Gregory G. Brunk, Donald Secrest, and Howard Tameshire, *Understanding Attitudes About War: Modeling Moral Judgments.*(Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996) pp. 237.
$45.00 ISBN 0-8229-3926-6 (hardcover)
$19.95 ISBN 0-8229-5585-7 (paperback)

In part, synthesizing the authors' previous work on the subject, this book examines attitudes of American foreign policy elites regarding the morality of U. S. involvement in war. It is based on 2152 completed mail questionnaires received from persons in government service and members of the "attentive public." Respondents were retired military officers (29% of the total), current diplomats (24%), former members of Congress (8%), Catholic clergy (22%), and newspaper editorial page editors (17%). (Priests were surveyed in 1987, and former members of Congress in 1988. Survey dates for the remaining groups are not reported.)

The surveys included open-ended questions but the heart of the study are 34 Likert-scale statements to which the respondents' extent of agreement or disagreement is measured in ordinal categories: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree.

The 34 statements are classified into 10 categories, derived from a careful analysis of existing literature. To illustrate, four of the categories are listed below, each with a statement from that category:

Just War — "It is not moral to fight a war until all peaceful alternatives have been tried first."

Legalism — "If legally ordered by our government, it is all right to launch an attack against another country."

Supreme Emergency Principle — "If an enemy goal is total destruction of our nation, morality should still influence our actions in times of war." A *negative* response reflects the principle.

Moral Perfectionism — "Our country's decision to go to war should be based only on universal moral principles and not on the particular context facing our nation."

As might be expected, the greatest difference in attitudes toward such statements is between Catholic priests and retired military officers, the officers evidencing fewer moral constraints than priests on the use of military force. For example, Just War statements on average were supported by 65% of priests but only 36% of military officers. Support for the Supreme Emergency concept was not strong in any group, though again military officers and priests were on opposite ends of the spectrum (44% of officers in favor, compared to a mere 8% of priests). The greatest contrast among groups was in the Moral Perfectionism category. Statements supporting that concept were favored by 68% of priests and only 19% of military officers. In all 10 categories opinions of journalists, diplomats, and former members of Congress fall between those of priests and military officers, though generally are closer to views of the military.

Following this type of data summary, enhanced by discussion of the theoretical context, the authors compute a factor analysis. Three primary dimensions are identified that account for 42% of the variance in responses to the 34 statements. (Presumably the factors were orthogonally rotated since they are treated as being independent of one another.)

The three factors are:

Risk Aversion. Statements loading on this factor support minimizing the risk of military defeat and reflect the belief that the national interest rather than morality should guide foreign policy, a clear Realist Perspective.

Legitimacy of Force. Statements related to pacifism are the most strongly, and positively, related to this factor (which suggests that a more appropriate factor name would have been "illegitimacy of force").

Moral Constraints on War. Statements supporting the Just War load strongly on this factor, thereby reflecting an Idealist Perspective.

After describing these factors the authors develop three models of individuals' foreign policy belief systems. Although different labels are used, these models are theoretical constructs based on the above three factors, and attempt to explain the varying perspectives of the groups of respondents.

While recognizing that other views exist on this subject, I must confess to being uncomfortable with the use of factor analysis when–as in this study–the underlying data are ordinal, rather than interval or ratio. How can variances and product moment correlations be calculated meaningfully in factor analysis using ordinal data?

As an alternative, the authors might have had the respondents register their opinions on an interval scale. An example is the "feeling thermometer," calibrated from 0 to 100, that was developed in the 1940s.

On balance, the book is a unique contribution to the study of influences of morality on elite opinions toward war because it is based on empirical data from survey research, not conjecture or anecdotal evidence. Moreover, it is valuable for its synthesis of an impressive body of literature that the authors link to the subject, ranging from game theory to philosophy to social psychology to mainstream international politics.

Randall Jones
University of Central Oklahoma