

The Underlying Structure of Ethical Beliefs Toward War*

HOWARD TAMASHIRO, GREGORY G. BRUNK & DONALD SECREST
Syracuse University, University of Oklahoma

Behavioralists have tended to neglect the study of ethics as unimportant to an understanding of political behavior and its various manifestations, such as international conflict. In our analysis we examine the attitudes of a sample of retired American military officers toward war and war waging issues in order to infer the more fundamental nature of the ethical constraints that are embedded within the decision making of these individuals. Three fundamental dimensions of ethical thinking are apparent. These concern constraints on the use of force as a policy tool, the legitimacy of force and force planning, and the sensitivity of individuals to the risks present in the international system. In order to justify our interpretations, we present a detailed question by question analysis of the factor weights of each survey item. Finally, we speculate on the types of ethical tensions that will arise within the military when these three fundamental factors of ethical evaluation come into conflict.

1. Introduction

While any review of the religious and philosophical literature concerning the ethics of war and war waging will reveal a great diversity of views, what is most surprising about this subfield of international relations is that very little effort has been devoted to the empirical study of the ethical frameworks that practitioners actually employ regarding such issues. As a first step in expanding our knowledge of this area, we surveyed the moral judgments of retired American military officers toward specific aspects of war and war waging. Here we offer a detailed analysis of the structure that underlies the ethical beliefs of such individuals.

2. Major Ethical Schools

We first conducted a general review of the philosophical, religious, and international relations literature in order to identify the major moral schools most cited in discussions of the ethical implications of war and foreign policy decisions.¹ Initially, we identified thirteen major positions, some of which overlap in the writings of particular scholars. We do not claim that our listing is exhaustive, only that it provides an initial, very broad-based

starting-point for the empirical examination of ethical systems. The basic positions of the thirteen ethical schools are outlined below:

The Golden Rule. 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' Two concepts that are very close to the Golden Rule are the 'ethic of self-fulfillment' (Gordis, 1964) and Kant's (1785) concept of justice.

Negative Reciprocity. One has the right to suspend moral behavior when the enemy acts immorally.

Pacifism. Taking another's life is absolutely prohibited.

Nuclear Pacifism. Since nuclear war cannot serve any practical or moral end, it must be condemned.

Moral Crusade or Holy War. Some goals are so important or our enemies are so evil, that any action useful in defeating the enemy is justifiable.

Just War. One can morally engage in war only under certain specific conditions. There are seven commonly cited criteria for a Just War (Ramsey, 1961, 1968; Walzer, 1977; O'Brien, 1981; National Council of Catholic Bishops, 1983):

1. A war must be declared by a legal authority.
2. The damage to both sides in a war must be proportional to the good achieved by the war.

* We thank Sheila Watson for her assistance in computer analysis. Each of the writers is a full co-author of this manuscript. Our name order is random.

Table I. One Possible Characterization of the Relationship among Major Ethical Schools

Type of Reasoning	Analytical Focus			
	Focus on Nature of Acts	Focus on Consequences	Focus on Motives or Desired Virtues	No Direct Focus
Relativist or Situational (Responsibility Orientations)	Just War	Just War Negative Reciprocity Reason of State Supreme Emergency Utilitarianism	Just War Golden Rule	Fatalism
Absolutism Reasoning (Strongly Principled or Rule-Based)	Legalism Pacifism	Nuclear Pacifism	Moral Crusade	

3. The injury that caused the war must have been real and recent.
4. One must have a reasonable chance of winning a war.
5. War must be a last resort.
6. A state must have the right intentions in waging war.
7. A war must be waged morally, i.e. non-combatant immunity.

Reason of State or Amorality. Governments should be guided by the goals of victory and survival, and specific, moral rules simply do not apply in war. Some Reason of State theorists contend that this ethic has a moral quality in that it seeks to protect one's national interests (Lackey, 1984, pp. 12–13).

Legalism. It is one's duty to obey legal authorities, and the morality of actions is not for the individual to decide. The major consequence of this ethic seems to be that individuals feel responsibility to the people giving orders, but not for the orders themselves (Milgram, 1974).

Supreme Emergency. Under the most extreme of circumstances, such as the clear possibility of total defeat, one can ignore moral rules (Walzer, 1977).

Utilitarianism. Morally justifiable rules are those that maximize long run expected benefits. Utilitarian policies are those that rational, impartial persons would be expected to choose (Brandt, 1972).

Fatalism. The evils of war are unavoidable, and thus any attempts to establish moral rules of warfare are futile.

Absolutism. There are certain principles that must be followed without exception, but the specific principles that individuals follow differ from person to person.

Responsibility or Moral Relativism. Any action potentially may be morally justified as long as it is the least destructive option available.

These perspectives are only broadly representative of the existing moral schools found in the literature and do not compose a definitive typology. They are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. Some viewpoints are broad orientations from which other, more specific moral positions flow. For example, Absolutist Reasoning might yield either Pacifism or Moral Crusading, depending on the individual who utilizes it. Some viewpoints differ in emphasis or specificity (Just War and the Ethic of Responsibility), while others are diametrically opposed (Moral Crusading and the Golden Rule). Still others might be made more specialized (e.g. examining the concepts of act-utilitarianism, rule-utilitarianism and virtue-utilitarianism, rather than simply utilitarianism).

As a preliminary aid to the reader, we offer Table I, which is one of many possible schemes for ordering this diversity of ethical outlooks. While Table I cannot show all the complex nuances found in the ethics of war, it does reflect some salient features. Each ethical school occupies a single cell of the table, except for Just War, which spans three cells. This is because the Just War doctrine is an amalgam of different judgment criteria rather than a single perspective.

3. *The Distinction between Attitudes and Ethics*

We begin with the testable assumption that ethical frameworks provide the fundamental guidelines that ethical individuals call upon when making very basic decisions. While this assumption has motivated most of the philosophical and religious studies of ethics, it remains largely an untested hypothesis. We have no idea how many individuals really use ethical beliefs in making their decisions. One obvious alternative explanation of decision making argues that attitudes, rather than ethical beliefs, determine decisions. An attitude usually is defined as a predisposition toward an object or a policy. Attitudes may or may not stem from the professed ethical concerns of individuals. Individual attitudes do not have to be internally consistent, while a fundamental characteristic of an ethical system is a high degree of internal consistency.

We assume that an ethical person strives to follow a set of fundamental rules or moral precepts that have two distinguishing characteristics. First, ethical rules should have a substantial degree of internal consistency, whereas attitudes or norms of behavior are often found to be only very weakly connected to each other, if they are connected at all. Only rarely should an ethical individual be forced to break one moral precept in order to obey another. In the rare instances when breaking one ethical rule is necessary in order to uphold another, an individual is forced into a painful evaluation of his or her ethical system in an attempt to eliminate the inconsistency. In this way ethical systems slowly evolve.

We also define a second characteristic of ethics, which distinguishes ethical systems from simple attitudes. Fundamental ethical rules are assumed to dominate over simple attitudinal predispositions (Levy, 1981). If there is a conflict between one's goals and one's fundamental beliefs, the ethical individual follows his or her beliefs. In this way, ethics provide a constraint on behavior. If these constraints are strong enough, it may eventually be possible to improve predictions concerning political behavior by including such ethical constraints in the decision-

making calculus. Our present research strategy has been to ask individuals a series of questions about attitudes in order to identify more fundamental patterns of ethical beliefs.

4. *The Questionnaire*

Initially, it was unclear to us whether the thirteen ethical perspectives we identified in the literature could be distinguished by common citizens. A number of philosophers and psychologists (e.g. Donagan, 1977; Hare, 1981; Kohlberg, 1981) argue that the issues in moral analysis important to academics are not necessarily of similar importance to the general public. We suspected that some of our initial thirteen moral schools might be too far removed from everyday life for ordinary persons to clearly distinguish among them. In order to determine if this was the case, we conducted a trial run of our survey, which included over one hundred, five-point Likert-type items designed to tap these various ethical outlooks. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they 'strongly agree', 'agree', are 'uncertain', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with each statement.

In order for an ethical school to be included in the final questionnaire, there had to be consistent response patterns observable in the trial questionnaire. Responses to items attempting to tap the same ethical school had to be correlated with each other in the correct direction. This was not the case with the ethics of Utilitarianism and Fatalism, which were dropped from the final questionnaire. In the cases of Absolutism and the Ethic of Responsibility, individuals who strongly supported the statements tapping one of these two schools tended to strongly oppose the statements that tapped the other school. This indicates that the two ethics are the opposite ends of one dimension, and the same set of items can be used to measure support for both schools of thought.

Using the response pattern of our pilot survey, we concluded that ten sets of items would be sufficient to capture most of the common man's perception of ethical frameworks toward war. Absolutism and the Ethic of Responsibility were combined into one scale, while Utilitarianism and Fatalism were

Table II. Item Wordings

Golden Rule (Positive Reciprocity)

1. If we do not want other nations to spy on us, we should not spy on them.
2. If we want other countries to keep their treaty promises, we should keep our treaty promises.
3. Our government should treat other countries in the same way that we want to be treated.

*Moral Responsibility/Moral Absolutism**

4. Moral principles are absolute and do not depend on the situation.
5. Our military planners should not rule out any type of future military actions because of moral principles.
6. Our country's decision to go to war should only be based on universal moral principles and not on the particular context facing our nation.

Moral Crusade (Holy War)

7. When at war, we have a moral duty to punish and totally destroy the enemy.
8. It is all right to use military force to convert others to our beliefs.
9. There are moral values so important that we should not deal with those who disagree with these values.

Pacifism

10. If one must choose either non-violent resistance or participating in a war, non-violent resistance is the only moral choice.
11. Morality requires that a nation should not resist if attacked by a foreign country.
12. It is always wrong to kill another person, even in war.

Nuclear Pacifism

13. Destroying enemy cities with nuclear weapons is immoral even if our cities are attacked with nuclear weapons first.
14. It is better to accept defeat than participate in a nuclear war.
15. It is morally acceptable to threaten the use of nuclear weapons against enemy cities as a way to prevent nuclear attacks against our cities.

Just War

16. A war must be legally authorized before it can be considered to be moral.
17. It is not moral to fight a war until all peaceful alternatives have been tried first.
18. A war must be an act of self-defense in order for it to be moral.
19. The amount of war damage and casualties to both sides is important in deciding whether a war is moral.
20. A moral war must seek to only defeat the enemy's military and not to totally destroy his society.
21. Efforts to avoid killing civilians are necessary for a war to be moral.
22. It is not moral to fight a war that one has no chance of winning.

Supreme Emergency

23. Sometimes our enemies are so evil that it may be necessary to ignore moral concerns in order to win a war.
24. It is all right to attack an enemy first, before he becomes strong enough to defeat us.
25. If an enemy's goal is the total destruction of our nation, morality should still influence our actions in times of war.

Negative Reciprocity or the Retaliatory Ethic

26. Harsh and unrestrained military actions are justified against an enemy who launches an unprovoked attack on our nation.
27. If a foreign enemy stops observing moral principles, we should also stop observing moral principles.
28. Revenge against an enemy's civilians is morally acceptable if that nation has attacked our civilians.

Legalism

29. If the only way to avoid defeat in a battle is to commit a 'war crime', then we should do so.
30. If legally ordered by our government, it is all right to launch a surprise attack against another country.
31. If there is a conflict between one's personal, moral beliefs and our country's law, one should obey the law.

Reason of State (Amorality)

32. The only thing that matters in war is victory.
 33. National interest, rather than morality, should determine our foreign policy.
 34. We should go to war whenever it is to our advantage.
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* The ethics of Responsibility and Absolutism are measured as two ends of the same scale.

The items were randomly ordered in the questionnaire and did not appear in this order. A copy of the questionnaire is available by writing to the authors.

dropped from the candidate list of commonly held ethical systems. On the basis of responses from the sample study, we selected the three candidate items from each school that appeared to best capture the most basic elements of that school's principles.² The following eleven ethical systems are represented in our study:

1. Golden Rule (Positive Reciprocity)
2. Moral Responsibility
3. Moral Crusade (Holy War)
4. Pacifism
5. Nuclear Pacifism
6. Just War
7. Supreme Emergency
8. Negative Reciprocity (Retaliatory Ethic)
9. Legalism
10. Reason of State (Amorality)
11. Moral Absolutism

The actual items used in the following empirical analysis are presented in Table II. A personally addressed cover letter explained that respondents should use their own interpretations of obvious normative terms such as 'moral', and that we were interested in finding out how individuals felt about issues, not in advocating any particular viewpoint. We sent questionnaires to one thousand retired members of an American military service related organization composed largely of military officers. The response rate was 62%. In most instances less than one-half percent of the respondents failed to answer a given question, and of the 620 individuals who responded to our study, 567 answered all the questions used in the factor analysis.

5. *Support for the Ethical Schools*

First we will examine the average level of support given to the separate principles of the various ethical schools. Support is defined as responding 'agree' or 'strongly agree' to a positively worded statement or 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to a negatively worded statement. There is substantial support for component items of the Ethic of Responsibility (75.3%), the Golden Rule

(63.3%) and Legalism (61.1%). Little support was expressed for Moral Absolutism (18.5%), Moral Crusading (10.6%), Pacifism (5.5%) and Nuclear Pacifism (4.9%). An intermediate level of support was expressed for Just War principles (36.2%), Reason of State (40.9%), the Retaliatory Ethic (43.5%) and Supreme Emergency (43.9%).

It is not immediately clear what this evidence means, since a simple tabular analysis is open to many varying interpretations. It may be that many individuals really do believe in 'Doing onto others as you would have them do onto you'. But at the same time, almost an equal level of support is expressed for the Ethic of Responsibility, which argues that any action may be morally justified as long as it is the least destructive option available. Even more people support the principle of Legalism than the Golden Rule. The essence of Legalism is that it is one's duty to obey authorities, and the morality of an order is not for the individual to decide, while the Golden Rule argues for a more detailed moral analysis of actions.

How could our subjects simultaneously express support for such diverse ethical positions as the Golden Rule, Legalism, and the Ethic of Responsibility? One possible answer is that individuals may not be responding on the basis of ethical beliefs, but simply are offering conditioned attitudinal responses. Most people were taught some version of the Golden Rule early in life, and all military trainees are taught that they should obey the orders of superiors. Another possibility is that survey respondents were answering in an unsystematic, ad hoc fashion, possibly because they have no strong, moral opinions about war. A third possibility is that respondents are answering systematically, but in a manner that cannot be monitored by a simple tabular count based on traditional ethical categories. Examining these possibilities requires further, more sophisticated methods.

6. *A Factor Analysis of Ethical Beliefs*

Because our questionnaire was designed to tap the fundamental features of each ethical

school, factor analysis of individual level responses should be useful for measuring shared variance, which is not possible to determine by simply examining frequency counts. An analysis of this shared variance, in turn, should reveal any underlying structure in our survey data. The existence of such a coherent structure would render unlikely the possibilities of pure attitudinal or ad hoc response explanations for our survey findings. The reason: purely attitudinal or ad hoc behavior would not display the internal statistical consistency demanded of a robust, underlying factor structure.

Our survey asked a series of questions that were designed to tap agreement with the principles of eleven ethical schools. Each item dealt with a particular aspect of a school's beliefs. Using factor analysis, we can sort these items into distinct, statistically independent classes.³ These classes, called factors or dimensions, tell us to what extent our survey findings are consistent with the eleven ethical schools found in the academic literature. Further, the factors extracted in factor analysis probe the interrelationships among the survey answers and the shared variance in these data. Hence, the factors, properly interpreted, can reveal common themes in the survey, which are more fundamental than the traditional descriptions of ethical schools found in the literature.

If such a coherent, underlying structure exists, it would suggest a core set of moral concerns motivating our respondents' ethical views toward war. A preliminary factor analysis indicates that nine factors have eigenvalues greater than one and together explain 52.9% of the variance in responses. But most of these factors do not have obvious substantive interpretations and appear to result from chance correlations. A scree plot suggests that only a fraction of the factors are of real importance and can be interpreted substantively. The first three factors all have eigenvalues greater than two, are substantively meaningful, and taken together explain 30.7% of the variation in responses.

This 30.7% variance explained by the three extracted factors merits further discussion. A high percentage of variance explained among all the survey responses

(say over 50%) would suggest a high degree of uniformity or patterning. Substantively, this would mean that individual moral judgments are highly structured and that people's moral beliefs display a high level of resemblance. In contrast, a low percentage of variance explained (say around 10%) would suggest that individual moral judgments generally are unstructured and ad hoc.

Our level of explained variance falls between the extremes. This tells us that individual moral views are patterned and that certain moral judgments tend to co-occur more frequently than others, but also that overall individual moral views are not rigidly structured and doctrinaire. Such a result has substantial face validity. The literature on applied ethics teaches the importance of an ethical direction in people's lives and yet is filled with discussions of special cases, qualifications, and fine distinctions. Applied ethical judgments are based on moral precepts and the specific 'facts of the case'. Concrete circumstances and complexities make impossible the rendering of an all-purpose, systematic, and automatic moral code. Our empirical findings reflect this ethical tension between people's needs for moral guidelines, on the one hand, and judgmental flexibility on the other.

Using an oblique rotation, we found that the first three factors are not very highly correlated with each other. The correlation is -0.10 between factors one and two, 0.21 between factors one and three, and -0.15 between factors two and three. This extraordinarily clean factor structure is very pleasing. It tells us that the first three factors are tapping three distinct aspects of ethical frameworks. This important finding increases our suspicions that an empirically based categorization of ethical schools is possible.

In order to define any generic classificatory concepts connected with our survey findings, we must offer a detailed substantive interpretation of our three factors. This requires orthogonal rotation. In orthogonal rotation, the variance within the three factors is maximized, so that the three factors are separated conceptually to the greatest possible extent. This makes theoretical inter-

Table III. Factor Coefficients

Ethical School (Item Number)	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
	Risk Sensitivity	Constraints on War as a Policy Tool	Legitimacy of Force
Supreme Emergency (23)	0.72	-0.06	0.06
Supreme Emergency (25)	-0.71	0.06	-0.07
Retaliatory Ethic (27)	0.70	-0.12	0.06
Legalism (29)	0.65	-0.09	-0.03
Reason of State (32)	0.62	0.06	0.00
Retaliatory Ethic (26)	0.55	-0.01	-0.24
Moral Absolutism (5)	0.55	-0.12	-0.22
Reason of State (33)	0.54	-0.10	-0.20
Moral Crusade (7)	0.51	-0.25	0.07
Legalism (31)	0.47	0.05	-0.35
Retaliatory Ethic (28)	0.38	-0.30	-0.12
Legalism (30)	0.37	-0.25	-0.28
Moral Absolutism (4)	-0.31	0.16	0.03
Just War (17)	0.05	0.62	0.14
Just War (20)	-0.13	0.61	0.18
Just War (18)	0.02	0.54	0.24
Golden Rule (2)	-0.08	0.53	-0.15
Moral Crusade (8)	0.24	-0.52	0.08
Golden Rule (3)	-0.04	0.49	-0.01
Supreme Emergency (24)	0.28	-0.47	-0.09
Reason of State (34)	0.26	-0.45	0.27
Just War (21)	-0.12	0.43	0.30
Just War (16)	0.01	0.36	0.27
Nuclear Pacifism (13)	-0.29	0.10	0.54
Nuclear Pacifism (14)	-0.13	0.05	0.54
Pacifism (12)	-0.04	0.12	0.48
Moral Absolutism (6)	-0.24	0.10	0.47
Golden Rule (1)	-0.01	0.06	0.46
Nuclear Pacifism (15)	0.22	0.02	-0.43
Pacifism (10)	0.10	0.13	0.43
Pacifism (11)	0.08	0.01	0.40
Just War (19)	-0.05	0.01	0.31
Just War (22)	0.25	0.21	0.30
Moral Crusade (9)	0.00	-0.15	0.30
Explained Variance	16.7	7.8	6.2
Eigenvalue	5.7	2.6	2.1

pretation of the factors easier. The factor coefficients that result from this operation may be interpreted as correlation coefficients. These factor coefficients or loadings tell us which items associate most strongly with which factor. The items that load highly on a factor form a pattern of interdependent moral judgments identified by that factor. These factor coefficients thus reveal what a dimension is describing or classifying. High positive or high negative loadings tell us that the corresponding items should be used to

interpret the dimension's substantive meaning. Table III displays these coefficients for each item.

Our interpretation of factor one is that it measures an individual's level of risk sensitivity, while factor two measures the belief that special moral responsibilities accompany the willingness to use war as a policy tool, and factor three measures the extent to which an individual perceives military force and force planning to be legitimate. The first factor explains 16.7% of the variation across

Table IV. Interpretation of Factor 1: Risk Sensitivity

Essence of Item	Expected Response	Consistency of Response
23. We can ignore morality to win a war.	Positive	Consistent
25. Morality applies in wars 'to the death'.	Negative	Consistent
27. If enemy is immoral, we can be immoral.	Positive	Consistent
29. If necessary, we can commit war crimes.	Positive	Consistent
32. All that matters is victory.	Positive	Consistent
26. Harsh actions are justified if attacked.	Positive	Consistent
5. Morality should not overrule planning.	Positive	Consistent
33. National interest should determine policy.	Positive	Consistent
7. We have a duty to punish the enemy.	?	No Prediction
31. Obey the law, not your conscience.	Positive	Consistent
28. Revenge is acceptable if attacked.	Positive	Consistent
30. Surprise attacks are legitimate.	Positive	Consistent
4. Moral principles are absolute.	Negative	Consistent
13. Using nuclear bombs on cities is immoral.	Negative	Consistent
24. It is all right to attack an enemy first.	Positive	Consistent
34. We should go to war when advantageous.	Positive	Consistent
22. A war is immoral if you cannot win.	Positive	Consistent

All the items that correlate at 0.25 or greater with the factor are presented in descending order of magnitude.

For these expected response patterns, the reader is cautioned not to interpret 'positive' as meaning 'agree' and 'negative' as meaning 'disagree'. *In particular, this is true for Table VI.* Positive and negative, in this context, refer to the expected signs of the factor loadings for each of the question items. These expected factor loading signs are, in turn, a function of both the direction of question wording ('we should . . .' or 'we should not . . .') and the manner in which the responses were coded (0 to 5), which was consistent across items. Each of these issues were taken into account when the 'consistency of responses' was determined for Tables IV, V, and VI.

As a rough rule of thumb, if two items share the same factor loading sign, this means people who answer 'agree' ('disagree') on one item are most likely to answer 'agree' ('disagree') on the other item. Alternatively, if two items share different factor loading signs, the people who answer 'agree' on one item are most apt to answer 'disagree' on the other item.

all items, while the second factor explains 7.8%, and the third factor 6.2%.

We will now argue in detail why our interpretations of these factors are reasonable. In this discussion, it will be useful to refer to Table II, which presents the exact wordings of the items that were used to measure support for the principles of each ethical school. Table III presents the correlations of these items with the three extracted factors. Tables IV through VI are used in justifying our interpretation of these three factors based on the consistency of our predictions of the correlation between each item and a factor.

6.1 Risk Sensitivity

Let us first examine our interpretation of factor one as measuring sensitivity to risk. In this context, we take risk to mean exposure to the possibility of harm to one's 'in-group' by some enemy. Risk averse individuals

should fall at one end of this factor, while risk taking individuals should fall at the other end. Table IV summarizes each question that correlates at 0.25 or greater with factor one. The questions are presented in their rank order, starting from the greatest correlation with this factor.

Assume that our interpretation is correct and positive values on this dimension represent aversion to risk. On the basis of this proposed interpretation we have made predictions of the expected sign of the correlation between each question and the factor. These also are presented in Table IV. We could make predictions for all items except 7, which comes from the Moral Crusading school. Item 7 has no obvious relationship to risk sensitivity, and its correlation appears to result from random error. For the other sixteen questions, predictions can be made, and all sixteen are consistent with our expectations. These results indicate that risk

sensitivity is a reasonable interpretation for this dimension.

Risk averse people are located at one end of the dimension and risk accepting people at the other end. Let us examine the components of this risk sensitivity dimension in detail. Individuals appear to be responding to four types of uncertainties. The first is the risk of military defeat, which is well captured by questions 5 and 29. A risk averse individual is unwilling to constrain military planning in the service of moral principles. Accordingly, risk averse people probably would be predisposed toward 'worst-case' analysis and the acceptance of expedient measures to guard against these 'worst-case' possibilities. Further, risk averse individuals are willing to consider the possibility of committing a war crime in order to prevent military defeat.

The second type of uncertainty concerns the intentions of other countries. Questions 31 and 33 represent this type of risk. Risk averse individuals tend to believe that national interest, rather than morality, should guide our foreign policy. Further, the risk averse individuals in our sample tend to believe that one should follow the law rather than one's conscience. The military emphasizes discipline, and in the world's uncertain environment, not obeying legitimate orders risks mismanagement and destruction.

The third type of uncertainty is in regard to the nature of the enemy. If the enemy is victorious, we are at his mercy and his post-war behavior may turn out to be brutal and intolerant. If we fear such a possibility and are not constrained by other factors, we should do everything we can to avoid defeat. Three items bear on this issue. Item 29 allows for the commission of war crimes to prevent defeat, while items 23 and 25 allow us to relax moral constraints if the enemy is very evil or if the enemy is bent on the total destruction of our society.

The final type of uncertainty deals with the bonds of mutual restraint that often develop between enemies during war. Rules often emerge in war that prohibit certain types of behavior, such as the bombing of food wagons during the trench warfare of World War I or the use of poison gas during World War II. However, such prohibitions are fra-

gile (Axelrod, 1984). All the Negative Reciprocity items (26, 27, 28) to some extent tap this type of risk; one must stand ready to retaliate and punish any violations by the enemy of tacit agreements. In this sense deterrence is a defensive, reactive, and hence risk averse stance.

We have presented a plausible interpretation of the basic predisposition that is captured by this dimension. Two important empirical results should be stressed at this point. First, the factor solution does not uniquely identify individual ethical schools. This means that the precepts of the major ethical schools are built upon even more fundamental beliefs or predispositions, which are to some extent shared by the various ethical schools.

Second, the most important criterion that individuals use to evaluate ethical positions is not an ethical principle at all. Rather, it is an individual's willingness to take risks. *Risk averse individuals are likely to adopt different ethical beliefs than are risk accepting individuals.* A further reasonable speculation, which cannot be tested directly with the data at hand, is that the extent to which one is willing to take risks probably depends on how one views the world. If the world is viewed as a very risky place, one will tend to be more risk averse.

We appear to have discovered a predisposition individuals use in structuring their ethical frameworks that underlies many of the traditional ethical positions in the academic literature. The theoretical implications of this finding could be significant. Axelrod (1984) recently has shown that cooperation can develop in certain types of situation. *Our evidence suggests even more generally that relatively complicated ethical systems may evolve as well.* A key element in this evolution appears to be the level of risk that individuals face. If our conjecture is sound, then high levels of risk should lead to the common development of defensive and risk averse ethics. In other types of societies or situations, less risk sensitive ethics should evolve.

6.2 Constraints on War as a Policy Tool

The second dimension clearly measures a person's belief that special moral responsi-

Table V. Interpretation of Factor 2: Constraints on War as a Policy Tool

Essence of Item	Expected Response	Consistency of Response
17. War should be the very last resort.	Positive	Consistent
20. We should destroy the enemy's society.	Positive	Consistent
18. A war must be for self-defense.	Positive	Consistent
2. We should keep our treaty promises.	Positive	Consistent
8. We can convert others to our beliefs.	Negative	Consistent
3. We should treat others like ourselves.	Positive	Consistent
24. It is all right to attack an enemy first.	Negative	Consistent
34. We should go to war whenever advantageous.	Negative	Consistent
21. We should try not to kill civilians.	Positive	Consistent
16. A war should be legally authorized.	Positive	Consistent
28. Revenge is acceptable if attacked.	Negative	Consistent
30. Surprise attacks are legitimate.	Negative	Consistent
7. We have a duty to punish the enemy.	Negative	Consistent

All the items that correlate at 0.25 or greater with the factor are presented in descending order of magnitude.

lities accompany the willingness to go to war. In Table V we have presented a similar analysis of the consistency of this interpretation as we presented for the first factor. Of the thirteen items that reasonably can be predicted using our interpretation, all correlate in the correct direction with this dimension. The principle that is most strongly associated with this dimension is represented by item 17, which is taken from Just War theory. Its factor correlation is 0.62. This principle contends that a moral war must be a last resort measure after all peaceful options have been exhausted.

In general, this moral responsibilities dimension largely embodies the principles that are reflected in the idea of a 'Just War'. Five of the seven Just War items (16, 17, 18, 20, 21) are correlated positively with this dimension at 0.25 or greater. But the dimension is more general than the specific principles that make up the Just War doctrine. Two items dealing with the Golden Rule (2, 3) correlate positively with this dimension, which is consistent with the Donagan–Aquinas argument that Just War principles logically will be derived from the Golden Rule through moral reflection (Aquinas, 1266; Donagan, 1977).

Further, agreement with the principles of this dimension implies probable disagreement with certain ethical principles of other schools. In particular, supporters of morally responsible restraints on war policy will tend

to oppose statements 7 and 8, which were taken from the Moral Crusading school and argue that we legitimately can use force to convert others to our beliefs or punish them without limit. Secondly, supporters of war restraints also oppose the position of the Supreme Emergency followers as embodied in item 24 that surprise attacks may be authorized against an enemy. Thirdly, supporters of war restraints reject the position of the Reason of State school that we should go to war whenever it is to our advantage (34). Finally, it seems reasonable that supporters of war restraints would reject military revenge against noncombatants and surprise attacks (28 and 30).

6.3 Legitimacy of the Use of Force and Force Planning

The third factor measures the perceived level of legitimacy of the planning and use of military force to solve problems. In general, this dimension may be interpreted as the source of ethical or practical warrants governing the use of force. We again have examined this interpretation through a consistency analysis. The evidence is presented in Table VI. Of the sixteen items that are correlated at 0.25 or greater with this dimension, fifteen reasonably can be interpreted as measuring legitimacy of the use of force or force planning. The other item (9) does not appear to be related to the issue of force and its correlation may be due to random error. The direc-

Table VI. Interpretation of Factor 3: Legitimacy of Force or Force Planning

Essence of Item	Expected Response	Consistency of Response
13. Using nuclear bombs on cities is immoral.	Positive	Consistent
14. Defeat is preferred to nuclear war.	Positive	Consistent
12. It is always wrong to kill.	Positive	Consistent
6. Going to war should be a moral decision.	Positive	Consistent
1. We should not spy on others.	Positive	Consistent
15. We can threaten to use nuclear weapons.	Negative	Consistent
10. Non-violence is the only moral choice.	Positive	Consistent
11. We should not resist if attacked.	Positive	Consistent
31. Obey the law, not your conscience.	Negative	Consistent
19. War damage is an important issue.	Positive	Consistent
22. A war is immoral if you cannot win.	Positive	Consistent
9. No contact with the enemy.	?	No Prediction
21. We should try not to kill civilians.	Positive	Consistent
30. Surprise attacks are legitimate.	Negative	Consistent
16. A war should be legally authorized.	Positive	Consistent
34. We should go to war whenever advantageous.	Positive	Consistent

All the items that correlate at 0.25 or greater with the factor are presented in descending order of magnitude. See note to Table IV regarding the interpretation of coefficients.

tion of all fifteen items is correctly predicted by our interpretation.

At least three types of legitimacy are captured by this dimension. The first is that force is at least minimally legitimate in some instances. This issue is addressed by the pacifism items (10, 11, 12). Pacifists are at one extreme of this dimension, and strong non-pacifists are on the other. The second type of legitimacy concerns the use of nuclear weapons. The premise of nuclear pacifism is that since nuclear war cannot serve a useful purpose, it must be condemned. The more one tends to support the legitimacy of the use of this type of military force, the more one tends to disagree with this position. This type of legitimacy is captured by items 13, 14, and 15.

The third type of legitimacy concerns the circumstances under which war can be waged or war planning conducted. This aspect of legitimacy is typified by the items concerning surprise attacks (30), whether a war is moral if you cannot hope to win (22), whether a war has to be legally authorized and the primacy of legal authorization (16, 31), whether the decision to wage war should be made on purely moral grounds (6), whether war damage is a vital moral objection to war (19), whether spying is legitimate (1), and whether

war can be legitimately viewed as a routine policy device (34).

7. Discussion

Our empirical analysis has revealed an interesting and somewhat surprising structure underlying military beliefs about war and war waging. Perhaps the best way of discussing the theoretical implications of our findings is by addressing directly a series of fundamental questions connected with our research. First, do any of the ethical frameworks that are prominent in the religious and philosophical literature have much relevance for military officers? Our findings answer yes. The officers in our sample hold views that are strongly consistent with elements of Just War, Golden Rule, Supreme Emergency, Negative Reciprocity, Legalism, Reason of State, and Absolutism. This ethical diversity, however, indicates an important qualification to our affirmative answer. We have discovered that the core set of moral concerns governing military views toward war is not dominated by any single, ethical approach defined in the literature. This suggests that 'military ethics', and quite likely the traditional ethical schools of thought developed by religious and philosophical

scholars as well, rest on even more basic belief patterns akin to the factors extracted in our analysis. This conjecture leads naturally to the next question.

What factors appear to organize the structure of ethical beliefs among the military? We discovered three, very robust, independent factors, which were derived from empirical analysis, and not by arbitrary judgment. The dominant factor underlying our survey results was a risk sensitivity dimension. We argue that military ethical perspectives are strongly conditioned by defensiveness and risk averseness. Risk aversion is not a traditional ethical criterion, yet it seems to play a crucial role in organizing ethical beliefs among the military. A second factor is an ethical responsibility dimension. It represents those special ethical responsibilities that the military recognizes as co-occurring with the willingness to wage war. The Just War and Golden Rule precepts would weigh heavily here. But this ethical responsibility predisposition is opposed by the last factor, which is a legitimacy of force dimension. Basically, this dimension is the source of ethical or practical warrants for legitimizing the use of force. For example, the moral acceptability of deterrence or the use of nuclear weapons in extremis are components of this legitimacy dimension.

The military support for the Golden Rule connected with the ethical responsibility dimension deserves added comment. At first glance, the high level of support for the idealistic principle of the Golden Rule might seem to conflict with the military's risk averseness. A closer inquiry, however, shows that the Golden Rule has a strong relativist flavor – morally allowable actions are determined by one's particular ethical code, and most coherent ethical codes are consistent with the Golden Rule. Indeed, this ethical tolerance seems to explain the Golden Rule's historical and cultural ubiquity (Donagan, 1977, pp. 58–59). Hence, it is likely that military officers see most Golden Rule directives as being consistent with their other ethical judgments, including those connected with risk averse positions.

As a final overall judgment, the character of the three dimensions we have found sug-

gests that the military focuses on the nature of acts and their consequences when making moral judgments. Other traditional alternative ethical approaches which consider an actor's motives, his overall situation, suffering, or sacrifices seem relatively less important as moral determinants of military behavior. How do moral considerations and practical military imperatives fit together within the military's ethical outlook? Clearly, military policy, no matter how enlightened or ethical, cannot be made on purely moral grounds. Practical, technical, empirical matters must be weighted as well. Our analysis suggests that the combining of the ethical and the practical is realized in the factor structure described earlier. The risk sensitivity dimension is a practical component; the legitimacy dimension is a combination of ethical and practical concerns; and the ethical responsibility dimension is an ethical component. However, this three-dimensional mix of the ethical and the practical is no panacea. Considerable tension seems to exist between the conflicting demands within this framework.

Take the issue of noncombatant immunity. It presents a real moral dilemma for the military. It may be that war legitimacy and efficiency imperatives discourage some officers from placing a high moral emphasis on noncombatant immunity. Since civilian deaths in war are usually unavoidable, making civilian immunity a decisive moral benchmark may be seen as tantamount to rejecting all war as illegitimate. Clearly, this would be militarily unacceptable. On the other hand, most officers would feel equally uncomfortable foreswearing all moral concerns toward civilians for the sake of war waging efficiency. Hence, a moral dilemma arises between the demands of the legitimizing dimension and the ethical responsibility dimension. The need to legitimize force is in some tension with the need to recognize ethical constraints governing war. In a sense, the ethical responsibility dimension balances off the legitimacy dimension. The latter dimension tells you what you can do; the former tells you what you should not do; and at times they tilt in opposing directions.

A similar moral tension exists between the

desire to control risks, on the one hand, and satisfy moral responsibilities on the other. For example, the element of surprise is highly esteemed in military doctrine as a device for minimizing risks to the attacker. Hence, the logic of surprise attacks, preemptive strikes, and preventive wars can be appealing. Yet, the moral imperatives of 'last-resort', self-defense, and civilian immunity often run counter to the spirit of surprise and risk minimizing. The US military's discomfort over the hazardous 'rules of engagement' in Vietnam is an example. In this manner, then, the imperatives of the risk sensitivity dimension can conflict with the strictures of the moral responsibilities dimension.

In summary, military officers are called upon to maintain their moral balance under extraordinary circumstances and contradictory pressures. They must weight moral precepts against practice demands. Theirs is an 'ethic of distress'. It is neither neat nor tidy, but perhaps it is the best that is possible in a difficult and imperfect world.

NOTES

1. It is impractical to include in this paper all the references that we consulted in our general survey of the philosophical, religious, and international relations literatures. We have cited only some of the more interesting or non-obvious of our sources. A twenty-five page supplement, including a twelve-page bibliography of sources for each of the ethical schools, can be obtained by writing to the authors.
2. As we show, the one exception was the Just War framework, which includes two types of constraints embodied in its seven principles. These are constraints on the declaration of war and constraints on the use of force during war.
3. An orthogonal rotation indicates that the three factors are largely uncorrelated with each other.

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GREGORY G. BRUNK, b. 1949, PhD in Political Science (University of Iowa, 1981), MA in Economics (1980); Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Oklahoma; fields of specialization include empirical political theory, quantitative research methods, and American politics.

DONALD SECREST, b. 1931, PhD in Political Science (University of Michigan, 1968); Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Oklahoma; fields of specialization include international relations and normative approaches to war and conflict.

HOWARD TAMASHIRO, b. 1947, PhD in Political Science (Ohio State University, 1981); Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science, Syracuse University; fields of specialization include international relations, heuristics, US foreign policy and American defense policy.