Conclusion: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy
(The Bosnia War Case)

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Few items in the study of democratic policymaking are more debated and less tested than the relationship between mass public opinion and foreign policy. Policymakers in democratic societies tend to be aware of their countries' public opinion—although to very different degrees. By and large, there is substantial correspondence between policy and public opinion. Moreover, policymakers also tend not to act against an overwhelming public consensus (see Risse-Kappen 1991; Shapiro and Jacobs forthcoming). Despite recent advances in studying 'opinion-policy links' based on various national cases (see works of La Balme, Everts, Belucci, Isernia, Sobel, Wybrow, Richman, Shapiro and Jacobs, and others), there have been few attempts to study these links from a comparative perspective. This volume combines various national cases to shed light on one of the most fascinating and dynamic elements of contemporary democracy.

In studying national cases, a comparativist must wrestle with divergent variables and unlike research approaches. While de-emphasizing the obstacles can be an effective analytical maneuver, this method does not conceal well-known difficulties of the comparative approach about the validity of broad generalizations. This analytical chapter consolidates the empirical evidence in the national cases according to a multi-level approach for comparative study of opinion-policy links. This approach facilitates a more comprehensive evaluation of opinion-policy links from a comparative perspective that directs attention to issues overlooked in national cases.

The examination of the cases here and elsewhere provides growing evidence of the existence of complex "mediating" variables between public opinion and policy making (Sobel 1998; Isernia 1998; Everts 1996; Page and Shapiro 1992; Hinckley, 1992; Bartels, 1991; Wittkopf 1990; and Page & Shapiro 1983). Though the opinion polls results reach top decision-makers, public opinion does not convert itself necessarily into foreign policy. Polling may affect what issue policy executives push to the top of their political agenda; nevertheless, policymaking plays from a different script (Shapiro and Jacobs forthcoming; Wybrow in this volume). Just because the public maintains a strong and stable opinion about a specific foreign-policy issue does not mean the influence of public opinion on policy is obvious and direct.

In sum, various studies show that the impact of public opinion on policy is context-dependent and conditioned by mediating variables (Risse-Kappen 1991). To illustrate, Vengroff at al. here describes such variables as the context of the international problem under consideration; the nature of the proposed policy; the effectiveness of the communication among elites; elite awareness of the public opinion and the perceived level of public support for the policy; and structure and timing of decision-making. Other experts refer to at least three factors that mediate the impact of public opinion on policy: the distribution of political preferences among the public; the structure of domestic political institutions; and the bargaining strategies of national decision-makers at both national and international levels (see Putnam 1988; Risse-Kappen 1991; and Bellucci & Isernia in this volume).

Public opinion's influence on foreign policy is mediated by a relatively stable system of values developed through socialization (Page 1994). For instance, most people in democratic countries would rather support peace-keeping actions than interventions directed at political changes in other nations (Jentleson 1992). The composition of the parliamentary system, political views of elected officials, salience of presidential leadership, effectiveness of elite communication, and elite perception of the public opinion are also critical mediating factors in our understanding of opinion-policy links (Powlick 1991; Jentleson 1992; and Graham 1986). Domestic factors can mediate the impact of international developments on policy-making (Putnam 1988; Moravski 1993). A country's general political context, including media coverage, mediates between attitudes and policy (Everts 1983; Everts here; Howard and Howard here). In short, understanding the opinion-policy links requires one to undertake the investigation of the context in which the links are established.

The term 'policy climate', or 'climate of opinion' (Clinton 1975; Bellucci and Isernia in this volume), helps in understanding the mediating variables between policy and public opinion. The policy climate consists of a set of beliefs about what the country and the government should or should not do on the international level, and in particular, in case of an international conflict. This is the prevailing sentiment among policy-makers and those individuals capable of influencing the direction of foreign policy through their roles as security and defense executives, analysts, problem definers, "gate keepers," "watchdogs," and "experts and commentators" (Page and Shapiro 1988, 243). These political elites constitute the 'concerned minority' of the nation, or the "citizens" (Almond & Verba 1963). In parliamentary and public debates, statements, televised interviews,

printed publications, and other channels of communication, the 'attentive public' voices opinions about their country's foreign policy and some international developments. The media in these circumstances, speaking on behalf of the people, become not only a conductor but also a source of foreign-policy attitudes. Therefore, some public officials may intentionally or unintentionally confuse the sources of attitudes by not distinguishing between mass opinion identified through polling and the policy climate. For instance, Bellucci and Isernia implied that policymakers sometimes refer to public opinion when, in fact, they talk about their party's members and parliamentarians.

Some examples illustrate the links between policy climate and policy. In Canada, from the beginning of the Bosnia conflict, the policy climate established among officials favored intervention. As a result, Ottawa, securing a political consensus between the government and general public, took the lead in asking the United Nations to intervene and promised to contribute personnel and equipment to any United Nation's mission (Keating and Gammer 1993, 730). France has a long tradition—as the book mentions—of political pressure originating in 'the intellectuals' who historically have been engaged in raising concerns about injustice. The Italian policy climate regarding Bosnia took shape in a complex set of domestic constraints including the uncertainty of the attitudes of the political elite and prime minister, and the stubborn opposition of the military to any armed intervention.

Policy climate has its own dynamics. Policy climate can be salient and non-salient; it can be assertive or non-assertive, becoming at times more susceptible under the influence of general public and less susceptible when the public doesn't care about foreign policy. Each country's policy climate at different times can have different impacts on policy making. In Italy, for instance, the climate evolved the Italian policy toward Bosnia through different stages (Bellucci and Isernia in this volume). Russian policy climate toward Bosnia also evolved from neutral into aggressively-negative with increasing salience of anti-American and anti-NATO attitudes (Shiraev & Terrio in this volume). In France, for example, because of the general unity and strength in the voices contributing to policy climate, and because of the privileged positions and personal contacts of the French 'intellectuals', the policy climate became a consistent and significant 'pressure factor' on the government. Policy climate does not always resemble mass opinion—people's attitudes measured through polling. For example, in the Canadian and Dutch cases one notices a close proximity of mass opinion measured in many surveys and each country's policy climate. On the

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other hand, Russia's policy climate during the conflict in Bosnia was substantially different from what generally indifferent people had in mind regarding Bosnia.

Let us suppose that policy climate is empirically testable. Assuming this, we introduce the following frame of reference that should clarify further analyses of policy climate as a mediator between opinion and policy. Each country's particular policy climate originates in and is linked to a set of political, ideological, and situational conditions. These variables may be examined from several dimensions or axes (see Table 1). Each axis refers to a different domain of information that may help the researcher in analyzing opinion-policy links. Theoretically, when one attempts to create certain empirical categories, all the variables, within such categories, are expected to be homogeneous, there are clear boundaries among the categories, and the categories are mutually exclusive. However, this rarely occurs in practice.

Table 1. A multiaxial assessment of policy climate in mediating opinion-policy links

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Basic socioeconomic and political factors affecting the opinion-policy links:

Axis 1. Political institutions and communications. The edifice of political institutions and political communications that mediate the opinion-policy links. These include: the type of republic, i.e. parliamentary or presidential; formal distribution of roles among foreign policy institutions; frequency of national and local elections; the design and ownership of the media; basic socioeconomic conditions; and the level of institutionalization of opinion polls by the government.

Axis 2. Political landscape. The specific political landscapes in which particular foreign-policy debates take place and how they reflect specific political interests pursued by the government and its opposition. Special areas of attention include existing government coalitions with other parties; debates and internal struggle within the government; political struggle between the ruling party and other political forces; domestic and international political issues relevant to election campaigns; and decision-makers' anticipation of public reaction to various foreign policy-related issues in their attempts to either boost or maintain their popularity.

Basic cultural and psychological factors affecting opinion-policy links:

Axis 3. General sociocultural variables. The fundamental values and effects of socialization, including religious, moral, and major psychological predispositions that can influence particular

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foreign policy attitudes. Special areas of attention include isolationist or interventionist values; religious beliefs; historic experience; and general stereotypes and prejudice toward particular foreign policy, policy actors, or groups.

Axis 4. Contextual and situational factors. These determine the quality of information that both the public and policymakers receive. Special areas of attention include salience of the considered foreign policy issue; perceptions of public opinion by policymakers; framing, priming, and agenda-setting of the designated foreign-policy issues conducted by the media; presence or absence of specific media effects, i.e. particular media coverage that evokes specific reactions in people, including their opinions; and individual characteristics of decision-makers as political leaders.

Let us now examine the proposed dimensions of opinion-policy links, using the evidence provided in the book's chapters (see Table 2).

Table 2. A comparative analysis of policy climate in national cases

	Political Institutions and Communications	Political Landscape	Sociocultural Factors and Values	Contextual Factors and Media Perceptions
CANADA	Parliamentary republic; coalition-based cabinet; prime-minister conducts foreign policy	Strong multi-partisan consensus about peace-keeping mission in Bosnia	Strong interventionist and peace-keeping values	Serbs are the aggressors; victims should be helped; peace can be established through strength
FRANCE	Presidential republic; multi-party system; president conducts	Moderate consensus about peace-keeping mission in	Mixed and uncertain attitudes changing to	All ethnic groups are responsible; Serbs are the aggressors;

	foreign policy	Bosnia; pressure from 'intellectuals'	interventionism	victims should be helped; peace can be established through strength
GREAT BRITAIN	*De facto* Parliamentary republic; coalition-based government; prime-minister conducts foreign policy	Moderate multi-partisan consensus about peace-keeping mission in Bosnia	Moderate interventionist and peace-keeping values	Serbs are the aggressors; victims should be helped; peace can be established through strength
ITALY	Parliamentary republic; coalition-based government; prime-minister conducts foreign policy	Weak multi-partisan agreement; competition among influential groups	Mixture of interventionist and isolationist attitudes	Serbs are the aggressors; victims should be helped; peace can be established through strength
HOLLAND	Parliamentary republic; coalition-based government; prime-minister conducts foreign policy	Strong multi-partisan consensus about peace-keeping mission in Bosnia	Strong interventionist and peace-keeping values	Serbs are the aggressors; victims should be helped; peace can be established through strength
RUSSIA	Presidential republic; multi-party system;	Continuous struggle between legislature and	Anti-Western and pro-Serb sentiment,	All ethnic groups are responsible; Serbs should be

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	president conducts foreign policy	cabinet about policy in Bosnia	mixture of isolationist and interventionist attitudes	helped; isolationism; peace can be established through strength
USA	Presidential republic; de facto two-party system; president conducts foreign policy	Weak multi-partisan agreement about peace-keeping mission in Bosnia	Mixture of interventionist and isolationist attitudes	Serbs are aggressors; victims should be helped; peace can be established through strength
GERMANY	Parliamentary republic; coalition-based cabinet; chancellor is in charge of foreign policy	Moderate multi-partisan consensus about peace-keeping mission in Bosnia	Moderate interventionist and peace-keeping values	Serbs are the aggressors; victims should be helped; peace can be established through strength

Political institutions and communications. The role public opinion plays in the shaping of any country's foreign policy is indispensably linked to the country's political system (Cohen 1977-78, 196). On this level, one should assess how the country's existing political, democratic institutions mediate the links between public opinion and foreign policy. Political systems—that include a wide set of actors, like parties, bureaucracies, and pressure groups—may or may not transmit opinions into the policy process, so that public opinion may or may not act as a "catalyst" to foreign policy operations. In some cases, like Russia, the lack of democratic alternative institutions during the period of transition was a weighty factor that affected policy climate. Therefore, the major and persuasive conductor of public opinion about both domestic and international events was the lower house of the Russian parliament, the Duma.

Different national governments may have dissimilar traditions of soliciting and considering public opinion as a factor in foreign-policy making, which is called "institutionalization" of polling (Shapiro and Jacobs forthcoming). Therefore, in analyzing opinion-policy links one should determine whether and to what extent polling becomes institutionalized by the government. For instance, in the Italian political and academic culture—imbued with historicism and idealist undertones—public opinion as measured by surveys was long considered as having little legitimacy in itself. That is to say, the empirical and positivist attitudes that underline the idea that "attitude can be measured" have been often discarded in Italy (Bellucci and Isernia in this volume). In British parliamentary debates, results of opinion polls about international developments were discussed continuously. On the contrary, polls were practically unmentioned in Russian parliamentary debates (Shiraev and Terrio in this volume). In short, a comparison of the US to some other democratic and transitional systems, for instance, shows how different the governments' approaches to polling can be.

Obviously, voters can exert the control over policy through reward and punishment in elections and government shake-ups. During the war in Bosnia, the United States and France changed their presidents, Russia replaced one, and Italy did so to three of its prime ministers. However, different types of democracy create unlike frameworks of relationships between the branches of the government. Bellucci and Isernia (in this volume) suggest that public opinion should influence policy more directly in two-party parliamentary settings than in coalition-based multiparty assemblages. Stronger parties should be "stronger" conductors of public opinion than weaker ones. Also, national systems with consolidated and established channels of communications—involving parties, interest groups, bureaucracies, and the media—ought to provide better conditions for public opinion expression than in the systems with fragmented communications. In the United States, the links between opinion and policy develop within the presidential political system with relatively weak parties. Party factions are relatively weak in the Senate and stronger in the House of Representatives. In comparison, the role of political parties and party factions is more salient in other countries, such as Italy and France.

In parliamentary and presidential systems where executive power is based on the strength of the parliamentary majority, foreign policy is often influenced and directed by internal political considerations. Typically, the head of the government tries to avoid taking policy steps that could undermine the ruling parliamentary majority. To exemplify, in the French system, the President

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lacking a majority in the parliament is forced to appoint a prime minister from an opposing party and then try to find a formula to work together. Thus in 'cohabitation' the President becomes somewhat responsive to the views of the prime minister and foreign minister. In the Italian political system, the channels of communication between the highest foreign policy executives and society are shaped mainly by political parties and the mass media that are also heavily controlled by political groups.

Yet, foreign policy is perceived by most as coming from an executive office. The highest foreign policy executives appear to be more independent in their activities than their counterparts in parliamentary systems. Nevertheless, one should acknowledge that the formal roles inherited by the chief government executives vary from country to country. French presidents, for example, depend on the national "intellectuals" to a greater extent than American presidents would. In the Netherlands, important foreign-policy decisions will not be taken by the minister of foreign affairs, but rather by the cabinet as a whole. The Netherlands are typically ruled by often shaky coalitions of two or more political parties and no single party is strong enough to govern alone. Foreign and defense ministers can only be forced to abdicate if they lose the confidence of parliament. Italian governments are usually based on a coalition of parties, and institutional actors have a voice in formulating and a veto-power in implementing Italian foreign policy. The nature of the relationships among them is not well established and depends on the political resources of each of these actors and of the personal skills of those who occupy these roles.

In Great Britain, even though the prime minister may enjoy support of his or her party in the Parliament, foreign policy is an arena of historic competition—not unique to Britain though—among Foreign Office, Joint Intelligence Committee, and foreign policy advisers to the prime minister. Bob Wybrow, for example (in this volume), mentions the resistance of many British prime ministers to the Foreign Office as an institution who sought their 'own,' independent advice. Russian presidents preserve a 'traditional' view that any compromises between the government and the opposition weaken the president. On the other hand, in the Canadian political system, the dominant theme is a pluralist conception of the origins of politics, the spirit of compromise and negotiation that characterizes domestic politics and spills over into foreign policy.

One interesting issue raised by the authors of the French chapter is the importance of the connections and networks between political elites in various positions around the center of power. Because many influential opinion leaders went to the same schools, shared common experiences,

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and belong to a similar social-status group, as the policymaking elite, the opinion leaders have the ability to influence policy. Another aspect of policy climate is the existing practices of co-ordination or rather lack of such between a country's foreign and military departments. According to some existing practices, military policy can be operated relatively separately from foreign policy, with its own norms, guidelines, and accountability. In the Italian case, the military were strong and determined in their intentions to stay away from a military involvement in Bosnia. In 1995, the negotiations about the deployment of Russian troops to Bosnia were conducted by Russian generals whereas the foreign ministry was virtually cut off. Moreover, the surprising 1999 deployment of the first Russian contingent in Kosovo was also ordered by top military commanders, and the Kremlin did not inform the foreign ministry of this extraordinary development (see interview of Russian prime minister to *Newsweek*, July 26, 1999).

Political competition. Political parties and interest groups influence the ways public opinion affects foreign policy. Internal political developments can make public opinion either more or less salient in the eyes of policymakers. Policy-makers in democracies are perhaps relatively well quali-fied to conduct policies for which the risks are small, in part because of the weakness of the domestic political opponent (Everts 1996). Politicians face severe problems, however, either when success is elusive or when the trade-off between costs (especially in terms of human lives) and interests is seen as unfavorable. Mistakes cost the decision-maker politically. On the whole, in Bosnia, many governments aimed at conducting a 'play-it-safe', low-risk, and low-cost foreign-policy line.

Both national and local elections provide mechanisms for determining the ways foreign policy executives pay attention to or manipulate public opinion (Shapiro and Jacobs forthcoming). When opinion polls reflect people's concerns about an international event, it may or may not be noticed by elected officials. However, when the potential voter expresses his or her dissatisfaction with how the government or ruling party handles a foreign-policy issue, such opinions are likely to become more salient to those who represent the government or the ruling party or parliamentary faction (Wybrow in this volume). It is important to determine, however, the importance of a particular election campaign for the average voter. For example, despite the fact that the war in Bosnia became an issue during the European parliamentary elections, the

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relative insignificance of the elections helped the French president to resist the demands of public opinion about particular decisive actions in Bosnia. On the other hand, a constitutional referendum in Russia in 1993 was crucial for Yeltsin's political survival and this made him ask the western allies not to undertake any actions against the Serbs who were supported by Russia's media and public opinion (Shiraev & Terrio in this volume).

The desire to be elected or re-elected creates pressing incentives in politicians to be responsive to public opinion in order to avoid falling too far out of line with the median voter. Moreover, in the United States and in other democracies, foreign policy actions can be naturally linked to each other. Bellucci and Isernia in this volume refer to Italian foreign policy so closely related to the country's domestic policy to the point that the former basically mirrors the latter. That is, parliamentary approval of certain government policies may be based on yielding to the opposition in some other policy areas. When a government is unstable and is not able to rely on a shaky party coalition in the parliament, internationalism in foreign policy—because of it potential high risk and cost—should decrease despite the pressure of public opinion (Isernia, 1998; Bellucci and Isernia in this volume). As the Russian case also suggests, while many Russians had a general desire to avoid war, and almost one third of Russians did not support any side involved in the conflict, the Russian policy climate around the Bosnia situation shaped up in a distinct way. That is, under persistent pressure from the Duma, the administration was forced to start building up a Russian policy of resistance to the West, and the United States in particular. As a result of victories of opposition parties—primarily of nationalistic and communist orientations—in both the 1993 and the 1995 legislative elections, Yeltsin and his executive foreign-policy team began to reshape their Bosnia policy and change personnel along lines more conducive to opposition legislators. Not public opinion per se, but rather perceptions of public opinion by policymakers reflected through the mirrors of their political calculations, were the main driving horses of the carriage of Russia's Balkan policies.

As a matter of political survival, public officials try to anticipate public approval and objections. Assumptions about a positive public reaction to a proposed action or policy contribute to a 'permissive' policy climate, whereas anticipation of criticism may contribute to a 'non-permissive' climate. Political opposition would not challenge foreign policy decisions if the public support of such actions were going to be overwhelming. On the contrary, the opposition would be more likely to challenge the government if the public reaction is negative, split, or just

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anticipated to be negative or split. As an example, the announcement of the French president meant to exclude any participation of new draftees into the Gulf War combat operations was designed to appease domestic public opinion. The avoidance of public disapproval was one of the reasons why France began its participation in the military operations on Somalia in 1992 (La Balme forthcoming). The same internal considerations of potentially low domestic support, perhaps, held the Clinton administration and the German chancellor away from making any definite commitments to the use of ground troops in Kosovo in the spring of 1999. Policymakers pay attention to whether there is likely to be sufficient political support for their actions especially if casualties occur. They quickly distance themselves from unfortunate events—like a tragedy in Srebrenica in the context of the Dutch policy—by criticizing the United Nations for a set of mistakes (see Everts in this volume).

As the British case shows (see Wybrow in this volume), domestic political affiliations affect people's responses to opinion polls' questions, in their willingness to support the government's action, assessments of particular foreign policy steps, and overall approval of elected officials. In Italy, for example, those on the right were more supportive of intervention than those on the left. By the time of the crisis in Bosnia, the majority of the Democratic Left Party (former communists and political adversaries of NATO) supported the Atlantic Alliance and the Italian greater role in NATO (Isernia 1998). In Russia, the left held an isolationist attitude in the early 1990s but became extremely hawkish by the mid-1990s as soon as they gained political weight in the parliament. In Canada, support for peacekeeping was expressed across party and regional lines. Similarly, virtually all of the leading parties supported the international mediation role for Canada's armed forces in one form or another. However, in 1994, the newly elected Liberals began to act more decisively regarding Bosnia, perhaps trying to distance themselves from their predecessors—the Conservatives. In the Netherlands there was little political opposition to the military solution of the Bosnia dilemma, even from the traditionally antimilitarist left side of the political spectrum (a trend that was repeated clearly during the Kosovo crisis). For most of the period political differences within or outside the Dutch ruling coalition played only a minor role.

Sending troops abroad might have looked problematic in the context of particular domestic political tribulations and 'bad experiences' in some previous military engagements. Any nation, like the United States and the former Soviet Union, that once sent its troops abroad and took

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casualties may develop its own Vietnam or Afghanistan 'syndrome'. Success or failure in previous wars and military engagements may also become either a stimulating or restraining factor in making decisions about new peacekeeping operations. Many ongoing armed engagements—all of a different nature though—in Northern Ireland, Chechnya, and Somalia could have been such obstacles for Great Britain, Russia, the United States, and Italy. The ghost of World War II was powerful enough in Germany to influence decisions about sending German soldiers abroad. Great Britain had a relatively positive experience with the Falkland mission, whereas Russian military contingents were performing peacekeeping missions and taking casualties with the UN forces in Tajikistan, and with the collective peacekeeping forces in the Dnestr region and South Ossetia.

To summarize, on one hand, foreign policy issues, and especially mistakes or anticipation of mistakes in foreign policy—negatively evaluated in opinion polls—are used by the opposition to put pressure on the government responsible for the mistakes to undertake particular actions. In all cases in the book, political pressures initiated by the opposition in order to influence the governments to take action were common. Not only political rivals, but also concerned citizens, as is shown in the French case, could become influential sources of criticism. On the other hand, the government can use specific foreign policy-related issues to strengthen present political standings and electoral chances in the future. Immediate electoral concerns may affect specific foreign-policy decisions.

Sociocultural factors and people's values. Each country's policy climate taps into a unique political consciousness that consists of values and beliefs—shared by most individuals and communicated among citizens in the form of relatively stable mental representations. These attitudes grow out of cultural, ideological, and religious commitments characteristic to the people of a particular country and are not necessarily based on a cost-benefit calculus. For example, some fundamental religious and cultural values—and the Bosnian, Iraqi, and Kosovo crises of the 1990s provide evidence in support of this suggestion—may become absolutely essential in public endorsement of a particular foreign regime or country. A dictator and villain in the eyes of the American public may be perceived as a hero in other nations. Ethnic 'cleansing' may be justified and explained in some national media (in Russia, for instance) as an inevitable

byproduct of a civil war. The 'south', 'center', and 'north' subcultures in Italy have long had a polarizing and freezing role on Italian political culture.

Public opinion may reflect some stable and fundamental values that do not change under the pressure of new facts, challenging these values. Thus, since World War II the public in the United States has had a generally activist, not isolationist, orientation toward foreign policy (Shapiro and Jacobs forthcoming). The Vietnam War split American public opinion along a two-dimensional spectrum (Hinckley 1992). Likewise, the war in Kosovo has put an end to the Russian public's predominant isolationist attitudes of the 1990s toward international conflicts.

Some researchers (see Vengroff et al.; Howard and Howard in this volume) discussing national culture, mention a set of values shared by a majority of the population. Specifically, these values include stable national attitudes such as moral responsibility to assist suffering and seemingly helpless people (Martin and Fortmann 1995) the attitudes that become a core set of beliefs determining people's views on international events.

Public opinion is not necessarily capricious, erratic, or volatile (as some politicians indicated) because of the general lack of public interest in foreign policy and the fear of casualties. In the mid-1990s, no less than 56 percent of Dutch people supported participation by the Netherlands' armed forces in actions entailing considerable risks of casualties. A consistent majority of the French public appeared to favor military intervention. In Italy, public opinion was also strong in support of an armed Italian intervention in Bosnia under the NATO banner.

At the beginning, the war in Bosnia was a *terra incognita* to both journalists and the public. The situation differed from other conflicts of the Cold War period, in the sense that the dividing lines between the competing sides were not easily understood in general and ideological terms. Hence, it was not easy for the outside world to interpret the conflict and decide what ought to be done. Thus the public became relatively dependent on the media and government in its attempts to make sense of the ongoing events in the former Yugoslavia. A preconceived and convenient ideological 'Cold War' prism, an ideological gestalt for interpretation of international events and distinctions between 'them' and 'us', was no longer available. However, to a certain degree, this 'Cold War' schema—portraying the war as a battlefield between the 'old' authoritarian forces and 'good' freedom-fighters—was reinvented in the war in Bosnia. As a result, the Bosnian Serbs were constantly portrayed in the Western media as villains.

There is a fairly stable belief system regarding peacekeeping operations in some countries and yet not in others. In general, questions about the motives justifying the use of force like `human rights' and 'international legal order' scored much higher than matters like `protecting economic interests' (Everts in this volume). In Great Britain, polls indicated a significant increase in the people's willingness to perceive their country as a world power. Peacekeeping continued to serve as one of the cornerstones of Canadian foreign policy. Postmaterialist values enhanced the development of a specific self-image, a coherent world view, and a set of distinctly Canadian instrumental values, such as altruism, concerns for environment, human rights, and individual freedom. Canadian foreign policy in Bosnia was congruent with Canadian political culture and sense of identity in spite of their own internal conflict of Quebec separatism that threatened to tear the nation in two (Carriere, O'Reilly, and Vengroff in this volume). Such a global desire to be a major actor in resolving the conflict was evident in both the Canadian and Dutch cases. It permeated the views of elites and the general citizenry, the media, and the content of foreign policy debates across party and ethnic lines.

However, postmaterialist values alone do not explain the complexity of contemporary foreign-policy attitudes. Surprisingly, for example, these values and internationalism were found to be negatively linked in Italy. Though public support for the use of the military in civil tasks and peace-keeping missions have been highly popular among Italians in the 1990s, it was due, most likely, to fundamental idealistic assumptions of catholic or socialist origins (Bellucci and Isernia in this Volume). On the other hand, the validity of the 'postmaterialist' hypothesis in interpreting the congruence of public and elite opinion is enhanced by the Russian case. That is, economic hardship and material insecurity were strongly correlated with isolationism and apathy (Shiraev 1999a; Shiraev and Terrio in this volume). As a challenge to some rational actor models of political behavior, the Russian case suggests how important it is to consider 'ideological values' in interpreting motivations in foreign policy. To illustrate, while no immediate threats to Russia's security existed from the outside, and while the ending of the Cold War had brought increased opportunities for obtaining Western aid, Russia's leaders consistently underemphasized the importance of such help and were painfully concerned instead about not letting Russia be treated as an inferior partner compared to other leading international powers (Goble 1996).

The war in Bosnia cracked the ideological commitments of the so-called peace movement, with some individuals sticking to a non-violent resolution of the conflict and others pleading for military intervention—and both sides pleading their cases in the name of peace. It is remarkable

how in 1999, many European pacifists and German 'greens' in particular became unified in their support for military strikes against Serbia. It remains to be seen whether an embarrassing inaction in the Bosnian war caused a cognitive dissonance between a desire to stop the bloodshed and the lack of will power required for action. According to the psychological theory (Festinger 1957) a mismatch between a person's intentions and behavior create unpleasant psychological pressures and urges the person to act in order to reduce the dissonance. Such dissonance resulted in moral guilt among certain opinion leaders and politicians and prepared some psychological foundation for the development of strong interventionist attitudes and readiness to act in case of the Kosovo crisis a few years later.

Not only pacifist values but also fatalistic assumptions about the nature of all ethnic conflicts conveyed by the European and North American press penetrated public opinion. At the beginning of the escalation of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, the Dutch were skeptical of the likelihood that an international peacekeeping force would be able to keep the conflicting parties apart. As Everts implies, the emphasis was put on the violent and vicious traditions of all civil wars. Most Russians and many Americans also were skeptical about the conflict. Many French and Russian commentators hinted at the complicated nature of civil wars. Skepticism was also a consequence of the perceived impotence of international institutions and an empty plea of the U.S. president Bush in 1991 for a new international order. On a psychological level, as Philip Everts concludes, it was relatively easy to plead ignorance about complicated conflicts in 'faraway countries' and to be fatalistic about them.

Contrary to the Gulf war, in which a villain was clearly identified and vilified, no such target emerged immediately in the Bosnia crisis. Both French and Russian governments, for example, refused to name the aggressor in the beginning of the conflict (the French position changed later, but Russian's remained undaunted) and did not support the partition of Yugoslavia. The Italian media never clearly and coherently pictured the Serb leaders Karadzhic and Milosevic as evil. Moreover, arguments about the historic nature of this particular conflict, anti-Nazi actions of the Serbs during World War II, Slavic and Orthodox roots of Serbs and Russians, and historical ties of affinity with Yugoslavia and Serbia lessened the simplicity of the situation (Ullman 1996; La Balme forthcoming). In Russia, a pro-Serbian sentiment was partially intensified under the influence of a broader anti-Western prejudice growing since the early 1990s as a byproduct of the search for the country's post-Cold War identity (Shiraev 1999b; Sidorov

1994, 3). Gradually, 'national-chauvinist' attitudes, evident in public discussions about Russia's role in the Bosnia conflict from the beginning of the conflict in the summer of 1991, became increasingly prominent over time, grew especially strong in 1994-96, and later became dominant during the 1999 war in Kosovo. Russian leaders desired to see the restoration of the great empire status and were ready to use any opportunity to challenge the U.S. interests on the Balkans.

On the other hand, in the countries studied—and the Russian and Dutch cases showed this trend clearly despite some substantial differences between these two countries' policies in the region—setbacks in diplomatic fields and failed attempts to end the conflict in Bosnia led to a sense of humiliation and defeat among opinion leaders in both countries and contributed to strong compelling will for action in Bosnia.

Contextual factors.   Contextual factors, such as framing, priming, and agenda-setting determine the quantity and quality of information exchanged between the policymakers and the public. These factors communicated by the media and by policymakers through the media determine the salience of a particular foreign-policy issue (Paletz 1999, 141-143). For example, at the beginning of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, few opinion leaders and citizens were knowledgeable about what was going on in the region. The media, providing opportunities for experts of various qualities and persuasions to present their views, helped to shape public debates on the role of foreign countries in the conflict settlement. In effect, some ordinary citizens were informed about events in Bosnia only by reading and listening to various experts and accepting what they conveyed about the war. Bob Wybrow refers to the 'bad press' received by the Serbs in British media as a factor contributing to low support of the Bosnian Serbs in opinion polls in 1993. Similarly, the 'good press' about the Serbs in most Russian newspapers contributed to relatively pro-Serbian attitudes of the public. Geographic proximity to a region of conflict affects the way a conflict is perceived and seen as a threat to national interests. The 'proximity' factor appears in the French, Russian, US, and Italian cases.

Public awareness about the war in Bosnia—especially in the beginning of the conflict—was relatively low: less than one in ten in Canada named Bosnia as part of the country's peacekeeping activities in the early 1990s. People express their concerns, however, when something substantial touches their emotions. In the broad sense, as suggested by Wybrow in this volume, without the media, the Bosnian tragedy would have faded from people's minds after the

first few months of fighting. Coverage of the Sarajevo market massacre in 1994—and followed unanimous calls for action—serves as an example of how quickly a consensus about the necessity of an intervention between governments and public could be reached.

The examination of opinion-policy should also take into consideration the level of unity or disagreement among the elites—including the media—regarding particular foreign-policy issues. Coverage of foreign policy in the media, as Shapiro and Jacobs (forthcoming) suggest, is crucial to the formation of a specific policy climate and achievement of a relative agreement between the public and government officials. The Italian government, by way of illustration, at a crucial stage of the war was divided: the minister of foreign affairs was in favor of a military intervention while the minister of defense was opposed to it. Russian parliament took an anti-NATO stand in Bosnia, whereas the administration tried to balance its approach to the situation. In the Netherlands, the parliamentary opposition demanded from the cabinet a more assertive stand regarding the conflict. The dispatch of the troops found opposition among the Dutch military, voiced by the military leadership and outside military commentators, who referred to national interests, unfinished restructuring of the military, and lack of experience of conscripts.

If the consensus in opinions is predetermined by a political alliance among the officials, the policy climate will be strong and relatively stable. If the government officials are bound by only party coalitions in the parliament (for example, in Italy, Israel, Russia, or Germany), the policy climate will be very unstable and gullible. Moreover, a leader's personal commitment, his or her ability and skills necessary to frame the issue at hand in a desirable way, may also act upon opinion-policy links. La Balme shows (forthcoming), for example, how Mitterand's personal opposition to war helped him to argue against a military involvement in the Balkans and, on the contrary, how American commitment to the Operation Restore Hope in Somalia affected his decision to finally make a commitment in that region.

The strength of the opinion-policy links can be determined by several communication effects that influence a country's policy climate. These effects are defined as specific schemes of news coverage that determine and shaping people's political preferences and choices (see Ansolabehere et al., 1993). Even though it is assumed that the effects share cross-national similarities, this requires additional empirical research. Obviously, each of these phenomena should be examined within national political and cultural contexts. Let us discuss one common

denominator of the media effects—their formative role in creating either a 'permissive' or a 'non-permissive' political climate regarding the country's intervention in Bosnia.

- **Free-rider effect.** Philip Everts notes that few people want their country to take steps irrespective of what other nations do. The existence of an understanding about other countries' commitment is therefore an important condition of domestic support for participating in international peacekeeping. As long as there is no clear commitment for intervention from other countries, a 'wait-and-see' attitude among policymakers and ordinary people becomes prevalent. This situation serves as a restraining factor on the government despite pressures of public opinion (Everts in this volume). As soon as one or several countries begin to act or show a strong commitment to intervene, a permissive set of attitudes begins to develop in support of the trend (Sobel 1996). Both governments and the public may also hesitate when feeling that other governments are not carrying their part of the international burden. The debates around the Bosnia crisis were mostly directed at the United States. Specifically, the 'wait-and-see' attitude in European governments was influenced by their preference for a more active role for the United States. In Russia, on the other hand, perceptions of the United States' active role in the Balkans induced attitudes and actions of resistance to the growing American influence.

- **Victim effect.** People can remain relatively indifferent to a foreign conflict if it gets little media coverage. As soon as gruesome images of civilian suffering and casualties start to appear in the media, attitudes tend to change and the pressures 'to do something about it' grow. Shame, compassion and genuine concern are also important elements in the reactions of many people (Everts in this volume). Meanwhile, sensitivity seems to increase due to more communication. Learning more about civilian casualties and starvation, most Europeans indicated in the opinion polls that they didn't want to let these things continue. The wicked mortar attack on a Sarajevo market in February 1994 that killed 68 people, and the subsequent frightful video images of it distributed around the world brought public opinion together with opinion leaders and policymakers to a consensus about the necessity of taking decisive steps to stop the conflict. Britain's Channel 4 announced at one time that it was to devote 15 hours of prime-time television to heighten public

awareness of the war in Bosnia and the suffering it had caused (Wybrow in this volume). In the Netherlands, the media continued to play their traditional agenda-setting role. Television and newspaper reports about atrocities were a major factor in raising the saliency of the issue from 1991 onwards, and contributed to a climate in which the government increasingly perceived pressures from the public as demanding that something ought to be done in Bosnia. Contrary to other countries, in Russia the Serbs were presented as victims and president Yeltsin defended employing a Russian military contingent near Sarajevo on the basis of persistent requests from the Bosnian Serbs (Volkov 1994, 1). It is also remarkable that the Russian foreign ministry refused to accept the Western media's accusations that the Serbs were responsible for the Sarajevo market tragedy. Instead, clear suggestions were made in the Russian press that the Muslims themselves could have been behind the massacre (Yushin 1994, 1, 3).

- **Rally-around-the-flag effect.** Before a foreign military operation is announced opposition may be strong. However, when the troops are being deployed or have already been deployed, people tend to support the government and the nation's commander-in-chief. The effect can be enhanced if the country's national interests appear to be threatened or violated. For example, detention by Bosnian Serbs of several French peacekeepers in May 1995 led to a dramatic change in French policy. In Italy, the climate changed in 1992 after the shooting down of an Italian airplane flying a humanitarian mission over Bosnia. With a popular executive leader, this effect can become significant in determining the strength of public and elite's support. For example, the French president's visit to Sarajevo provided him with an enormous boost in popularity. Moreover, policymakers can 'spin' the issue by using their popularity to promote some designated policy steps. As an example, France's most vociferous policy shift did correspond, as Howard and Howard suggest, with the election of Jacques Chirac to the Presidency in 1995. Chirac's foreign policy initiatives were designed to be impressive, especially in the early months following his election. Actions themselves may boost public support. As Everts implies, whether public support for participation in risky peacekeeping is forthcoming and stable, or fails to materialize, depends partly on the credibility, unanimity, and persuasiveness of political leadership. Foreign-policy decision-

makers are able to frame issues through the media in terms designed both to generate popular support for a particular policy and to strengthen people's pre-existing attitudes. For instance, government elites successfully 'framed' the issue of Canada's intervention in the former Yugoslavia as one that is peacekeeping, not interventionist, knowing that the public since the 1950s had continuously preferred the former over the latter.

- **Body-bag effect.** Support for war diminishes roughly in logarithmic proportion to the number of expected casualties. People express their concerns about a particular type of an intervention, whether it is a peacekeeping mission or military operation with an increased risk of taking casualties. In the Netherlands, a change in opinion climate toward isolationism was reinforced by the dramatic events of July 1995 when the Bosnian Serbs forced the Dutch military contingent to surrender Srebrenica. Even the anticipation of casualties can affect public opinion. Politicians thus may refer to public opinion as the reason for which certain policies cannot be implemented. The Italian government maintained an attitude that public support of a military action would change as soon as the first Italian casualties occurred. In January 1996 in Great Britain, the proportion wanting to pull the troops out if they suffered serious casualties was at a high 43 percent level. Assumptions that the public would not be willing to sustain casualties tomorrow even though people support military intervention today was commonly argued by politicians and opinion leaders in every examined case. Public opinion, however, is not static. The unwillingness to sustain casualties is not a constant. It has been argued that the steadfastness of political leaders may create or help to sustain public support (Everts 1996; Sobel 1996; see also van der Meulen, 1994; van der Meulen, 1995; Parsons, 1995: 242-243). Even though 60 French soldiers died in the former Yugoslavia by September 1996, the support for intervention remained strong. In spite of some early humiliations, threats to the lives of Canadian troops, a lack of clarity regarding their role, and significant budget cuts for the Canadian armed forces, Canadian public opinion was continuously supportive of a peacekeeping action.

- **The likely success effect.** Support for the use of force increases if a quick and victorious outcome is anticipated at a minimal cost. Depending on the situation posed to them, the

European public was generally in favor of each country's troops being used in Bosnia, particularly when they appeared to be operating in a relatively safe environment where they were providing help and protecting the civilians (Sobel 1996). As Everts put it, the perceived success of a particular military action appear to be an important intervening variable, determining whether public opinion turns out to be stable or volatile, and whether it presents an obstacle or a condition of effective foreign and military policy. The air campaigns in Bosnia in 1995 and in Kosovo in the spring of 1999, a virtual reality seen by millions on their television screens, have enhanced a perception in some viewers that future wars can be easily won from the air. This belief, expressed in opinion polls, may encourage future political leaders to undertake reckless military actions supported by enthusiastic—but unfortunately misled about the nature and consequences of air war— public opinion. The combined appeal to the described earlier 'body bag' and 'free rider' effects provides policymakers with a moral and political reasoning—as Wybrow and Everts note—for inaction in the international arena. Anticipation or perception of the 'victim', the 'likely success', and the 'rally-around-the-flag' effects creates a policy climate favorable for implementing the decision to act. In sum, the support for military action drops considerably once the likelihood of casualties becomes apparent. However, the high probability of success and the perceived chances of peace, dehumanization of the opponent, and the need to take revenge, all considerably lessened the impact on policy climate and public opinion that the fear of casualties would have had. These tend to contribute to a hardening of people's positions and a willingness to persevere in the military conflict.

Conclusion. In order to consolidate and summarize the empirical evidence presented here, the book uses a multi-axial approach for a comparative study of opinion-policy links. According to this approach, each country's particular policy climate—within which foreign-policy decisions are made—is originated by and linked to a set of empirically testable variables. These diverse variables may be examined from several dimensions that refer to specific socio-economic, political, cultural, and psychological conditions of a country. The use of this approach should help facilitate a more comprehensive evaluation of the relations between public opinion and foreign policy from a comparative perspective and direct attention to conditions that may be unintentionally overlooked in examining of national cases.

First, public opinion always 'exists' in someone's perception and should be evaluated within a particular ideological and political context. From the pollster's standpoint, public opinion about Bosnia in Europe, Canada, and the USA, in general, was characterized by a combination of concerns about the tragic situation, a relatively strong commitment to the United Nations, and human rights. There was an expressed commitment to taking coordinated—but not unilateral—actions to protect these rights and further peace, justice, as well as a growing antipathy toward ethnic violence. People were aware of the risks inevitable in military operations. On the other hand, public support increased when there was an anticipated success of certain foreign policy. The book displays that from the policymaker's standpoint, public opinion was either strong (Canada) or weak (Russia), based on core values (The Netherlands) or more immediate concerns (USA), conveyed directly by the people (Germany), opinion leaders (France), or via political parties (Italy)—it all depends on the context within which the opinion polls were taken and analyzed.

Second. Guided by their own beliefs and motivations, policymakers may follow public opinion (1) because of their democratic commitment, religious, and ideological values, or (2) because by initiating a policy they want to make political investment that brings future electoral votes. If policymakers are pressured by strong demands for action, they might question whether the risks involved in the implementation of such actions are equivalent to the values and interests they intend to defend, and whether public opinion will continue to support their policy when the first casualties are taken. The decisions that persons make and opinions that people express about their country's participation in an international military operation are both logical calculations and moral choices, no matter where these topics are discussed or decisions are made—at a kitchen table or in the Oval Office. A level of public support of 55 or 60 percent may look impressive for a journalist or any other observer, however it can be insufficient for a politician who makes his or her decision on a larger number of variables than the public usually does. Politicians themselves—when asked about the role public opinion plays in their foreign policy decisions—tell researchers (La Balme forthcoming) about the complexity and controversy surrounding opinion-policy linkages. Some public officials imply that political decisions are always made according to the will of the people. For instance, George Stephanopolous, long-term adviser to president Clinton, suggested in an interview that no foreign policy should be implemented without support of public opinion (Stephanopolous 1999). Others, as the authors of

this volume repeatedly show, often feel insulated from public pressures and imply that public opinion has no direct effect on foreign policy. They insist that their decisions were based on the elite's special expertise and its moral conscience about what is best for the people. It is no surprise that the corridor between opinion and policy resembles a multi-level highway intersection, not a narrow one-way street. The links are interactive and reciprocal rather than unidirectional and linear.

Third. Public indifference has its bearing on foreign policy. As Everts brings to mind, if the public is not interested in a foreign-policy issue or passive in expressing its opinion, this gives governments considerable freedom of action. However, the public may develop relatively stable and strong attitudes in particular situations when the victims are easily identifiable, for example in cases of civil wars and conflicts in which human rights are violated on a large scale. Knowing that they are under pressure, policymakers have fewer foreign-policy choices to consider. The war in Bosnia in the early and mid-1990s and the 1999 conflict in Kosovo partly confirm this assumption. Even though a governmental decision to commit the armed forces can be sustained in most countries for some time without parliamentary support, such a legislative approval was also needed. Parliaments, however, hesitate to give such support when they are not confident that public opinion at large will demonstrate understanding and support of the government's actions (Everts; Shiraev and Terrio; Bellucci and Isernia in this volume).

Fourth. The cases present the comparative evidence that government policy is more likely to change in response to a shift in public opinion than vice versa, and to shift in the direction preferred by the public, thus supporting what Graham (1986) and Page and Shapiro (1983) have suggested about US foreign policy. All in all, the book shows that public opinion pressures do not per se cause policymakers to change their policies; however, the pressures create a difficult dilemma between the risks they might be taking—if certain policies are unpopular—or the benefits they could gain when they appeal to voters. Public opinion was a relatively consistent supporter of intervention in Bosnia from the beginning of the conflict. The governments, with the exception of Canada and the Netherlands, started with a non-interventionist stance during the first few years of the war, but gradually moved in the direction of public opinion: non-intervention soon gave way to humanitarian intervention, which eventually turned into military intervention. However, public opinion was not always steady, becoming at times less certain about a military action in Bosnia. Fear of casualties, growing pessimism about the ability to bring an ethnic conflict to an end, the

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lack of clear objectives for peace-keeping missions caused fluctuations in public support for the countries' involvement into the conflict. Fortunately for the peace process, such fluctuations did not change the governments' policies that eventually led to the long-term military intervention. Since a commitment is made, the public support for the military action grows, especially if (1) the perceived success of the operation is evident, (2) fear of casualties is low, (3) and other countries become active participants of the intervention.

Fifth. Summarizing the empirical evidence presented in the book, and using a multi-axial approach for a comparative study of opinion-policy links, one can make critical assessments and suggestions about some future tendencies in public opinion's influence on foreign-policy. For instance, the end of the Cold War has decreased the 'visibility' of foreign policy because the 'evil empire' has disappeared thus demolishing the old foreign-policy assumptions and making foreign-policy attitudes less accessible in people's minds. The more difficult it is for people to explain foreign affairs, the less pressure is applied to influence policy. Moreover, with the disappearance—though prematurely proclaimed—of the 'Cold War frame' in international relations, both policymakers and the media have a chance to frame international news in new ways and by doing this influence public opinion in a way they desire. If there is no clear ideological view about who the enemy really is, the public will tend to pay attention to opinion leaders who can name, define, and explain new dangers in contemporary world. Therefore, often motivated by specific political interests and election concerns, public officials can accumulate considerable strength in framing foreign-policy agenda. They will face the public that is more detached from foreign-policy issues, has less information and fewer attitudinal predispositions than it had in the 1980s. Making judgments about foreign politics, the public perhaps will be more dependent on an immediate struggle of ideas among elites than on people's own stable ideological commitments. In this context, the role of the leader's persuasive skills—his or her ability to persuade or 'spin' an issue for policy-justification purposes—as well as the potential impact of the media will inevitably increase.

This book offers some explanations as well as sets forth testable hypotheses about opinion-policy linkages in international relations. These new hypotheses should encourage researchers to examine not only public support for or objection to particular policies per se but also the policy climate and a variety of contextual factors that influence decision-making. The

approach for the multiaxial analysis of the opinion-policy links supported by the evidence presented in this volume allows us to remain optimistic about the direction of future research.

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