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Studying the Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy in International Crises: The United States and the Bosnian Crisis, 1992–1995

Yaëli Bloch-Elkon

This study presents an integrative model of the press, public opinion, and foreign policy relations during times of international crises. It combines theories of mass communications and international relations, with emphasis on the various stages of the crisis, the roles and functions of the media, and the different positions adopted by the press and the public vis-à-vis government foreign policy. The model is then applied to the United States during the Bosnian crisis (1992–1995), by examining commentary and editorials from *The Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal*, news headlines from *USA Today* and *Washington Times*, and public opinion data. The findings and conclusions regarding strong and significant correlations among media content, public opinion, and policy clarify the different roles of the press during various stages of an international crisis. They shed new light on scholars' and practitioners' understanding of the complex nature of these relationships, during both times of crisis and more generally.

Keywords: *elite/popular press; media; public opinion surveys; foreign policy; international crisis; Bosnia and the United States; content analysis*

The interrelationship of news coverage, public opinion, and foreign policy during international crises has become one of the most important and complex issues in the study of the mass media and contemporary foreign policy making. Its importance has increased as a result of the media's rise in influence—along with major changes in international politics. At the same time, globalization has made world news more accessible than ever before to the broad public. There are, however, few academic studies that explore the relationships between all three central variables. Most studies tend to examine only two of them, without elaborating on this fuller complexity. Few studies focus on the roles

of the media in international crises, where the media have the potential to shape attitudes and significantly influence opinions. Consequently, identifying the nature of the links between and among the three variables has been a core difficulty in research efforts, partially exacerbated by methodological complexity, leading one variable to be ignored despite its inevitable connection to the other two.

Since the 1990s, a growing number of studies have attempted to construct integrative models that relate governmental policy, media coverage, and public opinion (Entman 2000, 2004; Holsti 2000; Nacos et al. 2000; Page 2000; Powlick and Katz 1998; Robinson 2000; Seaver 1997). Questions regarding the links and directions of influence of these variables are extremely complicated (Bennett and Paletz 1994; Entman 2000; Holsti 2000; Isaacs 1998; Nacos 1990; Newson 1996; Page 2000; Seaver 1997; Sobel 2001), but their interrelationships are essential to understanding the world in which we live. For example, to what extent do the media have real power to influence not just public opinion but also government action? Or does the government manipulate the media and, through them, the public? Or when it comes to foreign policy, do the media and the government influence public opinion, rather than the public affecting governmental decision making? There is also the possibility that the media and government simultaneously influence one another (Malek and Wiegand 1996).

Examining these connections requires an interdisciplinary approach, if a complete picture is to be presented (Bennett 1993; Bennett and Paletz 1994; Jacobs and Shapiro 1996; Livingstone 1998; Page 1996; Reta 2002; Seaver 1997). The media's powerful presence has driven scholars to evaluate the media's role in opinion formation and opinion change (Dimitrova 2001; Graber 2002; Mowlana 1996; Paletz 2002; Paletz and Entman 1991; Shamir and Shamir 2000; Splichal 1999), in priming or giving priority to certain issues on political agenda (Edwards and Wood 1999; Patterson 1997; Reese 1991), in mediating between the government and the public, and in reflecting public opinion (Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Habermas 1996; Kuypers 1997; Paletz 2002; Schoenbach and Becker 1995).

The majority of citizens particularly lack, or lack access to, information and understanding of international events, which by their very nature are more complex (Graubatz 1995; Holsti 1996; Nelson 2001; Page and Shapiro 1992; Paletz 2002; Sobel 2001). The media play a key role in reporting and interpreting such events for the broader public (Beaudoin and Thorson 2002; Boettcher 2001; Isaacs 1998; Powlick and Katz 1998).

The Media, Public Opinion, and Governmental Policy— Previous Approaches: A Comprehensive Review

Many scholars have acknowledged that these key variables can be reciprocally interrelated. Powlick (1991, 1995, Powlick and Katz 1998), for example,

presented a model emphasizing the mutual relations between elites, interest groups, governmental officials, and the media, and their relations with the public. O’Heffernan (1993) also proposed a complex system of mutual relations, as did Kennamer (1994). Mueller (1994) found mutual influences between public opinion and the media, focusing on the American government during the first Gulf War, while Seaver (1997) and Page (2000) also suggest that such influences exist.

Some scholars stress the influence of the government and the media in formulating public opinion (Everts 2000; Nacos et al. 2006; Nelson 2001), whereas others emphasize the impact of the media and public opinion on government policy (Bennett and Paletz 1994; Duncan et al. 2003). For example, Holsti (1996) claimed that since the end of the Cold War, both the media and public opinion influenced decision makers. There are scholars who emphasize mainly the media’s impact on public opinion and decision makers (Hoey 1995; McCombs and Shaw 1972; Page 1996; Seib 1997; Soroka 2003; Zaller 1992), and others point at the volume of media coverage and its effect on the extent of the public interest in international crises (Bissell 2002; Neuman 1990).

In general, most scholars perceive the media system as a channel or mechanism linking the public to policymakers (Bloch and Lehman-Wilzig 2002; Bloch-Elkon and Shapiro 2005; Brody 1991; Everts 2000; Jentleson and Britton 1998; Malek 1996; Page and Shapiro 1992; Rogers and Dearing 1988; Ruddock 2001; Splichal 1999; Van Belle 2000; Zaller 1992). Grosswiler (1996) claimed that the media affect the way in which the public perceives information about political matters, similar to Iyengar and Simon (1997) in their study on the media and public opinion in the Gulf crisis. Examining the relationship in the post-cold war period, Bennett et al. (1997) concluded that media coverage of events affected public opinion on foreign policy issues. Entman (2004) argued that when the media’s independence increased after the cold war, filling a vacuum in policy definitions, the influence of decision makers on public opinion diminished; in contrast, Shapiro and Jacobs (2000) suggested that the complexity of the new world order increased the opportunities of decision makers to lead the media and public opinion.

Several studies emphasize the government’s influence on public opinion through the media (Powlick 1991). For example, Mermin (1999) believes that the government attempts to influence the media, particularly in foreign policy matters, to obtain important public support. Although some scholars suggest that the impact of the media on the government reflects public opinion (Brown 2001), most claim that the variables mutually influence each other. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) suggested that one of the most important effects of the media is in setting priorities for the public, which, in turn, can have an impact on government.

Overall, however, there is a lack of consensus as to the nature and extent of mutual influence between the media and government policy and on how public

opinion fits into this relationship. In the realm of foreign policy issues, although many scholars agree that the media's influence on the public has increased during the past two decades (Mowlana 1996), the implications of this influence in state-society relations and the connections between foreign policy and public opinion (Holsti 1996; Seaver 1997) are not widely understood. Some claim that the media shape public opinion considerably (Naveh 2002; Paletz 2002), with the thought that politicians assume that the degree of media attention to a specific issue expresses its importance to the public (Linsky et al. 1986). The media thus act as a selection device for the public's and government's agendas. At the same time, the influence of public opinion on policy depends on several factors: the type of political decision being made (e.g., security/economics), the specific stage in the political process, the existence of an external threat, the media goals or philosophies prevalent at the time (e.g., "watchdog" or government mouthpiece), the context of the decision (e.g., during crises), and perceived relevance of public opinion (Seaver 1997).

The failure to consider all sides of this media, public opinion, and foreign policy triangle leaves fundamental questions inadequately answered. In the post-cold war era, understanding the interrelations of these elements has become even more important (Entman 2000; Nacos et al. 2000). Most studies during and after the cold war period have focused mainly on military crises, crisis prevention, and issues of security and defense. Since the end of the cold war, crises have arisen as a result of political/economic disparities and ethnic differences (Everts 2000; Jentleson and Britton 1998). In the new post-cold-war world order, national interests and doctrines of foreign policy are unclear without an established theoretical and normative structure. The absence of the familiar cold war schema, which dictated clear approaches to the use of force, may have made the government more willing to listen to public opinion (Entman 2004; Everts 2000). The end of the cold war influenced key perspectives on public opinion with regard to international relations and the role of the media (Bissell 2002; Holsti 1996; Malinkina and McLeod 2002; Reta 2002; Wittkopf and Hinckley 2000). It appears that the media have attempted to fill the vacuum by searching for a suitable new framework in which to report events (Entman 2004; Kuypers 1997) and foreign policy issues—making foreign policy an even more complex matter to comprehend (Shapiro and Jacobs 2000).¹ It is possible that the stability and the rationality that had formerly characterized public opinion corresponded to the existence of a stable international system and clear definitions of war and peace. Perhaps public opinion underwent change in light of uncertainty in the new international realm (Entman 2004; Everts 2000).

To understand the new international context, it is necessary to develop integrative models that examine the relationship between media public and policy, which are relevant to the present era. However, in related literature, these questions have been mainly examined by two separate disciplines—communications

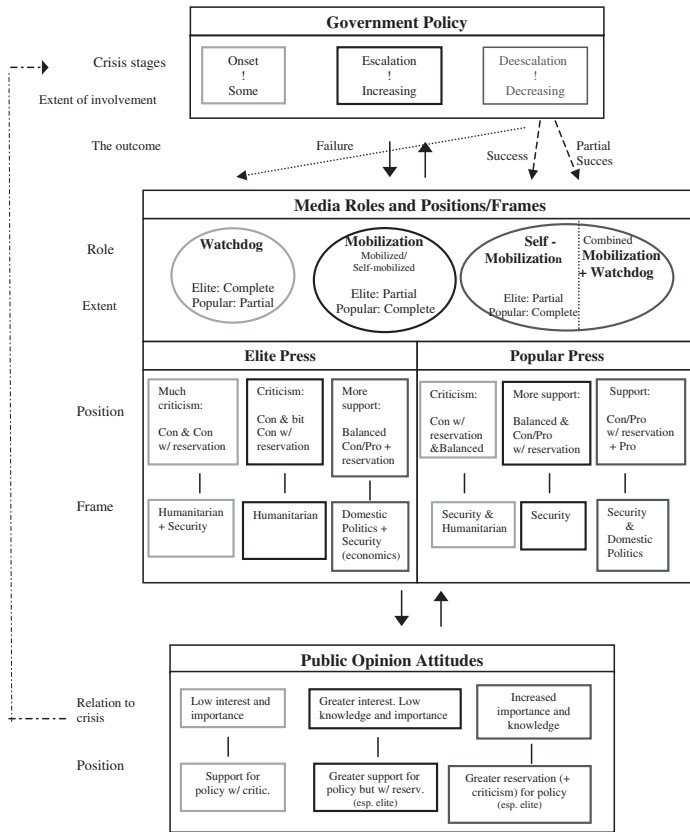


Figure 1
Government Policy, Media, and Public Opinion in an International Crisis

and international relations—working on different research tracks, with most studies focused on a subset of the main variables. The present study attempts to create an intellectual bridge across the two fields, by which the relations between media content, public opinion, and foreign policy may be explored and the various roles of the press during different stages of an international crisis may be clarified.

An Integrative Model—Overview

Developing a model that combines certain theories and concepts of international relations (“crises” and “national interests”) with those of mass communications (“agenda setting” and functions/roles) is not an easy task. There has been little research on the relationships of these two variables during the case of an international crisis.² The model, presented in Figure 1, comprises three

parts: governmental policy (divided into crisis stages³), media coverage, and public opinion attitudes in a democracy. Each stage coincides with the main positions and frames of the press (while comparing elite and popular newspapers) and the public, which are described further below.

An examination of the media's coverage leads to the question of *framing*. Presentation of the news and commentary on foreign policy is anchored in "frames," whereby journalists "package" information presenting a specific reality to their audience (Entman 1991; Entman and Rojecki 1993; Gitlin 1977; Wolfsfeld 1997). As a result, not only is the issue presented in a "preset" fashion, familiar to the public and therefore "comprehensible" (Callaghan and Schnell 2001; Durham 1998; Eilders and Luter 2000; Gamson and Herzog 1999; Norris 1997), but also, the very meaning of the news may vary by frame (Bloch and Lehman-Wilzig 2002; Kuypers 1997; Putnam et al. 1996; Scheufele 1999). The decision to raise the prominence of a particular subject, to choose and to emphasize a certain image or word, to promulgate specific explanations and commentary regarding the reasons for—and consequences of—events, and the attempt to connect new stories with old ones all contribute to the construction of news frames with an indentifiable "slant" (Auerbach and Bloch-Elkon 2005; Callaghan and Schnell 2001; Gamson 1992; Naveh 2002; Paletz 2002; Tankard 2001). These frameworks create a certain image of the world and set the public mood (Beaudoin and Thorson 2002; Brown 2001; D'Angelo 2002) in a way such that audiences are not fully aware of this process (Beniger and Gusek 1995; Tversky and Kahneman 1981) and therefore may be more susceptible to influence (Kennamer 1994; Patterson 1998).

As news frames and positions differ from medium to medium, the model addresses different types of print media—informational journalism ("quality press") and narrative journalism ("popular press"). In the United States, the quality press is the main source of foreign policy news with extensive and wide-ranging coverage (Beaudoin and Thorson 2002; Mermin 1999; Paletz 2002). It has at its disposal a broad range of independent news sources (Tift and Jones 1999) and draws its influence from its critical stance (Grosswiler 1996; Van Belle 2000; Wolfsfeld 1997). The opinions of elite newspapers function as the main press sources for U.S. foreign policy decision makers (Malek 1996; Merrill 1995); those who compete over the formulation of policy in the United States, and to a large extent beyond U.S. borders as well, read these newspapers regularly (Denhan 1997; Ferre 1980; Merrill and Fisher 1980). The popular press, on the other hand, reports more on human interest issues, on "colorful" aspects of news—through dramatic and entertaining literary and visual images (Bird 2002; Dahlgren and Sparks 1992; Roeh 1989). The reading experience is straightforward (Paletz 2002), and therefore, such news reaches broad audiences (for further analysis of the differences between types of journalism, see Bloch-Elkon and Lehman-Wilzig 2007).

Because it is not enough to merely match positions and frames to a stage, the model also illustrates each particular stage as having its own media *role*. Literature has focused on five main philosophical approaches to political communication (McQuail 1984, Siebert et al. 1956), of which two are most relevant to this study.⁴

First, according to the libertarian philosophy of government/press relations, also referred to as the “Free Press theory” (normative), the mass media serve the public best by fulfilling the role of an aggressive, independent, adversarial “watchdog” over government actions.

Second, although the media might formally and legally be “free,” politico-cultural constraints may render media output that is highly supportive of the government. This approach may best be categorized as “mobilization,” whereby the media tend to view their task in terms of reinforcing national consensus. This is most widely found in developing countries, but it is also not unusual to see such “mobilized” or “self-mobilized” journalism during times of crisis among otherwise libertarian-minded media caught in a “rally-round-the-flag” mindset (Holsti 1996; Zelizer and Allan 2002; Zaller and Chiu 2000). Indeed, previous studies have found that most domestic media news coverage tends to support national foreign policy goals, especially when the national interest is threatened, thereby acting as a source of “national integration” (Paletz 2002; Schudson 2002) or unifying force behind government decisions/actions (Rivenburgh 1996; Waisbord 2002). Interesting situations such as these highlight the complexity of journalism’s public role and the range of press responses (Holsti 1996; Russett 1990). However, one must note that it is difficult to find a clear definition of “self-mobilized media” in the literature. This approach is different from the “social responsibility” model (Siebert et al. 1956) that posits a degree of self-restraint for specific, localized, or social reasons and that normally does not involve self-restraint regarding criticism of government policy. Moreover, it is not always clear for whom the media are mobilized: the government or party or interest groups. Thus, there is an ambiguity surrounding “mobilization,” which this article will attempt to further clarify in the discussion section.

In Figure 1, during the first stage of an international crisis, the Onset (pre-crisis period)—typified by a change in the intensity of disruption between two or more states, a significant increase in the potential for violence, and a perceived threat by at least one state (Brecher 1993)—the media’s role is primarily as an adversarial watchdog, with press coverage that opposes the government’s natural inclination to act in its own political, and not necessarily national, interest. In the second stage, the Escalation phase (peak of the crisis)—which involves a significant increase in the severity of disruption and a growing probability of hostilities and use of military force between the parties (Brecher 1993)—media reports begin to play a mobilization role, rallying the public and tending to support government policy. In the third stage, the Deescalation phase (end of

the crisis)—indicated by a reduction in hostilities and violent interactions, which leads to accommodation and crisis termination (Brecher 1993)—the media's role varies according to policy outcomes. In the case of policy failure, the media tend to return to their watchdog role, as in the first stage. In the case of success or perceived success, the media gravitate toward a role of self-mobilization to aid the authorities in garnering political support or jumping onboard a successful campaign. When government policy is regarded as only partly successful, it is likely that the media will partly mobilize too, by combining the role of mobilizer and watchdog, while the type of press (elite versus popular) will dictate which role will be dominant.

Overall, this model is a dynamic one, presenting various interrelationships between the variables (bidirectional arrows). The extensiveness of government intervention influences media reports that sway public opinion (as the arrows pointed down show) and vice versa; public attitudes also have an impact on media news coverage that affects policymakers' decisions (arrows pointed up). In addition, public opinion may have a direct impact on administration policy (as the perpendicular line shows), through public and private opinion survey results.⁵

To examine and establish this framework, the model and its components were examined empirically through newspaper articles and public opinion polls related to U.S. foreign policy in the Bosnia crisis (1992–1995). There are several reasons for focusing on the United States and this specific crisis; first, as the world's sole superpower since the breakup of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, the United States has had difficulty redefining its international interests and its main role in the new international order (Haass 1997; Schonberg 1999). The post–cold war era left the United States at a crossroads, lacking a coherent foreign policy (Duncan et al. 2003; Livingston 1997; Schonberg 1999). The United States figuratively lost its frame of reference (the USSR), which had provided the United States with its bearings on what was permissible or acceptable. In effect, the use of “post” as a prefix (i.e., post–cold war) reveals the uncertainty of the present era. Examining the United States in the current era poses an interesting challenge, because it offers the prospect for the formulation of a new world politics and American foreign policy.

Second, the Bosnian crisis was one of the first extended and complex crises with which American had dealt since the demise of the Soviet Union (Daalder and Froman 1999; Woodward 1995), and it presented a prototype of ethnic conflict. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the cruel civil war that took place between March 1992 and November 1995 presents the most tragic and drastic example to date of history repeating itself among the former Communist Bloc nations (Boettcher 2001; Daalder 2000; Holbrooke 1998; Ullman 1996). Particularly in the Balkans and Yugoslavia, there were never clear national ethnic borders. The Yugoslavian Federation included six states—Serbia, Croatia,

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Montenegro—and in the past also included two independent districts (Voyvodina and Kosovo). Each of these states comprised different nationalities, religions, and languages (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1997/2000; Manas 1996).

Sarajevo served for years as a sterling example of cosmopolitan culture—a combination of eastern and western Christianity, along with Islam. Yet the Bosnian War was characterized by great cruelty, carried out especially by the Serbs: mortar fire on unarmed civilian populations, concentration camps, mass rape, and the use of military, paramilitary, guerilla warfare, and terrorism. The city of Sarajevo was destroyed and 200,000 people were killed—about 4.5 percent of the Bosnian population—while an additional 180,000 were injured and 3,000,000 became refugees (Holbrooke 1998; Power 2002; Weiss 1996). Throughout this international crisis, the United Nations passed approximately thirty resolutions, applied sanctions, froze diplomatic relations, and set up various peace conferences to discuss the tragedy, but no military intervention was forthcoming for the first two years of hostility (Daalder 2000).

Though the crisis was one of the most severe during the 1990s, the United States largely ignored what was transpiring in the former Communist society (Gompert 1996). During the course of the crisis, the American presidency changed (from Bush to Clinton, January 20, 1993), and at a critical stage, the U.S. government was preoccupied with the first Gulf War (1991), not with Bosnia, believing that hostilities in the Balkan region were of a limited scale and that European nations should handle the situation (Danner 1997; Woodward 1995). Indeed, the United States did not have any strategy and its policy was characterized by fluctuations between isolationism (“Vietnam Syndrome”) and activism (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1997/2000; Carr 1995; Fabry 2001; Larson and Savych 2005; Sobel 2000). In light of the continued fighting in Europe (notably in the same area where World War I broke out) and the coming elections (1996), President Clinton sought to add another international achievement to his repertoire: to establish America’s image as a peace superpower and “world policeman” in the eyes of both his voters and the rest of the world (Foyle 1999). After three and a half years, on November 21, 1995, a peace agreement that ended the fighting was signed in Dayton, Ohio. The difficulties in achieving peace were tremendous: There was no trust between the sides, and the European nations tended to withdraw, and thus, the United States played an important role of mediator, in the position to award guaranties and compensation as needed.

The Bosnian crisis, as previously mentioned, was largely ethnic in character. Ethnic conflicts are relatively common today, in the post-cold war era, and will presumably be widespread in the future (Daalder and O’Hanlon 1999; Sarkees et al. 2003; Seib 1997). Most of the large-scale crises in the 1990s to which the United States was required to react were intrastate (e.g., Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Kosovo) and ethnically based (Saideman 2001; Taylor 2000).

This type of crisis has direct implications for the nature and degree of superpower involvement, media coverage, and public support, particularly when military intervention abroad is taken into account.

Therefore, the Bosnian crisis—which combined civil war, violation of civil rights, an attempt to gain peace, and uncertainty regarding U.S. interests—serves as a useful example for understanding U.S. foreign policy, media strategy, and public course in the post–cold war era.

Research Design

The analysis of this case involved several steps. First, the significant events in the crisis were mapped (East 1992-1994; Reuters 1995), from June 1991 (independence declarations by Croatia and Slovenia) until November 1995, consisting 107 specific dates. Then, the twenty-three main events involving the United States (initiation/reaction) were selected for further data collection and study.

A comparative analysis was conducted of different types of press—the elite versus popular press. The print media were chosen as they are among the most influential in agenda setting, and the public uses them as a source of *detailed* information (Auerbach and Bloch-Elkon 2005; Neuman et al. 1992; Paletz 2002; Taylor 2000; Vincent 2000). The press is among the key organizations that assist the public and decision makers in formulating and evaluating issues by presenting extensive facts and a variety of commentaries and opinions (Beaudoin and Thorson 2002; Brown 2001).⁶ In American society, the press is thought to have a particular impact on both the decision-making process and the public (Cook 1998; Viorst 1987), especially in the area of foreign policy (Malek 1996; Van Belle 2000).

To examine the various newspapers' positions and frames, qualitative and quantitative content analyses of two elite and two popular newspapers were conducted. For the former, two leading U.S. papers were chosen: *The Washington Post* (*WP*) and the *Wall Street Journal* (*WSJ*) (Merrill 1995; Smith and Epstein 2001; Vincent 2000). The focus was on editorial articles and commentary (op-eds) to analyze the positions taken by the papers, which cover the most important issues on the news and hence public agenda (Grosswiler 1996). In the elite press, these editorials and commentary articles tend to be more critical of government policy, presenting the newspaper's opinion in a clear and unequivocal voice (Denhan 1997; Mermin 1999; Page 1996), in contrast to more factually oriented news. Decision makers tend to view issues covered on these pages as being important and often necessitating an official response (Grosswiler 1996; Trice 1979).

For the twenty-three specific events under study, all daily reports were examined two weeks before and after each main event to ensure the inclusion of all

relevant coverage. The same type of analysis was carried out for the popular press. The *USA Today* (*USAT*) and *Washington Times* (*WT*)⁷ were chosen mainly because they cover the same geographical areas (local—Washington and national level) and hold comparable ideological attitudes to the two elite newspapers selected (liberal and conservative/right wing).⁸ However, because of the different nature of the popular press and the reading practices of its readership (Cook 1998; Harry 2001; Paletz 2002), a slightly different methodology had to be employed to examine these papers' positions. Readers of this type of newspaper tend to "scan" the headlines, which emphasize the most interesting events and news (Paletz 2002) by highlighting what the newspaper considers as the "main" issues, and thus, the focus was placed accordingly. It seems that most popular press readers infrequently read the entire text (Nir and Roeh 1992) because it tends to have built-in redundancy with the headline, especially for overseas news. Furthermore, the commentary section is read less by popular press readers than by the elite press's more educated and "involved" readership. Here, as well, the Bosnia-related items were analyzed for a fourteen-day period around the events noted above to cover all crisis-related news.

It was necessary to develop different categories and measures to define the specific positions of each article or news item presented by the press. Several categories and scales were used, of which two are especially relevant to the topic at hand: (a) the main position taken in the article/headline toward government policy (pro, pro with reservations, neutral/balance, con with reservations, and con). These are ordinal categories, facilitating characterization of the publications' general approach, and (b) the type of frame/argument presented (security and world order, economic, humanitarian, domestic politics, or combination of these) and emphasized in the paper's main position. To identify the specific position and central frame of each news item (see examples below), close examination of the articles and news was required. Because the methodology involved qualitative components, intercoder reliability was assessed.⁹

In addition, public opinion was examined through surveys published during the whole four-year period, relating directly to the Bosnian crisis or U.S. involvement.¹⁰ The issues that received special attention involved either a series of similar questions on the same topic—to compare the answers and understand public opinion—or specific questions with identical wording that were repeated over time, which would determine short- and long-term trends. Eleven questions with identical wording were identified, which could be grouped into four main types of issues: general involvement, type of involvement (military, humanitarian, or cooperation), attitude toward the crisis (attention, importance, knowledge), and attitude toward presidential performance:

A. Involvement—General (Three Questions):

Should the U.S. *do more* to stop the war in Bosnia, or has the U.S. already done enough? (nine time points)

Do you think the U.S. has a *responsibility* to do something about the fighting between Serbs and Bosnians in what used to be Yugoslavia, or doesn't the U.S. have this responsibility? (sixteen time points)

In your opinion, is the U.S. currently too *involved* in the Bosnian situation, not involved enough, or is the U.S. level of involvement in Bosnia about right? (six time points)

B. Type of Involvement (Three Questions):¹¹

Military—Ground, to Stop the Fighting (Security)

Do you favor or oppose the U.S. sending *troops* / *ground forces* to Yugoslavia to try to help stop the civil war there? / to end the violence? (twenty-two time points)

Military—for Humanitarian Aid

Do you favor or oppose sending U.S. ground forces to restore peace and *humanitarian aid* in Bosnia? (eight time points)

Cooperation—Part of International Force

Would you support or oppose the U.S. *along with its allies* in Europe / as part of the NATO sending in ground forces to try to stop the fighting in Bosnia? (twenty time points)

C. Attitude toward the Crisis (Four Questions):

Attention

Now I'll read you a list of some news stories covered by news organization this past month. Which one of the stories have you *followed* most closely? (ten time points)

How *closely* have you followed news about the situation in what used to be Yugoslavia? Would you say you have followed it very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all? (thirty-five time points)

Importance

What do you think is the most *important* news event / issue that happened in the nation or the world / for the government to address? (thirty-three time points)

Knowledge

Do you happen to *know* the name of the ethnic group that has conquered much of Bosnia and has surrounded the city of Sarajevo? (seven time points)

D. Attitude toward Presidential Performance (One Question):

Do you approve or disapprove of *the way* (President) Clinton/Bush has been handling (good or bad job) the situation in what used to be the Yugoslavian Republic of Bosnia? (sixty-seven time points)

These repeated questions facilitated the analysis of long-range trends, opinion stability, fluctuations, frequency and intensity of attitude change, and the possible correlations between these attitudes, political events, and the reportage/commentary.

The analysis included 124 articles from elite newspapers (60 in *WP* and 64 in *WSJ*) and 571 news items from popular newspapers (139 in *WT* and 432 in *USAT*), totaling to 695 newspaper articles and 233 public opinion responses at different points in time (based on eleven questions).

Public opinion trends and the roles of the media were compared regarding foreign policy—throughout multiple stages of the crisis, with emphasis on the

Table 1

Positions of the press—elite and popular—by crisis stage

Position	Crisis Stages					
	Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Elite press						
Pro	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pro with reservations	1	6	3	4	4	16
Neutral-balanced	3	19	15	18	5	20
Con with reservations	7	44	25	30	10	40
Con	5	31	40	48	6	24
Total	16	100	83	100	25	100
Popular press						
Pro	2	2.5	20	5	18	15
Pro with reservations	12	15	75	20	17	15
Neutral-balanced	22	27.5	116	31	25	21.5
Con with reservations	28	35	115	31	40	34
Con	16	20	48	13	17	14.5
Total	80	100	374	100	117	100
Combined—the press						
Pro	2	2	20	4	18	13
Pro with reservations	13	13.5	78	17	21	15
Neutral-balanced	25	26	131	29	30	21
Con with reservations	35	36.5	140	31	50	35
Con	21	22	88	19	23	16
Total	96	100	475	100	142	100

Note: The data compiled by the author. Contingency coefficient (C) = .171, $p < .01$.

major events, to obtain as accurate a picture as possible on the interrelations. The analysis compared the crisis stages (Brecher 1993): The “Onset” phase included four dates, from April 6, 1992, to February 1, 1993, during which the United States did not offer to intervene diplomatically or militarily; the “Escalation” phase included sixteen dates, from February 10, 1993 (when the United States offered to lend its diplomatic services to find a peaceful solution to the Bosnian crisis) until June 1994; and the third stage (“Deescalation”) included three dates, from October 5, 1995, until November 21, 1995 (Dayton Agreement).

It was possible to explore causality in the data based on theoretical considerations by examining different time periods and statistical correlations among the variables.

Findings—Applying the Model

Overall, strong and significant correlations were found among the variables (the primary findings are shown in Tables 1 through 4) between crisis stages

Table 2

Framing of the press—elite and popular—by crisis stage

Framing	Crisis Stages					
	Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Elite press						
Security and world order	6	37.5	28	33.5	7	28
Economic	0	0	4	5	2	8
Humanitarian	6	37.5	41	50	4	16
Domestic politics	0	0	3	3.5	7	28
Combination	4	25	7	8	4	16
Other	0	0	0	0	1	4
Total	16	100	83	100	25	100
Popular press						
Security and world order	44	55	275	73.5	77	66
Economic	0	0	4	1	4	3
Humanitarian	23	29	53	14	7	6
Domestic politics	0	0	17	5	21	18
Combination	13	16.2	16	4	1	1
Other	0	0	9	2	7	6
Total	80	100	374	100	117	100
Combined—the press						
Security and world order	50	52	303	66	84	59
Economic	0	0	8	2	6	4
Humanitarian	29	30	94	21	11	8
Domestic politics	0	0	20	4	28	20
Combination	17	18	23	5	5	3.5
Other	0	0	9	2	8	6
Total	96	100	457	100	142	100

Note: The data compiled by the author. $C = .335$, $p < .001$.

and all the other factors: the positions of the press ($C = .171$, $p < .01$, Table 1), the public positions ($F = 3.468$, $p < .05$; $F = 3.337$, $p < .05$; $F = 6.815$, $p < .01$, Table 4),¹² the newspapers' frames/arguments ($C = .355$, $p < .001$, Table 3), and the topics/frames of the surveys ($C = .331$, $p < .001$, Table 2). This reveals that the variables changed over time in systematic ways: the press's position and public attitude vis-à-vis government policy varied from stage to stage, while the central frame put forward by the press and in public polls also underwent significant change from one crisis stage to another.

Stage 1—Onset (Pre-crisis)

Stage 1, specifically, was marked by lack of government intervention, based on the presidential administration's assessment that the civil war was an internal

Table 3
Surveys' subject (framing) by crisis stage

Framing	Crisis Stages					
	Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Questions' main subject						
Involvement—general	2	6	22	17	7	10
Type of involvement	11	33	14	11	25	36
Attitude toward the crisis	16	49	55	42	14	20
Attitude toward the government	4	12	39	30	24	34
Total	33	100	130	11	70	100

Note: The data compiled by the author. $C = .331$, $p < .001$.

Yugoslavian problem, which had little direct impact on Europe as a whole. The press took a very critical position, emphasizing frames of security and moral humanitarianism and thus acting as a watchdog over governmental activities.

The elite press, particularly, played the watchdog role, being relatively more critical and subjective (75 percent—Table 1, Stage 1, con and con with reservation), placing greater emphasis on the moral-humanitarian frame (38 percent—Table 2, Stage 1). This specific combination of position and frame was put forward by the elite press to highlight the situation and pressure of the government to develop an activist policy (security frame—38 percent) toward the ethnic conflict. The humanitarian-moral and security frames were identically emphasized to pinpoint the severe situation in Europe, which as history had already shown, was a politically high-risk area. The popular press was somewhat less critical of the policy (55 percent—Table 1, Stage 1, con and con with reservation) and used a more balanced (28 percent) and supportive approach (18 percent—pro and pro with reservation) while placing less emphasis on moral issues (29 percent—Table 2, Stage 1) and therefore played only a partial role as watchdog.

The fact that policy shapers in the United States and abroad read the elite press to gain an independent analysis of international events gives great importance to the press's role at this stage. Most government leaders do not settle for press abstracts, especially for those papers published on the East Coast, but do read the newspaper directly. As for the popular press, which is read more by the broad public, the decision makers also receive the *WT* because of its Washington D.C. circulation (Liburt 2001; Reese 2001). In addition, they may also read *USAT*, a national paper with the largest circulation in the United States (Merrill 1995).¹³ Thus, the positions of the different newspapers and their emphasis on any specific frame either directly or indirectly reach both the public and the decision makers.¹⁴

Table 4

Positions of the public by crisis stage

Questions	Subject	Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3	
		% Pro/Yes	% Con/No	% Pro/Yes	% Con/No	% Pro/Yes	% Con/No
1	Do more	37 (.)	49 (.)	31.5 (4.47)	58 (3.92)	—	—
2	Responsibility	24 (.)	67 (.)	33 (10.14)	56 (10.76)	34.5 (5.19)	59 (4.96)
3	Too much involved	—	—	26.3 (3.21)	41.3 (6.65)	31 (5.19)	41 (5.29)
4	Military intervention	26.5 (5.43)	63 (5.44)	29 (7.29)	61 (9.95)	31.5 (5.47)	62 (5.34)
5	Humanitarian involvement	53 (10.22)	38 (7.68)	38.5 (2.12)	48.5 (3.53)	64 (.)	32 (.)
6	Part of international force	—	—	42 (6.85)	52 (7.71)	40 (8.07)	51 (8.88)
7	Strict attention	3%—Bosnia	3%—Bosnia	2.8%—Bosnia	2.8%—Bosnia	—	—
8	General attention	48 (6.83)	51 (6.61)	51 (9.47)	49 (9.24)	60 (11.82)	39.8 (11.14)
9	Importance	4.5%—Bosnia	4.5%—Bosnia	3%—Bosnia	3%—Bosnia	6%—Bosnia	6%—Bosnia
10	Knowledge	56.5 (36.50)	41 (29.75)	30 (6.78)	70 (6.78)	47 (.)	53 (.)
11	Government policy	36.5 (5.06)	29.7 (7.67)	41 (6.85)	38 (8.59)	41 (5.35)	43 (4.49)

Note: Q 8 Pro: $F = 3.468, p < .05$; Con: $F = 3.337, p < .05$; Q 11 Pro: $F = 6.815, p < .01$. The data compiled by the author. Not all the questions were asked in all stages (—). Completion to 100% of every question, in each stage, comprises also the percentage of those who did not know/reply. As Questions 7 and 9 did not divide by pro/con, they were excluded from the test.

Public opinion in this stage showed, on average, no particular interest in the crisis (51 percent—Table 4, Stage 1, Question 8) and few considered it relatively important (4.5 percent—Question 9). The public was divided regarding the president's performance—just a slight plurality showed support (37 percent—Question 11). Sixty-seven percent—particularly conservatives and Republicans—claimed that the United States held no responsibility for the crisis (Question 2). However, one cannot ignore that a relatively high percentage (37 percent—Question 1) believed that more must be done, particularly among the liberals and Democrats. Overall, there was clear opposition to military intervention (63 percent—Question 4), but all sectors supported humanitarian involvement (53 percent—Question 5).

Since the Vietnam War, the United States has had strong reservations about overseas military intervention, fearing negative reaction in the media and public opinion at home. This has been even more constraining with regard to humanitarian military intervention, which is difficult to justify in terms of clear national interest. An interesting conclusion for this stage of the crisis is that it seems as if the press actually helped articulate a rationale for humanitarian military intervention in Bosnia—using critical positions and emphasizing humanitarian and security frames—while the public simultaneously supported such involvement. The government might not have been sufficiently aware of this, at least in the beginning; had it been, it might have taken more decisive action and much sooner. It is possible that the press, in conjunction with public opinion, urged the government to intervene and cross over into Stage 2 by turning the event from a noncrisis (on the macrosystem level) into a crisis (on the micropereceptual level). Thus, the press synthesized the two levels and functioned as a critical factor in the shaping of policy (for further analysis, see Auerbach and Bloch-Elkon 2005).

This conclusion is consistent with previous studies that viewed the Bosnian case as an example of an unpopular international crisis, in which the American media pushed public opinion to obligate the administration to act (Cate 1996; Strobel 1997). Media attention, accompanied by public opinion, influenced the government to respond to the ongoing crisis (Banks and Straussman 1999). This impact is quite significant, mainly when policy is unclear and no government consensus is evident, as occurred in the case at hand (Carey 2002; Robinson 2000, 2002).

Stage 2—Escalation (Peak of the Crisis)

At the escalation stage, when the administration began its involvement in the Bosnian crisis, the press slightly reduced its tone of criticism and placed more emphasis on the humanitarian frame (elite press—50 percent, Table 2, Stage 2) or security frame (popular press—74 percent, Table 2, Stage 2); this was probably related to a change in the main frames used in the post-cold war

period. Here, the elite press in particular emphasized the moral-humanitarian dimension to push or justify actions, as opposed to the recent past (end of cold war) when foreign policy topics were mainly framed as security issues. For example, the following *WP* editorial, published on April 23, 1993, at the beginning of Stage 2, represented the elite press frame during this period:

The feeling of *moral obligation* promoted by the new *Holocaust Memorial Museum*, coinciding with the *public outrage* generated by fresh *Serb brutalities* in Bosnia . . . in dealing with the issue of *Serb aggression*. . . . Belgrade and Bosnia Serbs have not bowed to repeated international condemnations . . . threatened *war crimes* trials. . . . It is time to stop the killing and '*ethnic cleansing*' [emphasis added].

The choice of the elite press's vocabulary expressed a desire to infuse the event with a particular significance by linking it to something familiar. By associating the situation in Bosnia with the Holocaust, the elite press prompted a moral-humanistic perspective on the crisis. The Bosnian Serbs are portrayed as aggressive, their actions as inordinately cruel and labeled as *ethnic cleansing* and *war crimes*. In the popular press, on the other hand, especially among the less educated and more variegated public, the security issue was still emphasized to ensure support from a broad audience accustomed to thinking in terms of the "us vs. them" or "good vs. bad" schema, which characterized the cold war. A *USAT* news item (April 20, 1994), for example, was headlined "New Sense of Urgency in Policy on Bosnia." This finding is comparable to that of an earlier study that showed that one of the most important factors in determining support for this crisis was the perception of security interests (Larson and Savych 2005).

The press at this stage were somewhat more mobilized because of the fact that this was a stage of escalation in the crisis and the United States had finally decided to intervene in one way or another. Given that the United States was in a state of emergency, there was a tendency to create unity and consensus among the public by softening critical stands to back the government, especially at this crucial phase of the crisis (Stage 2).

This role was characterized by the popular press, reducing its level of criticism and thus providing more support for government actions (25 percent, Table 1, Stage 2, pro and pro with reservation). The "pro" element doubled and more evidence of "balance" emerged. However, to a relatively lesser extent, criticism was still expressed (44 percent, con and con with reservation), suggesting the possibility of the popular press abandoning its characteristic approach during times of crisis. For instance, a *WT* news item (April 19, 1994) on the Serbian attack on U.N. troops was headlined "Finger Pointing Takes Place of Action in Bosnia." The elite press was less supportive at this stage and only partly mobilized/self-mobilized, continuing its intense criticism (78 percent, con and con with

reservation) based on the belief that the administration should have done *more* to stop “ethnic cleansing.” The criticism of the administration’s policy was that the country was not committing enough resources to the crisis:

Suddenly, in the depths of August and the budget debate, the war in Bosnia has reached a crux. . . . Meanwhile, President Clinton is busy lobbying for his tax increase. . . . We would *certainly support anything that could be done to help the Bosnians*. . . . If the Clinton administration somehow decides to send the Air Force to Sarajevo, we hope that it’s *part of some plan that could actually make a difference*. *So far the West has slipped further and further into this war, with no plan to bring it to an end* [emphasis added]. (“Editorial” 1993, p. A12)

This criticism, one might note, does not characterize media reporting during a crisis but seems to derive from the fact that American national interests were not under threat nor did American lives face any serious danger. Furthermore, in addressing a specific public, the elite newspapers permitted themselves, and were even expected, to attack the administration’s acts even during sensitive and complex periods, without fear of losing credibility among their readership.

At this stage, there is a need to be conceptually precise about the media’s role, as there is ambiguity surrounding the issue of mobilization. The literature has not theoretically differentiated between the press’s roles of being mobilized by the government or alternatively being self-mobilized. It seems that the difference between the roles lies mainly in the *cause*, as the result is similar in both cases. Does the administration request that the press, in the name of society, function in a particular way, especially at the height of a crisis, where the press answers a social need and attempts to operate as a government mouthpiece? Or does the press, on its own initiative, self-mobilize without governmental appeal? In the latter case, the demand to hold criticism is not “external” but rather occurs in the form of internal or self-recognition, where the journalist’s or editor’s conscience dictates restraint or delay of criticism. Alternatively, this restraint is dictated by a desire not to alienate the readership. This media role could also appear toward the end of the crisis (Stage 3).

It is possible that during the second stage, the press was mobilized by the government but at the same time was self-mobilized to willingly reduce its criticism to ease a situation defined as a crisis. In other words, mobilization had two sources, involving both external forces and self-initiating ones. These types of mobilization can appear jointly or separately, depending on the situation. Furthermore, the press cannot be completely mobilized by the government during a crisis, particularly in liberal-democratic regimes; mobilization also requires some willingness on the part of the press to respond to the call.

In this stage, public opinion expressed general interest in the crisis (51 percent, Table 4, Question 8) but did not yet find it important (3 percent, Question 9).

The public had little knowledge of developments in the region (70 percent, Question 10), apparently confused by the ongoing events and various actors in the crisis. Support for government policy slightly increased (41 percent, Question 11), but there was still evidence of critical expressions from certain public segments (around 30 percent, Questions 1 through 3)—the elite, conservatives, and Republicans (i.e., the conservative right). Here, too, the “rallying” was not completed and was most likely influenced by contradictory press reports and the lack of government consensus. This conclusion fits with those who claim that the rally-round-the-flag phenomenon is mainly caused by the media coverage of any elite debate (Baum and Groeling 2005; Brody 1991; Zaller 1992).

Stage 3—Deescalation (End of the Crisis)

In the final stage, in which the crisis wound down, the press took a more supportive position than before as the administration managed to bring the combatants to the negotiating table after three and a half years. But the press still expressed criticism because of the perception that only partial success had been achieved. The operational consequences of the peace agreement left tens of thousands of American soldiers in the area for the long term, to act as a policing force. The elite press was somewhat more generous in its support of the government (16 percent—more than fourfold the previous stage; Table 1, Stage 3). However, heightened criticism was abundant (64 percent, con and con with reservations; Table 1, Stage 3), emphasizing internal-political (28 percent) and security (28 percent) frames (Table 2, Stage 3). For example, on October 13, 1995, toward the signing of the Dayton Accord, the *WSJ* issued an editorial: “Drifting into Bosnia”:

Now, the U.S. and NATO will seek to forge a permanent peace by intermediating between indicted war criminals and their victims. . . . In this exercise, 25,000 American troops would be just right, the Clinton Administration tells us. . . . The Bosnians’ troop commitment plan betrays the *ad hoc nature of this administration’s foreign policy*. Important commitments are made as part of a presidential *rhetorical exercise* or White House *improvisation*, unified by one principle: *Get Bosnia off the front pages until after November 1996*. . . . But it [e.g. building the Bosnian army] can’t be done with *U.S. troops as peacekeeping hostages* and it doesn’t require 25,000 troops. . . . Sending U.S. combat troops into the middle of *somebody else’s war* is a serious matter. Fighting troops are trained to fight, not to offer themselves *as targets for war criminal* Ratko Mladic’s thugs. If this is to be the role of the U.S. troops Mr. Clinton is promising, Congress has every right, indeed responsibility, *to challenge the President*. . . . Not because we are turning isolationist, but precisely because we believe the American superpower has interests in and responsibilities to keep peace in the world. . . . *This need not require American ground troops* [emphases added]. (p. A14)

The popular press was more supportive (30 percent, Table 1, Stage 3, pro and pro with reservation), apparently self-mobilized, and yet still somewhat critical (49 percent, con and con with reservation). It operated predominantly within a security frame (66 percent, Table 2, Stage 3) and also slightly within an internal politics frame (18 percent). For instance, a *WT* news item (November 25, 1995), after the Dayton agreement, was headlined “Congress Will Ask Why Bosnia Won’t Be a Rerun of Somalia.” The economic frame increased in both press types, indicating the press’s use of previously unemphasized frames, apparently because it had already successfully transferred the main concepts—security and humanitarian—and saw fit to focus public attention once again on the administration, especially with the crisis in its closing stages. With presidential elections approaching, the administration’s overall handling of the Bosnian issue obviously needed to be placed within the general political context.

The roles of the press in this stage thus depended on the success of the policy. It is apparent that when foreign policy is considered a failure, the press will move from Stage 2 in the conflict to criticize the government and will once again take on a watchdog role. On the other hand, if policy results are viewed as successful, the media will move toward a self-mobilization role. In this role, the press could aim to help the authorities garner political support or may “jump onboard” a successful campaign. When government policy is regarded as partly successful, as was the case in this crisis, it is likely that more criticism will be expressed and that the media will combine the mobilizer and watchdog roles, while the type of press will relate to the more emphasized of the two roles. The popular press would be more supportive, more self-mobilized (as we saw), and always one step behind the elite press with regard to criticism; the elite press would be more “attack” oriented and less self-mobilizing.

In the deescalation stage, the public was interested in the crisis (60 percent, Table 4, Stage 3, Question 8), attributed more importance to it (6 percent, Question 9), and as a result exhibited greater knowledge (47 percent, Question 10). When the government’s achievements were perceived as being only partly successful, public criticism increased, as in the press (43 percent, Question 11; whereas 59 percent claimed there is no U.S. responsibility, Question 2)—especially on the part of the conservative right, as the “rallying” phenomenon did not fully occur in the previous stage.

From a broader perspective, this case study indicates that the United States had to face a classic dilemma of the post-cold war era. On one hand, the United States no longer needed to be concerned about the USSR, and there was no national interest that justified involvement in the Balkans; on the other hand, as the only superpower, the United States felt an obligation to stop the fighting in Bosnia. In some respects, U.S. policy toward the crisis may have been a turning point. This involved an examination of the way with which a humanitarian crisis—which could arouse public opinion—should be dealt; a questioning of

U.S. responsibility toward world events; and the clarification of U.S. interests in the new international system. This case suggests that until American administrations learn how to adapt their foreign policy to the new contemporary geopolitical world, the media will have a significant impact on their policy. This impact, it should be noted, points not only to the success of the media but also to government failure, or at least to its dysfunction.

As an addendum, it is worth noting some other findings that relate to interactions between and among the variables. A significant and positive correlation ($r = 0.45, p < .05$) was found between the use of photographs in popular newspapers and the degree of importance the public related to the crisis (Table 4, Question 9).¹⁵ Though one might argue that the choice to use photographs is endogenous to the severity of the conflict, this finding has operative implications for the media's coverage of international crises, especially on complex or marginal issues. Positions held by the press (elite/popular) with emphasis on certain frames/issues correlate negatively with the position of the public (elite/mass) toward the specific issue ($-0.556, p \leq .5$, for frame, $-0.846, p \leq .1$ for position). The regression analysis suggests that the press's criticism (con and con with reservation positions), accompanied by a security frame, has a direct impact on public opinion (con/no) concerning military intervention (Table 4, Question 4). Thus, in focusing on the two most important variables—position and frame—the data suggest that the more the press criticizes government policy, while emphasizing the security/military aspect, the less the public opposes that type of intervention. Therefore, as long as the press claims that the administration is not doing enough militarily to preserve security, the public will reduce its resistance to military intervention. This finding implies that the press had a direct and strong impact on the public in one of the most critical issues—military intervention—since the end of the cold war, which could affect decision makers' efforts to guide the public on such issues.

Conclusion

This article examined an integrative model of the relations between media content, public opinion, and foreign policy. Its analysis has provided a fuller look at how the media function, while comparing different types of press coverage as well as the public's attitudes concerning foreign policy during multiple stages of an international crisis. The strong and significant correlations between the variables suggest that changes occur throughout a crisis: the press's position and public attitude concerning government policy vary from stage to stage, while the central frame put forward by the press and reflected in public opinion also undergoes significant change. The various roles of the press and the public's attitudes, then, depend on the phase of the international crisis.

One of the most interesting conclusions is that the press, supported by public opinion, might have helped articulate a rationale for humanitarian military intervention in Bosnia, urging government intervention. Such an impact is significant when policy is unclear and there is no government consensus, as is usually the case at the beginning of a crisis. This effect is less considerable when a clear policy exists. Thus, until a presidential administration learns how to adapt its foreign policy to the changes in the international environment, it appears that the media will have an increased impact on the administration's course of action. This influence indicates both the media's success and the government's failure.

This study's contribution to the fields of communications and international relations/political studies is twofold. At a theoretical level, the importance of the present study rests on its attempt to compose an integrated model relating the media to public opinion and policy. It considers existing theories and addresses the mutual relations of variables in characterizing the main roles of the media. Specifically, it enhances the concept of framing while combining it with basic international relations theories. The empirical research provides a comparison of different types of news media outlets (with an attempt to deepen our understanding of the popular press) and proposes a research methodology to examine the links in question. Second, on a practical level, this work may suggest some improvement in the ways in which the media cover international crises, as well as the media's relationship with decision makers and the public. Leaders may better handle international crises with respect to the media and public opinion as a result, and at the same time, perhaps the public will better understand the way press and government operate.

There is more work to be done to explore and shed further light on this complex topic. Future studies should examine cases in different types of democratic regimes, cases of short-term crises, small state foreign policy efforts, the behavior of other type of media, and different aspects of public opinion. Nevertheless, this study takes a step toward a better understanding of what have become increasingly important questions for both scholars and practitioners.

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Notes

1. Though the media have become one of the most influential features of modern life in the past decade, since September 11, there has been some modification in its "role." September 11 changed the atmosphere in which decisions are made, in all walks of society, including the press. The American media especially were confronted with the shock of the terror attacks on the symbols of American dominance, which occurred in the immediate proximity of the main American media headquarters (Zelizer and Allan 2002).
2. In the literature, one can find "crisis" definitions at two levels: macro-objective and micro-subjective. From a systems perspective (macro), a crisis entails an event constituting a drastic change, influencing and destabilizing the international system (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1997/2000; Young 1968). From a psychological perspective (micro), focusing on the decision-making process, the foreign policy crisis is defined as a situation that is perceived as threatening one or more basic values, leaving finite time for response, and carrying a high probability of involvement in military hostilities (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1997/2000).
3. The present study follows Brecher's (1993) categorization of international crisis phases. It focuses on the first three stages (onset, escalation, and deescalation), since the fourth stage (impact) occurs in the postcrisis period and includes the consequences of a crisis—whereas this study explores the roles of the media and the public during a crisis and not subsequent to it.
4. The three other approaches are social-responsibility (located between the aforementioned two), authoritarian, and totalitarian. For elaboration, see Siebert et al. (1956) for the original four, Peterson (1963) for social responsibility, and McQuail (1984) for additional philosophical approaches. The general media "indexing" hypothesis, that leaders can have a dominant influence on public opinion through the media (Bennett 1990), involves a more passive mobilization process than the one emphasized here.
5. Private poll results are unpublished and not yet available. In any event, such privileged data in the case of a crisis may be less influential than public surveys whose results are published in the media, creating greater pressure on the government.
6. In addition, though the TV is considered to be the main public source for news, to examine the exact positions held by the media regarding a topic (especially a foreign policy one), as in the case at hand, it is important to study the print media as well, where it is much clearer. The elite press in particular is read by other journalists and may have an impact on other media.
7. The *WT* daily circulation is 102,879 copies, which reach 226,100 readers (*WT* Press Kit; ABC Audit Report total average paid circulation for 12 months 1998; 1999 Scarborough Reports full year RPC), with news reports usually criticizing liberal positions (Paletz 2002). Its location enables 4,000 copies to arrive daily at the Congress, the House, and the Pentagon (Shoemaker and Reese 1996).
8. It should be noted that the focus on the U.S. East Coast press is a function of its leading role in media coverage of Central and Eastern Europe (i.e., Yugoslavia).
9. The results for intercoder reliability were highly supportive of coding consistency: on the "position," $r = .932$, and for the coding of the "frame," the percentage agreement was 94%.
10. The polling data were collected mainly through iPoll database (Roper Center) and included various sources such as Gallup, Harris, *WP*, *USAT*, *NYT*, *Los Angeles Times*, NBC News, CBS News, Fox News, Princeton Survey Research Association, Harvard, and PIPA—Program on International Policy Attitudes (University of Maryland).
11. No identical repetitive questions solely on "air intervention" or "humanitarian involvement" were found through the recurrent efforts.

12. A strong and significant correlation between the crisis stages and the public positions was found in part for some of the questions and a tendency toward correlation for others. The data point to a linkage among the variables, as clearly shown in the table.
13. The content analysis of these newspapers may also be measuring information that elites may be getting through other sources.
14. According to an Israeli journalist who was based in Washington at that time, a high-level American diplomat, heading the American consulate in one of the former Yugoslavian countries (during 1991–1992), spoke to him about the extent to which press reports influence decision makers in foreign policy issues. In the journalist's words, a meeting was fixed between the diplomat and a local foreign minister, and he requested instructions from Washington as to what stance he should present. However, the American clerks did not rush to decide on a policy because of disagreements between the different wings in the Office. One morning, the diplomat was informed that a report on this issue was published in the elite press, and within a few hours, he received an urgent telegraph indicating the American stance he was to present. In other words, the need to react to the press report forced the clerks to determine a policy.
15. A total of 571 news items in the popular press included 297 photographs. As the newspapers stopped attaching the photos or describing them in their database from the middle of the study period onward, a systematic analysis was not possible. Thus, the available photos were analyzed (close to 140 photos—about 50% of the total number) but only as supporting evidence.

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