶ “President urges resolution of Kosovo’s status,” Radio Montenegro, Podgorica, 27-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 29-03-2001.

¹³⁷ “Yugoslav leader urges respect for Montenegrin people’s independence stand,” Tanjug, Belgrade, 08-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 08-04-2001.

¹³⁸ “Montenegrin Speaker says future of Serbia, Montenegro lies in alliance,” Montena-fax news agency, Podgorica, 11-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 11-04-2001.

¹³⁹ ICG, “Time to Decide: A Pre-election Briefing Paper,” Europe Briefing N°18, 18 April 2001, 2.

stressed the importance of ethnic belonging while arguing against independence and warned minorities from daring to vote for independence. Božović chairman of SNP threatened Muslims in Montenegro by saying that “If Serbia and Montenegro break apart, cutting the living tissue of the Serbian people [...] you, gentlemen Muslims, must unfortunately accept the fact that you will be selected as the ones to blame.”¹⁴⁰ At their election rallies nationalistic songs could be heard such as “We shall slaughter 300 Muslims one day.”¹⁴¹ Although such radical lines came from SNP fringe groups thus not from national leaders, these reflected the general anti-minority, xenophobic attitude of the party and its power base.

The SNP not only threatened minorities but warned the public that “ethnic minorities could decide the future of Montenegro”. This claim drew on opinion polls, which showed that minorities who made up a quarter of Montenegro’s population would vote almost unanimously for Montenegrin independence, thus tipping the scale in favor of secession. The People’s Party went as far as suggesting that minorities should be excluded from voting if a referendum be held. The parties promoting the joint state also complained that Montenegrins living in Serbia will not be allowed to vote, only Montenegrin residents.¹⁴²

The mobilization against minorities was supported by the pro-Yugoslav media, which spread rumors, according to which KLA was active in Montenegro, apparently trying to provoke animosity between the orthodox majority and the Albanian population. The pro-Yugoslav parties immediately used the opportunity to forward their message that

¹⁴⁰ “Bosnian news agency says Montenegrin coalition threatening local Muslims,” BH Press news agency, Sarajevo, 08-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 08-04-2001.

¹⁴¹ “Montenegro: Pro-Yugoslav coalition supporters allegedly sing anti-Muslim songs at rally,” Montena-fax news agency, Podgorica, 14-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 14-04-2001.

¹⁴² Esad Kočan, “Hate Speech as an Election Message, Children of a Lesser God,” *AIM* Podgorica, 27-02-2001.

“only union with Serbia can save Montenegro” which needs to protect itself from Albanian extremists.¹⁴³

The ruling coalition vehemently denied that KLA was present in Montenegro and accused Belgrade and SNP of “fomenting racial and religious hatred in perfidious way,” and thus trying to destabilize Montenegro in the height of the election campaign.¹⁴⁴ The opposition’s negative discourse about minorities was in sharp contrast with the government’s rhetoric. The prime minister repeatedly portrayed Montenegro’s multiethnic character as a value, which had to be considered while settling Montenegro’s status.¹⁴⁵ Representatives of the government often talked about the need to protect minorities in Montenegro and to ensure the “equal status for members of minority nations.”¹⁴⁶ Moreover, respect for minorities was presented as an inherent part of Montenegrin identity deeply rooted in Montenegro’s historical legacy. Đukanović stressed: “We shall not allow them [leaders of the “Together for Yugoslavia” coalition] to deal a blow to the equality of minorities, because that would be a blow to the foundations of the Montenegro bequeathed to us by Marko Miljanov 19th century Montenegrin military commander and writer, the Petrović dynasty and all our ancestors.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Zoran Radulović, “Is Kosovo Liberation Army Present in Montenegro? Waking a Sleeping Lion,” *AIM* Podgorica, 21-03-2001. SNP repeatedly drew attention to the Albanian danger. Pedrag Bulatović warned that “Albanian terrorist organizations, tasked to provoke crises, exist” in Montenegro, “and it is, therefore, rightly feared that something could happen after the election or on the eve of a potential referendum in the predominantly Albanian border areas of Montenegro”. In “Montenegrin Albanian official rules out clashes spreading to Montenegro,” Tanjug news agency, Belgrade, 23-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 23-03-2001; “Opposition party accuses leaders of ignoring Albanian danger,” SRNA news agency, Bijeljina, 21-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 23-03-2001.

¹⁴⁴ “Information minister accuses YU Info TV of trying to destabilize Montenegro,” SRNA news agency, Bijeljina, 20-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 22-03-2001.

¹⁴⁵ “Montenegrin press review for Thursday 22 March,” MNNews-Online, Podgorica, BBC Monitoring, 22-03-2001.

¹⁴⁶ “Government minority rights body calls for interethnic tolerance,” Radio Montenegro, Podgorica, 21-03-2001, BBC Monitoring, 24-03-2001.

¹⁴⁷ “Multiethnicity a fundamental basis of the Montenegrin state, president says,” SRNA news agency, Bijeljina, 12-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 12-04-2001; He also hailed that this year Orthodox and Catholic Christmas fall on the same day, which in his opinion represented “a symbol of unity, harmony and interethnic tolerance, which have been Montenegro’s characteristic for centuries and which even today make it stand out in the region...” In “Montenegrin president calls for interethnic tolerance in his Easter message,” Montena-fax news agency, Podgorica, 14-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 14-04-2001.

The elections brought about the victory of the pro-independence forces granting them a total 52.1%, if the votes of the “Victory for Montenegro” coalition, the LSCG, and the Albanian parties are added together.¹⁴⁸ This result quite accurately reflected the polarization of Montenegrin society divided by the status issue as election results mirrored public opinion on independence. According to an opinion poll conducted by CEDEM and Damar agency in April 2001, 49,3% of the population was for independence, while 39,5% against.¹⁴⁹ This ratio roughly matched the elections results, as the share of independence supporters corresponded to the percentage of votes gained by pro-independence parties, while the share of votes received by the pro-Yugoslav block almost equaled the ratio of the population opposing independence.

This level of popular support for independence was a result of political developments of the previous few years. Public opinion had been slowly moving in the direction of independence since 1997.¹⁵⁰ During the referendum held in March 1992, 95.4% of the population supported staying in the FRY, (although as was mentioned earlier at a 66.04% turn out rate due to the boycott of national minorities). In early 1997 still over 65% of the population supported the joint state. It seems that public attitudes began to change in 1997, as the proportion of those that favored staying in the current federation declined to 50% by mid-1998 and fell further in 1999, after which it stabilized around 40%.¹⁵¹

In the meantime, the numbers of independence-supporters started to grow as well. In December 1999 if voters had a choice between staying in the union and independence,

¹⁴⁸ The Victory for Montenegro coalition seized 42% of the votes, the Liberals 7.9% and the two Albanian parties together got 2.2%. The Together for Yugoslavia coalition received 40.6%.

¹⁴⁹ “Poll suggests victory for pro-independence bloc in Montenegro elections,” Beta news agency, Belgrade, 05-04-2001, BBC Monitoring, 05-04-2001.

¹⁵⁰ ICG, “Montenegro: Which Way Next?” Europe Briefing N°16, 30 November 2000, 7.

¹⁵¹ Poll by Damar Agency. In Draško Đuranović, “1998 Elections: Triumph of the Coalition ‘For a Better Life’, Milošević’s Crushing Defeat,” *AIM* Podgorica, 03-06-1998.

45.4% would have been for, 37 against independence (17.6 were undecided). The proportion of independence supporters peaked in January 2001 at 49.8 per cent, while 39.8 per cent was against independence.¹⁵² This suggests that while there was a momentum in favor of independence after 1997 until early 2001, from then on it somewhat weakened. Between 2001 and the referendum in 2006, public support for independence stabilized at a level fluctuating between 40% and 50%. This was not sufficient to produce a convincing majority at a referendum. Yet, it was enough to grant a slight advantage to pro-independence forces, which proved to be sufficient to keep them in power for more than a decade. This relatively equal division of preferences within the population remained in place until 2006.

4. Frame shift: the EU intervenes

Due to the EU's intervention, the pro-independence position will be framed by economic arguments, replacing the democracy frame.

After the elections: negotiating the Belgrade Agreement (April 2001-March 2002)

Referring to the narrow margin of victory of the pro-independence parties, the referendum was postponed by the government until April 2002. The “Victory for Montenegro” coalition formed a government with the support of the Liberal Alliance, which joined the government on the condition that rules of the eventual referendum would be established soon.¹⁵³ In the meantime Belgrade began to voice its frustration over the unresolved constitutional situation. The ruling DOS coalition in Serbia which ousted Milošević had to work together with the former allies of Milošević, i.e. with SNP at the federal level, which proved to be difficult. SNP opposed cooperation with the Hague Tribunal and refused to extradite Milošević to The Hague. In the end, the Serbian government bypassed the federation and gave Milošević over to the Tribunal without

¹⁵² ICG, “Montenegro, Settling for independence?” 12.

federal approval. In July 2001, the Serbian premier, Zoran Đinđić was urging Montenegro to hold a referendum on independence and make a decision by the end of 2001.¹⁵⁴ At the same time, discussions between the Serbian and Montenegrin side started in the summer of 2001 about possible solutions. The Serbian government's position was based on Koštunica's platform adopted in January 2001, which envisaged a "functioning federation", where the competencies of the Union would be constrained to the areas of foreign affairs, defense, human rights, monetary and customs policy, transport and communications. The Montenegrin approach was based on the proposal drafted in December 2000, which offered a confederation of independent states with cooperation in the fields of monetary policy, foreign affairs and defense.¹⁵⁵ By October, negotiations reached a dead end, and Koštunica agreed that Montenegro should go ahead with the referendum. At this point even the pro-Yugoslav SNP admitted that the referendum was needed, even if disagreements remained about the necessary majority to produce a valid independence outcome. However, in October when the Serbian and the Montenegrin governments seemed to be reaching an agreement on holding a referendum in Montenegro, the EU intervened and forced them to negotiate further in order to preserve the joint state. These talks began in December and continued until March 2002 when the Belgrade Agreement was signed.¹⁵⁶ The Agreement transformed Yugoslavia into the Union of Serbia and Montenegro, and obliged Montenegro to postpone the referendum at least for three years.¹⁵⁷ The EU was guided primarily by security concerns as it feared that the separation of Montenegro might fuel secessionist sentiments in Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia, which was the main reason why it preferred "a democratic Montenegro within a democratic Yugoslavia".

¹⁵³ ICG, "Montenegro: Resolving the Independence Deadlock," ICG Balkans Report N° 114, 1 August 2001, 6.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁵⁵ ICG, "Montenegro: Resolving the Independence Deadlock," 12.

¹⁵⁶ ICG, "Still Buying Time: Montenegro, Serbia and the European Union," Europe Report N° 129, 7 May 2002, 6.

During these six months – between October 2001 and March 2002 - the status issue completely dominated public discussions in Montenegro. Public discourse was hardly about anything else other than how to settle relations between Montenegro and Serbia. Until December 2001, when the EU forced the Serbian and the Montenegrin parties back to the negotiating table, the rhetoric about statehood in Montenegro had remained the same as it was during the last election campaign. The ruling DPS openly promoted the idea of independence by employing arguments put forward in the context of European integration, democracy and economic reforms.¹⁵⁸ The governing parties' rhetoric according to which Serbia was the same country as under Milošević was also sustained, which was another argument for leaving the federation. Furthermore, the government took pride in its reforms by highlighting how it was pushing back the grey economy, made preparations to introduce the euro and promoted development through securing international aid.¹⁵⁹ It is worth noting, however, that this was more rhetoric than substance.¹⁶⁰ Montenegrin economy was characterized by chronic dependency on foreign aid, an oversized public sector, an unsustainable budget deficit, state credits granted to loss making public companies, a banking sector burdened by bad debts, lack of foreign capital, a generally unfavorable business environment and corruption and organized crime.¹⁶¹ Lack of reforms went along

¹⁵⁷ Bieber, "Montenegrin politics since the disintegration of Yugoslavia," 37.

¹⁵⁸ "Democratic referendum in Montenegro is to be held in summer of 2002," *Pobjeda*, MNNews-Online, 28-11-2001.

¹⁵⁹ "Montenegrin economy, after ten years of international isolation, is starting with more intensive recovery...", said Đukanović. In "Montenegrin economy is going towards the intensive recovery", *Pobjeda*, MNNews-Online, 23-10-2001; "Continuation of reforms condition of development of Montenegro," *Pobjeda*, MNNews-Online, 16-10-2001.

¹⁶⁰ Several analysts agreed on this point, See: Wim van Meurs, "The Belgrade Agreement" in *Montenegro in Transition*; ESI, "Rhetoric and Reform..."; Dragan Đurić, "The economic development of Montenegro," in *Montenegro in Transition*; Nebojša Medojević: "Montenegro – Land of Frozen Reforms," in *Prospects and Risks Beyond EU Enlargement, Vol. 2, South Eastern Europe: Weak States and Strong International Support*, ed. Wim van Meurs (Leverkusen: Leske + Budrich, 2002), 173-191; ICG, "Montenegro: Resolving the Independence Deadlock."

¹⁶¹ After Milošević introduced a trade embargo on Montenegro in 1998, Western aid had kept alive Montenegrin economy, financing social funds, buying electricity, medical supplies, food and supporting infrastructure projects. Montenegro received more per capita aid from the US than any other country except for Israel. As an illustration of the various problems resulting from bad policies, the unhealthy size of the

with declining living standards. In 2002, average real wages were 50% lower than in 1990, and more than 30 thousand workers had not received their salaries for a period longer than 3 months. Altogether, between 25-30% of the population were considered poor by UNDP in contrast to 1990 when this ratio was 14,1%.¹⁶²

The pro-Yugoslav block also continued with the same rhetoric it presented before the last elections. It kept pointing out that the international community opposed independence and maintained its campaign about the authorities' involvement in crime and corruption.¹⁶³ A sharp frame shift happened in December when discussions resumed under EU pressure. At that point, the need of independence began to be framed increasingly by economic arguments, which will be discussed in more detail below.

The EU directed the discussions towards concrete, mostly economic issues. It initiated dialogues of experts based on which the legal framework of the common state was to be determined.¹⁶⁴ Thus, the tactic of the EU to guide the discussions to very specific policy areas induced a change in the pro-independence discourse. Montenegrin negotiators began to frame the need of independence in terms of economic interests. Politicians picked up these arguments thus the pro-independence position for the first time came to be framed by references to economic issues. Although the key audience of these arguments was the EU itself and the Serbian side, the same arguments appeared in the Montenegrin public

Montenegrin public administration can be also mentioned. Together with state-owned firms, Montenegro's public administration employed 60% of the active labor force, which was not only an enormous share of all registered employees, but was also a result of a recent, ongoing trend. Between 1998 and 2000 under the Đukanović era, the number of employees in public administration had increased by 25%. Moreover, a significant share – estimated somewhere between 40 and 60% – of economic activity was related to the shadow economy. ESI: "Rhetoric and Reform...", 2-12; As Daniel Gros, analyst of CEPS noted in 2001, Montenegro was caught in a "self-made poverty trap," in which the government did not dare to reform the dysfunctional economic system for fear of its social consequences. In Daniel Gros, "Montenegro 2010," in *The Future of Montenegro, Proceedings of an Expert Meeting*, ed. Nicolas Whyte, 26 February 2001, (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2001) 65-79; ESI, "Politics, Interests and the Future of Yugoslavia: an Agenda for Dialogue," 26-11-2002, 25; Dragan Đurić, "The economic development of Montenegro," Florian Bieber (ed.), *Montenegro in Transition*.

¹⁶² "Zaposlenost, tržište, rada i životni standard u Crnoj Gori," (Podgorica: UNDP, 2002), cited in Dragan Đurić, 144.

¹⁶³ "In front of the decision," *Monitor*, MNNews-Online, 06-11-2001.

sphere and were presented through the Montenegrin media to the Montenegrin public. The bottom-line of Montenegrin economists' reasoning was that Montenegro could be reformed more quickly independently from Serbia.¹⁶⁵ The main points of this economic frame will be outlined in the following.

First, it was argued that Montenegro cannot renege on its economic reforms in order to adjust its system to that of Serbia, such as abandon its monetary sovereignty, including its own Central Bank and the euro, or increase its level of customs tariffs to that of Serbia.¹⁶⁶ These were important points because according to the Serbian position, the common state must have a common monetary and customs regime. As was being argued by Serbian negotiators, otherwise "the joint state would look like economic Frankenstein, because it is impossible to support a united market and the free flow of goods and services without united customs".¹⁶⁷

Second, Montenegrin negotiators maintained that the two economies were incompatible and therefore equal relations were impossible. It was highlighted that due to "the huge discrepancy in size of Serbia and Montenegro", "Montenegro cannot realize its equality with Serbia" and therefore cannot "protect its strategic development interest in the federal model".¹⁶⁸ This argument was not easy to dismiss considering that Serbia was twelve times bigger than Montenegro in terms of population size and 6.4 bigger in terms of territory.¹⁶⁹ It was also emphasized that Montenegro as a small, open market based on

¹⁶⁴ "Change of speed in the unit of time," *Monitor*, MNNews-Online, 27-12-2001.

¹⁶⁵ Based on opinions of Veselin Vukotić and Nebojša Medojević. *The Future of Montenegro, Proceedings of an Expert Meeting*, 47; Author Interview, Nebojša Medojević, 23 May 2002, Podgorica; Beata Huszka, "The dispute over independence," 59-60.

¹⁶⁶ "Vukotić: We do not want to go back," *Pobjeda*, MNNews-Online, 28-12-2001.

¹⁶⁷ "Đelić and Dinkić: Absolutely absurd combinations," *Pobjeda*, MNNews-Online, 25-02-2002.

¹⁶⁸ "Independence is civilizational need and existential interest of Montenegrin people," *Pobjeda*, MNNews-Online, 14-01-2002; "Survival of the federation would cost Montenegro DEM 1.5 billion in the next 10 years", *Vijesti*, MNNews-Online, 05-02-2002.

¹⁶⁹ Wim van Meurs, "The Belgrade Agreement," in *Montenegro in Transition*, 63.

services could not afford the high tariff levels of Serbia. At the time the average rate of tariffs was around 3% in Montenegro while it was 10% in Serbia.¹⁷⁰

Third, Montenegrin experts pointed out that the federation would cost too much for Montenegro without producing much benefit. Montenegrin experts estimated that sustaining federal institutions would cost 150 million DEM per year for Montenegro.¹⁷¹ Beside these future costs, as it was being argued the federation already cost Montenegro dearly “since Montenegro lost its market, sea fleet, income of tourism and maritime economy...”. At the same time, they explained that separation would not mean additional costs. “Montenegro has been functioning as an independent state for several years” and “it has already founded institutions such as the Central Bank, customs administration, network of diplomatic and economic representative offices abroad and thus it has already realized the greatest part of the expenses”.¹⁷²

Altogether, as these arguments were based on persuasive evidence i.e. on measures and reforms Montenegro had implemented already, they made a strong case for independence in the economic sense. Although arguments referring to Montenegrin identity could also be heard during these negotiations, Montenegrin reasoning centered on interests, above all on economic ones.¹⁷³ Using the economic prosperity frame the experts in their report concluded that ultimately independence provided better conditions for economic reforms, democratization of society and integration of Montenegro in European institutions.

¹⁷⁰ Wim van Meurs, 66.

¹⁷¹ “Christmas discussion on the economy,” *Pobjeda*, MNNews-Online, 08-01-2001; “Ivanović: Return to dinar would be the end of Montenegrin economy,” *Publika*, MNNews-Online, 15-01-2002.

¹⁷² “Ivanišević: Federation has already cost Montenegro dearly,” *Pobjeda*, MNNews-Online, 18-01-2002.

¹⁷³ References to identity included statements such as that the independent Montenegro is a “civilizational need and existential interest of Montenegrin people”, which would “ensure [...] cultural and national identity of the state and the people of Montenegro”. In “Union of independent states is the best model,” *Pobjeda*, MNNews-Online, 18-01-2002.

However, ultimately contextualizing events can account for why economic arguments acquired primacy within the pro-independence discourse in this particular period. The prosperity frame became dominant during negotiations with Serbia, due to the EU pushing technical questions into the focus of the discussions. Framing is strongly driven by contextualizing events which is why pro-independence parties did not make these economic claims before, namely that there was no relevant event before which would have brought economic issues in the focus of attention. During previous key events such as when Đukanović' broke with Milošević or when Milošević ripped Montenegro of its constitutional rights not economic interests were at issue but democratic principles, constitutional legality and human rights. This explains why the democracy frame was used so extensively by the pro-independence political forces and why economic arguments had not emerged before.

To counter arguments on the Montenegrin side, Serbian negotiators emphasized that a bigger common market, a united foreign trade regime and one currency would contribute to a more efficient economic space than that of the tiny Montenegro.¹⁷⁴ In addition, Serbian experts argued for sustaining the federation on the grounds that Serbia would lose access to the sea, and Montenegro to the Danube. They also put forward arguments that the separation of Montenegro would strengthen secessionist aspirations in the region, and would contribute to the escalation of ethnic and religious problems. These arguments were refuted by the Montenegrin side by pointing out that “neither would Serbia be further away from the sea nor would Montenegro be further away from the Danube” but access was matter of political solutions. The Montenegrins also stressed that they were not afraid of the rise of inter-ethnic tensions because “Montenegro has and develops multiethnic harmony

¹⁷⁴ “Survival of the federation would cost Montenegro DEM 1.5 billion in the next 10 years,” *Vijesti*, MNNews-Online, 05-02-2002.

and tolerance”.¹⁷⁵ EU experts also joined in the debate in favor of the common state. In case of Montenegro’s separation, “benefits of the wider market would be lost, foreign investments discouraged and the absence of joint trade policy would be an obstacle for integration into the EU and the World Trade Organization”, they argued. They also warned that separation would delay the stabilization and association process.¹⁷⁶

However, the Montenegrin position according to which Montenegro “did not want to return to the dinar, increase its customs rates, introduce protectionism, give money to federal budget from which the army is being financed, and to take over the risk of high inflation” was not easy to refute. Montenegrins feared that if the dinar was reintroduced, it would make Montenegro hostage to Serbian monetary policy. In addition, due to the importance of tourism and because Montenegro was a small, open economy, it made more sense to use the euro, they reasoned.¹⁷⁷ Hence, although Montenegrin politicians were still framing strategically, framing became much more of a straightforward interest-based reasoning. Altogether, the EU’s negotiators met with firm resistance on the Montenegrin side to abandon the already achieved economic autonomy.¹⁷⁸ It seemed at the end of January that negotiations were going nowhere. Zoran Đinđić, the Serbian prime minister, explicitly called on the Montenegrin government “to propose the referendum as a solution to the problems of relations in the federation”.¹⁷⁹

In early February, however, EU officials stopped arguing further and simply admitted that while they were aware of Montenegrin objections “they wanted the two republics to remain in one federation, no matter how loose it can be” out of concerns for regional stability.

¹⁷⁵ “Whose is (Montenegrin) sea?” *Publika*, MNNNews-Online, 23-01-2002.

¹⁷⁶ “EU warns that further disintegration of the region would mean great expenses,” *Vijesti*, MNNNews-Online, 05-02- 2002.

¹⁷⁷ “Ivanović: Who invites double inflation in Montenegro?” *Publika*, MNNNews-Online, 11-02-2002.

¹⁷⁸ ICG, “Still Buying time...,” 9.

¹⁷⁹ “Đinđić announced referendum in Montenegro,” *Dan*, MNNNews-Online, 24-01-2001.

They promised that the agreement will be temporary, “which would last for two or three years”.¹⁸⁰ The EU also made it clear that for the moment it neither supported the referendum, nor would it recognize its results as valid as it feared that Montenegrin independence could destabilize the wider region.¹⁸¹

The EU thus practically blackmailed the Montenegrin government with the threat that it will lose all its international support if it proceeded with the referendum. At the same time, in mid February the EU seemed ready to give in to all Montenegrin demands concerning economic issues provided that Montenegro was willing to stay in some sort of union with Serbia for the time being. In the end, the government signed the Belgrade Agreement, which satisfied most Montenegrin interests in exchange for maintaining a single state with a single international personality. Montenegro also received the permission to call a referendum after three years.¹⁸² As was promised, LSCG and SDP withdrew support from the government subsequently leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Vujanović in April 2002.¹⁸³ Therefore, early parliamentary elections were called for October 2002.

Public support for the “Victory for Montenegro” coalition fell sharply between January and April, from 33.3% to 27.2%. This loss of popularity was probably due to the delay of independence given that an overwhelming majority of the coalition’s supporters favored independence.¹⁸⁴ At the same time, the number of those who would have opted for independence at a referendum also dropped considerably from 46.7 to 42.3% during the

¹⁸⁰ “EU still hopes for agreement,” *Vijesti*, MNNews-Online, 07-02-2002.

¹⁸¹ “European Union offered Montenegro probation work with Serbia for a one or two more years,” *Vijesti*, MNNews-Online, 12-02-2002.

¹⁸² “Agreement on Principles of Relations Between Serbia and Montenegro Within the Framework of a Union of States,” *Document*, Belgrade, 14 March 2002.

¹⁸³ ICG, “Still Buying Time: Montenegro, Serbia and the European Union,” 15.

¹⁸⁴ 90,5% of DPS voters and 97.6% of SDP voters would have opted for independence at a referendum. Center for Democracy and Human Rights, “Political Opinion in Montenegro 2002,” April 2002, 4, 9, http://www.cedem.co.me/opolls/images/CEDEM_april02_eng.pdf.

same period as the signing of the Belgrade Agreement destroyed hopes that independence could be proclaimed any time soon.¹⁸⁵

The Belgrade Agreement was a short and vague document which left many questions open for further discussion.¹⁸⁶ For that reason, the Agreement envisaged that the two parliaments should draft a Constitutional Charter by the end of June, which would specify the functioning of the joint state's institutions and define common policies. Negotiations dragged on until December 2002 when the Constitutional Commission finally accepted the draft, which was passed by the federal parliament in February 2003, after the approval of the republican assemblies.¹⁸⁷ The end result was very disappointing for many in Serbia who maintained that without a common currency, central bank, and without common institutions having their own budgetary funds, chances of having a functioning state were slim. In addition, in absence of a common customs and trade policy, the advantages of the common market could not be realized either.¹⁸⁸

5. Frame shift: the Belgrade Agreement takes independence off the agenda

The government shifts its emphasis from the goal of independence to that of reforms and switches back to the civil society master frame.

Regime change becomes the main goal of the pro-Yugoslav opposition, instead of sustaining Yugoslavia. There is an attempt to change the coalition's discourse fundamentally and to adopt a rhetoric promoting ethnic diversity.

Parliamentary elections, October 2002

The government and the opposition interpreted the Agreement in completely opposing ways. While for the pro-Yugoslav parties, the Agreement represented a fulfillment of their promise to preserve the joint state, for the government it was a

¹⁸⁵ Results of opinion polls conducted in January and April 2002 by the Damar agency for CEDEM. Cited in: ICG, "Still Buying Time: Montenegro, Serbia and the European Union," 20.

¹⁸⁶ ICG, "Still Buying Time: Montenegro, Serbia and the European Union," 11.

¹⁸⁷ ICG, "A Marriage of Inconvenience: Montenegro 2003," Europe Report N°142, 16 April 2003, 2-4.

¹⁸⁸ ICG, "A Marriage of Inconvenience: Montenegro 2003," 4-7.

guarantee of Montenegrin sovereignty. The government had no choice but to sign the agreement considering that the Agreement fulfilled all Montenegrin demands, while not signing it would have meant that Montenegro will lose international support. Moreover, going ahead with the referendum without international approval did not seem to be an attractive option given that the results of the referendum would not have received international recognition, forcing the newly independent state into international isolation. Yet, as both the government and the opposition regarded the state issue as being settled for the moment, the question of independence was pushed into the background. The political record of the government became the central theme of this campaign. DPS sustained its pro-EU, reformist rhetoric. It talked the most about reforms and not about independence. DPS leaders placed the strongest emphasis on the party's role as a guarantor of Montenegro's European integration. According to them, the opposition was pulling Montenegro away from Europe.¹⁸⁹ DPS asked for citizens' support so that the party can continue economic development, reforms, "as well as further implementation of the Belgrade Agreement for which we need a stable government".¹⁹⁰

At the same time, the position of the pro-Yugoslav parties shifted considerably during this election campaign. First, their main goal became the removal of the government as opposed to the preservation of the joint state, (which according to them "was realized by the Belgrade Agreement"). The pro-Yugoslav parties – the SNP, the SNS and NS – formed a coalition under the name "Together for Change", which indicated a change in their program. "The struggle against organized crime, corruption and the mafia" were the main arguments as to why regime change was necessary.¹⁹¹ Even for the Liberal Alliance the

¹⁸⁹ "Protocol visits can wait," *Publika*, MNNews-Online, 27-09-2002; "Đukanović: Serbian parties are significantly larger and they would absorb LSCG," *Vijesti*, 30-09-2002.

¹⁹⁰ "The dirtiest campaign of the opposition so far," *Publika*, MNNews-Online, 05-10-2002.

¹⁹¹ "Bulatović: DPS, SDP and Albanians have no chances," *Vijesti*, MNNews-Online, 03-10-2002.

struggle for independence became secondary.¹⁹² The primary goal of the opposition including the liberals became to “liberate Montenegro from DPS’ dictatorship”.¹⁹³ Political alliances also indicated that the state issue did not structure the political scene anymore. The liberals and pro-Yugoslav parties formed a new majority in the parliament to pass laws together against the will of the government.¹⁹⁴ Although SNP and LSCG had a diametrically opposing stance on the status issue, it did not represent an unbridgeable problem anymore, indicating that this subject matter had lost its primacy. At the same time, both parties concentrated their campaign on the idea of a clean state, and attacked the ruling coalition for crime and corruption.¹⁹⁵

Moreover, as will be discussed below, SNP began to promote the idea of a multi-ethnic Montenegro, and define membership in the national community based on citizenship and not ethnicity. This represented a radical rhetorical turn, given that the party’s language used to be marked by xenophobia and hate speech against minorities. Pedrag Bulatović promised that “after winning the elections we shall call upon leaders of Muslims, Albanians, Croats and minorities to try to constitute authority together since Montenegro was and still is multi-national and multi-cultural.”¹⁹⁶ He further said at a press conference, “This is a victorious coalition and after October 20 it would represent a new regime in Montenegro that would make better life for all citizens regardless of religion and nationality”.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹² “Clear or late,” *Monitor*, MNNews-Online, 17-10-2002.

¹⁹³ “Liberation day,” *Publika*, MNNews-Online, 18-10-2002.

¹⁹⁴ OSCE/ODHIR Election Observation Mission Report, “Republic of Montenegro, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Early Parliamentary Elections 20 October 2002,” 28 November 2002, Warsaw, 3-4, http://www.osce.org/documents/odhr/2002/11/1350_en.pdf.

¹⁹⁵ “Perović: LS is no longer a tip of the scales but a weight,” *Publika*, MNNews-Online, 07-10-2002.

¹⁹⁶ “Central Promotional meeting of the Together for changes coalition in Berane,” *Dan*, MNNews-Online, 15-10-2002.

¹⁹⁷ “Coalition for changes founded,” *Pobjeda*, MNNews-Online, 26-09-2002.

Two reasons could account for this change. On the one hand, leaders of SNP might have realized that if they wanted to win elections ever, it would be useful to attract at least part of the minority vote. After signing the Belgrade Agreement, DPS's popular support had plummeted, so it seemed that the pro-Yugoslav parties finally had a chance to defeat DPS. More importantly, however, the coalition boasted that they were the ones supported by the EU and not DPS.¹⁹⁸ This new rhetoric based on the idea that they were the true allies of Europe did not fit well with a xenophobic discourse, which was in sharp contrast with values promoted by the EU. This was especially the case as EU standards and guidelines became the ultimate reference points frequently alluded to also on the pro-Yugoslav side. Altogether, by adopting a pro-minority discourse the party could prove the credibility of its new "civic orientation" and its European leaning. A newspaper commentary suggested that this rhetorical turn on the part of SNP was a result of a conscious attempt induced by EU officials. "Allegedly, Bulatović intends to establish SNP on new, civilian basis and to develop a party of socialistic orientation without any room for extreme Serbian nationalists and worshippers of Milošević's deeds. Allegedly, some Western diplomats suggested that to him", the newspaper *Monitor* noted.¹⁹⁹

However, it seems that SNP's leadership had overstepped the rhetorical limits, which their supporters tolerated. The "Together for Change" coalition was not only defeated at these elections but lost three additional mandates. Afterwards it soon fell apart in early 2003. According to experts, this was caused by an identity crisis of the member parties, especially of SNP. SNP was trying to assume a new identity, but was faced with "an extremely conservative electorate that still glorifies Slobodan Milošević and opposes

¹⁹⁸ "Central Promotional meeting of the Together for changes coalition in Berane," *Dan*, MNNews-Online, 15-10-2002.

¹⁹⁹ Statements by SNP officials also signaled that SNP tried to win the favor of the West. For instance, an SNP official said before the presidential elections that the "international community, that is, British

cooperation with the Hague Tribunal.”²⁰⁰ The electorate of the pro-union parties was made up mostly by ethnic Serbs. In Montenegro, national self-identification tended to reflect one’s view of Milošević’s policies, other ethnic groups and cooperation with the Hague Tribunal. Self-declared Serbs usually opposed not only independence, but also cooperation with The Hague, viewed other ethnic groups with suspicion and were generally less enthusiastic about EU accession than the rest of the population. At the same time, self-proclaimed Montenegrins, Albanians, Croats, Bosniaks and Muslims tended to support independence and the government’s pro-EU policies, including the extradition of war criminals. Therefore, the pro- and anti-independence divide seemed to reflect not only ethnic cleavages but also split people according to their views on EU ideals and policies. The SNP’s electorate was mostly made up by citizens who cherished such values and policies that run counter EU norms, which explains why Bulatović’s attempt to foster a civic identity – as was explained above – failed in the end.²⁰¹ The crisis of the pro-Yugoslav coalition well demonstrated how established framing positions considerably constrain future framing choices. The parties through their previous framing created a very stable constituency with stable interests, which constrained their representatives significantly. This meant that established symbolic links between frames were not easy to dissolve.

This time DPS could not count on the support of the state media. The editor-in-chief position of the TV Montenegro was taken over by an appointee of LSCG who ensured that Đukanović and the government would not get too much coverage.²⁰² However, despite the

ambassador Charles Crawford influenced this party” in choosing their candidate. “Two paths,” *Monitor*, MNNNews-Online, 22-11-2002.

²⁰⁰ Quote from Srdjan Darmanović, director of CEDEM, Cited in: “Darmanović predicts disintegration of the Coalition for Changes,” *Vijesti*, MNNNews-Online, 17-04-2003.

²⁰¹ ICG, “Montenegro’s Independence Drive,” 11.

²⁰² “Đjukanvić eliminated from main TV news,” *Vijesti*, MNNNews-Online, 28-09-2002.

opposition's coordinated campaign against the authorities, the elections strengthened DPS' position.²⁰³

Presidential elections, December 2002 – May 2003

By the presidential election in December 2002, the state issue almost completely faded from public discussions. The presidential election had to be repeated twice in order to produce a valid result due to the boycott of the opposition. Only the third attempt in May 2003 was successful when Vujanović, the DPS' candidate was finally elected to be the president of Montenegro. Revealing that the status issue stopped structuring the Montenegrin political scene, member parties of the "Together for Change" coalition gave their tacit support for the candidate of the pro-independence liberals. As the main issue for the opposition parties became regime change, this helped them to surpass their divisions over their preferences about Montenegrin statehood, and to unite their forces against the government's candidate.

However, while the topic of statehood was waning in the parties' rhetoric and did not determine their alliances anymore, it seemed that voters' choices were still guided primarily by their preference about Montenegro's status. During the second (yet failed) election round, which was boycotted by the pro-Yugoslav opposition, 47,7% of all voters participated. 81,5% supported Vujanović, indicating that voters of the pro-Montenegrin block were mobilized.²⁰⁴ According to the director of CEDEM, this could be explained by

²⁰³ At a relatively high voter turn out rate of 75%, the DPS-SPD coalition entitled Democratic List for a European Montenegro gained three additional seats in parliament thus increasing the number of their mandates to 39. At the same time, their opponents, the Together for Changes coalition lost 3, while the Liberal Alliance 2 mandates compared to the previous term. According to the OSCE, the elections "were conducted generally in accordance with international commitments and standards for democratic elections". Although several allegations were made about attempts of buying votes or influencing voters by DPS, none of these were substantiated. Moreover, this time the opposition could not blame media bias for the incumbents' victory, since "state media coverage of the campaign was more balanced than on previous occasions". OSCE/ODHIR Election Observation Mission Report, "Republic of Montenegro, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Early Parliamentary Elections 20 October 2002," 28 November 2002, Warsaw, 2-3, http://www.osce.org/documents/odhr/2002/11/1350_en.pdf.

²⁰⁴ "Turnout of 47,7% - elections failed," *Pobjeda*, MNNews-Online, 10-02-2003.

the fact that “voters obviously remain faithful to its [the government’s] orientation on the issue of state status of Montenegro”.²⁰⁵

6. Frame shift: referendum May 2006

Unionists switch back to their old position constructed by the anti-independence frame of “self-serving nationalist elites” and by ethno-nationalist and anti-minorities discourse (as the attempt to endow the coalition with a “civic identity” failed). In addition, they also present arguments against independence which appeal to Serbian voters’ personal economic interests.

The government retains its usual rhetoric based on the idea that independence means faster EU accession and better chances for economic development. Economic arguments are also frequently used to support the pro-independence position.

The state union never really functioned, as neither side was satisfied with the arrangement. Montenegro jeopardized the creation of effective common institutions as it wanted complete independence, while Serbia preferred a more centralized state. The republics failed to harmonize their constitutions with the Constitutional Charter, and direct elections were never held for electing members of the State Union’s parliament after their mandate expired in March 2005. Customs checkpoints remained in place on the border between the two republics, since many customs rates were never brought into line with each other. At the same time, the two republics began to follow a quite different development path. In 2005 Montenegro was attracting four times more foreign direct investment than Serbia on a per capita basis, was further along privatization and had a much lower inflation rate.²⁰⁶ Eventually even the EU accepted the fact that the two republics had to be treated as two economic entities, and adopted a so called “twin-track approach” during the stabilization and association process.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ “Voters mature, without illusions, ready to criticize the government,” *Vijesti*, MNNews-Online, 29-01-2003.

²⁰⁶ In the first three quarters of 2005, Montenegro attracted 376 Euro/capita, while Serbia only 87 euro/capita. Annual inflation was 2,3%, whereas in Serbia 18 per cent. ICG, “Montenegro’s Independence Drive,” Europe Report N°169, 7 December 2005, 7.

²⁰⁷ ICG, “Montenegro’s Independence Drive,” 1-8.

Not only was the state union dysfunctional, but it failed to speed up the country's EU integration process. Repeated delays hit the accession process because of Serbia's lack of cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, causing increasing frustrations in Montenegro. In the end, in May 2006 the EU suspended negotiations about the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the state union. Since in line with the Belgrade Agreement Montenegro was allowed to hold a referendum the earliest in February 2006, the government decided to exercise this right. The EU reluctantly approved the decision, yet imposed a formula according to which at least 50% of the electorate had to participate, and a minimum of 55% of the total electoral body had to choose independence for a successful independence outcome.

In the meantime, from 2004, the Montenegrin government engaged in a series of measures aimed at nation building. The government adopted various symbols of Montenegrin national identity which were inspired by the independent Montenegrin state of King Nicola (1878-1918), such as the old flag of the Petrović dynasty, which was in use until 1910 as national flag. An anthem emphasizing Montenegrin separateness replaced the old one which stressed Montenegro's Serbian identity.²⁰⁸ In 2004 the official language became "mother tongue" instead of Serbian, which as the government reasoned better reflected Montenegro's ethnic diversity. Thus, forging a Montenegrin national identity practically meant casting off some of its Serbian aspects. All these steps which aimed at downplaying the Serbian features of Montenegro's identity outraged and alienated self identified Serbs despite the fact that Montenegrin authorities maintained the civic idea of the nation.²⁰⁹ Some pro-independence papers, such as the daily *Republika* and the literary journal called *Montenegrin Literary Paper* published some clearly anti-Serbian views, such as calling Serbs "dogs" or "very nasty people". However, such language was not

²⁰⁸ Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 193.

characteristic to the mainstream newspapers such as *Pobjeda* or *Vijesti* or to the pro-independence parties.²¹⁰

The campaign was marked by low level, occasional violence and mutual accusations about vote buying and falsifying voter registration documents. The media was full of reports about all kinds of irregularities during the campaign. Unionist officials were arrested over alleged forgery of voter registration applications. DPS activists were caught as they tried to bribe people to vote for independence.²¹¹ Incidents broke out between supporters of the Serbian and the Montenegrin Orthodox Church.²¹² Hate speech and efforts to undermine the credibility of the rival camp was especially characteristic to the unionist camp, although not exclusively. A commentary of a pro-government weekly *Monitor* entitled “Apartheid” for instance drew a parallel between unionist parties and Hitler’s Germany. The article was written in response to a unionist leader’s call on people to cut contacts with their neighbors who favor independence. The author wondered whether “concentration camps and gas chambers come next for those who favor Montenegrin independence, or would simple execution by firing squad be sufficient?”²¹³

Each block employed the rhetoric that they had used the most during the previous decade. Unionist forces returned to their ethno-nationalist discourse promoting an ethnically exclusive national identity. Orthodox and Islamic Clerics supported the unionist position with religious arguments, which was a novelty, yet the actors forwarding such arguments were from Serbia and not from Montenegro. As many times before, the unionist campaign focused more on efforts to undermine the government’s

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 195.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 196-7.

²¹¹ “Montenegrin press review for Tuesday 25 April 06,” *BBC Monitoring*, 25-04-2006.

²¹² “Orthodox Church head: Montenegrin government siding with ‘counterfeit sect’,” Bosnian news agency SRNA, *BBC Monitoring*, 23-04-2006.

²¹³ Andrej Nikolaidis, “Apartheid,” *Monitor*, in “Commentary decries call for ostracism of Montenegrin independence supporters,” *BBC Monitoring*, 24-04-2006.

credibility than on presenting arguments in favor of sustaining the joint state. The actual arguments they presented against independence played on fears that Montenegrin citizens might lose their right to pension, work, education, and health care in Serbia. At the same time, the pro-independence parties also stuck to their usual lines. Their discourse was overwhelmingly based on the idea that independence guaranteed faster accession to the EU and provided better chances for economic development, while drawing on a civic concept of the Montenegrin state characterized by multi-ethnicity.

The unionist parties targeted mostly ethnic Montenegrin and Serbian voters. The Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian media also got strongly involved on the pro-union side. Thus they tried to turn the referendum about independence into a plebiscite on Dukanović and his government. Such efforts were bolstered by the fact that the influential NGO *Group for Changes* increasingly criticized the government for its corrupt practices and for its reluctance to fight organized crime. Importantly, their leader, Nebojša Medojević who himself was a supporter of independence, campaigned with unionist politicians against the Montenegrin leadership. For example Medojević said that DPS would have been banned in any democratic country because of the alleged vote-buying incident when a DPS activist was filmed as he was trying to buy people's vote.²¹⁴ It should be also noted that Medojević personally enjoyed high popularity among citizens, often scoring higher marks in opinion polls than the prime minister.²¹⁵

Unionist officials accused the government of pursuing an “extremely anti-Serb policy”, and argued that relations with Serbia will worsen if Montenegro gains

²¹⁴ Quote from *Vijesti*, In: “Headline: Montenegrin press review for Thursday 30 March 06,” *BBC Monitoring*, 30-04-2006. In April 2006 for instance he accompanied those opposition politicians who paid a visit to Washington DC with the aim “to present a different picture of Montenegro [than the government's] to officials in Washington”. In: “Montenegrin TV profiles Serbian premier's 'lobbyist' in Washington,” Excerpt from a report of Montenegrin TV, 20-04-2006, *BBC Monitoring*, 21-04-2006.

independence.²¹⁶ Andrija Mandić, SNS president went as far as saying that special rights should be granted to Serbs who needed to be protected.²¹⁷ As usual, unionists sustained their claim that Đukanović was criminalizing the state and controlled everything, including the judiciary, police and all the state funds.²¹⁸ They stressed that when DPS talks about independence “you should know that a big robbery is in the offing.” Many references were made about corruption charges against the government, as it allegedly sought independence in order to create a “private state”.²¹⁹

Advocates of the state union also put forward arguments as to why it was not in people’s personal economic interest to separate from Serbia. Politicians pointed out that Serbia may introduce higher fees for Montenegrin students, patients, and visas for Montenegrin citizens.²²⁰ These arguments were underpinned by Zoran Stojković, Serbian justice minister. He in an interview given to the newspaper *Dan* warned that Montenegrin citizens living in Serbia will be treated as foreigners and will lose many of the benefits they enjoy today.²²¹ Economic arguments were also forwarded against independence. As an SNP official highlighted, setting up “a modern, functional and organized diplomacy”, “funding membership in international institutions”, sustaining a separate army would mean huge expenses, which “the government is purposefully avoiding mentioning”.²²² Moreover,

²¹⁵ Between January and December 2005, Nebojša Medojević was the single most popular public figure in Montenegro. See CEDEM, “Political Public Opinion in Montenegro,” December 2005, 29, www.cedem.cg.yu.

²¹⁶ Quote from Dragan Šoć, NS official, cited in: “After independence, first visit to Belgrade,” Beta, 25-04-2006.

²¹⁷ “Many booked flights”, *Vijesti*, In “Unionist leader says Serbs to demand their rights in Montenegro,” BBC Monitoring, 10-05-2006.

²¹⁸ “Montenegrin TV broadcasts final TV referendum debate with blocs’ leaders,” BBC Monitoring, 17-05-2006.

²¹⁹ “Montenegrin TV airs fifth debate on arguments for and against independence,” BBC Monitoring, 09-05-2006.

²²⁰ “Montenegrin TV broadcasts third debate on independence,” BBC Monitoring, 25-04-2006.

²²¹ Marina Borozan, “Stojković: Relations between two states are not the same thing as relations within common state,” *Dan*, In “Independent Montenegro citizens to be treated as foreigners - Serbian minister,” BBC Monitoring, 08-05-2006.

²²² “Pro-union bloc warns of higher tax burden for independent Montenegro,” Mina news agency, BBC Monitoring, 06-05-2006.

it was being emphasized that Serbian and Montenegrin economies were interdependent. Thus erecting new trade barriers would hurt Montenegrin economy since Montenegrin companies depended on Serbia for raw materials or for selling their products.²²³

Although according to Morrison the pro-union block made some efforts to shed the negative symbols of Serbian nationalism indicated by the absence of the flag with the four Ss or Chetnik song, their language was often marked by hate speech against minorities.²²⁴ Mobilization against minorities was part of the unionist campaign. Serbian media, especially the Belgrade daily *Politika* and the Podgorica daily *Dan* spread rumors about Croat, Albanian and Muslim mafia gangs willing to carve up Montenegro if the independence vote succeeds.²²⁵ Inciting hatred against minorities was not unusual during unionist campaign events, however, the parties and their supporters did not represent a unified voice in this regard. Pedrag Bulatović, chairman of SNP rejected such rhetoric by saying that “various ethnic groups were living in harmony in Montenegro”.²²⁶

Emotionally loaded ethno-nationalist themes were part of the unionist rhetoric. Metropolitan Amfilohije referred to historical ethnic roots when arguing for sustaining the joint state. “Whoever is destroying the [joint] state is destroying his own roots, the unity and centuries-long effort of his ancestors who have built their blood and bones into the fabric of the [state] community,” he said.²²⁷ Interestingly, religious arguments emerged on the unionist side as well as religious leaders joined in the campaign.

²²³ “Headline: Unionists upset by Montenegrin state TV intro to referendum debate,” TV Crna Gora, Podgorica, 18-04-2006, BBC Monitoring, 18-04-2006.

²²⁴ Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 212.

²²⁵ ICG, “Montenegro’s Referendum,” Europe Briefing N°42, 30 May 2006, 5; “Headline: Consulate ‘not aware’ of US report on independent Montenegro igniting mafia war,” Montenegrin Mina news agency, BBC Monitoring, 19-04-2006.

²²⁶ “Montenegrin press review for Friday 28 April 06,” BBC Monitoring, 28-04-2006.

²²⁷ “Montenegrin metropolitan urges believers to vote for state union,” SRNA, BBC Monitoring, 24-04-2006; The Serbian patriarch Pavle argued along similar lines stressing the common historical heritage of the two republics. “The breaking up of the unity of the people and the state, which has been built over centuries and through immeasurable sacrifice, cannot bring anything good,” the patriarch said. “Serbian patriarch urges

Metropolitan Amfilohije urged believers to say “Yes” to God, but “No” to the devil, since “it was Judas’ ideology to estrange brothers”, that is to support the divorce of the two republics.²²⁸ Similarly, Hamdija Jusufspahić, Mufti of the Serbian Islamic Community, while calling on Muslim believers to vote for the state union said: “God did not create us so we can separate, disunite, kill each other...”.²²⁹ Although Montenegrin Bosniaks overwhelmingly supported independence, some representatives of the Bosniak community particularly the ones in Serbia were campaigning for the state union in an effort to preserve the unity of the Sandžak region inhabited by Bosniaks connecting Serbia with Montenegro.²³⁰

Pro-independence politicians also made some references to common ethnicity with Serbia appealing to pan-Serbian sentiments, although such arguments were rare in the pro-independence discourse. Marović for instance used the metaphor of two brothers while talking about relations between Serbia and Montenegro. He explained that “brothers do not stop being brothers when both have their own homes”, and there is no brother “who does not want to become independent” and have his own family.²³¹ Yet, on the whole, pro-independence politicians consciously sought to present a pragmatic and rational image, contrasting with the rival block’s emotional rhetoric. Đukanović explicitly said that “respecting emotions and understanding that emotions are an integral

state union president to preserve union,” Serbian independent news agency FoNet, BBC Monitoring, 11-05-2006.

²²⁸ “Montenegrin press review for Monday 15 May 06,” BBC Monitoring, 15-05-2006.

²²⁹ Excerpt from report by M.B, “Hamdija Jusufspahic entitled I would prefer us to preserve Serbia-Montenegro,” *Dan*, 06-05-2006, in “Serbian Islamic leader supports survival of the common state,” BBC Monitoring, 06-05-2006.

²³⁰ According to a poll of CEDEM conducted in April 2006, 80,2% of Bosniaks were for independence, whereas “only” 72,7% of ethnic Montenegrins. “Political Public Opinion in Montenegro,” CEDEM, April 2006, www.cedem.org.yu.

²³¹ “Marović: Brother remains brother,” *Dan*, 25-04-2006; “Headline: SCG army’s command system remains unchanged – president,” Mina news agency, 30-03-2006;

“Union president recognizes only Serb Orthodox Church in Montenegro,” BBC Monitoring, 25-04-2006.

part of the occurring political process and our lives, it seems to me as a political person that I must point out that this issue [independence] has to be looked at rationally”.²³²

That independence guaranteed fast accession to the EU was the most emphasized message of the pro-independence parties.²³³ It was repeatedly stressed that Montenegro was hostage to Serbian policies, as it had “to share the consequences of something it did not cause itself”. This meant that Serbia’s reluctance to cooperate fully with the Hague Tribunal was slowing down the accession process. The claim that Montenegro’s EU accession cannot depend on Serbia’s lack of cooperation with the Hague Tribunal became one of the most fundamental arguments for independence.²³⁴ The EU’s suspension of negotiations with the state union in the height of the referendum campaign added force to this argument.²³⁵ At the same time, the EU made it clear that it would respect the referendum result and thus was not against independence. Moreover, some EU representatives, such as Doris Pack, head of the EP commission for Southeast Europe, expressed their clear support for the independence outcome.²³⁶

The claim that Montenegro could join the EU faster on its own was further reinforced by the fact often pointed out that the state union failed to function in the last three years. Although there was a lot of truth to this argument, it should be also mentioned that the Montenegrin government was not an innocent player in creating this situation. “The state union did not resolve one problem but retained the old ones and created new

²³² “Montenegrin PM views Serbia Patriarch approach to state union,” Mina news agency, BBC Monitoring, 12-05-2006.

²³³ “Montenegrin press review for Friday 28 April 06,” BBC Monitoring, 28-04-2006.

²³⁴ “Serbia failure to arrest Mladic not to hamper Montenegrin independence – FM,” Mina news agency, BBC Monitoring, 03-05-2006.

²³⁵ ICG, “Montenegro’s Referendum,” 6.

²³⁶ “European MP blames Solana for Montenegrin ‘hostage’ status,” Croatian news agency HINA, BBC Monitoring, 13-05-2006.

ones,” emphasized a DPS official.²³⁷ As the Montenegrin minister for European integration highlighted, the adoption of the double-track model by the EU during the accession and stabilization process also indicated that the integration process via the common state model was not working. As she argued, this was the reason why a number of issues were returned to Montenegrin jurisdiction during the negotiations. She concluded that “the European integration process has become the main critic of the common state model” as the common state was clearly slowing down Montenegro’s EU integration.²³⁸

The economic prosperity frame featured strongly in the pro-independence discourse. Vujanović said that “Montenegro, with its resources and population, would experience a fast and strong prosperity as an independent country”.²³⁹ It was pointed out that economic indicators were better in Montenegro than in Serbia, such as those of inflation, GDP per capita, debts and unemployment.²⁴⁰ Pro-independence politicians emphasized that Montenegro “as many small countries” is “an economically viable entity”.²⁴¹ Economic experts argued that stock prices will fall if the referendum outcome will be negative, because Montenegro will have to give up the euro, which would create a currency risk and also because the republic will have to forsake its liberal regulation of capital transactions.²⁴² In contrast, it was stressed that the declaration of independence will encourage economic growth and foreign investment, since at the moment the nationalist

²³⁷ “Montenegro will not be ‘anyone’s protectorate’ any more - pro-independence bloc,” Mina news agency, BBC Monitoring, 02-05-2006.

²³⁸ “Independent Montenegro is the best EU accession model – minister,” BBC Monitoring, 10-05-2006.

²³⁹ “Vujanović: We shall agree on the quality of the union of independent states,” *Pobjeda*, Mina News Agency, 16-05-2006.

²⁴⁰ “Montenegrin TV airs fifth debate on arguments for and against independence,” BBC Monitoring, 09-05-2006.

²⁴¹ Quote from Maritime Affairs and Transportation Minister, Andrija Lompar. “Headline: Unionists upset by Montenegrin state TV intro to referendum debate,” TV Crna Gora, Podgorica, 18-04-2006, BBC Monitoring, 18-04-2006.

²⁴² Bojica Bosković, “Common state brings stock value down,” *Vijesti*, in “Headline: Montenegrin stocks to drop if unionists win – daily,” BBC Monitoring, 23-03-2006.

block in Serbia is discouraging foreign investment.²⁴³ Therefore, economic arguments were presented as interest-based explanations as to why independence was needed.

As during the last ten years, the civic idea of the state and the nation was central to the pro-independence rhetoric. Vujanović declared that the referendum is about “citizens’ declaration on the state” rather than a vote on a national basis.²⁴⁴ As Ranko Krivokapić, speaker of the parliament explained, the reasons why Montenegro wants independence were to have a “multi-ethnic Montenegro, a Montenegro which cooperates with its neighbors, a Montenegro with open borders”.²⁴⁵ Pro-independence politicians often talked about independence in the context of “an independent, modern, multi-ethnic Montenegro.”²⁴⁶ Demonstrating their commitment to the protection of minorities, a few weeks before the referendum the Montenegrin assembly adopted the law on minority rights, in order to court minorities and to make sure that they will go out to vote during the referendum.²⁴⁷ As could be expected, minorities showed a strong support for independence. The share of pro independence votes was the highest in the Bosniak majority municipalities of Plav and Rožaje (above 90%) and the Albanian municipality of Ulcinj. In these municipalities the level of support for independence was higher than in the areas where Montenegrin identity has been strong traditionally, such as Cetinje.²⁴⁸

At the end, at a 86,49% participation rate 55,53 % of the people voted for independence, which was just half per cent above the necessary threshold. Montenegro officially declared independence in June 2006. OSCE deemed the campaign on the whole

²⁴³ “Headline: Montenegrin press review for Tuesday 4 April 06,” BBC Monitoring, 04-04-2006; “The size of Montenegro is an asset, not a disadvantage,” *Pobjeda*, in “Headline: Montenegrin press review for Monday 3 April 06,” BBC Monitoring, 03-04-2006.

²⁴⁴ “Headline: Montenegro to have better relations with Serbia after independence – president,” Radio Montenegro, BBC Monitoring, 04-04-2006.

²⁴⁵ “Headline: Montenegrin Speaker, French deputy Speakers discuss May referendum,” TV Crna Gora, BBC Monitoring, 29-03-2006.

²⁴⁶ “Headline: Montenegrin premier says campaign accord is ‘guarantee of victory’,” Text of report by Montenegrin TV on 23 March, BBC Monitoring, 23-03-2006.

²⁴⁷ “Montenegrin parliament adopts minorities’ law,” Mina news agency, BBC Monitoring, 10-05-2006.

free and fair in spite of acknowledging that the media coverage was biased to either one of the referendum options.²⁴⁹ Moreover, there was considerable pressure on public employees to vote for independence.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Morrison, *Montenegro, A Modern History*, 210, 218.

²⁴⁹ OSCE/ODIHR, “Republic of Montenegro, Referendum on State-Status, 21 May 2006,” Referendum Observation Mission Final Report, Warsaw, 04 August 2006, http://www.osce.org/documents/odihhr/2006/08/20077_en.pdf.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 210, 215.

Table3. Discourse dynamics of the independence movement

<i>Pro-independence parties</i>		<i>Pro-Yugoslav /unionist parties</i>	
<u>Declared Goal</u>	<u>Dominant Frame</u>	<u>Declared Goal</u>	<u>Dominant Frame</u>
In 1996-1997			
I. Economic sovereignty	Economic arguments		
Event: Đukanović breaks with Milošević			
II. Democracy	Civil society master frame	Sustaining Yugoslavia	Anti-independence frame of “self-serving nationalist elites” and the ethnic security frame
Event: Milošević violates the federal constitution, followed by the escalation of threat			
III. Independence	Constitutional equality	Sustaining Yugoslavia	War threats
Event: Milošević falls			
IV. Independence	Democracy frame	Sustaining Yugoslavia	Regional security, EU, ethnic security frame
Event: EU intervention into the negotiations between Serbia and Montenegro			
V. Independence	Economic prosperity frame		
Event: signing the Belgrade Agreement			
VI. Reforms	Civil society master frame	Change of government	Frame of “self-serving nationalist elites” + discourse promoting ethnic diversity (failed)
Event: referendum			
VII. Independence	Democracy frame, EU accession, prosperity frame	State union	Frame of “self-serving nationalist elites”, ethno nationalism, references to personal interests

Conclusions

Table 3 displays changing framing dynamics during the mobilization cycle. It presents declared goals and dominant frames of the two political sides in different periods while also showing key contextualizing events which induced the major frame shifts. Before the break with Milošević, the ruling party began to call for more economic rights for Montenegro by referring to economic arguments. However, as the leadership turned against Belgrade in 1997, it shifted its demands from more economic autonomy to that of democracy and began to rely on the civil society master frame. This was the first major frame shift, induced by protests against Milošević in Serbia. The pro-Serbian opposition in Montenegro responded with corruption charges and accusations about secessionism against the government while drawing on a Serbian ethno-nationalist discourse. This became the most typical interaction between frames of the two political sides: the government's rhetoric calling for democratic reforms, the respect of human rights and rapprochement to Europe challenged by discursive efforts of the opposition aimed at undermining the government's credibility while employing the ethnic security frame. At the same time, as a result of these framing efforts, the pro-independence agenda became associated with the civil society master frame, Western orientation and democratic aspirations, while the pro-Yugoslav position was linked to Serbian ethno-nationalism.

The next frame shift was triggered by Milošević violating the federal order, and by the subsequent escalation of threat, which created a new political reality. As a response, the Montenegrin government began to embrace the idea of independence as a means of self-defense by referring to Montenegro's constitutional equality and Serbian aggression. The pro-Yugoslav side emboldened by its alliance with Serbia echoed Serbian threats in the face of the government's growing independence drive.

However, independence became the primary goal of the Montenegrin leadership only after Milošević was finally ousted, which represented the third frame shift. With the threat gone, the Montenegrin government escalated demands for independence by relying on the democracy frame. This represented a new situation for the pro-Yugoslav opposition, as their patron, Milošević was gone and for the first time, they had to counter a serious mobilization for independence. Consequently, the opposition adopted new arguments and based on references to security threats began to reason for sustaining Yugoslavia. They practically picked up arguments presented by the EU and the international community, thus consequently started to move towards a pro-European stance.

The independence frame changed again when the EU intervened into the negotiation process between Serbia and Montenegro, pushing economic arguments into the focus of attention. However, after the Belgrade Agreement was signed, the parties regarded the status issue as being settled thus their proclaimed goals and arguments changed again. The topic of independence was taken off the agenda; the government returned to its reformist rhetoric while the opposition set regime change as its main aspiration. At that point, some leaders of the pro-Yugoslav coalition tried to link their program to a discourse promoting ethnic diversity. This attempt failed however, and by the referendum campaign they returned to their standard discursive position constructed by ethno-nationalist discourse and corruption charges against the government. References to citizens' personal interests were the only new element in their argumentation in favor of sustaining the state union. At the same time, the pro-independence parties during the referendum campaign relied on the democracy frame combined with economic arguments while emphasized the importance of Montenegro's European integration.

Therefore, frames shifted primarily in reaction to key events, such as the wave of anti- Milošević demonstrations in Serbia in 1996, Milošević's constitutional coup d'état against Montenegro, his fall from power, and the EU's intervention into the negotiation process between Serbia and Montenegro. These contextualizing events strongly determined the content of mobilizational frames. For instance, when Milošević rigged the local elections in Serbia in 1996, inspiring a wave of popular protests, Đukanović turned against him by referring to democratic principles. In 1999-2000 when Milošević violated Montenegro's constitutional rights, the Montenegrin leadership reasoned by using legal arguments and references to threats coming from Belgrade to justify claims for greater sovereignty. During the negotiations with Serbia before the Belgrade Agreement, the pro-independence frame centered on economic arguments as the EU forced the negotiating parties to focus on economic issues during the discussions. Elections per se did not lead to frame shifts, since elections in themselves did not necessarily imply a transformation of the political environment. Normally actors continued to rely on existing frames until circumstances changed and the established frames did not seem to be useful anymore. For instance, threat based arguments faded away from the government's discourse after Milošević was gone and the environment of external military threat had disappeared. At the same time, economic arguments, which came to dominate the pro-independence position during negotiations of the Belgrade Agreement remained important mobilization tools for independence four years later during the referendum campaign. As the pro-independence parties consciously and admittedly sought to present a pragmatic, interest based argumentation, economic arguments seemed to be ideal tools for building their position.

Frames themselves had considerable impact on Montenegrin politics during the independence movement. Sometimes, through framing politicians managed to change the

political status quo. Đukanović through a rhetorical action by adopting the civil society master frame turned against Milošević and put Montenegro on a Western oriented, reformist path. At the same time, by using pro-democracy arguments and stepping up his rhetoric against Milošević he attracted international support as he managed to frame the Montenegrin struggle for greater sovereignty in a way which matched the interests and identities of international audiences. Moreover, by employing the democracy and the prosperity frames which communicated an ethnically inclusive Montenegrin identity, the pro-independence parties won the backing of ethnic minorities. Thus through these framing efforts ruling parties managed to keep their domestic constituency and sustain international support throughout the whole mobilization period.

Moreover, frames relying on a civic understanding of national identity favored moderate politicians, debates and parties, which contributed to the preservation of inter-ethnic peace especially in the critical years of 1999-2000. When some of the Montenegrin Serbs began to mobilize in 1999, the government's framing the conflict in non-ethnic terms fostered moderation. It is important to note here that the pro independence frames excluded the language of violence, while the pro-Yugoslav discourse did not, as during the years of 1999-2000 SNP politicians threatened the government with war in case it pursued independence. Tensions with the Serbian minority could have intensified especially in the fall of 1999 at the time of the so called "tribal gatherings" had the government stepped up its rhetoric against Montenegrin Serbs by employing an ethnically exclusive language. Although the main reason why violence was avoided was that Milošević never intervened in Montenegro, still inter-ethnic relations with the Serbian minority could have deteriorated further had the government responded in a more aggressive way to perceived external and internal threats by using more radical discourse and actions.

As it was being argued based on the model of secessionist framing, the demographics of Montenegro itself best explains why an inclusivist independence position was pursued rather than exclusivist. In light of the multi-ethnic structure of Montenegro, it would have been self-defeating on the part of the government to employ some sort of ethnically exclusive rhetoric which could have alienated ethnic minorities. It is hard to imagine that minorities would have supported the government and its independence agenda in the absence of a broadly inclusivist discourse. Stressing Montenegrin civic identity attracted the support of minorities and prevented the exclusion of ethnic Serbs from the national community, helping to avoid a serious internal conflict with the Serbian minority. Thus due to the very demographics of Montenegro, the independence movement came to be based on an ethnically inclusive rhetoric, which in turn helped to preserve inter-ethnic peace in the republic.

In line with the model on secessionist framing, which frame becomes dominant is a combined effect of identity and contextualizing events. The initial reason why the Montenegrin independence movement came to be based on the civil society master frame was that as Đukanović grabbed the opportunity offered by the protests in late 1996, he confronted Milošević over the issue of democracy. More importantly, however, this frame seemed best suited for constructing an ethnically inclusive national identity, which was necessary in light of Montenegro's ethnic structure, as argued above. In addition, the pro-independence position during the discussions leading up to the Belgrade Agreement and in part during the referendum campaign was based on economic framing. Economic arguments emerged due to contextualizing events i.e. the EU's intervention into the negotiations. Nevertheless, economic arguments could enter the mobilization discourse due to their ethnically inclusive nature. Thus, the democracy and the prosperity frame were linked to each other while movement leaders formulated their position. These frames were

ideal tools to induce the perception of common Montenegrin interests thus to create interests to every citizen not only to the Orthodox population.

At the same time, since the pro-Yugoslav position was built on an ethnically exclusive version of national identity, it was difficult to link it to the civil society master frame or the prosperity frame. Economic arguments were rarely used to support the pro-Yugoslav/unionist position probably because economic arguments create interests for everyone living on a given territory regardless of ethnicity. For this reason, it is difficult to reinforce an ethnically exclusive national identity by using economic arguments. In addition, although unionist politicians made efforts to adopt a pro-EU rhetoric after Milošević's fall from power during the October 2002 election campaign, they could not permanently link the pro-Yugoslav position to a "European" frame, considering that by the referendum such arguments disappeared from their discourse. As the pro-Yugoslav parties began to adopt a pro-EU stance, it created tensions within the coalition, since EU values and ideals were in sharp contradiction with the block's ethno-nationalism and hostility to minorities. This motivated part of the leadership to construct a different identity friendly to minorities for the pro-Yugoslav political option during the campaign in 2002. The attempt failed in the end, because the coalition's support base rejected this frame shift. Failed framing efforts of the pro-Yugoslav block indicated that framing entrepreneurs were not free to combine discursive elements in an arbitrary way. This meant that the pro-Yugoslav position could neither be disentangled from the ethno-nationalist discourse nor reconciled with a "civic identity", which defines the nation as a community of citizens, not as one based on common ethnic belonging.

Altogether, it can be concluded that the content of a discourse matters during nationalist mobilization; what kind of frames are being used influences inter-ethnic dynamics. Moreover, what is being said is important even if a rhetoric contradicts reality on the ground. The ruling parties in Montenegro presented themselves as democratic reformers, while living standards were deteriorating and policies did not testify to a commitment to reforms either. Moreover, the opposition's continued allegations about corruption and mafia connections of the government many times seemed to be supported by convincing evidence.²⁵¹ Yet, even if the political elite led by Milo Đukanović were a real mafia hungry for money and power as their opponents claimed, their reformist, pro-European, civic discourse created positive political dynamics, which helped to preserve multiethnic harmony.

²⁵¹ ICG, "A Marriage of Inconvenience: Montenegro 2003," Europe Report N°142, 16 April 2003, 18.; Interview with Miodrag Vlahović, in "If Đukanović entrenches himself it would lead him into a political defeat," *Vijesti*, MNNews-Online, 16-12-2002; "Montenegrin press review for Tuesday 25 April 06," BBC Monitoring, 25-04-2006.

V. Testing the model outside Eastern Europe: Spain and Indonesia as plausibility probes

In this chapter the theoretical model will be tested with four cases outside of Eastern Europe in order to determine whether the model travels outside of the cultural, political and historical conditions unique to Eastern Europe. The analytical framework will be applied to two paired case studies: the self-determination movements in East Timor and Aceh in Indonesia, and Catalonia and the Basque country in Spain. Spain and Indonesia in terms of their cultural and historical setting have not much in common with each other or with Yugoslavia, which is why it is worth investigating to what extent the model of secessionist framing can be applied to these additional cases of nationalist mobilization.

Each pair belonged to the same country and emerged approximately during the same time period among very similar conditions and thus represent good cases for comparison. Yet, the dependent variable i.e. inclusive versus exclusive nationalist framing varied within each pair. In Catalonia mobilizational frames reflected an ethnically inclusive understanding of the nation, as opposed to the Basque country where during the first phase of the movement i.e. until the Franco era ethnically exclusive frames dominated. (However, subsequently, from the 1960s Basque national identity began to shift towards an inclusive interpretation.) In Indonesia, East Timorese forged an ethnically inclusive national identity whereas the Acehnese adopted an exclusivist interpretation of national self-understanding. The aim of this chapter is to explain the causal mechanism in each case and to examine whether the mode of action was the same between the Indonesian and the Spanish cases with the same dependent variable.

Although the Catalan movement primarily sought autonomy and not secession, still it is worth including in the analysis. Autonomy and independence movements both represent struggles of a community of a non-independent territory for some form of self-

administration, they differ only in the degree of claims. As Horowitz noted, groups often move back and forth along the continuum of group claims sometimes radicalizing their demands sometimes moderating them.¹ For this reason autonomy movements are not essentially different from secessionist ones, which is why the Catalan case can be compared to that of the Basques. Such comparison is justified especially considering that in 1982 when the Spanish state wanted to curb some of the autonomous rights of Catalonia and the Basque country, Catalans stepped up their demands and called for the separation of Catalonia from Spain.²

East Timor

East Timor had been a Portuguese colony from the 1500s up until the overthrow of the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal. This prompted the process of decolonization in 1974 when in East Timor the first parties were formed, and nationalism and anti-colonialism emerged. Three major political parties were created, two of which promoted the idea of independence while the third (APODETI) stood for the integration with Indonesia. UDT, one of the parties which fought for self-determination was Christian socialist and conservative, had close links with the Catholic Church and was strongly anti-communist. UDT stressed East Timor's Portuguese identity and wanted decolonization with Portuguese assistance.³ Fretilin, which became the most popular party and later led the East Timorese resistance against the Indonesian occupation, had Marxist leanings.

However, when in 1974 the Portuguese governor called for democratic elections, it was not easy to mobilize people for nationalist political projects, especially those living in the countryside among their tribes. The population was ethnically highly fractionalized, less than one million inhabitants were divided among more than fifteen different ethno-

¹ Donald Horowitz, "Irredentas and Secessions: Neglected Connections," in *Irredentism and International Politics*, ed. Naomi Chazan (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991), 13.

² Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 147.

³ Bill Nicol, *Timor: A Nation Reborn* (Equinox Publishing, 2002), 156-167.

linguistic groups representing two different language families – Austroindonesian and Papuan – where four languages covered most of the territory.⁴ The majority of the population did not care much about events happening outside of their small community, had a general fear of change and did not dare to criticize the colonizers. In addition, people were psychologically attached to Portugal, fostered by blood pacts and the Church. However, Fretilin managed to win their support, as it was the first party to use local dialect and it adopted the word “Maubere” to refer to an incipient East Timorese nation, thus forging a communal identity overriding ethnic differences. This term originally had a derogatory connotation as the Portuguese colonizers used it to label the locals. However, Fretilin endowed the word with a new meaning that is “one of the people”. Moreover, Fretilin introduced agricultural and educational programs to fight illiteracy and politicize the population. Ultimately, Fretilin managed to foster trans-ethnic national consciousness by addressing the natives as “people of East Timor, brother Maubere”, while at the same time it was also stimulating indigenous culture.⁵

In 1975 East Timor was invaded by Indonesia and ultimately, the common experience of suffering the brutal Indonesian military oppression, during which one third of the population perished, formed the nation. In addition, sharing the common Catholic faith helped to create relatively cohesive multiethnic elite. The number of church goers doubled during the occupation. The Church became an important pillar of resistance through providing refuge to the people, although it avoided advocating independence openly. Catholicism became an important part of East Timorese identity under the occupation, which significantly differentiated the locals from the Muslim Indonesian occupiers.⁶ As the

⁴ David Wurfel, “Democracy, Nationalism and Ethnic Identity: The Philippines and East Timor Compared,” in *Democratization and Identity: Regimes and Ethnicity in East and Southeast Asia*, ed. Susan J. Henders (Lexington Books, 2006), 203.

⁵ Bill Nicol, *Timor: A Nation Reborn*, 167.

⁶ Peter Carey, “The Catholic Church, Religious Revival, and the Nationalist Movement in East Timor, 1975-98,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 27, no.78 (1999): 86.

Nobel peace price winner Bishop Belo explained, “the Catholic faith for the people is a kind of symbol to unite them, it is a way to express the fact that they are Timorese, they don’t like any other religion [and] they [certainly] don’t like Indonesia.”⁷

In the mid 1980s, the different pro-independence groups originally split along ideological lines were brought together by the occupation: primarily the Church and Fretilin that in the 1970s used to be hostile to each other. The Church used to be suspicious of Fretilin due to its Marxists leanings, while Fretilin viewed the Church as part of the former colonizing establishment. Subsequently, the occupation produced an inclusive vision of the nation transcending ethnic and ideological divides.⁸

As Jacques Bertrand noted, as a result of decades of occupation, different groups in East Timor began to identify themselves as “East Timorese” and “conceived of themselves as a distinct nation based on ethnic differences”.⁹ Two features of the island’s society made the creation of such an ethnically inclusive national identity possible. On the one hand, patronage networks encouraged inter-ethnic and inter-linguistic bargaining among the various ethnic groups, which constituted the East Timorese people. On the other hand, East Timor had a very balanced ethnic structure, meaning that the population was ethnically highly heterogeneous thus there was not a single group that culturally dominated or could have assumed the right to control others. Thus the highly diverse ethnic arithmetic allowed for the emergence of an ethnically inclusive national identity. The relative irrelevance of East Timor’s intra-ethnic divisions was indicated also by the fact that the emerging East Timorese parties reflected ideological rather than ethnic differences.¹⁰

⁷ Interview with Bishop Belo in 1993 by a researcher from the Catholic Institute of International Relations, cited in Peter Carey, “The Catholic Church, Religious Revival, and the Nationalist Movement in East Timor”, 86.

⁸ David Wurfel, “Democracy, Nationalism and Ethnic Identity: The Philippines and East Timor Compared”, 202.

⁹ Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Indonesia* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 135.

¹⁰ David Wurfel, “Democracy, Nationalism and Ethnic Identity: The Philippines and East Timor Compared,” 234.

John Taylor noted that “the differentiated social structure of the pre-invasion period” marked by cleavages between urban and rural, rich and poor, assimilated and indigenous, and distinct linguistic groups “converged politically and ideologically because of the occupation.” The initial ideological differences also vanished gradually as the occupation brought the Church and Fretilin close to each other.¹¹

While until 1984 violent military actions characterized the resistance, from the mid 1980’s the movement began to assume a more peaceful image as student underground movements were formed that started to stage anti-Indonesian demonstrations. Eventually towards the end of the 1980s, the CNRT (National Council of Timorese Resistance) was founded, which embraced all resistance organizations, and fundamentally advocated peaceful opposition.¹²

However, despite the essentially peaceful nature of the resistance and the inclusive nature of East Timorese identity, Indonesian immigrants who arrived to East Timor alongside the Indonesian army were excluded from the national community. The arrival of the settlers – mostly Javanese and Balinese families – meant economic marginalization for the local Timorese who were squeezed out of office jobs especially in the public sector.¹³ In 1995, there were some 180,000 Indonesian transmigrants in East Timor, which was considerable given that the whole population numbered 830,000. Ethnically motivated violence was widespread against the settlers who were clearly seen as part of the Indonesian establishment. Attacks were carried out by members of the East Timorese

¹¹ Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Indonesia*, 135-137.

¹² Jacques Bertrand, 137.

¹³ Ben Kiernan, *Genocide and resistance in Southeast Asia.: documentation, denial and justice in Cambodia and East Timor* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2008), 279.

armed resistance not only against Indonesian soldiers but also against civilians and Islamic religious property.¹⁴

The occupation in East Timor reached a turning point in 1991 when the Indonesian army slaughtered hundreds of peaceful protesters in Dili in front of the international media. This raised international awareness towards human rights abuses in East Timor, and helped to mobilize public opinion world wide. At the same time, East Timorese students began to create links with pro-democracy groups in Indonesia. As a result, East Timorese and Indonesian pro-democracy movements joined their forces against the common enemy i.e. the Indonesian military dictatorship. The fall of the Suharto regime in 1998 and president Habibie coming to power opened the way to holding a referendum on East Timor's status. Although the referendum was followed by harsh military reprisals, East Timor finally gained independence in 2002.¹⁵

While the struggle in East Timor attracted the attention of the world's public as a human rights issue, East Timorese leaders most often framed their fight in terms of national self-determination and as an anti-colonial struggle. Naturally, they frequently talked about brutalities of the Indonesians, yet these reports of human rights abuses most often referred to crimes committed against the nation, the collective rather than against individuals. Atrocities against specific persons were usually mentioned as illustrations of human rights violations against "the East Timorese", the nation as a whole. Jose Ramos-Horta, one of the main leaders of the resistance movement, in an interview given in 1999 to the Australian broadcaster ABC called on Australians and the international community to "save a small nation that is being threatened with destruction and extinction". The parallel between the

¹⁴ Peter Carey, "The Catholic Church, Religious Revival, and the Nationalist Movement in East Timor," 88.

¹⁵ Jason MacLeod, "Free at Last: The Struggle for Independence in East Timor," The Change Agency, http://www.thechangeagency.org/dbase_upl/CaseStudy_East_Timor.pdf.

fate of the Jews under the Holocaust and the East Timorese under the Indonesian occupation was frequently drawn by their leaders. Furthermore, they often talked about crimes of the Indonesians in terms of committing genocide thus stressing the collective and not the individual aspect of human rights abuses.¹⁶ Similarly, a leader of RENETIL (National Resistance of East Timorese Students) while addressing the UN Committee on Decolonization introduced his organization as one which “has been struggling for the right to self-determination and independence for East-Timor”. In his statement he emphasized the distinct nature of East Timorese people who have their “own culture, religion, language and colonial history”. He further added that “the question of East Timor is a question of the violation of the fundamental rights of self-determination of the people of East Timor” (rather than the violation of fundamental human rights, such as the right to life, liberty and security of person).¹⁷

Altogether, in East Timor nationalists justified their goals much more in terms of appeals to justice, international law, the right of self-determination, and resistance to outside aggression than they did by emphasizing ethnic, cultural or historical factors, mostly because the brutality of the invasion was the most important experience forging the nation. In addition, the East Timorese movement was fundamentally framed as a struggle for self-determination and not as a fight for human rights and democracy, which could have been a feasible option, considering that international sympathies were attracted on grounds of severe human rights violations by the Indonesians. Yet, as the movement was fueled by existential threats targeted against individuals on ethnic basis, mobilization centered on the ethnic security and not on the democracy frame even if demands for the respect of human

¹⁶ “ABC interview with Ramos Horta as Timor liberation begins,” 25 September 1999, <http://www.etan.org/et99b/september/19-25/20abc.htm>.

¹⁷ Constancio Pinto, Statement before the United Nations Committee on Decolonization on behalf of the National Resistance of East Timorese Students (RENETIL), New York, July 1998, http://www.algonet.se/~tpollak/OTK/UN_decol98/RENETIL.txt.

freedoms and democracy were important elements of the pro-independence rhetoric.

Although this frame was not about ethnic security in the traditional sense meaning that East Timorese feared oppression primarily from the government rather than from an other ethnic group, still their lives were threatened due to their ethnic belonging, which is why this mobilizational frame expressed fears about ethnic security rather than concerns about human rights and democracy.

In addition, given the extreme difficulty of secession, mobilizing people by applying the ethnic security frame seemed reasonable, since the struggle against the Indonesians involved serious personal sacrifices. The ethnic security frame is expected to be salient if a movement faces considerable threat, regardless of whether that threat is internally perceived or stems from the outside.

Therefore, in East Timor an ethnically highly fractionalized population was unified by an overarching ethnic identity, which became the basis of their ethnically inclusive national identity.¹⁸ A very heterogeneous ethnic structure and a very weak, almost hardly existing national identity characterized the population of East Timor towards the end of the Portuguese colonial period. When in the late 1960s/early 1970s some groups started to mobilize for independence, the mainstream of the movement represented by Fretilin assumed a leftist ideological character whose leaders aspired to forge an overarching communal identity by using the name Maubere. After the Indonesians invaded the country, and secession became extremely difficult, costing the lives of hundreds of thousands, East Timorese identity got solidified, and became the basis of the nationalist movement. Forging this inclusivist national identity was also a way to overcome ideological differences, which

¹⁸According to Edward Aspinall and David Brown, East Timorese national identity could be best described as civic identity. Edward Aspinall, personal correspondence with author, 22 September 2009; David Brown, *Contemporary Nationalism: Civic, Ethnocultural and Multicultural Politics* (London: Routledge, 2000), 56-57.

previously divided the various groups that supported resistance against the Indonesians. The East Timorese communal identity represented the common ideological ground among conservative and leftist nationalist groups, which were previously hostile to each other.

Yet, nationalist mobilization in East Timor was marked by ethnic violence against Indonesian transmigrants, which runs against the basic theoretical propositions of this dissertation, according to which ethnic exclusion and violence is not likely to happen when national identity is based on an ethnically inclusive understanding of the nation.¹⁹ East Timorese nationalism was very hostile to Indonesian migrants and settlers unlike to other internal minorities such as the Chinese. However, considering that the East Timorese were butchered by the Indonesians in the hundreds of thousands, it is not surprising that Indonesian settlers who arrived to East Timor alongside the army were not included into the national community as they were understandably seen as agents of the invasion. Ethnic violence hardens ethnic divisions between the opposing parties regardless of whether common identity is framed in inclusive or exclusive terms.

The case of East Timor suggests that framing has the power to influence inter-ethnic relations until the outbreak of ethnic violence within the secessionist entity. Adopting a civic national identity and using ethnically inclusive frames during secessionist mobilization can contribute to peaceful ethnic relations before ethnically based violence ensues. Inclusive framing has the tendency not to alienate ethnic minorities living in the secessionist entity but to include them into the “nation” in the name of which independence is demanded. Yet, as soon as ethnic violence is inflicted on the movement from the outside in the form of aggression by an occupying army, which is killing the local population on an ethnic basis, co-ethnics of the occupiers who are at the same time politically linked to the

¹⁹ Lewa Pardomuan, “Embattled Chinese find safe haven in East Timor,” Reuters, 20-07-1998, <http://www.etan.org/et/1998/july/july14-21/20chine.htm>; Sonny Inbaraj, “East Timor’s Chinese look forward to going home,” *Asia Times Online*, 13-03-1999, <http://www.atimes.com/se-asia/AC13Ae02.html>.

aggressors are unlikely to be included into the nation but will be seen as enemies. Given that the Indonesians began ethnic cleansing in East Timor no wonder that the East Timorese showed hostility towards the Javanese settlers who moved to East Timor with the help of the army. This conclusion is in line with Gagnon's argument, according to whom once violence ensues in the name of an ethnic group against the other, it deprives people of the choice to identify themselves in any other way than ethnic and hardens ethnic divisions between the opposing groups.²⁰ Under such circumstances, co-ethnics of the perpetrators of violence are unlikely to be included into the secessionist nation which is subject to ethnic cleansing. Evidently, people tend not to accept those as members of their nation who are trying to kill them due to their ethnic origin.

At the same time, East Timorese showed very different attitudes towards another ethnic minority group, the Chinese. In 1998 Chinese were fleeing to East Timor from Indonesia from terror and intimidation, apparently feeling welcome in East Timor. More than twenty years after the Indonesians slaughtered most of the Chinese in East Timor, there were again some 2000 Chinese living in Dili, East Timor's capital. As a Chinese shopkeeper explained his situation in East Timor: "I never feel I am treated differently by the East Timorese only because I am Chinese. I hold an Indonesian identity card because Indonesia is here, but I feel that I am an East Timorese."²¹ This demonstrates that while the East Timorese excluded the Javanese, other ethnic groups unconnected to the occupying regime such as the Chinese were welcome to be part of their nation.

Aceh

By contrast to East Timor, in Aceh not only the Javanese but also other minorities became targets of violent attacks during the course of the independence movement, which

²⁰ Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War*, 28.

²¹ "Embattled Chinese find safe haven in East Timor"; "East Timor's Chinese look forward to going home."

started in 1976 and came to an end in 2005. Besides the Javanese, the Chinese, contractors working for international companies and civil servants were additional targets, all of whom were seen as potential collaborators of the Indonesian regime.²² Another feature distinguishing the case of Aceh from that of East Timor is that long before the movement started, the Acehnese had a strong sense of distinctive ethnic identity central to which was their regionally specific form of Islam, a distinct language and a history of independence until the Dutch invasion in 1873.²³ Religion is probably the most important unifying factor of the people of Aceh.²⁴ Although there are ethnic differences within the population, mainly between the Acehnese, the Gayo and the Alas peoples, these are of minor importance while the Acehnese constitute the dominant majority within the population.²⁵ Fundamentally, the Acehnese independence movement was based “on a widely shared and well-established sense of Acehnese identity”.²⁶

It is worth noting though that in the beginning, being Acehnese and Indonesian were not mutually exclusive categories. The Acehnese fought together with the Indonesians for independence against the Dutch colonizers and “framed their resistance in terms of an overarching Indonesian identity”.²⁷ The rebellion in Aceh against Indonesia began when it became clear that Indonesia was becoming a secular state not one based on religion, which implied that Islam which was central to Acehnese identity was being marginalized. Only when the Acehnese realized that the Indonesian state will not be constituted on an Islamic

²² Kirsten E. Schulze, “The Free Aceh Movement (GAM): Anatomy of a Separatist Organization,” East-West Center Washington, September 2004, 39, <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/3514/1/PS002.pdf>.

²³ Clive J. Christie, *A modern history of Southeast Asia: decolonization, nationalism and separatism* (I.B. Tauris, 1996), 140.

²⁴ Kirsten E. Schulze, “The Free Aceh Movement (GAM): Anatomy of a Separatist Organization”, 7.

²⁵ 80% are ethnic Acehnese, while the second biggest indigenous group, the Gayo constitute only 5% of the population. There are other groups, which however live in even smaller numbers. Javanese are the only sizable minority making up 7% of the total population, yet this is an immigrant minority viewed with hostility by the natives. In Anthony Reid, “Introduction,” in *Verandah of Violence, The Background to the Aceh Problem*, ed. Anthony Reid (Singapore University Press, 2006), 5.

²⁶ Edward Aspinall, “The Construction of Grievance: Natural Resources and Identity in a Separatist Conflict,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51 (2007): 967.

²⁷ Edward Aspinall, 958.

basis did aspirations for regional solutions emerge. Yet, the resistance movement in Aceh, which erupted in 1953, was initially not over independence but over the role of Islam in the state and sought only autonomy not secession.²⁸

The independence movement was launched in 1976 by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), and was directly triggered by the removal of Aceh's special status, which granted self-governing rights to the province in the fields of religion, customary law and education. After Mohammad Suharto took power in Indonesia in 1965, Aceh's autonomous status was revoked, which meant not only that the province's political prerogatives were withdrawn but also the *ulamas'*, the local Islamic clerics' power was also considerably reduced.²⁹ However, the rising armed resistance shifted its emphasis from Islam to ethnicity stressing the national distinctiveness of the Acehnese from other peoples of Indonesia.³⁰ The resistance started not long after the discovery of gas and oil fields in Aceh in 1971 by Mobil Oil Indonesia, which fueled resentment among Acehnese that their natural wealth was being drained away by the center. However, the most important reason generating mass support for the movement two decades later was the Indonesian army's heavy-handed tactics against the insurgency, which included murder, abductions, mutilation and sexual assault against the Acehnese population.³¹

²⁸ The so called Darul Islam rebellion wanted to transform Indonesia into an Islamic state and did not seek secession, only autonomy. In Kirsten E. Schulze, "The Free Aceh Movement (GAM): Anatomy of a Separatist Organization," 2.

²⁹ Robert Shaw, "Aceh's Struggle for Independence: Considering the Role of Islam in Separatist Conflict," *al Nakhlah, The Fletcher School Online Journal on Southwest Asia and Islamic Civilization* (2008): 4.

³⁰ Edward Aspinall, "The Construction of Grievance: Natural Resources and Identity in a Separatist Conflict," 959.

³¹ Edward Aspinall, "Modernity, History and Ethnicity: Indonesian and Acehnese nationalism in conflict," manuscript received from the author, originally appeared in *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 36, no. 1. (2002):3-33.

The Indonesian military came down heavily on the rebels and the people; thousands of guerillas and civilians were killed and tortured by the Indonesians especially in the 1990s. Human rights abuses committed by the Indonesians transformed GAM into a genuinely popular movement in the late 1990s.³² As Edward Aspinall argued, state violence greatly contributed to the growth of ethno-nationalism in Aceh. Allegations about human rights abuses carried out by the Indonesian security forces against the Acehnese became an important reference point in GAM's rhetoric as well; the organization in its statements and comments often mentioned these atrocities as reasons to justify its actions.³³ Consequently, real ethnic tensions arose with the Javanese minority, most of whom were forced to leave their homes due to intimidation by GAM, which included extortion, and murders of civilians.³⁴ Violence against the Javanese was on the rise from the mid 1990s. Especially following the expansion of GAM in 1999, between 120,000-170,000 Javanese had to flee, some of whom had been living in Aceh since the Dutch colonial period while others came as transmigrants under Indonesian rule.³⁵

Mobilizational rhetoric of GAM centered on the ethnic security frame and on anti-capitalist, anti-Western ideology, while also included demands related to human rights and democracy. However, ethnocultural themes were the most dominant in GAM's rhetoric framed by historical arguments, references to common blood ties and religion.³⁶ According to GAM's communication, the movement's most important goal was to ensure "the survival of the people of Aceh-Sumatra as a nation; the survival of their political, social, cultural and religious heritage, which are being destroyed by the

³² Kirsten E. Schulze, "The Free Aceh Movement (GAM): Anatomy of a Separatist Organization," 16.

³³ Edward Aspinall, "Violence and Identity Formation in Aceh under Indonesian Rule," in *Verandah of Violence, The Background to the Aceh Problem*, ed. Anthony Reid (Singapore University Press, 2006), 168.

³⁴ "Aceh: Why Military Force Won't Bring Lasting Peace," *Asia Report* N°17, 12-06-2001, 2.

³⁵ Kirsten E. Schulze, "Strategy and the Aceh Conflict," in *Verandah of Violence*, 237.

³⁶ Edward Aspinall, "Modernity, History and Ethnicity: Indonesian and Acehnese nationalism in conflict."

Javanese colonialists”.³⁷ Acehese nationalist leaders relied heavily on historical arguments partially in order to destroy the historical connection between Aceh and Indonesia. As GAM’s foundation document, the “Redeclaration of Independence of Aceh, Sumatra” of December 4, 1976 claims

“...when, after World War II, the Dutch East Indies was supposed to have been liquidated – an empire is not liquidated if its territory is preserved – our fatherland, Aceh, Sumatra, was not returned to us. Instead, our fatherland was turned over by the Dutch to the Javanese – their mercenaries – by hasty fiat of former colonial powers. The Javanese are alien and foreign people to us Acehese Sumatrans. We have no historic, political, cultural, economic or geographic relationship with them.”³⁸

Yet, as Aspinall argued, obsession with history was not only GAM’s characteristic but it was fed by the widespread feeling of the Acehese people that their glory belongs to the past and that the Indonesian period brought decline to Aceh.³⁹

Historical arguments were also meant to reinforce Acehese distinct ethnic consciousness. GAM aimed to create “a distinct and exclusive ethnocultural basis for Acehese national identity” indicated by frequent references to the common land and ancestry. For instance Hasan di Tiro, the founder of GAM wrote in his memoires “Memorize your history! It has been written, not by ink over the papers, but by your forefathers’ blood over every inch of our beautiful valleys and breath-taking heights...”.⁴⁰ Islam was also central to GAM’s character, as it served as a further unifying element of the population while also reinforcing Aceh’s differences from syncretistic Java. Yet, GAM’s objectives were fundamentally political rather than religious.⁴¹ Arguably, GAM set the movement on an ethnic-political and not on a religious basis for strategic reasons i.e. to

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Hasan M di Tiro, *The Price of Freedom (The Unfinished Diary)*, Information Department, National Liberation Front Aceh Sumatra, Norsborg, 1981, 24-25, cited in Edward Aspinall, “Modernity, History and Ethnicity: Indonesian and Acehese nationalism in conflict.”

³⁹ Edward Aspinall, “Modernity, History and Ethnicity: Indonesian and Acehese nationalism in conflict.”

⁴⁰ Hasan M di Tiro, 69, cited in Aspinall.

attract wide international support. It organized training camps in the 1980s in Libya and not in Iran, as the latter required GAM to assume an Islamic character. However, as GAM needed the widest domestic support, it retained its Islamic identity, for instance by using the mosque network to spread its independence message.⁴² Islam remained a “subcurrent” of GAM’s ideology, “a reflection of Acehese identity and character” while it has not come to constitute GAM’s political goals.⁴³ Although ethno-nationalist discourse remained the most prominent line in GAM’s rhetoric, the movement also began to employ the language of human rights from the 1990s mostly in order to attract international support.

However, atrocities by the Indonesians against the population of Aceh, which the Acehese called genocide, reinforced the ethnic security frame that mobilized the population en masse. In addition, economic grievances also played an important role in increasing popular support for the movement. 30% of Indonesia’s oil and gas exports were extracted in Aceh, which were not matched by a similar level of government spending in the province.⁴⁴ The discourse about the economic marginalization of Aceh was an important part of the mobilization rhetoric especially in 1980s, later overshadowed by claims about human rights abuses. Although Aceh was no worse off than other regions in Indonesia, grievances emerged as it was widely recognized that in light of the natural resource base discovered, the province’s economic development could have been much stronger than it actually was.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, capitalizing on these popular frustrations GAM argued that Aceh was subject to neo-colonialist exploitation and therefore had the

⁴¹ Robert Shaw, “Aceh’s Struggle for Independence: Considering the Role of Islam in Separatist Conflict,” 1.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁵ Mette Lindorf Nielsen, “Questioning Aceh’s Inevitability: A Story of Failed National Integration?” *Global Politics Network* (Issue Spring 2002): 17, <http://www.globalpolitics.net/framesets/journalframe.html>.

right to secede.⁴⁶ “Aceh, Sumatra has been producing a revenue over 15 billion US dollars yearly for the Javanese colonialists, which they used totally for the benefit of Java and the Javanese”, claimed GAM’s “declaration of independence” of December 1976.⁴⁷ This economic discourse thus in reality reinforced the ethnic security frame, as it supported the argument that the Indonesian state served the interest of one ethnic group only that is of the Javanese at the expense of others i.e. the Acehnese.⁴⁸ Aspinall argued along similar lines that “the evolving framework for Acehnese identity provided a prism through which natural resource exploitation was interpreted in grievance terms” rather than natural resource grievances being the direct source of the conflict.⁴⁹

After the fall of Sukarno with the democratic changes, GAM’s ideology based on ethnic and historic roots was somewhat marginalized by calls for democracy, respect for human rights and economic restructuring forwarded by civil society and student organizations.⁵⁰ Yet, as non-violent protests failed to deliver benefits, people disappointed with Indonesian democracy were increasingly drawn to GAM, leading the ethno-nationalist frame to regain prominence over the democracy frame. According to Aspinall, many young people who used to be human rights activists became “hardened Acehnese nationalists” in response to the massacres committed by the Indonesian army in 1999 and after.⁵¹ Indonesia stepped up its counter-insurgency activities from 2001, which included the introduction of martial law in 2003, as a result by 2004 much of GAM’s fighting ability was destroyed.⁵² The tsunami in 2004 hit Aceh especially hard, costing the lives of hundreds of thousands.

⁴⁶ Mette Lindorf Nielsen, 19.

⁴⁷ Cited in Aspinall, “The Construction of Grievance: Natural Resources and Identity in a Separatist Conflict,” 954.

⁴⁸ Mette Lindorf Nielsen, 20.

⁴⁹ Edward Aspinall, “The Construction of Grievance: Natural Resources and Identity in a Separatist Conflict,” 957.

⁵⁰ Mette Lindorf Nielsen, 31.

⁵¹ Aspinall, “Violence and Identity Formation in Aceh under Indonesian Rule,” 169.

⁵² Schulze, “Strategy and the Aceh Conflict,” 247.

In response to the disaster, GAM asked for a ceasefire so that the corpses could be collected, which was a daunting task given the magnitude of the destruction. In addition, the Indonesian government allowed foreigners to enter Aceh who wanted to distribute international aid. Although the army continued its counter-insurgency operations in the province, it also distributed aid and helped the reconstruction. The government and GAM finally grabbed the opportunity offered by the tsunami to seek a negotiated solution.⁵³ The two sides reached a peace agreement in 2005 with EU assistance. Peace has held since the agreement was signed, which granted special autonomy to the province. Subsequently, the government reduced the presence of security forces in Aceh, GAM fighters were disarmed and the level of violence decreased radically. In 2006 local elections were held which elevated a GAM strategist to the post of the province's governor.⁵⁴

The case of Aceh supports the present theoretical framework, since the people of Aceh embraced GAM's exclusivist, ethnically defined vision of the Acehnese nation in response to human rights violations carried out by the Indonesian forces against the indigenous population of the island. The people of Aceh initially (i.e. before the 1970s) sustained a regional identity, which was not at odds with an Indonesian national identity. When Indonesia began to behave in a truly threatening way indicated by its use of violence against the Acehnese, perceptions of internal threat associated with the Javanese immigrants emerged and national identity shifted towards an ethnically exclusive interpretation. In Aceh's case similarly to that of East Timor, violence carried out by the Indonesian military against the local population was the most decisive in triggering ethnic violence against the Javanese. GAM began attacking Indonesian non-combatants from the mid 1990s which was preceded by the Indonesian military's widespread human rights

⁵³ Michelle Ann Miller, "What's Special about Special Autonomy in Aceh?" in *Verandah of Violence*, 311.

violations against the Acehnese civilian population, especially in the early 1990s during DOM (Military Operations Zone), killing several thousands.⁵⁵ Thus, people began to see the Javanese minority as an internal enemy after Indonesia stepped up its military activity in the province. As the Indonesian state orchestrated the immigration of Javanese to Aceh, the settlers were easily perceived by the locals as being linked to the threatening center. Although some of the Javanese had been living in Aceh since the Dutch colonial period, many of them came in the 1980s and 1990s as part of the Indonesian state's transmigration program. As a result, Indonesian transmigrants were excluded from the national community as the model of secessionist framing would predict. The result was ethnic violence targeted against them.

In addition, although various kinds of discourses were used throughout the course of the movement, the ethnic security frame dominated, which is the expected mobilizational tool when common identity is set on an exclusive basis under conditions of ethnic violence. Although both in East Timor and Aceh internal perceptions of threat emerged associated with a local minority which was connected to the occupiers, nonetheless national identity was framed in an ethnically inclusive way in East Timor in contrast to Aceh, which as I argued was due to the multi-ethnic structure of the population. Thus this structural condition of East Timor explains fundamentally the difference between the Acehnese and the East Timorese national identity.

Moreover, although as my model predicts East Timor should have had much more peaceful internal relations than Aceh given that it chose an ethnically inclusive national identity, due to ethnic violence perpetrated by the Indonesian forces Indonesian settlers

⁵⁴ Edward Aspinall, "Peace without justice? The Helsinki Peace Process in Aceh," Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, April 2008 Report, 5, http://www.conflict-recovery.org/bin/CHD_Aceh_peacewithoutjustice.pdf.

who had ties with the center were excluded from the secessionist nation in East Timor as well, similarly to Aceh. The comparison between Aceh and East Timor suggests that under conditions of ethnically based violence, unsurprisingly, the inclusion of minorities that are ethnically and/or politically connected to the aggressor regime into the secessionist nation is very unlikely. In such situations, violence overrides any other consideration, which also means that it does not matter much whether national identity is framed in ethnically inclusive or exclusive terms.

Catalans

Catalan nationalism from the early 20th century was characterized as bourgeois, as initially Catalan intelligentsia and the political elite were leading the nationalist movement.⁵⁶ Yet, already in the early 1930s radical leftists and Catalan nationalists formed the first broad coalition, which was a reaction to Primo de Rivera's dictatorship that combined national and social oppression. In 1931 a coalition of Catalan left wing parties (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya) won the regional elections, which attracted a significant part of the votes of workers, many of whom were Castilian and anarchists.⁵⁷ Anarchism was especially welcome in Catalonia given that it advocated the decentralization of Spain.⁵⁸ A study carried out before WWI found that "Catalonia nationalized the immigrants" indicated by immigrant workers' absorption of the "general ideas" of Catalan workers and their willingness to learn the language. Thus, as Catalan nationalists started to embrace other oppositional groups, the movement was set on a broad popular base with a leftist nationalist orientation already before the Spanish civil war.⁵⁹ The

⁵⁵ It was estimated that between 1000 and 3000 people were killed and another 900 to 1400 disappeared during the DOM operation. In ICG, "Aceh: Why Military Force Won't Bring Lasting Peace," ICG Asia Report N°17, 2001, 3.

⁵⁶ Hank Johnston, *Tales of Nationalism*, 83.

⁵⁷ Gershon Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation in Catalonia, the Basque Country, Latvia, and Estonia* (SUNY Press, 1995), 59-60.

⁵⁸ Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 40.

⁵⁹ Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 78.

result was the emergence of an inclusive national identity, the core value of which was Catalan language.⁶⁰ Catalan language enjoyed a high prestige due to Catalonia's economically developed status as compared to other regions in Spain, and also because Catalan social and economic elites ensured that Catalan language retained its dominant position within Catalonia. Consequently, for immigrants the knowledge of Catalan became a tool of integration and social mobility.⁶¹

Under the Franco regime, cultural nationalists again allied themselves with radical leftist groups as Franco was “the worst adversary of both socialists and regional nationalists”.⁶² Consequently, Catalan nationalism in the 1950s and 60s came to include diverse groups among them leftists, Catholics and non-Catalan immigrants who all stood in opposition to the official Spanish establishment.⁶³ Marxist ideology was layered on the Catalan identity in the 1960s when Marxism was on the rise in Catalonia. In addition, in the late 1950s and early 1960s many Christian Catalan organizations whose members had strong Catholic and nationalist background began to shift leftward as well.⁶⁴ The appeal of Marxism to Catalan nationalists was due to the ideology's vehement opposition to Francoism while Catalanism in itself was not militant enough for young people. Simultaneously, as the Catholic Church increasingly raised its voice in favor of linguistic freedom and social justice and consequently came to be defined as anti-Francoist, the Catholic middle class also felt encouraged to voice their nationalist sentiments more openly.⁶⁵ Although the Catholic Church in Spain was an important ally of the Franco regime, the regional clergy increasingly assumed a leading role in the Catalan resistance

⁶⁰ Ibid., 54.

⁶¹ Ibid., 81.

⁶² Ibid., 62.

⁶³ Johnston, *Tales of Nationalism*, 159.

⁶⁴ Johnston, *Tales of Nationalism*, 93.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 125.

movement from the 1940s. Especially the Benedictine Abbey of Montserrat became a center of Catalan opposition under the abbot of Aureli Escarre (1908-68), and also many local parishes were safe heavens for the Catalan opposition.⁶⁶

Altogether, anti-Francoism became the link which brought together Catalan nationalists and working class immigrants into the same camp.⁶⁷ As a result, major working class organizations came out in “support for nationalist demands during anti-Francoist mobilization” as Catalan autonomy, democratic Spain and anti-Francoism became synonymous. Immigrants began to back not only the cause of Catalan autonomy but “embraced Catalan nationalist symbols, such as the flag, songs and even poetry”.⁶⁸ Therefore, Catalan nationalism brought together Marxists and Communists, working class immigrants, middle class nationalists and Catholics and became a frame which united various opposition struggles against Francoism, and effectively became the culture of the opposition.⁶⁹ By the mid 1960s all relevant opposition groups were situated on the left, and the Communist party played a prominent role in the opposition movement.⁷⁰ The rapprochement between Catholics and Communists was made possible by the Church’s growing concern with social issues and the Communists’ increasing interest in Catalan nationalism.

The mobilization discourse included calls for Catalan national rights and demands for democratization and human liberties, yet fundamentally it was based on the democracy frame and had a strong emphasis on human rights.⁷¹ In 1966, for instance, when the police disbanded a gathering of students and intellectuals at the Capuchin monastery, demonstrations which followed the event focused primarily on civil and human rights

⁶⁶ Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 126-127.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

issues rather than on nationalist demands.⁷² The Barcelona Round Table, which grew out of the Capuchin affair united opposition groups among them human rights and working class organizations that included non-Catalans, Communists, Catalan nationalist, all who shared the common goal to protest against the Franco regime.⁷³ This was the beginning of mass mobilization; from the late 1960s, the number of protests increased dramatically. The Assembly of Catalonia formed in 1971, a broad oppositional front uniting a wide range of opposition groups focused on democratic principles the most, such as amnesty for prisoners, the right to exercise fundamental democratic liberties while also demanded self-determination for Catalonia.⁷⁴

While the Catalan movement expressed strong criticism over the Franco regime because of the latter's undemocratic nature and human rights abuses, at the same time displayed Catalan nationalist symbolism. For instance, in 1960 at a commemorative ceremony in honor of a nationalist poet Joan Maragall, leaflets were distributed by Catalan activists, which presented Franco as a negation of all liberties. While the message of these leaflets expressed demands for democratic rights, at the ceremony people sang "the Hymn to the Catalan Flag," which was a song banned from public performance due to its expression of nationalist sentiments. Consequently, the police beat up the audience.⁷⁵ Therefore, Catalan culture acquired a political meaning as its demonstration became an act of opposition.⁷⁶

As was explained above, Catalan opposition embraced non-Catalan immigrants from other parts of Spain most of whom came from Andalusia and spoke Castilian as their mother tongue. Yet, considering that the Franco regime was not only authoritarian but was

⁷² Ibid., 145.

⁷³ Ibid., 160.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 169.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 129

strongly nationalist, repressing regional and minority cultures and languages while promoting Castilian Spanish it was not at all obvious that the 1.4 million immigrants who arrived from the rest of Spain were accepted by the locals as “one of us”.⁷⁷ By 1975 these mostly Spanish speaking immigrants constituted around 40% of the population.⁷⁸ Three factors allowed this integrative version of national identity to acquire dominance. As the Catalan language was the main carrier of national identity, more so than descent, immigrants could integrate through learning the language and practicing other dimension of local indigenous culture, such as taking part in Catalan celebrations and events. At the same time, Catalan intellectuals and politicians saw language as the central symbol and instrument for the diffusion of Catalan culture.⁷⁹ Linguistic incorporation was the declared way to integrate immigrants, which can be observed in the writings of Jordi Pujol, a prominent figure of the Catalan nationalist movement. He wrote: “Language is the decisive factor of integration. It is the most definitive. A man, who speaks Catalan and speaks Catalan to his children, is already a Catalan at heart.”⁸⁰ Since Catalan language is close to Castilian, it was not too demanding for immigrants to master it, which helped their integration. In addition, the fact that leftist ideas were central to Catalan nationalism also encouraged the acceptance of immigrants most of whom were lower class workers and thus generally open to leftist ideas and consequently opposed to Francoism.⁸¹ Finally, it can also be mentioned that due to Catalonia’s geographic position of being situated on the Mediterranean coast, it had attracted a large influx of immigrants throughout history thus had long tradition of assimilation. For instance, from the late 19th century due to its

⁷⁶ Ibid., 124.

⁷⁷ Scott L. Greer, “Demanding only autonomy: The mobilization of Catalan nationhood in the Spanish democratic transition, 1970-1975,” 9. Posted on the website of the University of Michigan, 22 August 2007, http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/2027.42/55488/1/constructing_7.pdf.

⁷⁸ Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 191.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 169.

⁸⁰ Jordi Pujol, *La Immigració, problema i esperança de Catalunya* (Barcelona: Nova Terra, 1966), 82-3, cited in Conversi, 196.

⁸¹ Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 264.

industrial boom, immigration accelerated until the 1930s when the share of immigrants reached 20% in the population.⁸²

Most importantly, however, as the model on secessionist framing predicts Catalans did not view immigrants as a threat since immigrants had no political links to the Franco regime, which made their integration possible. Immigrants came to Catalonia for economic reasons, spontaneously and apart from their ethnic origin had no connection to the Spanish center. If anything, they were hostile to Franco owing to their working class identity. Therefore, the Catalan nationalist movement came to be based on an ethnically inclusive collective identity and consequently inter-ethnic relations remained harmonious. Although the fact that immigrants had no ties with the Spanish center made their inclusion possible into the Catalan nation, inclusion happened as a result of Catalan nationalists using ethnically inclusive frames during mobilization such as the democracy frame, Marxists ideology and the Catalan culturalist frame. As this short case study demonstrated, Catalan nationalist leaders framed their struggle by arguments which created ethnically inclusive identities thus opening the door for immigrants to join the nationalist movement.

After Franco's death and with the subsequent democratic transition, Catalan autonomy was institutionalized, which also meant that Catalan mobilization culture was coming to an end. Spanish devolution led to better relations between Catalonia and the center, and the issue of Catalonia's status in Spain on the whole lost its "explosive potential".⁸³ Subsequently, especially from the early 1980s, immigrant workers started to face discrimination in Catalonia in the job market and relations between nationalists and

⁸² Ibid., 190.

⁸³ Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 64.

socialists worsened.⁸⁴ A potential source of social tensions remained the apparent class difference between Catalans and immigrants. While Catalans dominated in upper and middle management positions and controlled most of the economy, immigrants were overwhelmingly manual workers.⁸⁵ Yet, as Hank Johnston concluded, “in the balance, in spite of the overlapping class and ethnic divisions, in spite of the worst economic recession of the postwar period, and in spite of a tumultuous political transition, ethnic peace was the greatest legacy of the Catalan opposition”. Although political style became more conflictual after the Franco era was over, yet relations between immigrants and Catalans could be still characterized by mutual sensitivity.⁸⁶

Some studies also demonstrated that this integrative version of Catalan identity continued to be upheld also during the post Franco years. Gershon Shafir cites two studies indicating this: one found that between 1978 and 1983 “differences between the views of native Catalans and Catalan residents born in other parts of Spain have diminished in regard to the institutions and symbols of Catalonia.”⁸⁷ The other one published in 1989 concluded that “there may be now increased solidarity feelings from Catalans for non-native Spaniards who use Catalan as a second language, and fewer sanctions against such use from Castilian speakers.”⁸⁸ Supporting the model on secessionist framing, the Catalan case demonstrates how adopting ethnically inclusive frames can contribute to the integration of minorities and peaceful ethnic relations not only during but also after nationalist mobilization.

⁸⁴ Johnston, *Tales of Nationalism*, 200.

⁸⁵ Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 76.

⁸⁶ Johnston, 207.

⁸⁷ Carlota Solé, “Cambios en la visión de los inmigrantes sobre las instituciones, símbolos y partidos políticos de Cataluña,” *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, no. 32 (Oct. - Dec., 1985): 193-234, Cited in Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 83.

⁸⁸ Kathryn A Woolard, *Double Talk: Bilingualism and the Politics of Ethnicity in Catalonia* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1989). Cited in Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 83.

Basques

Phase I

Basque nationalism emerged in the late 19th century in the writings of Sabino Arana Giori, yet became a mass movement only in the 1930s. It was a reaction to Spanish industrialization and modernization, which threatened the Basques' traditional way of life guarded by various privileges such as their exemption from military conscription and state-levied taxes. Spanish centralization and capitalist reforms also meant that Basque municipalities were losing control over their iron ore and lumber mines, which were offered up for privatization, while artisans had to face the competition of big enterprises. As a result, initially Basque rural notables and artisans provided the popular base of the emerging nationalism.

At the same time, whereas in Catalonia native culture and language were flourishing, in the Basque country the language was half-forgotten already at the end of the 19th century.⁸⁹ Although Basques took pride in their unique language being incomprehensible to outsiders, it was spoken only by a minority of them (less than 20%) by the 1970s.⁹⁰ Given the decline of national culture and language, attention was directed at ethnic descent, which became the signifier of "Basqueness".⁹¹ In Arana's definition, the core value of Basqueness was hidden in racial purity.⁹² In light of this ethnically exclusive national identity, Spanish immigrants who already in 1900 constituted more than a quarter of the local population were viewed with distrust and hostility, as they were seen as a threat to the preservation of Basque identity. Altogether, Basque nationalism was a defensive nationalism motivated by fear of ethnic extinction and was rooted in an ethnically exclusivist understanding of the nation which originated from the 19th century. This in turn

⁸⁹ Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 57.

⁹⁰ Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 119.

⁹¹ Conversi, 179.

⁹² Shafir, 91-97.

implied that immigrants initially were excluded from the Basque nation by nationalist leaders.

As was explained in chapter 1, existing identities also influence whether minorities will be seen as a source of internal threat or not by the local majority (thus not only minorities' links with the threatening center affects whether they will be perceived as an internal threat by the local majority and how national identity will be framed subsequently). Basques' ethnically exclusive national identity predated the independence movement and was based on the general fear of ethnic extinction, as was argued above.⁹³ Due to this fear, Basques viewed immigrants as a threat to Basque identity and culture as mobilization for independence began. Consequently, in the first phase of the nationalist movement, which lasted until the late 1930s, i.e. until the Franco era, non-Basques were excluded from nationalist organizations and trade unions.⁹⁴ Yet, the present theoretical model also predicts that ethnically exclusive identities tend to be reconsidered and shift towards an inclusivist interpretation if minorities have no ties to the threatening center. This happened in the Basque country in the late 1960s with the emergence of ETA, which will be discussed in the following.

Phase 2

The fear of ethnic extinction was exacerbated under the Franco regime, which suppressed all aspects of Basque identity until the late 1960s. The nationalist movement was driven into exile and underground. The situation was somewhat different in Catalonia where the main target of the regime was the Catalan language while other aspects of Catalan culture were less persecuted. Basque language was not repressed probably due to its weak diffusion; however, repression in general was much more intense than in the rest of Spain including torture, police attacks on citizens, arbitrary arrests, etc. Such physical

⁹³ Ibid., 265.

⁹⁴ Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 98.

manifestations of repression were characteristic in Catalonia in the early Falangist phase, but not anymore in the 1950s and 60s. Basque nationalism began to revive slowly in the 1950s, and in the early 1960s ETA carried out its first attacks against representatives of the Spanish state.⁹⁵ According to Daniele Conversi, the violence instigated by ETA was a result of the combined effect of frustrations over the decline of Basque distinctiveness and the harsh state repression against any remaining symbols of ethnic identity. Whereas in Catalonia emphasizing and cultivating local culture provided an escape route and defense against centralist repression, in the absence of such clear cultural markers, violence gave the Basque nationalist movement “a sense of change and purpose”.⁹⁶

The emergence of ETA led to the reformulation of Basque national identity pushing it into an inclusivist direction. The changing ethnic structure which was a result of immigration triggered this shift towards an inclusive identity. The share of immigrants grew further in the 1950s and 60s and was reaching over 30% by 1981.⁹⁷ ETA faced the choice of recruiting only those with a strong Basque identity and where Euskari was still spoken or opening its ranks to assimilated Basques and non-Basques. In reality, stress on ethnicity did not promise much for ETA in an urbanized society undergoing cultural assimilation. People in urban centers were more mobilized by the national cause than people in the countryside, yet they were the ones who lost most of their cultural traditions. Thus, as ETA needed to recruit militant fighters it decided to mobilize everyone including non-Basque immigrants dictated by the pervasive external threat posed by central authorities. Therefore, ETA discarded the notion of “Basque race” previously central to

⁹⁵ Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 102.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 226.

⁹⁷ The population born in Catalonia decreased to 63.76% while the share of those born in the Basque country to 67.47% by 1981. Yet, the size of the native population was even smaller considering that some of those born in these provinces were the children of immigrants. Taking this factor into consideration, the share of second generation Basques could be estimated at 51% of the population in 1981. In Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 42-43.

Basque identity.⁹⁸ Basques in ETA's interpretation were those that took part in the national struggle; it was a status not defined by birth but by performance.⁹⁹ "An abertzale is one who participates in the political struggle.[...] You are not borne an abertzale. You make yourself one."¹⁰⁰ Reflecting this changing view on Basque identity, in 1971, Aldredi, an underground newsletter of the Basque Nationalist Party, called for the inclusion of immigrants that supported the nationalist struggle. The call was entitled "43 Words for You, Immigrants in Euskadi". It began by a "welcome to our land [...] this is your land, you are Basque."¹⁰¹ The editorial called on those who "came from other lands [...] to assume fully the duties which the impending critical situation demands from us all".

It should be also mentioned that ETA adopted Marxists ideology beside its nationalist position, which was a radical expression of opposition to the Franco regime's right wing, conservative platform. ETA's Marxist leaning meant that according to the logic of class struggle workers had to be included in the movement, the majority of whom were Spanish.¹⁰² Thus ETA took active part in working class strikes and also began to place greater stress on class conflict than on ethnic conflict in order to appeal to the workers.¹⁰³

Thus, the case of the Basque country demonstrates the process of how a shift in ethnic geography towards a higher degree of heterogeneity can induce a reconsideration of an ethnically exclusive communal identity. Yet, as in Catalonia, the inclusion of non-Basques was possible because immigrants were not connected to the Franco regime, but on the contrary, because of their class identity were rather hostile to it. Although initially native Basques viewed immigrants as a threat to the preservation of their culture and held

⁹⁸ Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 91.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 252.

¹⁰⁰ MacClancy, "The culture of radical Basque nationalism," *Anthropology Today* 4, no.5 (1988): 17-19, cited in Conversi, 252.

¹⁰¹ *Aldredi*, no. 270, December 1971, cited in Conversi, 202.

¹⁰² Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 113.

onto their exclusive identity, as the share of Spanish speaking immigrants was reaching critical levels, some nationalist groups began to reconsider their attitude towards them. Immigrants were no longer perceived as a source of internal threat but rather as potential recruits to the resistance movement, indicated by the fact that in the mid 1980s 16,6% of ETA members came from non-Basque ethnic background, while an additional 40% were of mixed ancestry.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, Basque identity was reframed and set on a more voluntary basis, which made the integration of immigrants possible. MacClancy, an anthropologist, reported about having met children of Spanish immigrants who were not borne in Basque land, yet identified with the movement and attended demonstrations. One of them told him “Not being borne here doesn’t matter. I feel Basque”.¹⁰⁵

Despite this inclusive framing of Basque identity, ethnic nationalism remained central to the Basque nationalist movement. The fear that their culture and language were slowly dying out underpinned ETA’s ideology as well, yet as was mentioned above, it was infused with Marxism. As a radical nationalist organization, ETA rejected all things Spanish, yet it embraced egalitarianism and social justice. However, accusations of cultural genocide were its main justification for the use of violence as an instrument of resistance. Violence fulfilled the role of culture as it marked the boundary between insiders and outsiders. Therefore, the ethnic security frame remained an important mobilizational tool of ETA, which could be expected given that mobilization for violence during a nationalist movement hardly happens without employing the ethnic security frame indicated also by the other cases discussed in this dissertation.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 102.

¹⁰⁴ Robert P. Clark, *The Basque Insurgents, ETA, 1952-1980* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 147. Cited in Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 203.

¹⁰⁵ MacClancy, “The culture of radical Basque nationalism,” 17-19.

It should be also added here that these two visions of national identity – one based on descent, the other on performance – were never fully reconciled among the different nationalist groups, as moving away from the ethnic interpretation alienated some of the ethnic Basque base. The Basque movement was characterized by continuous fragmentation and occasional alliances of one or more trends against the others who supported different ideas of Basque identity.¹⁰⁶ The ongoing conflict over core values also implied that a popular form of cultural nationalism never developed.

Yet, on the whole, as a result of ETA's activities, membership in the nation was increasingly framed in inclusivist terms. Mobilization was a manifestation of left wing nationalism where discourse was based on the idea of class struggle and national liberation, thus on the combination of the ethnic security frame and Marxist, anti-capitalist ideology. Furthermore, it seems that this change of Basque national identity continued after the Franco era. According to a study carried out in the early 1980s, among those who felt Basque only, 79,8% chose living and working in the Basque country as a necessary criterion for being a Basque while within the same group only 41,2% thought that Basque ethnic descent was a precondition. The same study found that 35% of immigrants felt equally Spanish and Basque, while 8,3% more Basque than Spanish while the rest identified themselves as Spanish or more Spanish than Basque.¹⁰⁷ In addition, as Juan Linz highlighted, how people were thinking about national identity had a generational aspect to it, which also indicated that Basque identity continued to shift towards a civic interpretation. While older people held that descent was the core element of Basque-ness, the younger generation was increasingly adopting a civic idea of national identity.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 241.

¹⁰⁷ Juan Linz, "From Primordialism to Nationalism," in *New Nationalisms of the Developed West*, ed. Edward A. Tiryakian and Ronald Rogowski (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985), 221. Cited in Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 123-125..

¹⁰⁸ Juan Linz, "From Primordialism to Nationalism," 221, cited in Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 123-125.

Moreover, Basque nationalist parties received overwhelming support during elections in some areas where immigrants were a majority, such as during the 1987 municipal election in the town of Gipuzkoa where natives constituted only 19% of the population. Yet, 62,7% of the votes were cast to Basque nationalist parties.¹⁰⁹ These findings indicate that the shift of Basque identity towards an inclusive understanding triggered by ETA continued after ETA's role diminished within the Basque nationalist movement. Therefore, the Basque case shows in line with the theoretical model that nationalist framing influences ethnic relations not only during mobilization but also has an impact on the post-mobilization period.

After democratization, Basque nationalism retained its radical nature in terms of its goals and instruments as independence remained the main goal and violence as a tool has not been renounced by some groups. Yet, the movement's radical aspect was on the whole marginalized. Popular support for ETA has dwindled since the end of the Franco years. According to opinion polls, by the late 1980s only 10% of the people backed ETA's activities. At the same time, the moderate nationalist PNV (Basque Nationalist Party) has been the strongest party since democratization, which together with the five major Basque regional parties except for Herri Batasuna, in 1988 denounced terrorism by signing a pact in order to isolate ETA terrorists.¹¹⁰

The Basque case demonstrates that collective identities tend to shift from an exclusivist towards an inclusive interpretation if minorities have no ties to the hostile regime. Yet, this happened over a long period of time, which means that the model can predict only a tendency not the exact timing of such transformation. In the Basque land the shift was triggered by immigration. Since immigrants had no connection to the Franco

¹⁰⁹ Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 205.

¹¹⁰ Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists*, 109-111.

regime their incorporation in the Basque nation was possible and also made sense from a strategic point of view. As Basque nationalists took up a fight against the official Spanish establishment, it would have been self-defeating from their perspective to alienate immigrants who made up close to half of the local population.

The Catalan and the Basque cases suggest that regardless whether national identity at the outset of a movement is framed in ethnically inclusive or exclusive terms minorities tend to be included into the secessionist nation eventually given that they are not connected politically to the threatening center. This can be expected even if those minorities share the same ethnicity with the oppressing regime.

Conclusions

The four regions share one fundamental feature i.e. all four of them saw a large influx of immigrants who were ethnic kin of the oppressing center. National identity was framed in ethnically inclusive terms in Catalonia, in the Basque country during the second phase of mobilization and in East Timor, yet for different reasons. In the Spanish regions, inclusive framing was possible as immigrants had no ties to the center while in East Timor due to the multiethnic structure of the population national identity was set on an ethnically inclusive basis. Although these represent two different modes of action, both fall in line with my model, which predicts that ethnically inclusive identities tend to become salient if the population is highly multi-ethnic as in East Timor, or if local minorities are not politically connected to the threatening center as in the Spanish regions.

Ethnically exclusive frames dominated in the Basque country in the beginning of the nationalist movement and in Aceh, yet again for different reasons. The Basques adopted an ethnically exclusive national identity *prior to* the start of mass mobilization for independence out of fear of ethnic extinction, which was exacerbated by increasing immigration into the Basque country from other parts of Spain. Although immigrants were

not connected to the center, they were perceived as a threat to the preservation of Basque identity and were consequently excluded from the national community. This outcome does not contradict my model, according to which existing identities also influence whether internal minorities will be seen as a source of internal threat or not and whether they will face ethnic inclusion or exclusion consequently. Yet, the model also predicts that if the same minorities have no ties with the threatening center, they are likely to be included eventually into the secessionist nation during nationalist mobilization. This happened in the Basque country in the 1960s when the rise of ETA initiated the reconsideration of Basque identity and pushed it into an inclusivist direction. Thus Basque identity shifted towards an inclusivist interpretation under the pressure of immigrants arriving to the Basque country as these immigrants had no ties with the Franco regime.

In Aceh by contrast, the Acehnese embraced the exclusivist national identity advocated by GAM in response to the atrocities committed by the Indonesian military against the Acehnese. As the violence carried out by the Indonesians had an ethnic character i.e. was targeted against the local population on an ethnic basis similarly to East Timor, the Acehnese began to show hostility towards Indonesian immigrants, many of whom (though not all of them) were settled in Aceh by the Indonesian government. Thus, as the state started to behave in a threatening way, Acehnese began to view the Javanese minority which had links to the Indonesian state as an internal threat and consequently adopted an ethnically exclusive identity.

By comparing Aceh with East Timor the question can be asked why the level of ethnic conflict was high in both regions despite the fact that in Aceh mobilization centered on ethnically exclusive frames while in East Timor the movement was based on an ethnically inclusive national identity. I argued by studying these two cases that once ethnic

violence emerges in a secessionist region, inter-ethnic relations can be hardly pacified through employing inclusive frames but ethnic exclusion and ethnic conflict can be expected. Thus in East Timor, ethnically inclusive framing was not followed by ethnic harmony between the locals and the Javanese, which as I argued was due to the violence instigated by the Indonesian state against the East Timorese on an ethnic basis. East Timor's case suggests that inclusion of a minority which has kinship ties and political links with the oppressing center is very unlikely even in a highly multiethnic setting under conditions of violence being perpetrated by the state on an ethnic basis against the local population. By contrast, the Basque case demonstrates that a movement using violent means can also rely on an ethnically inclusive national identity. If violence is not ethnically based as happened in the Basque land where ETA fighters targeted collaborators of the Franco regime, radicalization of the movement does not need to lead to worsening ethnic relations within the secessionist entity.

Altogether, the main difference between the Indonesian and the Spanish regions was that in the case of the former there was an internal minority, the Javanese, which had political connections to the threatening center and was consequently viewed as a threat by the locals. As the immigration of Indonesians was orchestrated by the Indonesian regime, immigrants were perceived as allies of Jakarta, which is why the local majority began to look at them as an internal enemy. By contrast, in the two Spanish regions, immigrants came spontaneously for economic reasons and had no links to the center. Therefore, due to this structural condition their inclusion into the national community was possible. At the same time, the Spanish cases also show that sharing the same ethnicity with the oppressing regime in itself does not lead to ethnic exclusion.

VI. Conclusions

In this chapter I summarize the main conclusions drawn from the case studies, why they verify or in what way they modify my theoretical argument. I start by assessing the cases which represent the two ends of the ethnic heterogeneity spectrum, where the population is ethnically homogenous (or almost homogenous) as in Slovenia, or highly fractionalized as in Montenegro and East Timor. After this I turn to the so called “in between cases” of ethnic heterogeneity where a few large groups dominate.

Although Slovenia had a small immigrant minority and some historical minorities as was noted in chapter 2, mobilization for independence resembled the case of an ethnically homogenous country as immigrants or any other minority were not even mentioned during the independence movement. Immigrants were dispersed in the overall population, their share was relatively small and were politically unorganized, thus the Slovenes usually did not take much notice of them. This meant that the Slovenian majority did not have to define its relationship to minorities unlike in Croatia, where due to the size and visibility of the Serbian minority each party had to articulate its approach to the Croatian Serbs. In Slovenia, it was not a political necessity to address this issue – not only because of minorities’ low level visibility but also because they did not pose a threat to Slovenia due to their lack of connection to the Milošević regime. According to the theoretical model, minorities are likely to be excluded from the national community when the majority perceives them as a source of internal threat as a result of a particular structural setting where some in the minority have political links to the threatening center. Immigrants’ (and other minorities’) lack of connection to the Serbian leadership and Milošević’s lack of interest in their mobilization meant that Serbs living in Slovenia were not perceived as a source of internal threat by the

majority. Had Milošević targeted them as he did the Croatian Serbs, immigrants could have easily been viewed with suspicion and hostility by the Slovenes. Therefore, the perception is also based on an objective relationship between the minority and the threatening center.

Nevertheless, as perceptions of internal threat had not emerged in Slovenia, the independence movement came to be based on the civic version of national identity, which was however only indirectly ethnically inclusive as minorities remained a non-issue during mobilization. This inclusivity was thus non explicit as no argument was made for independence which addressed the issue of immigrants or minorities in any way. However, politicians emphasizing the civic nature of Slovenian identity and their reliance on inclusive frames such as the prosperity and the democracy frame indicated that every citizen living in Slovenia was called on to support independence regardless of ethnicity.

Montenegro and East Timor represent the other end of the spectrum characterized by a highly diverse ethnic structure. Montenegro fulfilled expectations of the model since mobilization for independence came to be based on an ethnically inclusive interpretation of national identity reflecting the country's multiethnic conditions. Ethnic structure defined movement framing as this inclusive version of national identity advocated by pro-independence politicians was maintained even after perceptions of internal threat associated with the Montenegrin Serbs emerged in Montenegro in 1999. The civic idea of Montenegro was not renounced by the ruling parties even after Serbs began to mobilize against the pro-independence government and Milošević stepped up the army's activity in the republic. Despite rising fears that Milošević might intervene in Montenegro militarily and despite the fact that some leaders of the Serbian community had political links to Milošević, Montenegrin Serbs were not excluded from the nation by the pro-independence political leadership. Montenegro's case suggests that excluding some groups on an ethnic basis is

rhetorically very difficult without renouncing the previously adopted civic notion of the nation. As Montenegrin authorities defined membership in the nation in civic terms, they continued to include Serbs into the national community.

By contrast, in East Timor, regardless of the East Timorese' ethnically inclusive national identity dictated by the population's highly diverse ethnic structure, Indonesian immigrants were excluded from the nation and were subject to atrocities. Yet, as was argued in chapter 5, under conditions of ethnic violence perpetrated by the state against the population of a secessionist region, different rules apply than those suggested by this model. Given the fact that the Indonesian military killed thousands in East Timor during the occupation, it is not surprising that Indonesian transmigrants whose arrival to East Timor was facilitated by the army were hated and sometimes attacked by the locals. Therefore, under conditions of state violence targeted against a population on ethnic basis, ethnic tolerance towards co-ethnics of the center cannot be expected regardless of how the secessionist group frames its identity.

However Slovenia, Montenegro, and East Timor belong to the more exceptional cases. In real life it is a relatively rare phenomenon that a population is either completely homogeneous so that there are no minorities to exclude or highly fractionalized to the point where no group can dominate. Most nationalist movements emerge under conditions of relative ethnic heterogeneity where one or a few groups dominate. In these cases, ethnic exclusion happens if the local majority views an internal minority as a source of internal threat. The emergence of such perceptions is conditioned on whether the threatening external actor has political links to the minority. In such a structural setting the minority is likely to be considered a source of danger irrespective of the actual behavior of that minority. The cases of Croatia and Aceh represent this scenario. Towards the late 1980s, the

Croat majority viewed the Serbian minority with increasing suspicion given that certain groups within the minority were allied with Milošević who was mobilizing ethnic Serbs all over Yugoslavia. Thus there was a growing external threat which was connected to the Serbian minority in Croatia. Consequently, the political discourse of HDZ, which advocated an ethnically exclusive national identity for Croats, became dominant as indicated by HDZ's election victory in the spring of 1990. After HDZ took over the leadership of Croatia, ethnic relations in the republic swiftly deteriorated. This implies that the victory of HDZ's exclusionary rhetoric greatly contributed to the alienation of Serbs considering that the majority of them began supporting radical Serb nationalists only after HDZ came to power while during the first democratic elections most Serbs voted for the former Croatian communists. This suggests that not so much the behavior of the minority but the particular configuration of conditions – i.e. that some Croatian Serbs had links to Milošević who posed a threat to Croatia – induced their collective exclusion from the nation, which consequently led to their radicalization and ethnic conflict. This special situation of the Serbian minority in Croatia was the most important difference between Slovenia and Croatia, which explains why mobilization in Croatia and Slovenia followed such different trajectories.

Similarly in Aceh, Acehnese embraced the exclusive version of national identity promoted by GAM after the Indonesian army carried out widespread human rights violations against the Acehnese. Consequently, Indonesian non-combatants became targets of the Acehnese guerillas. It should be emphasized that violence against them started only after Indonesia committed mass atrocities against the Acehnese in the early 1990s. Acehnese perceived Indonesian civilians as being connected to Jakarta given that many Indonesians settled in Aceh as part of the Indonesian government's transmigration program. Thus in Aceh, the threatening behavior of the center, Jakarta prompted an identity shift in the

exclusivists direction, as traditionally Acehnese viewed themselves as a part of the Indonesian nation and sought only regional autonomy not secession. Thus the two cases suggest that ethnic exclusion happened only when these two factors were present simultaneously i.e. the minority had links to the center and the center posed a threat to the secessionist entity.

Furthermore, the cases of Catalonia and the Basque country indicate that the existence of ethnic kinship ties between an internal minority and the threatening center in itself does not lead to ethnic exclusion on the part of the local majority. If a minority is not connected politically to the center, it is likely to be included in the community seeking self-determination. In Catalonia and the Basque country, Spanish immigrants came spontaneously for economic reasons, the majority of them being lower skilled workers open to Marxism and hostile to the Franco regime due to their class identity.¹ As Spanish immigrants had no political connection with the center, they had not come to be viewed as a threat by the local majority, and consequently collective identity was set on an inclusive basis.

Thus, frames are selected according to the inclusive/exclusive nature of collective identity, which emerges from a particular structural setting defined by minorities' links to the threatening center. In those secessionist regions where the presence of a minority is regarded as threatening, national identity is likely to be set on an ethnically exclusive basis and the ethnic security frame is expected to dominate, which might easily trigger ethnic tensions. The examples of Croatia and Aceh illustrate this case scenario. By contrast, in those places where no minority is perceived as a threat, collective identity tends to be framed in ethnically inclusive way. Movements based on inclusive identities often employ

¹ David Laitin, "Language Normalization in Estonia and Catalonia," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 23, no.2 (Summer 1992): 159.

the democracy or the prosperity frame, or some other kind of ideological frame. The categorization of cases is displayed in the Table4:

Table4.

Perception of internal threat associated with the presence of a minority

	Yes	No
Ethnic structure	Ethnically exclusive identity/Ethnic security frame/Internal ethnic conflict (Croatia, Aceh, Basque country Phase1)	Ethnically inclusive identity/ Democracy, prosperity frame, ethnic security frame /Internal ethnic peace (Catalonia, Basque country Phase2)
homogeneous/ fractionalized	Inclusive identity/ Ethnic security frame /Internal ethnic conflict (East Timor)	Inclusive identity/Democracy, prosperity frame, ethnic security frame/Internal ethnic peace (Slovenia, Montenegro**)
	Inclusive identity/Democracy, prosperity frame /Internal ethnic peace (Montenegro*)	

*Montenegro before the fall of Milošević

** Montenegro after the fall of Milošević

What sort of frames are used depends also on contextualizing events. The development of the Slovenian and Montenegrin independence movements demonstrated well that frame shifts were induced by significant events, which pro-independence politicians felt compelled to respond to. Thus, the topics dictated by these events determined the specific content of mobilizational frames. For instance, when Slovenes protested on behalf of the Kosovo miners, the democracy frame became salient as the violation of the miners' human rights was the event that prompted the demonstration.

Moreover, the case studies also revealed that any frame can communicate an ethnically inclusive or exclusive understanding of the nation, yet some frames are more suitable for constructing inclusive or exclusive identities than others. Where national

identity is defined in ethnically exclusive terms, the ethnic security frame seems to dominate, such as in Croatia or Aceh. However, the ethnic security frame also tends to be salient under conditions of violence regardless whether collective identity is framed by inclusivist or exclusivist arguments, which is supported by the cases of Croatia, Aceh, the Basque country and East Timor. The latter two movements were based on inclusive identities, yet in both cases the ethnic security frame was an important tool of mobilization. The East Timorese movement was fundamentally presented by its leaders as a struggle for self-determination and a fight against ethnic genocide rather than a fight for human rights and democracy, which also could have been a possibility. However, given the extreme difficulty of secession, mobilizing people by alluding to a common East Timorese ethnic identity seemed reasonable, since the struggle against the Indonesians involved serious personal sacrifices.

By contrast, politicians relied heavily on the prosperity and the democracy frame where collective identity was set on an inclusivist basis, demonstrated by the cases of Slovenia, Montenegro, and Catalonia. At the same time, pro-democracy and economic arguments were not frequently used by politicians who framed collective identity in ethnically exclusive terms. When politicians call upon their constituents to support independence because it will bring economic benefits to the country and lead to a more democratic society, it is difficult to address one ethnic group only and exclude others on an ethnic basis.

Among the self-determination movements explored here, economic arguments featured in two cases. What was common to the Slovenian and the Montenegrin movement besides framing collective identity in civic terms was that in both cases the leadership began to assert demands for a higher degree of autonomy through moves for economic independence. Therefore, it can be assumed that one necessary condition under which

economic arguments emerge and become salient is not relative wealth of a region, but the existence of a particular kind of institutional setting, in which a region can assert its interests over the center through economic policy moves.

Finally, the cited cases show that ethnic relations were peaceful where national identity was framed in an inclusive way, with the exception of East Timor. This does not mean, however, that movements based on an inclusive identity will not resort to the use of violence, as one could see by the example of the Basque country. Yet, violence was targeted against representatives of the center and not against individuals on ethnic bases, while internal ethnic relations within the Basque land remained peaceful.

At the same time, as noted already, East Timor's case suggests that ethnic tolerance cannot be expected from a population which is under attack by the state on an ethnic basis. Therefore, when the state carries out systematic ethnic violence against the population of a secessionist entity frames have little power to influence ethnic relations between the local majority and a minority which has ties to the aggressor.

Table5. displays what sort of frames were used by the different movements, which were discussed in the case studies, and what was their outcome in terms of ethnic relations.

Table5.

Place	Dominant national identity	Dominant frame	Inter-ethnic relations during the course of the movement
East Timor	Ethnically inclusive identity	Ethnic security frame, Language of self-determination	Ethnic conflict
Aceh	Ethnically exclusive identity	Ethnic security frame, Anti-capitalist ideology, economic grievances	Ethnic conflict
Catalonia	Ethnically inclusive identity	Cultural frame, Democracy frame, Leftist ideology	Ethnic peace

The Basque country	Phase1: Ethnically exclusive identity Phase2: Inclusive identity	Phase1: Ethnic security frame Phase2: Ethnic security frame + Marxist ideology	Phase1: Ethnic tensions Phase2: Ethnic peace
Croatia	Ethnically exclusive identity	Ethnic security frame	Ethnic conflict
Slovenia	Civic identity	Ethnic security frame Democracy frame Prosperity frame	Ethnic peace
Montenegro	Civic identity	Democracy frame Prosperity frame	Ethnic peace

It should also be noted that identities are not fixed attributes of nations and communities, i.e. a civic or an ethnically exclusive national identity are not inherent attributes of certain nations. Identities can shift not only throughout the course of an independence movement, but also after statehood is achieved. A relatively high level of national unity characterizing some movements often weakens in the post-independence period, leading to internal fragmentation, as happened in East Timor and Montenegro.

In East Timor, internal differences among the East Timorese were accentuated after independence leading to sporadic outbursts of low scale violence. Yet, according to most analysts, tensions between “easterners” and “westerners” manifested most in the form of urban riots and did not reflect ethnic divides. Richard Tanter argued that such tensions were more about matters of regional benefit and deprivation.² Loro Horta explained the deadly riots in Dili in 2006 by the ongoing power struggle between the president and the prime minister.³ Reyko Huang and Geoffrey C. Gunn reasoned along the same lines that violent gang clashes reflected regional and not ethnic differences in that the sporadic riots had their roots in social problems.⁴ Nevertheless, the previous national unity of East Timorese,

² Richard Tanter, “Ten questions about East Timor for which we need answers,” *Austral Policy Forum* 06-18A, 8-06-2006, <http://www.nautilus.org/~rmit/forum-reports/0618a-tanter.html>.

³ Loro Horta, “East Timor: a nation divided,” *Open Democracy*, 8-06-2006, www.opendemocracy.net.

⁴ Reyko Huang and Geoffrey C Gunn, “Reconciliation as State-building in East Timor,” *Lusotopie* (2004):28.

which was fostered by the Indonesian repression, was coming to an end and new internal divisions were appearing. Yet these new division had not much to do with national identity.

Similarly in Montenegro, it became apparent after the declaration of independence that the Montenegrin civic identity in reality papered over a multitude of interests. Until Montenegro separated from Serbia, this ethnically inclusive Montenegrin identity was “a perfect ideological vehicle – comprising minorities, Montenegrins and even some Serbs”.⁵ Yet, after the referendum, it was soon visible what a diverse “coalition of interests” the pro-independence block was, as many new schisms emerged, dividing the former pro-independence camp.⁶ Many among the pro-independence intelligentsia turned against Đukanović and DPS, such as the newspapers *Vijesti* and *Monitor*, as they regarded the government as standing in the way of Montenegro’s democratic development. The Montenegrin Orthodox Church (MOC) also came out against the authorities, as the government failed to recognize MOC as the only Orthodox Church in Montenegro.⁷

The fact that an independence movement is based on an ethnically inclusive interpretation does not mean that the same nation after a successful secession will not assume an ethnically exclusive self-understanding. For instance, the dominant interpretation of national identity went through a change in Slovenia in the post-independence period shifting in an ethnically exclusivist direction. As mentioned before, in Slovenia, immigrants who made up almost 10% of population were not recognized as a problem during the independence movement.⁸ However, not long after Slovenia seceded

⁵ Kenneth Morrison, email correspondence with author, 11-09-2009.

⁶ Term borrowed from Kenneth Morrison, *Montenegro: A modern history*.

⁷ Morrison, *Montenegro: A modern history*, 226-8.

⁸ In Slovenia in 1991, 88,3% of the population was constituted by ethnic Slovenes. The rest were autochthonous minorities, among them Italians (0,15%), Hungarians (0,42%), and immigrant minorities from the other republics of the former Yugoslavia. Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia,

from Yugoslavia and a right wing government was formed promoting the ethnic-cultural interpretation of Slovenian identity, the situation of immigrants deteriorated. Out of nearly 200,000 immigrants, some 25,000 were removed from the official population registry, which meant that more than 1% of the population was turned into illegal immigrants. The consequences of this decision were dire, as people were deprived of their basic economic and social rights, and many were separated from their families as they could not return to Slovenia.⁹ According to a news analysis, the erasure of immigrants was a manifestation of “the animosity felt by Slovenian conservatives towards the Balkans, which they see as a culturally inferior region”.¹⁰ This indicates that the civic identity which was salient during the independence movement is not an intrinsic characteristic of the Slovenes. In addition, it also implies that ethnic relations could have been politicized during the mobilization for independence. However, as this dissertation argues, the immigrants were not excluded from the national community in Slovenia before 1991 because they had no links to Milošević, which is why they had not come to be viewed as a threat by the majority population. So the question arises what explains the exclusion of immigrants in the post-independence period.

The answer to this question lies in the fact that secessionist times are “unusual times” in politics, which is why the model applies only to cases of secessionist mobilization. The conditions of framing collective identities are very different than during “normal times” of politics, for instance during an election campaign in a stable country facing no external enemies. During mobilization for independence, leaders try to win the backing of every potential supporter of independence (which excludes those that are perceived as a source of internal threat). As secessionists often face an external threat from

“Population by Ethnic Affiliation, Popis 2002,”

http://www.stat.si/Popis2002/en/rezultati_slovenija_prebivalstvo_dz.htm..

⁹ Tihomir Loza, “Inequality, erased?” *EruopeanVoice.com*, 10-03-2009.

¹⁰ Tihomir Loza, “Inequality, erased?” *EruopeanVoice.com*, 10-03-2009.

the center they want to secede from, they need a high level of internal popular backing. Secessionist projects are dangerous enough without internal enemies, which is why secessionist politicians tend to present arguments which represent the national common denominator. By contrast, at “normal” election times in well established states political parties are competing against each other. As they try to distinguish themselves from their rivals, they present arguments which appeal to some of the electorate while alienating others. This also implies that ethnic exclusion during times of “politics as usual” can happen for reasons other than a minority having connections to an external enemy regime. A right wing party may show hostility towards immigrants simply in order to appeal to its voters. However, the same party might refrain from presenting exclusivist arguments during secessionist mobilization. In Slovenia, for instance, the ethnically exclusive discourse was marginalized by the referendum campaign, as it deeply divided the population, and thus would have alienated many potential supporters of Slovenian independence, which would have been a self-defeating strategy on behalf of the pro-independence political leadership.

Lastly, it may be asked whether the model has any policy implications. I essentially argued that in the name of what secessionist leaders advocate independence, matters a great deal in a multiethnic settings, as the character of the mobilization discourse has a strong impact on internal inter-ethnic relations. Rhetoric that excludes minorities has the potential to trigger ethnic violence. Inter-ethnic peace is more likely to hold where mobilization is based on ethnically inclusive frames as opposed to ethnically exclusive ones. Therefore, it can be recommended that outside actors should try to persuade secessionist leaders and/or their internal opponents to employ ethnically inclusive frames in order to avoid ethnic conflict. Leading powers of the international community, especially the EU and the US wield

considerable leverage over secessionist leaders, since most movements seek international support for independence and recognition, as argued by Clifford Bob. Some movements rely heavily on outside assistance and make few radical steps without international approval such as Montenegro or Kosovo. In such cases, international actors enjoy relatively high leverage over movement leaders and are thus able to influence movement framing. While Western powers often put pressure on secessionist leaders regarding the kind of policies they should pursue, they rarely focus on the discourse politicians present internally. Given that mobilization rhetoric can have a great impact on inter-ethnic relations, the international community should pay more attention to what kind of mobilizational frames are used by their protégés and how these frames affect internal ethnic relations.

It can be further argued that whether political discourse communicates an ethnically exclusive or inclusive national identity also has an impact on ethnic relations during “normal” times of politics, not only during secessionist periods. Here, too, Western powers and international organizations tend to pay significant attention to minority legislation or minority representation at the state level, but are generally less concerned about what the official political discourse communicates about minorities. Arguably, a state may guarantee the most far reaching minority rights, yet if it allows hate speech against minorities in the media and at public events, it creates an atmosphere that is conducive to a culture of intolerance that might result in low scale ethnic violence. Serbia represents this case scenario where despite the country’s relatively progressive minority protection regimes, ethnically motivated violence was on the rise in 2003 and 2004, which coincided with a nationalist turn at the central and the provincial level in Voivodina. Essentially, how minorities feel about their situation in a certain country depends as much on the general political discourse as on the existence of laws that are meant to guarantee their minority rights.

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