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Punitiveness and U.S. Elite Support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War

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There is a substantial moralistic streak in U.S. elite attitudes about war against states perceived as evil. Among opinion leaders, death penalty supporters were substantially more likely than opponents to support the 1991 Gulf War, condone the Iraqi death toll, and favor escalating the war to topple Saddam Hussein. These relationships persist after controlling for ideology, nationalism, and instrumental beliefs about force and thus probably result from individual differences in retributiveness and humanitarianism, moral values known to underlie death penalty attitudes. Foreign policy expertise moderated this effect only on the regime change issue, and then only moderately, suggesting that “moral punitiveness” might also influence the thinking of decision makers. President George H. W. Bush evidently felt real moral outrage during the crisis about Iraq’s aggression, but he refrained from escalating the war to punish Saddam more severely for it.

Keywords: 1991 Persian Gulf War; retribution; death penalty; Foreign Policy Leadership Project; opinion leaders; George H. W. Bush

Do states go to war to exact retribution for international crimes? Some scholars have noticed that political leaders’ rhetoric and policies appear to seek revenge for past defeats, affronts to honor, or violations of international norms (Harkavy 2000; Nossal 1989; Offer 1995; Rosen 2004; Sherry 2005; Steinberg 1991; Welch 1993). But research on norms and security has generally focused on humanitarian motives and policies, such as the abolition of the slave trade, decolonization, humanitarian intervention, human rights and foreign aid policies, nuclear and chemical weapons taboos, and noncombatant immunity. This emphasis results partly from the preeminence of humanitarian values in contemporary moral discourse. But it is also due to the difficulty of differentiating the retributive from instrumental aims of military punishment. States often punish to deter, coerce, and weaken others, and it is hard to show that moral outrage had any real impact. It is thus perhaps understandable that some scholars simply assume that rational self-interested calculation underlies punitive behavior (e.g., Gelpi 2002).

One way to distinguish between instrumental and moral motivations for the use of force, at least in public opinion, is to manipulate morally salient features of hypothetical scenarios in survey experiments (e.g., Herrmann and Shannon 2001). An alternative approach is to examine whether individual differences in moral dispositions influence support for war against states widely regarded as evil. An advantage of this method is that one can use actual transgressors and national political debates as the situational stimuli for punitive responses. In this article, I use the second approach to study U.S. opinion leaders' attitudes about the 1991 Persian Gulf War. President George H. W. Bush, seeking to build national support to reverse the August 2, 1990, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, condemned Saddam Hussein as another Hitler and decried Iraqi atrocities against Kuwaiti civilians. Aside from any strategic benefit from the war, a disposition to desire punishment for wrongdoers should have boosted support for war and for destroying Saddam's regime. This would help explain the U.S. public's greater enthusiasm for regime change in Iraq compared to other cases (Eichenberg 2005) and would also illuminate why Bush focused on demonizing Saddam in his public arguments for war.

In prior research, I found such a "moral punitiveness" effect in U.S. public opinion on the 1991 and 2003 Persian Gulf wars (Lieberman 2006). But opinion leaders merit separate study. Their greater political knowledge and professional status may distinguish their foreign policy thinking from that of average citizens. Attitudinal patterns observed among opinion leaders should also be more generalizable, within limits, to those of decision makers. And opinion leaders' disproportionate influence over public opinion and policy make them worthy of interest in their own right.

Because death penalty attitudes are strongly shaped by retributiveness and humanitarianism, death penalty support can be used as a surrogate measure for these moral dispositions. Examining Holsti and Rosenau's 1992 Foreign Policy Leadership Project survey data (Holsti and Rosenau 1996a, 1996b), I find much consistency between opinion leaders' death penalty and Gulf War attitudes. In theory, punitive consistency across issue areas could also be a by-product of left-right political ideology, abstract beliefs about the efficacy of force and punishment, or support for the domination of social out-groups, regardless of retributiveness or humanitarianism. But even after controlling, directly or indirectly, for these potential confounders, strong death penalty supporters were 39 percent more likely to have favored the use of force against Iraq. They were also 36 percent more likely to condone the Iraqi death toll from the war and 22 percent more likely to disapprove strongly of ending the war with Saddam still in power.

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Thus, even elites experts are susceptible to high moral drama on the world stage, or at least to manipulation by crusading, good versus evil political rhetoric. Moreover, the moral punitiveness effect on support for the war was just as strong for foreign policy specialists as it was for nonexpert elites and only moderately weaker on the issue of toppling Saddam. If retributive gut feelings or principles can sway the positions of foreign policy professionals, perhaps they can also influence decision makers. Indeed, a review of the literature on President Bush's crisis decision making finds convincing evidence that the president himself was deeply outraged by the Iraqi invasion. But there is no clear evidence that this influenced his decision making, particularly as Bush refrained from escalating the war to give Saddam his just deserts.

In the next section of this article, I review social-psychological and survey research on the role of moral feelings and values in punitiveness, particularly in death penalty attitudes. This body of work (along with other findings in cognitive and social psychology) is used to infer hypotheses about attitudes about war against evil-seeming states and to justify the use of death penalty support as a proxy measure for moral punitiveness. The subsequent section examines alternative explanations for why American elites might hold consistent criminal punishment and military punishment attitudes. I then discuss the relevant contextual features of the Gulf War crisis, my choice of measures, and the analysis of the data. After a brief examination of moralistic aspects of President Bush's decision making, I conclude by summarizing the results and their implications.

The Social Psychology of Punitiveness

In Thucydides's famous account, Athens slaughtered all the men of Melos and enslaved the rest, not because the Melians deserved it but rather to deter other tributaries from emulating their rebellion. In Biblical times, however, such punishments were frequently God's will. An angry God wiped out whole peoples, innocents included, with flood, brimstone, fire, or plague in the Old Testament, and condemned wrongdoers to everlasting torment in the New (Pelton 2003). Although often regarded as an atavism, retribution was explicitly condoned by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1976 as a legitimate justification for imposing the death penalty (Grasmick et al. 1992). Justice Stewart called retribution "part of the nature of man," and in fact, much research shows that desires for retribution, along with humanitarianism, strongly shape individual attitudes about crime and punishment.

Retributiveness and humanitarianism are related but distinct values, rather than opposite poles of a single dimension. Retribution is an angry response to wrongdoing, and those lacking all retributive impulses are best described as forgiving. In contrast, the stimulus of a humanitarian response is human suffering and death, and its emotional signature is compassion, empathy, or sorrow. Nonhumanitarians are thus better described as tough-minded than as retributive. This is not to say that retributive and

humanitarian values are unrelated. Retributive individuals tend to be tough-minded, while humanitarians tend to be forgiving (Neapolitan 1983; Tyler and Weber 1982).

Because of this relationship, and because it is impossible to differentiate retributiveness and tough-mindedness with the data analyzed below, I use the term *moral punitiveness* to refer to a bidimensional combination of both dispositions. In other words, the retributive and tough-minded rank high in moral punitiveness, forgiving humanitarians rank low, and other combinations fall in between. The morally punitive, I argue, should respond similarly to foreign as to homegrown evildoers, at least under certain common conditions.

Killing Killers

There is ample evidence that moral punitiveness shapes death penalty opinion. In a June 1991 Gallup poll, for example, 50 percent of death penalty supporters justified their position with “a life for a life,” while 45 percent gave the instrumental reasons of deterrence (13 percent), “keeps them from killing again” (19 percent), or reducing prison costs (13 percent; Gallup and Newport 1991). These figures probably understate the strength of retributive motives since deterrence and incapacitation justifications often turn out to be rationalizations. In a 1983 study, only a quarter of supporters said they would change their position even supposing that the death penalty did not lower the murder rate. Fully half would maintain their position even if the death penalty caused a net *increase* in the murder rate (Ellsworth and Ross 1983).

Death penalty opponents are even more likely to give moral justifications. In the 1991 Gallup poll, 41 percent said it was “wrong to take a life,” while 17 percent said “punishment should be left to God,” 11 percent worried that “persons may be wrongly convicted,” and 6 percent mentioned the “possibility of rehabilitation.” Like supporters, opponents were not very susceptible to instrumental considerations. Only a quarter said that convincing proof that the penalty lowered the murder rate would lead them to change their minds (Gallup and Newport 1991).

People tend to downplay or underestimate their own retributiveness out of a cultural taboo on vengeance. Survey respondents are far more willing to justify their support of the death penalty in terms of a “life for a life” or “punishment fits the crime” than as “retribution” or “vengeance,” even though these are identical concepts. Out of wishful thinking or social desirability bias, it seems, people habitually exaggerate the instrumental purposes of punishments that they actually favor for retributive reasons (Carlsmith, Darley, and Robinson 2002; Ellsworth and Ross 1983).

Individual differences in retributive and humanitarian values have also been found to strongly influence death penalty support. Most studies compare retributiveness to instrumental beliefs (e.g., Bohm, Clark, and Aveni 1991; Vidmar 1974), but one also measuring humanitarianism finds that it has a distinct impact comparable in magnitude (standardized beta weights of about .30) to retributiveness (Tyler and Weber 1982). In studies of varied crime-and-punishment scenarios, situational factors salient

to retribution, such as the maliciousness and harm of an offence, have a greater impact on punitive judgments than do factors relevant to deterrence and incapacitation (Carlsmith, Darley, and Robinson 2002; Darley, Carlsmith, and Robinson 2000).

The lack of practical utility of the death penalty over life imprisonment, whether in terms of deterrence, incapacitation, or financial burden, may account for the role of morality in death penalty opinion (for a review of the criminological consensus on the penalty's utility, see Radelet and Borg 2000). But a more important reason is that retributive and humanitarian responses are intertwined with emotion. Four-fifths of death penalty supporters report feeling "a sense of personal outrage" when convicted murderers escape execution, and moral outrage mediates much of the impact of a crime's seriousness on the severity of preferred punishments (Darley, Carlsmith, and Robinson 2000; Ellsworth and Ross 1983). Resolving anger through punishment, moreover, can be pleasurable. A third of death penalty supporters say that executions give them "a sense of personal satisfaction" (Ellsworth and Ross 1983). Taking revenge for even relatively minor offences stimulates neural pleasure centers, and those with higher stimulation levels tend to be more punitive (de Quervain et al. 2004). Humanitarianism's emotional taproot is empathy or compassion (Garvey 2000; Batson 1991). Accordingly, four-fifths of death penalty opponents say they are saddened by "any execution . . . regardless of the crime" (Ellsworth and Ross 1983).

Anger and empathy may influence preferences through their effects on values and moral reasoning, but some research has found that they have more immediate, intuitive effects. Moral justifications often turn out to be post hoc rationalizations, and the values captured in survey research could be less causally potent than the underlying emotional dispositions (Haidt 2001). Retributiveness thus encompasses not only formal legal and moral codes, such as "an eye for an eye," but also gut vindictive reactions that some observers may not consider "moral" at all (though for a defense of the ethics of retribution, see French 2001). Moral punitiveness should be conceived as a disposition to react in predictable ways to perceptions of evil or human suffering, without presupposing explicit moral values or reasoning. In addition to their immediate effects and their impact on values, emotions can also influence judgment through wishful thinking (Kunda 1990; Mullen and Skitka 2006; Taber, Lodge, and Glather 2001). This would explain death penalty supporters' tendency to exaggerate its deterrent efficacy and to disbelieve its inequities and procedural flaws (Bohm, Clark, and Aveni 1991; Ellsworth and Ross 1983; Lord, Ross, and Lepper 1979).

Fragmentary evidence suggests that elites are about as morally punitive than the general public, or perhaps somewhat less. Fifty-eight percent of police chiefs and sheriffs support the death penalty "philosophically," even though they "don't think it is an effective law enforcement tool in practice" (U.S. Department of Justice 1994, 172; see also Bohm, Clark, and Aveni 1991). In the 1992 survey data analyzed below, 68 percent of opinion leaders opposed banning the death penalty, a proportion not much smaller than the 76 percent of the public approving the penalty in the 1991 Gallup

survey or the 76 percent opposing a constitutional ban on the death penalty in another survey that year (Ellsworth and Gross 1994, 49-51; Gallup and Newport 1991).

Education only somewhat diminished the percentage of the public giving moral justifications for or against the death penalty in 1991. Moral rather than instrumental reasons were volunteered by 39 percent of college graduates, 46 percent of those with only some college coursework, and 56 percent of those lacking a high school diploma. These differences could be an artifact of social desirability bias, given the tendency of education to heighten sensitivity to social taboos, such as that on vengeance. Sure enough, the education-interaction effect vanished entirely a decade later, after retributive justice rationales for punishment had become more socially acceptable.¹

Moral Punitiveness and Support For War

Generalized to foreign affairs, moral punitiveness should heighten support for war and for punitive war aims against offender states. Retributiveness directly magnifies the value attached to making wrongdoer states “pay,” while tough-mindedness should reduce aversion to the killing, death, and suffering incurred by war. Humanitarian pacifism, found by Hurwitz and Peffley (1987) to constrain attitudes about military intervention, is in this view rooted in a broader humanitarian ethic.

Motivated biases reinforce these effects. Humanitarians will tend to overlook reasons to fight, while those wanting retribution will often overlook incentives for restraint. An indiscriminate venting of moral outrage observed in punitiveness research, known as the “carryover effect” (Goldberg, Lerner, and Tetlock 1999), should further lessen retributive individuals’ reservations about “collateral damage.” Enemy noncombatants may be blamed, even only subconsciously, and punished for the sins of their rulers.

Moral punitiveness should have much less salience for military spending preferences than for punitive wars. Military power has a lot of uses besides sanctioning wrongdoer states. In addition, moral and emotional responses to domestic crimes and victimization are dramatically heightened by the vividness of these stimuli (Nadler and Rose 2003; Ogloff and Vidmar 1994; Small and Loewenstein 2005). While compelling images of foreign evildoing often appear in debates about military intervention, they crop up less often in debates about defense spending and weapons acquisition, unless one is arming against a specific notorious enemy.

None of this should be construed to mean that moral punitiveness is the only or even the most important factor in attitudes about the use of force. A sizable literature has repeatedly shown that citizens’ expectations that a policy will successfully promote national interests, with a minimum of national sacrifice, are the primary determinant of support for military interventions (e.g., Eichenberg 2005; Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2005-2006; Jentleson 1992; Jentleson and Britton 1998). The public is also far more averse to national than foreign casualties (e.g., Mueller 1994, 122-3). We should expect morality to play a weaker role in attitudes about the use of force

than in death penalty opinion, not only because of nationalism but also because the death penalty is less useful in reducing violent crime than military force is for achieving certain foreign policy objectives.

But when there is widespread uncertainty about the net benefits of war, moral and emotional dispositions are likely to come to the fore. Thus, moral punitiveness explains considerable variance in public attitudes about the 1990-1991 and 2002-2003 Persian Gulf conflicts (Lieberman 2006). Elites, though, may be less moralistic in their foreign policy attitudes than are average citizens. Elites' greater foreign affairs knowledge should help them recognize relevant situational facts and causal connections, as well as calculate and compare the expected utilities of policy alternatives. Greater certainty about policy consequences should check moralistic or emotional inclinations. Knowledge might also attenuate retributive reactions by giving insight into the situational causes of others' unwanted behavior; there is some evidence that greater reflection diminishes punitive responses to crime (Sargent 2004).

At least one study of normative thinking in elite attitudes about the use of force did not find a powerful effect. Herrmann and Shannon's (2001) analysis of an opinion leader sample found normative considerations to be dominated by realpolitik concerns. They found, for example, that elites were 46 to 52 percent likely to favor repelling a hypothetical aggressor after an unprovoked attack when told that U.S. interests were at stake but only 6 to 8 percent likely to do so in the absence of U.S. interests. They were 72 percent likely to defend a democratic victim from cross-border aggression when U.S. interests were engaged but were otherwise only 46 percent likely to do so. The effects of morally significant situational factors were considerably slighter. Holding interests constant and engaged, attacks out of the blue were just 10 percent more likely to draw support for intervention than wars arising from feuds, and democratic victims of aggression were only 20 percent more likely to draw help than nondemocratic ones.

On the other hand, these effects are nonnegligible and should increase with the vividness of images of evildoing and human suffering and with uncertainty about the net benefits of using force. Uncertainty is not always neutralized by knowledge; indeed, sometimes the more one knows, the more one realizes how much remains unclear. The complexity and irreducible uncertainties of international politics and war often make prediction very difficult (Jervis 1998). Tetlock (2005) found that, on average, experts' political forecasts on issues such as interstate violence, nuclear proliferation, and transitions to democracy are about as accurate as those of dilettantes or, for that matter, dart-throwing chimpanzees.

This could explain experts' frequent reliance on axiomatic reasoning about difficult issues (e.g., Koopman, Snyder, and Jervis 1989; Tetlock 2005). For example, experts' positions on nuclear arms issues during the 1980s generally depended heavily on two simple heuristics, a desire for U.S. superiority and belief in the stabilizing or dangerous effects of particular weapon systems. These were the same

heuristics used by novices, though novices had more difficulty categorizing weapon systems (DeNardo 1995). If experts and novices sometimes rely on the same simple instrumental beliefs, then it seems not implausible that they can be guided by the same moral principles and feelings. Political sophistication might even facilitate reasoning from core values to issue positions. This is suggested by the greater ideological structure of elite opinion than of public opinion (Jennings 1992) and greater consistency between core beliefs and issue positions among more politically knowledgeable citizens, particularly on complex issues (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Pollock, Lilie, and Vittes 1993; Zaller 1992).

Thus, there is good reason to question the notion that elites and experts are always less susceptible than average citizens to moral and gut feelings. Rather, expertise should check moral punitiveness when it facilitates more confident expectations about the likely net benefits of alternative policies. The moderating effect of expertise should therefore depend on the complexity of the issue and the availability of relevant information.

Alternative Models of Horizontal Punitive Consistency

Retributiveness and humanitarianism are not the only plausible sources of punitiveness in dealing with common murderers and rogue states. Punitiveness might also stem from left-right political ideology, instrumental beliefs about force, a desire for the domination of social out-groups, or trust in the government. Clarifying these competing explanations is essential to devising persuasive tests of the moral punitiveness effect.

U.S. elite foreign policy attitudes have been highly structured by left-right political ideology, at least since the height of the Vietnam War. This pattern survived the end of the cold war (e.g., Aguilar, Fordham, and Lynch 1997, 2001; Holsti 2004; Mandelbaum and Schneider 1979; Murray 1996; Murray and Cowden 1999; Murray, Cowden, and Russett 1999; Russett and Hanson 1975). To a far greater degree than in public opinion, conservative elites have been hawkish on both crime and foreign policy and liberals dovish on both. For instance, a domestic policy issue scale correlated highly (disattenuated $r = .75$) with a “militant internationalism” scale in 1992 data on opinion leaders (Murray, Cowden, and Russett 1999, 168).

Bivariate comparisons also suggest a dominant, left-right dimension of ideology. Finding that attitudes on the death penalty, domestic poverty alleviation, and using military force against aggressor states were all highly and equally interrelated, Murray (1996) concluded that the “toughness” underlying death penalty support is no more significant for military hawkishness than are other sorts of conservative values. Even if liberalism and conservatism are partially constituted by humanitarian and retributive values, respectively, if these and other values fall on a single left-right dimension, then moral punitiveness offers little explanatory utility above and beyond ideology.

Abstract causal, rather than moral, beliefs might also explain the consistency of elites' domestic and foreign policy issue positions, as Holsti (2004) has suggested.² Although studies of mass political belief systems have generally focused on hierarchical belief structures within particular issue domains, certain beliefs and values might be abstract enough (e.g., "bullies prey upon the weak," "bullies fear the resolute," and "once a bully always a bully") to shape attitudes in analogous issue domains. Intercorrelated causal beliefs could result in ideological consistency across a wide range of issues. But even if efficacy-of-force beliefs were only loosely related to other ideologically salient beliefs, and thus did not explain the sort of consistency on diverse issues observed by Murray (1996), they might still offer an alternative explanation to moral punitiveness for consistency between criminal and military punishment attitudes.

Support for intergroup hierarchy, or social dominance orientation (SDO), could also heighten punitiveness against both criminals and foreign states. Those approving the domination of out-groups support tough law-and-order policies as a means to control minority and underclass groups, and they support military supremacy as a means to dominate foreign nations (Pratto, Stallworth, and Conway-Lanz 1998). Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) is another construct linked to attitudes about both criminal punishment and war (Altemeyer 1996; Doty et al. 1997; McFarland 2005). These links could be due in large part to the moral punitiveness and ideological conservatism embedded in RWA. Along with conservative values and desires for social conformity, RWA measures punitiveness toward deviants and nonconformists, and this dimension is the main source of RWA's impact on criminal punishment attitudes (Funke 2005). Authoritarians' deference to governmental authority figures might also account for punitive consistency, as it should logically heighten trust in state-sanctioned criminal and military punishment. Thus, several beliefs and values could lead to consistent criminal and military punishment attitudes, and controlling for these will help isolate the effects of moral punitiveness.

Elite Opinion and the 1991 Persian Gulf War

The 1990-1991 Gulf conflict is a case where we should expect to observe moral punitiveness in action. Saddam Hussein's sudden conquest and annexation of Kuwait in 1990, his abortive effort to hold U.S. and other Western citizens hostage in Iraq, and his army's brutal treatment of Kuwaiti citizens were all likely to arouse retributive responses. President George H. W. Bush's public justifications for intervention were well chosen to amplify these effects (Bennett and Paletz 1994). Bush declared that "it's naked aggression. It's good versus evil; we have a clear moral case here . . . nothing of this moral importance since World War II" (Bush 1990, 1,093). In addition to arguing that a peaceful international order required punishing aggressors, Bush continually compared Saddam to Hitler and condemned Iraqi atrocities in Kuwait. He also repeatedly recounted an apocryphal story of Iraqi troops tossing Kuwaiti babies out of

incubators being taken back to Iraq (Freedman and Karsh 1993, 218). These vivid images probably heightened the public's retributive reactions, as such effects are well documented in experimental settings (Nadler and Rose 2003; Ogloff and Vidmar 1994; Small and Loewenstein 2005). Metaphors of violent burglary and rape also translated interstate aggression into more familiar domestic crimes: "Saddam Hussein's unprovoked invasion—his ruthless, systematic rape of a peaceful neighbor violated everything the community of nations holds dear" (Rohrer 1995, 124).

Inundated by media coverage of the crisis, the public came to see Saddam as evil incarnate (Dorman and Livingston 1994; Mueller 1994, 402). Assuming that elites shared this view, those who believed in "an eye for an eye" should have been more likely to support war against Iraq. Humanitarianism had less clear-cut consequences. Aversion to the human costs of war would have been counterbalanced by humanitarians' desire to rescue the Kuwaitis from further brutalization.

Uncertainty about the United States's net material incentives in this case allowed room for moral logic to hold sway. To be sure, the United States had notable economic and realpolitik incentives for liberating Kuwait—namely, preventing the Iraqi domination of the oil-rich Gulf region and setting an example to deter other would-be aggressors. But on the debit side were specialists' high and widely varying U.S. casualty estimates. The net benefit was not so compelling that it generated a national consensus favoring war.

Data and Measures

Holsti and Rosenau's 1992 survey of opinion leaders provides valuable data for testing the moral punitiveness model. The survey was part of their larger Foreign Policy Leadership Project (FPLP), which conducted mail surveys every four years from 1976 to 1996 (Holsti and Rosenau 1996a, 1996b). Half of the sample was randomly selected from *Who's Who in America*, with additional sampling frames used to obtain individuals with foreign policy expertise or influence, as well as those from professions underrepresented in *Who's Who*. A 58 percent response rate in the 1992 survey yielded a total of 2,312 respondents. The sample was 87 percent male, mostly middle-aged, and highly educated, with 40 percent identifying as Democrat, 32 percent as Republican, and most of the rest as independent. The range of professions included educators (28 percent), business leaders (17 percent), lawyers (8 percent), media (7 percent), military officers (7 percent), diplomats (6 percent), clergy (5 percent), health professionals (4 percent), and labor officials (3 percent).

Support for war against Iraq was assessed by an item asking respondents to recall, "just before the U.S. launched military operations on January 16, 1991," whether they thought that President Bush "was right to use military force right away," "should have given economic sanctions a longer time to work," or should not have gotten involved at all. I coded the variable Prowar positively for those favoring force (56 percent) and zero for the nonmilitary responses. Using all the original response categories for this item, as well as for the other ordinal war attitudes described

below, would have violated the proportionate odds assumption of ordered logistic regression, as assessed by the Brant test (see Long 1997).

The hypothesis that moral punitiveness heightens tolerance for inflicting casualties can be tested using an item on whether “too many Iraqis were killed” in the Persian Gulf War. I coded those who disagreed, strongly or somewhat, that too many Iraqis were killed as high on Killing (58 percent); those agreeing somewhat (19 percent) as medium; and those agreeing strongly (23 percent) as low. Those who disagreed strongly with “ending the Persian Gulf War while Saddam Hussein was still in power” were coded high on Topple (43 percent), those who disagreed somewhat were coded medium (25 percent), and those who agreed strongly or somewhat (33 percent) were coded low.

To compare support for the Gulf War and for U.S. military supremacy, I used two interval-level scales. Prowarscale combines the items used to construct Prowar and Killing, as well as a third item similar to the former but asking for respondents’ retrospective positions on the Gulf War (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .75$; $M = .48$; $SD = .18$). USpower is another interval-level scale averaging five ordinal items on whether the United States “needs to maintain substantial military forces in order to cope with security threats in the post–Cold War era,” should “reduce the defense budget in order to increase the federal education budget,” should pursue “unilateral reductions in U.S. Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles,” should build a national antimissile defense system, and the importance of “matching Russian military power” ($\alpha = .75$; $M = .51$; $SD = .11$). With the exception of the missile defense item, all of these items (and this applies to the rest of the attitudinal measures mentioned below) are Likert-type questions with four ordinal response categories ranging from *strong agreement* to *strong disagreement* or from *very effective* to *not at all effective*. For convenience, I scaled Prowarscale, USpower, and all the independent variables from 0 to 1.

As a proxy measure for moral punitiveness, I use a single item asking for the strength of agreement or disagreement with “banning the death penalty.” Those who disagreed strongly with banning the death penalty were coded at the highest level for DPS (48 percent), followed by those who disagreed “somewhat” (18 percent), agreed somewhat (13 percent), and agreed strongly (21 percent). I treat DPS as an interval-level variable in the regression models because likelihood ratio comparisons show no improvement in model fit from replacing DPS with indicator variables.

An ideology scale, Conservatism, combines a 7-point ideological self-identification scale with six domestic issue items, on prayer in schools, homosexual teachers, environmental regulation, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), busing, and “redistributing income from the wealthy to the poor through taxation and subsidies” ($\alpha = .82$; $M = .49$; $SD = .09$).³ To capture ideology’s impact on hawkishness, beyond its reflection of retributiveness, I selected issue items that correlated relatively strongly with Warscale (mean absolute $r = .36$), compared to the other ten domestic issue items besides DPS (mean absolute $r = .25$). Except for my substituting busing and ERA items for the one on the death penalty, these are the same items used by Murray and collaborators to demonstrate the ideological structure of foreign policy attitudes

(Murray 1996; Murray and Cowden 1999; Murray, Cowden, and Russett 1999). I also use a separate dichotomous measure of self-identification as a Republican (32 percent); preliminary regressions found Democrats indistinguishable from independents, so these are combined in the reference category.

The FPLP data lack efficacy-of-force measures abstract enough to influence both criminal and military punishment attitudes. But the survey did tap intermediate-level beliefs likely, according to hierarchical belief system theory (see, e.g., Hurwitz and Peffley 1987), to mediate the effect of core beliefs on war attitudes. Since controlling for a mediator variable also controls for a deeper cause's indirect effect, controlling for beliefs about the utility of military force should effectively guard against the contamination of DPS by traces of more abstract efficacy-of-force beliefs.

The variable Strength, based on an item on the effectiveness of the "military superiority of the United States" as an "approach to world peace," captures the deterrent notion of "peace through strength." Dominos measures agreement with the statement that "there is considerable validity in the 'domino theory' that when one nation falls to aggressor nations, others nearby will soon follow a similar path." This captures belief in the importance of demonstrating resolve and in the geopolitical importance of blocking expansion by aggressive states. Strength and Dominos were only moderately correlated ($r = .36$) and so were not combined into a scale. As with DPS, additional tests found that no information is lost by treating them as interval variables rather than splitting them into indicator variables.

The FPLP lacks measures of SDO and RWA, but controlling for their mediators should control for their indirect effects. SDO's effects on American support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War were fully mediated by ideology and nationalism (Pratto, Stallworth, and Conway-Lanz 1998), while blind patriotism mediated most of RWA's effect on support for the 2003 Gulf War (McFarland 2005). Pratto, Stallworth, and Conway-Lanz (1998) measured nationalism with items on attitudes about U.S. international dominance and leadership, while McFarland's (2005) blind patriotism measure assessed unquestioning approval of, and support for, one's country.

Attitudes about U.S. dominance and leadership can be assessed by the FPLP's items on whether the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) should be used to undermine hostile governments, whether the United States ought to act like a superpower, whether "America's conception of its leadership role in the world must be scaled down," and the importance of "protecting the interests of American business abroad." Although not quite the same thing as blind patriotism, trust in the U.S. government and faith in U.S. superiority are reflected in FPLP items on whether there was a moral difference between the United States and the Soviet Union during the cold war, whether U.S. strength contributed to the demise of Soviet and East European communism, whether "Americans have relied too much on Presidents to define the national interest," whether "the press is more likely than the government to report the truth about the conduct of foreign policy," and whether "the conduct of American foreign affairs relies excessively on military advice." An exploratory

factor analysis yielded a dominant single factor, so I averaged all nine items into a scale called Nationalism ($\alpha = .80$; $M = .71$; $SD = .10$).

Some scholars have conceived of nationalism in terms of unilateralism (Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis 1995), but the items used here are a closer conceptual match to the loyalty and dominance constructs used by the studies on SDO and RWA. Moreover, Nationalism correlates more strongly with Prowarscale ($r = .58$) than does a scale composed of multilateralist (pro–United Nations) items ($r = -.31$), making Nationalism a more demanding control variable.⁴

To test whether foreign policy expertise moderated the impact of moral punitiveness, I coded military officers, National War College students, State and Defense Department officials, media leaders, and international affairs journal subscribers positively for Expertise (25 percent of the sample) and all others as zero. A negative interaction between Expertise and DPS, as indicated by a negative coefficient for the interaction term, Expertise \times DPS, would suggest that expertise diminished the impact of moral punitiveness.

Finally, I included controls for gender, education, and age. I dropped cases with “no opinion” or “not sure” responses or with missing data but calculated scale scores if there was at least one nonmissing response on scale items. Between 10 and 20 percent of the cases are lost from listwise deletion but without a substantial sacrifice of statistical power due to the large sample. Item nonresponse bias should not be a major concern in light of uncertainties about the population and sampling procedures. Moreover, I obtained the same basic results employing multiple imputation to replace missing data.

Analysis

Table 1 shows the results of three logistic regression models of Prowar, first with just the control variables, then with the addition of DPS, then with the addition of Expertise and Expertise \times DPS. DPS had a significant effect on support for the war, even after controlling for ideology, nationalism, and beliefs about military power and force, as can be seen in model 1.2. From the model, it can be estimated that a shift from strong opposition to strong support for the death penalty, while holding the other variables at their means, increased the likelihood of favoring force against Iraq from 34 to 73 percent, or a total increase of 39 percent.⁵ In other words, only about a third of otherwise-average, strong death penalty opponents recalled favoring the use of force against Iraq in January 1991, compared to nearly three-quarters of otherwise-average, strong supporters.⁶

The drop in the Conservatism coefficient with the addition of DPS (compare models 1.1 and 1.2) could in principle mean one of three things. Both variables could be measuring a common construct, DPS could be mediating some of Conservatism’s effect, or DPS captures a source of both Conservatism and Prowar. The first possibility deserves especially careful consideration, owing to Murray’s (1996) argument

Table 1
Support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War

	Model 1.1 Prowar	Model 1.2 Prowar	Model 1.3 Prowar
Male	0.05 (0.18)	0.17 (0.18)	0.21 (0.19)
Age	0.20 (0.30)	0.29 (0.31)	0.12 (0.33)
Education	-0.44 (0.43)	-0.21 (0.43)	-0.25 (0.44)
Republican	0.62**** (0.15)	0.55**** (0.16)	0.53**** (0.16)
Conservatism	6.88**** (0.96)	3.86**** (1.02)	3.83**** (1.03)
Nationalism	8.41**** (0.91)	7.98**** (0.94)	8.07**** (0.97)
Dominos	0.35* (0.20)	0.25 (0.21)	0.24 (0.21)
Strength	0.99**** (0.24)	0.85**** (0.24)	0.83**** (0.25)
DPS	—	1.64**** (0.17)	1.71**** (0.20)
Expertise	—	—	0.09 (0.27)
Expertise × DPS	—	—	-0.34 (0.35)
Constant	-9.71**** (0.76)	-9.21**** (0.78)	-9.16**** (0.79)
<i>n</i>	1,998	1,998	1,979
Log likelihood	-952.77	-904.84	-897.69
χ^2	826.58****	922.44****	909.19****

Note: Table entries are unstandardized logistic regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. DPS = death penalty support.

* $p < .1$. **** $p < .001$.

that any values underlying death penalty support are basically indistinguishable from left-right ideology for the purposes of explaining support for war against aggressors.

The most obvious indication that DPS is not merely siphoning off some of the variance already explained by ideology, but rather has a strong exogenous effect on Prowar, is a likelihood ratio chi-square difference between models 1.1 and 1.2 of 95.85, which is significant at $p < .0001$. DPS can be further distinguished from other ideological beliefs and values by comparing its effects to those of other individual domestic issue positions. I ran additional pairs of models of Prowar similar to models 1.1 and 1.2, replacing DPS in turn with each of the sixteen other domestic issue items in the survey and replacing the Conservatism scale with the single ideological

self-identification item (full results not shown). The effect of DPS ($b = 1.65, p < .001$; chi-square difference = 97.05, $p < .0001$) was much larger than the rest. Only seven other items improved overall model fit over the baseline model to a statistically significant ($p < .05$) degree.

An item on “leaving abortion decisions to women and their doctors,” with strong disagreement scored highest, had the second largest effect after DPS ($b = -.99; p < .001$; model chi-square difference = 29.97; $p < .0001$). Interestingly, while the bivariate relationship between abortion rights opposition and Gulf War support is positive, the sign is reversed after controlling for ideology. Those who strongly opposed abortion rights were 24 percent *less* likely to favor the Gulf War than strong abortion rights proponents, holding ideology and the rest of the controls at their means. It is probably a belief in the sanctity of human life that makes nonideological abortion rights opponents relatively dovish (Sawyer 1982). The other items that improved overall model fit, on mandatory AIDS testing, homosexuality, drugs, busing, wealth redistribution, and on nuclear power, had much weaker effects (absolute coefficients of $< .59$ and model chi-square differences of < 11.46) than either DPS or the abortion rights item. Clearly, there is something unique about DPS among domestic issue positions in explaining support for the Gulf War.

The improvement in overall fit resulting from adding DPS to the baseline model, noted above, also weighs against the possibility that DPS merely mediated ideology’s impact on support for the Gulf War. This possible source for the drop in the Conservatism term also lacks a plausible theoretical explanation. Why would ideology affect war attitudes through DPS or through values or beliefs underlying DPS? The lack of viable alternative explanations suggests that moral punitiveness is a source of both domestic political ideology and support for the Gulf War. Some of the apparent effect of Conservatism in model 1.1 is a spurious reflection of this.

Because Dominos and Strength are also controlled in model 1.2, the effects of more abstract efficacy-of-force beliefs should also be largely partialled out of the DPS coefficient. Inclusion of Conservatism and Nationalism indirectly control for the hierarchy-embracing value systems of SDO and RWA, as well as the effects of trust in government. Moral punitiveness thus seems a likely explanation for the results in model 1.2. The moral punitiveness effect, moreover, was no different for the foreign policy experts than for the nonexperts, as the nonsignificant Expertise \times DPS term in model 1.3 attests. In fact, expertise appears not to have had much effect on overall levels of support for the war. Expert and nonexpert opinion leaders were both about as likely as average citizens to endorse the war after the fact (on the public, see Mueller 1994, 208-10).

The endorsement of the Iraqi casualty rate was also related to DPS. Based on model 2.2 (see Table 2), a maximum increase in DPS, for otherwise average opinion leaders, predicts an increased likelihood of disagreement with the statement that “too many Iraqis were killed” from 39 to 75 percent, or by 36 percent. A significant improvement in overall fit over model 2.1 (chi-square difference of 94.46; $p < .0001$)

Table 2
Endorsement of Iraqi Death Toll and of Escalation to Topple Saddam

	Model 2.1 Killing	Model 2.2 Killing	Model 2.3 Killing	Model 2.4 Topple	Model 2.5 Topple	Model 2.6 Topple
Male	0.05 (0.16)	0.17 (0.17)	0.13 (0.17)	-0.29** (0.13)	-0.24* (0.14)	-0.20 (0.14)
Age	-0.37 (0.28)	-0.30 (0.28)	-0.39 (0.31)	0.83*** (0.22)	0.88*** (0.22)	0.10 (0.25)
Education	0.12 (0.40)	0.21 (0.41)	0.22 (0.41)	-1.00*** (0.33)	-0.95*** (0.33)	-0.87*** (0.34)
Republican	0.29* (0.16)	0.23 (0.16)	0.21 (0.16)	-0.08 (0.11)	-0.13 (0.11)	-0.20* (0.11)
Conservatism	8.39*** (0.94)	5.26*** (1.00)	5.13*** (1.01)	2.07*** (0.72)	0.40 (0.76)	-0.01 (0.77)
Nationalism	9.02*** (0.86)	8.75*** (0.88)	9.18*** (0.91)	-2.41*** (0.66)	-2.94*** (0.67)	-1.87*** (0.69)
Dominos	0.17 (0.19)	0.07 (0.19)	0.05 (0.20)	0.55*** (0.15)	0.49*** (0.16)	0.31* (0.16)
Strength	0.81*** (0.22)	0.57*** (0.23)	0.54*** (0.23)	0.49*** (0.18)	0.37** (0.18)	0.33* (0.19)
DPS	—	1.55*** (0.16)	1.60*** (0.18)	—	0.94*** (0.13)	1.10*** (0.15)

Expertise	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	-0.48** (0.20)
Expertise × DPS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	-0.55** (0.25)
Cut 1	9.35*** (0.71)	8.55*** (0.73)	8.69*** (0.74)	8.55*** (0.73)	8.69*** (0.74)	8.55*** (0.73)	8.69*** (0.74)	8.55*** (0.73)	8.69*** (0.74)	8.55*** (0.73)	8.69*** (0.74)	8.55*** (0.73)	8.69*** (0.74)	8.55*** (0.73)	8.69*** (0.74)	8.55*** (0.73)	8.69*** (0.74)	-2.25*** (0.55)
Cut 2	10.67*** (0.73)	9.95*** (0.74)	10.10*** (0.75)	9.95*** (0.74)	10.10*** (0.75)	9.95*** (0.74)	10.10*** (0.75)	9.95*** (0.74)	10.10*** (0.75)	9.95*** (0.74)	10.10*** (0.75)	9.95*** (0.74)	10.10*** (0.75)	9.95*** (0.74)	10.10*** (0.75)	9.95*** (0.74)	10.10*** (0.75)	-1.17** (0.55)
<i>n</i>	1,879	1,879	1,863	1,879	1,863	1,879	1,863	1,879	1,863	1,879	1,863	1,879	1,863	1,879	1,863	1,879	1,863	1,999
Log likelihood	-1,362.06	-1,311.74	-1,294.52	-1,311.74	-1,294.52	-1,311.74	-1,294.52	-1,311.74	-1,294.52	-1,311.74	-1,294.52	-1,311.74	-1,294.52	-1,311.74	-1,294.52	-1,311.74	-1,294.52	-2,053.86
χ^2	889.30***	989.94***	989.07***	889.30***	989.94***	989.07***	889.30***	989.94***	989.07***	889.30***	989.94***	989.07***	889.30***	989.94***	989.07***	889.30***	989.94***	188.01***

Note: Table entries are unstandardized ordered logistic regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. DPS = death penalty support.

p* < .1. *p* < .05. ****p* < .01. *****p* < .001.

indicates that DPS had a substantial exogenous effect on Killing. Expertise once again did not moderate the moral punitiveness effect, as is evident in the nonsignificant Expertise \times DPS interaction term in model 2.3.

Moral punitiveness also heightened regret that the United States failed to continue the war to destroy Saddam's regime. DPS had a significant effect on Topple, and its addition in model 2.5 significantly improves overall model fit (chi-square difference of 50.99; $p < .0001$). With other variables at their means, a shift from minimum to maximum DPS increased the likelihood of strongly supporting regime change from 28 to 50 percent, or an increase of 22 percent.

Although expertise did not affect attitudes regarding liberating Kuwait and the Iraqi death toll, it did influence attitudes about toppling Saddam. Otherwise-average, nonexpert opinion leaders were 46 percent likely to strongly disagree with Bush's decision to end the war with Saddam still in power, compared to only 28 percent of experts (based on model 2.6). As argued above, expertise should have the most impact on policy preferences when the issues at stake involve specialized or esoteric knowledge. This was certainly the case here. The risks of attempting regime change—such as fracturing the anti-Iraq coalition, costly military occupation and nation building, and a potential civil war that could fragment Iraq—were both harder to predict and less widely debated at the time than the pros and cons of simply expelling Iraq from Kuwait. Those who carefully analyzed these issues at the time generally concluded it would have been unwise to march on Baghdad (Freedman and Karsh 1993, 411-6). Experts' knowledge probably accounts for their greater reluctance to criticize Bush's decision, compared to nonexpert opinion leaders, and especially the public, 67 to 75 percent of whom were critical (Mueller 1994, 270-1).

Experts were also less susceptible to moral punitiveness on this issue, as can be seen from the significant and negative Expertise \times DPS interaction term in model 2.6. The interaction effect can be most easily interpreted by comparing the marginal probability effects of DPS for nonexperts versus experts. A shift from strong death penalty opposition to strong support increased the likelihood that typical (i.e., other variables at their means) nonexpert elites wished strongly that the United States had toppled Saddam from 30 to 56 percent, a 26 percent difference (with a 95 percent confidence interval of 20 to 32 percent). But a corresponding shift heightened otherwise-average experts' support for toppling Saddam from 21 to 32 percent, a change of just 11 percent (95 percent confidence interval of 2 to 19 percent). Experts were somewhat less responsive to moral gut feelings about punishing Saddam, probably because they saw more clearly the risks of escalation.

Further evidence that DPS reflects moral punitiveness rather than ideology or efficacy-of-force beliefs can be seen from its greater impact on attitudes about punitive war than about the more value-neutral issue (at least in this time period) of U.S. military supremacy. As can be seen from comparing the linear regression models of

Table 3
Sources of Elite Support for the
1991 Persian Gulf War and for U.S. Military Power

	3.1 Prowarscale	3.2 USpower
Male	0.04**** (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)
Age	-0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)
Education	0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)
Republican	0.02** (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)
Conservatism	0.29**** (0.05)	0.30**** (0.03)
Nationalism	0.61**** (0.05)	0.32**** (0.03)
Dominos	0.01 (0.01)	0.03**** (0.01)
Strength	0.07**** (0.01)	0.07**** (0.01)
DPS	0.10**** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Constant	-0.25**** (0.04)	0.09**** (0.02)
<i>n</i>	2,068	2,077
<i>R</i> ²	0.48	0.49
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.48	0.49

Note: Table entries are unstandardized linear regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. *DPS* = death penalty support.

p* < .1. *p* < .05. ****p* < .01. *****p* < .001.

USpower and Prowarscale in Table 3, DPS had a much smaller effect on the former than on the latter. This is not an artifact of the greater dispersion of the measure Prowarscale; standardizing the variables yields a DPS beta weight of .06 in a model of USpower, compared to .22 in a model of Prowarscale.⁷

A better sense of the magnitude of the moral punitiveness effect can be gained by comparing it to other dispositions influencing Gulf War attitudes. Table 4 summarizes the substantive effects of DPS along with those of ideology, ideology combined with party identification, nationalism, and instrumental beliefs about military force. The table shows how specified shifts in the independent variable (or variables) affected the probability of holding hawkish positions on Iraq while holding the remaining

Table 4
Marginal Effect on Likelihood of Holding Hawkish Attitudes
on the 1991 Gulf War (in Percentages)

Shift of Independent Variable	Prowar		Killing		Topple	
	Min–Max	20th–80th	Min–Max	20th–80th	Min–Max	20th–80th
Conservatism	42	15	52	19	(5)	(2)
Conservatism + Republican	51	27	56	24	(1)	(–2)
Nationalism	78	31	81	34	–37	–13
Dominos + Strength	26	17	15	10	21	14
DPS	39	39	36	36	22	22

Note: Estimates are based on models 1.2, 2.2, and 2.5, shown in Tables 1 and 2; parentheses indicate failure to attain $p < .05$ significance level. For Killing, the probability change is for disagreement with the statement that “too many Iraqis were killed” in the war, and for Topple, it is for strong disagreement with “ending the Persian Gulf War while Saddam Hussein was still in power.” DPS = death penalty support.

variables at their means. Two sorts of shifts are shown: from minimum to maximum values of the independent variable(s) and from the 20th to the 80th percentiles.⁸

A marked difference in dispersion among the key independent variables makes the second type of comparison the more useful one. The extremities of the Conservatism and Nationalism scales are populated by relatively few individuals who consistently took the strongest positions on all of each scale’s items. This is evident in the small standard deviations (about .10) and the narrow range of scores in the 20th to 80th percentiles of these 0 to 1 scales: .41 to .57 for Conservatism and .63 to .80 for Nationalism. In contrast, most people take strong positions on the death penalty. This holds true for the FPLP’s opinion leaders as well, with 48 percent and 21 percent in the highest and lowest categories of DPS, respectively, and a standard deviation of .40. Thus, a 20th to 80th percentile shift captures a more typical contrast than a 0 to 1 shift for comparing Conservatism and Nationalism to DPS.

As Table 4 shows, a 20th to 80th percentile shift in Nationalism increased the likelihood of endorsing the war and the Iraqi death toll about as much as did the same shift in DPS. A minimum-to-maximum shift, between hypernationalist and extreme antinationalist views, resulted in a larger effect. Nationalists were not reflexively hawkish, as they tended to oppose the war to topple Saddam. Further tests, not detailed here, indicate that the items on faith in the U.S. government, rather than those on support for U.S. dominance, mainly accounted for the opposition of those high in Nationalism to toppling Saddam. There was also a strong negative interaction between the two subscales; in other words, the lower one’s faith in the U.S. government, the greater the contribution of one’s preference for U.S. dominance made to support for toppling Saddam.

This suggests that nationalists generally viewed the eviction of Iraq from Kuwait, but not the overthrow of Saddam, as serving U.S. national interests and did so largely because they trusted the government's position on these issues. While this reflects a bidimensionality of the Nationalism scale that is significant for certain attitudes, replacing Nationalism with the subscales (with and without an interaction between them) in the regression models for Prowar, Killing, and Topple discussed above did not alter the main results for DPS.

Prior work on U.S. public opinion has shown that security incentives for war attenuate the moral punitiveness effect (Lieberman 2006). The FPLP did not measure respondents' perceptions of material incentives for the Gulf War. But insofar as Nationalism taps both interest in U.S. dominance and trust that the government will use force judiciously, it should capture utilitarian logic to a considerable extent. Indeed, an additional linear regression model of Prowarscale with the addition of a Nationalism \times DPS cross-product term (not shown here) found a significant negative interaction between Nationalism and DPS ($b = -.28$; $p < .001$). This suggests that as opinion leaders cared more about promoting U.S. power and leadership and trusted Washington's calculation of U.S. interests, they were less swayed by moral punitiveness.

Ideology was also a strong predictor of support for Bush's war policies, although a 20th to 80th percentile shift did not match a corresponding shift in DPS even for ideology and party identification combined. The full effects of ideology on Prowar, Killing, and Prowarscale, however, were stronger than the tables indicate because they were significantly mediated by Nationalism. Removing Nationalism from model 3.1 of Prowarscale increases the coefficient for Conservatism from $b = .29$ to $.49$, and a Sobel-Goodman mediation test indicates that indirect effects mediated by Nationalism represented 45 percent of Conservatism's total effect on Prowarscale. But when dispersion is taken into account, Conservatism still does not exceed the impact of DPS (standardized beta weights of $.22$ and $.25$, respectively) after removing Nationalism from the model.

However, as Tables 2 and 4 reveal, ideology did not significantly influence Topple after partialling out the effect of DPS. As there is no good theoretical reason for DPS to mediate Conservatism's impact on Topple, it would appear that the significant Conservatism term in model 2.4 is largely a spurious artifact of Conservatism's correlation with DPS. Thus, while my findings generally reinforce Holsti, Murray, Russett, and others' conclusion that foreign policy attitudes are strongly polarized by ideology, the exception in the case of toppling Saddam shows that ideology is not a reflexively dovish-hawkish disposition, something also evident in conservatives' typical opposition to humanitarian intervention. Finally, at least one or the other of the efficacy-of-force beliefs, captured by Dominos and Strength, affected hawkishness in each of the models, although their impact is consistently weaker than that of DPS.⁹

Moral Punitiveness and President George H. W. Bush

Compared to most opinion leaders, and especially to ordinary citizens, decision makers have greater professional experience and expertise, possess more extensive situational information, and face intense pressures to choose policies that will achieve their domestic and international political objectives. We also know that political leaders often cynically use ideological, good-versus-evil rhetoric in trying to mobilize popular support for realpolitik policies (Christensen 1996). It would thus be a mistake to generalize from elite opinion to official thinking.

But the fact that expertise did not significantly attenuate the moral punitiveness effect on approval of the Gulf War and the Iraqi death toll, and only moderately attenuated it regarding regime change, suggests that expertise does not necessarily inoculate decision makers from moralistic impulses. Additional models not shown here reveal that the 169 Defense and State Department officials in the FPLP sample were not significantly less morally punitive than other opinion leaders, even after excluding journal subscribers, National War College students, and/or media leaders. Thus, professional foreign policy-making experience also does not necessarily dampen the moral punitiveness effect.

Nevertheless, President George H. W. Bush and his advisers obviously did not feel compelled by retributive impulses to march on Baghdad. Bush himself, anecdotal evidence suggests, was predisposed to be morally punitive. A longstanding supporter of the death penalty and law-and-order issues, he emphasized these issues in his 1988 presidential campaign and his first presidential speech (Beckett 1997; Cook 1998). His defense secretary, Dick Cheney, reportedly characterized Bush as someone who holds grudges and settles political scores (Woodward 1991, 89). Bush's foreign policy, moreover, was generally tough-minded. Although he did intervene to save lives in Somalia, this was intended largely to dispel political pressure for a more risky humanitarian intervention in Bosnia (Western 2005).

A retributive disposition would explain evidence of real moral outrage felt by Bush at the time. On Christmas Eve, 1990, Bush wrote in his diary, "I think of the evil of this man. He has to not only be checked, but punished, and then we worry about how we handle our relations with the Arab countries" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 434). A high-level British diplomat recalled having "rarely seen a man so moved to suppressed fury and disgust" and concluded that "it became a very important part of [Bush's] overall approach to resolving this problem" (Freedman and Karsh 1993, 217). Even Brent Scowcroft, Bush's national security adviser and closest confidant during the crisis, has acknowledged that Bush "in his own mind demonized Saddam Hussein. And it's not hard to do. . . . When the reports came in about the way Kuwait was being treated, or just the way Saddam treated his own people in different circumstances, it took on a good versus evil kind of quality to it" (Yetiv 2004, 113). A dozen years later, Bush said that he still hated Saddam and that Saddam "ought to receive the ultimate penalty" (CNN 2002, 2003).

It may seem a little contradictory that Bush, having registered little anger over Saddam's far worse brutalization of Iraqi Kurds in the Anfal campaign of 1986-1989 and generally showing little concern over international human rights, became so infuriated by Saddam's cruelty to the Kuwaitis in 1990. One possible explanation is that Bush's own past experiences in the Gulf made him particularly sympathetic to the Kuwaitis. Another is that Bush's policy of engaging and appeasing Iraq, maintained despite increasing criticism right up to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (Jentleson 1994), had led to defensive avoidance of Saddam's crimes. A third explanation is that Bush perceived Saddam's invasion of Kuwait as an unforgivable betrayal of Bush's politically costly engagement efforts and, worse, made the entire policy look extremely foolish.

Finally, Bush may simply have cared a lot more about the nonaggression norm than about human rights per se. This would be consistent with the fact that Bush "saw a direct analogy between what was occurring in Kuwait and what the Nazis had done, especially in Poland" (Bush and Scowcroft 1999, 319). Bush frequently drew analogies to Hitler and the Second World War, both in private and in public (MacDonald 2002; Yetiv 2004, chap. 3). Scowcroft recalls that "reading historian Martin Gilbert's book on World War II and seeing Kuwaiti atrocities made Bush emotional. He tended to personalize it too much. We started to travel with him . . . to cool him down. He was turning people off. It was counterproductive" (Yetiv 2004, 74). For whatever reasons, Saddam's invasion transformed his image as an unlikable ally into that of an evil enemy in Bush's mind, arousing authentic feelings of "fury and disgust."

Outrage at Saddam could explain the alacrity with which a "visibly angered" Bush declared on August 5 that Iraq's aggression "will not stand." Chief of Staff Colin Powell regarded it premature to draw a line in the sand before a fuller debate on liberating Kuwait had been held in the White House. Secretary of State James Baker recalled that Bush "made a visceral decision to reverse the invasion and he was out in front of all his advisers" (Yetiv 2004, 43; see also 116, 161). Anger would also explain why Bush taunted his foe, emphasizing the first syllable of "Saddam," thereby altering the Arabic meaning from "one who confronts" to "little boy who cleans the shoes of old men" (Schweizer and Schweizer 2004). It would also account for Bush's apparent preference for war over a negotiated Iraqi withdrawal (Yetiv 2004, chaps. 3, 8).

But none of this evidence shows that Bush chose to liberate Kuwait for retributive rather than strategic or political reasons. His decision to end the war with Saddam still in power, moreover, seems inconsistent with a retributive disposition. Moral punitiveness should have disposed Bush to want to make Saddam pay dearly for his crimes. These could be reconciled if Bush expected that Saddam would not survive his humiliating retreat from Kuwait, military disarray, and U.S.-encouraged unrest throughout Iraq. Bush certainly hoped for an Iraqi coup, and he later rued having been "wrong, as was every other leader, in thinking that Saddam would be gone" (CNN 2002; Freedman and Karsh 1993, 411-7). Death penalty supporters' retrospective criticism of Bush's decision to conclude the war, discussed above, was based on hindsight

knowledge of Saddam's survival. Perhaps had Bush not been overconfident of Saddam's demise, he might have given more thought to marching to Baghdad to ensure that Saddam got his just deserts.

But even as his son prepared to finish off Saddam's regime in 2002, the elder Bush denied regretting ending the war when he did (CNN 2002). His own foreign policy expertise probably limited the effects of retributive impulses. As shown above, only a third of otherwise-average, prodeath penalty experts strongly opposed leaving Saddam in power, compared with over half of nonexpert elite death penalty supporters. Bush's past career as oil businessman, CIA director, United Nations ambassador, and diplomatically active vice president gave him a rare degree of foreign policy expertise (Yetiv 2004, 30-57, 158-61). This expertise surely helped him recognize the risks to U.S. interests of trying to topple Saddam (Freedman and Karsh 1993, 411-6).

Discussion

To sum up briefly, opinion leaders held remarkably consistent attitudes about the death penalty and the 1991 Gulf War. Compared to those who opposed the death penalty, supporters were significantly more likely to approve of the war, to endorse the Iraqi death toll, and to favor continuing the war to terminate Saddam Hussein's rule. In contrast, death penalty support had little impact on support for acquiring military power, an issue with much less moral salience at the time. Although the FPLP data do not permit direct measurement of moral punitiveness, death penalty support is a serviceable proxy because it is known to reflect humanitarian and retributive values. Ideology, nationalism, and beliefs about the efficacy of military power do not account for more than part of the consistency between DPS and Gulf War hawkishness. Thus, while the evidence presented here is circumstantial, moral punitiveness provides the best explanation among the main contenders for the pattern of attitudes observed.

The evidence on the moderating effects of expertise is mixed. Foreign policy specialists were somewhat less morally punitive on the issue of regime change but no less so on liberating Kuwait or the Iraqi death toll. Comparisons to public opinion, though complicated by differences in question wording, further undermine the case for systematic expertise moderation effects. The moral punitiveness effect for opinion leaders seems to have been greater than for the public regarding support for the Gulf War and about the same regarding the issue of regime change (on public opinion, see Liberman 2006). Expertise appears to moderate moral punitiveness when knowledge permits more confident realpolitik calculations, such as experts' pessimism about the benefits of overthrowing Saddam in 1991.

Evidence of moral punitiveness in opinion leaders, particularly among experts, suggests its potential effects on foreign policy itself. Journalists, experts, and information-leaking bureaucrats have a significant impact through their influence on national political debate, which constrains the policy options available to political

leaders (Entman 2004; Foyle 1999; Sobel 2001; Western 2005). The bully pulpit gives the president vast power to frame the moral issues in public debate. But this power is not unlimited. If it were, Bush would have been able to reduce the subsequent political blowback from his successful prewar demonization of Saddam: popular dissatisfaction with the outcome of the war.

To the extent that officials' thinking resembles that of opinion leaders, although the similarities should not be exaggerated, moral punitiveness may play a more direct role. Retributive dispositions, combined with a lack of expertise, particularly for decision makers who tend to rely on gut instincts, could result in counterproductive military overreactions to attacks, affronts, and transgressions. Had President George H. W. Bush been more swayed by his retributive feelings toward Saddam, as American opinion leaders and ordinary citizens were, the United States might have stumbled into an Iraqi quagmire in 1991. A dozen years later, U.S. public support for finishing off Saddam's regime was boosted by outrage over perceived Iraqi complicity in the September 11, 2001, terror attacks and a carryover effect from outrage at elusive al-Qaeda leaders (Lieberman 2006). Although the historical record remains too thin to do more than speculate, a president more expert and less of a "gut player," as President George W. Bush has described himself (Woodward 2002, 137), might not have been as determined to invade Iraq. In the future, awareness of the moral punitiveness effect may be helpful in avoiding military overreactions that ultimately generate terrorist recruits, alienate allies, and destabilize friendly Arab and Muslim states.

Although focused mainly on the effects of moral punitiveness, this study also sheds some new light on the role of ideology and nationalism on support for the use of force. While generally supporting the findings of Holsti, Murray, and others of ideology's powerful effects, the weakness of ideology as a predictor of support for toppling Saddam indicates a more complex relationship between ideology and military assertiveness. My findings also attest to the importance of nationalism in opinion leaders' attitudes, something already well established in research on mass and student populations. Like ideology, nationalism is not a reflexively hawkish disposition, as it seems to depend on whether the government takes a hawkish or dovish position and on whether the use of force is perceived to bolster or undermine national interests and power.

In future research, it would be valuable to measure directly the values underlying death penalty support to determine their effects more clearly. Retributiveness probably played the greater role than humanitarianism in this case because the ongoing Iraqi brutality in Kuwait ought to have undermined humanitarian opposition to war. It would also be valuable to gain a better understanding of the sources of these values. Some scholars have argued that American culture is particularly retributive, as evident in the disproportionate popularity and use of the death penalty in the United States compared to other developed democracies (e.g., Brown 1991; Van Koppen, Hessing, and De Poot 2002). One reason may be the strength in the United States of Protestant fundamentalism, which is associated with retributiveness and black-and-white views on moral issues (Grasmick et al. 1992).

More work also needs to be done to identify the range of norms, offences, and frames that can arouse moral punitiveness. The conflict in the Gulf in 1990-1991, as well as the one in 2002-2003, featured conditions conducive to a moral punitiveness effect: a fiendish enemy, political good-versus-evil framing, extensive media coverage, and uncertainty about the net benefits of war. But it is unclear whether tyrants massacring only their own citizens, rather than engaging in cross-border aggression, arouse such powerful retributive reactions. To what extent do social identity, the identifiability of villains and victims, political framing, and perceived material interests moderate the moral punitiveness effect? These are important questions for future research and should be kept in mind when contemplating the generalizability of the results found here.

Notes

1. Estimates of death penalty motivations are based on Gallup News Service Surveys #1991-222002, June 13-16, 1991, and #2003-31, May 19-21, 2003, both archived at the Roper Center for Public Opinion, University of Connecticut, Storrs.
2. A further possibility is that elites endorse constellations of policies log-rolled by political leaders to form winning political coalitions among actors with overlapping interests (e.g., Bawn 1999). Thus, crime hawks may have adopted military-hawk positions and vice versa, in a process of high-level back-scratching and lower level socialization.
3. A principal components factor analysis of the scale items yielded a single factor accounting for 49 percent of the variance.
4. The negative sign on the multilateralism/prowar correlation indicates that multilateralists opposed the war, despite United Nations (UN) Security Council authorization and Bush's claim that defeating aggression was necessary to uphold a UN-led, peaceful "New World Order."
5. Estimated probabilities for the categorical dependent variables are calculated using the user-written STATA program Clarify (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003).
6. Similar results were found, though not shown here, for models of Prowar (as well as of the other dependent variables discussed below) when controlling for two separate measures of ideology, an ideological self-identification scale and a policy preference scale.
7. Additional tests found no significant interaction between DPS and Expertise on Prowarscale and USpower.
8. I used the 19th percentile for Dominos, as well as DPS in the model of Topple, which scored in the lowest category of these variables because the 20th percentile fell just barely in the next higher category. The shift in Dominos + Strength is smaller for the 20th to 80th percentile shift because less than 10 percent of opinion leaders strongly doubted the validity of "peace through strength."
9. Herrmann and Keller (2004) found that protectionism is a strong predictor of elite attitudes about the use of force. A protectionism scale combining items on free trade with Canada and with Mexico ($\alpha = .70$) had a significant effect on Topple but not the other war attitudes, and it did not alter the DPS coefficients in any of the models.

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