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Justification of War and Terrorism

A Comparative Case Study examining Ethical Positions based on Prescriptive Attribution Theory[1]

Erich H. Witte & Susanne Halverscheid

Summary

The aim of this study is to examine the underlying ethical positions of statements that try to justify acts of war and terrorism. Similarities and differences will be analyzed within the framework of empirical ethics research. With respect to the current political situation, examples of war and terror from both Western and Arabian parties and terrorist organizations are chosen. The cases are exemplified by selected speeches and explanations from (1) the American Government justifying the military strikes in Afghanistan (2001-) and the war in Iraq (2003-) (2) the Red Army Faction (RAF) justifying terrorist attacks that they perpetrated in Germany between 1972 and 1984 (3) the former President of Iraq justifying the war against Iran (1980-1988), and (4) members of Al-Qaeda justifying terrorist acts between 2001 and 2004.

In a first rating procedure, statements containing justifications of politically motivated violence will be identified based upon argumentation analysis. The selected statements will then be rated in a second process in regard to the underlying ethics. The justification patterns will be presented, compared, and discussed in respect to the interaction of culture and type of aggression.

The results illustrate distinctive argumentation patterns for each group examined. The inference-statistical comparison reveals significant differences between the types of aggression as well as between Western and Arabian countries, whereas the cultural factor proves to be more essential.

Keywords: Prescriptive Attribution Theory, War, Terrorism, Justification

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Introduction

For more than 2000 years, philosophers have tried to determine circumstances that may justify war and other acts of aggression from a moral point of view. Political frameworks such as the "Just War theory" aim at establishing specific principles that are meant to evaluate whether military action is permissible (Christopher, 1999; Regan, 1996; Walzer, 1977). The traditional theory of just war comprises two sets of principles, one determining the resort of war (jus ad bellum), and the other regulating the conduct of war (jus in bello). It demands that just aims be established before conducting military operations, that severe violence should be used as a last resort and that reasonable proportionality in regard to violence be maintained (McMahan, 2004). Furthermore, it distinguishes between combatants and non-combatants, discriminating somehow between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' targets. In this respect, Just War theory has also been applied in order to conclude that terrorist acts are not justifiable in a moral sense (Coady, 2004; Smilansky, 2004).

In the field of Psychology, we are interested in how people *actually* argue when justifying acts of violence, shifting the focus from a normative perspective to a rather descriptive approach that tries to examine the underlying ethical positions. This approach is based on the assumption that moralities are "relative to particular contexts or frameworks, which people choose to accept or reject" (Calhoun, 2001, p. 42). As a consequence, justifications are expected to vary according to different standards of right and wrong. Hence, the question in focus is not whether politically motivated acts of aggression are justifiable in an absolute sense, but rather to explore similarities and differences within the ethical positions of various groups engaging in politically motivated violence.

The aim of this study is to examine patterns of ethical argumentations that are meant to justify acts of war and terrorism. The term "terrorism" is often referred to as "intentionally targeting noncombatants with lethal or severe violence for political purposes" (Coady, 2001, p.1697), while war has been defined as an "actual, intentional and widespread armed conflict between political communities" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2005). Both war and terror exist in a variety of forms and for various historical, sociological, and psychological reasons. In this respect, most definitions tend to oversimplify the phenomena. Nonetheless, it can be stated that both war and terror consist of politically motivated acts of severe violence. While acts of war are usually a condition of an "open and declared, hostile armed conflict between states or nations"

(Webster's Dictionary), acts of terror constitute rather unpredictable acts of aggression towards civilians.

For both types of aggression, justifications have reached the public through press conferences, press releases or video broadcasts. Justifications are defined as a positive evaluation of an action for which the subject is responsible (Klein, 1987). More specifically, it can be stated that justifications are given when the actors anticipate negative evaluation of their action or even acknowledge that their actions are somehow illegitimate (Keller & Edelstein, 1991). The justification itself consists of giving reasons that are meant to outweigh the violations in question (Keller, 1984). Overall, the committed action is evaluated positively by the actor. This feature discriminates justifications from excuses and apologies where the activity in question is acknowledged to be rather negative (Rehbein, 1972).

Kienpointner (1992) points out that, in daily argumentation, normative reasoning does not follow strict logical rules as postulated by philosophers. He distinguishes between seven schemes of daily normative argumentation, such as schemes of comparing, contrasting, referring to authorities, arguing in causalities, etc. These schemes of justifications can also be found in public explanations given by leaders of political parties and terrorist organizations.

The study at hand focuses on the analysis of the underlying ethical principles of these justification patterns. It relies on the prescriptive attribution model as proposed by Witte & Doll (1995). In contrast to attribution theories that describe how people explain the causes of behavior on a factual level (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1973; Jones & Harris, 1967; Weiner, 1985), prescriptive attribution theory examines the reasons people give for their actions on the value level. The prescriptive attribution model draws on the widely-known differentiation between means-oriented and ends-oriented ethics, focusing either on the duties upon which we base our behavior or rather stressing the consequences of our action. Besides these two sets of moral coordinates, ethics differ with respect to the extent of the moral community (Harman & Thomson, 1996). Some are restricted to the individual perspective, some include all people of a certain group, such as people from a specific nation or a religious group, and others include all humans of whatever nationality or religion. The original model of prescriptive attribution differentiates between two levels of judgement, focusing either on the individual or on society in general. In order to apply the model to the field of politics, a third level, the group-specific level of judgement has been added (table 1). With the resulting 2*3

categories, it is possible to classify the following ethical positions: deontology, utilitarianism, particulate deontology, particulate utilitarianism, intuitionism, and hedonism.

Table 1: The extended prescriptive attribution model based on Witte & Doll (1995)

	Ends/Consequence - oriented Ethics	**Means/Duty - oriented Ethics**
Individual level of judgement	Hedonism	Intuitionism
Group-specific level of judgement	Particulate Utilitarianism	Particulate Deontology
General level of judgement	Utilitarianism	Deontology

The fundamental assumption of deontological ethics is that decisions should be derived from general principles that are regarded as universally valid. It holds that morality is an intrinsic feature of human action, determined by moral obligations without referring to the consequences that the action may have (Kant, 1797). Utilitarianism, in contrast, is based on the maxim of achieving the utmost good for the majority. It was originally proposed by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and forms one of the major theories of consequentialism. From a utilitarian perspective, moral action demands that a certain good be maximized for the majority, while deontologists regard an action as fulfilling moral standards when it follows norms and values seen as universally valid. Particulate deontology differs from the latter perspective in so far as it originates from group-specific obligations, rights and virtues. Particulate utilitarianism, on the contrary, aims at the greatest outcome for a specific group of people. Intuitionism considers the reason for an action to stem from individual and immediate judgment as to what ought to be done (Sidgwick, 1874). It postulates that we have the power of seeing clearly what actions are right and reasonable. Typically, these sorts of justifications are not supported by further reasoning. Finally, the hedonistic view focuses on increasing well-being and reducing pain for the individual. By stating that no action may harm an individual, hedonism goes far beyond egoism and constitutes the fundamental basis for an ethical norm.

Table 2: Examples of direct justification patterns

Ethical Position	Justification Pattern	Example
Hedonism	It has to be acted in favor of individual well-being.	"Should a man be blamed for protecting his own?"[2]
Intuitionism	The action undertaken is based on individual insight on what ought to be done.	"In those critical moments, I was overwhelmed by ideas that are hard to describe, but they awakened a powerful impulse to reject injustice and gave birth to a firm resolve to punish the oppressors."[3]
Particulate Utilitarianism	The action carried out has to aim at a positive outcome for a certain group.	"Whatever it takes to defend the liberty of America, this administration will do."[4]
Particulate Deontology	It has to be acted according to group-specific duties, virtues and rights.	"Members of Congress are nearing an historic vote. I'm confident they will fully consider the facts, and their duties. Saddam Hussein's actions have put us on notice, and there is no refuge from our responsibilities."[5]
Utilitarianism	All action must achieve the utmost good for the majority.	"By our resolve, we will give strength to others. By our courage, we will give hope to others. And by our actions, we will secure the peace, and lead the world to a better day."[6]
Deontology	It has to be acted according to universal norms, values and principles.	"That's why I have said that if we don't have security, neither will the Americans. It's a very simple equation that any American child could understand: live and let other people live."[7]

The prescriptive attribution model has been empirically confirmed in a number of different studies (Gollenia, 1999; Hackel, 1995). The ethical categories that have been developed a priori were found in empirical data material on personal, interpersonal and

[2, 3] Bin Laden, speech released on October 29, 2004, as broadcast by Al-Sahab Institute for Media Production, retrieved 9/20/06, from http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Area=sd&ID=SP81104

[4, 5, 6] George W. Bush, speech held on March 15, 2002, retrieved 9/20/06, from http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/03/20020315.html

[7] Bin Laden, O. (2001). The Example of Vietnam. November 12 2001. In: B. Lawrence (Ed.) (2005). *Messages to the World. The Statements of Osama bin Laden* (p. 141). London: Verso.

social actions. Descriptive Factor Analysis attested that the ethical positions are partially independent (Witte & Doll, 1995; Witte, 2002).

Within the process of analyzing public justifications of politically motivated acts, it became evident that many statements put emphasis on the violation of ethical principles by the opponent. This observation led to the assumption that actions of aggression may also be *indirectly* justified by pointing at the enemy's amoral offences that have to be compensated by taking counteractions. George W. Bush, for instance, stated that "understanding the threats of our time, knowing the designs and deceptions of the Iraqi regime, we have every reason to assume the worst, and we have an urgent duty to prevent the worst from occurring"[8], underlining that his actions are indispensable due to the threat posed by the Iraqi regime. Accordingly, the Red Army Faction declared that "we will carry out attacks against judges and state attorneys until they stop committing violations against the rights of political prisoners."[9] Finally, this argumentation pattern may reflect ideas such as taking revenge, as stated by al-Qaeda: "The blood pouring out of Palestine must be equally avenged."[10] Due to the frequent occurrence of justifications stressing the enemy's violation of ethical principles, a model of indirect justification patterns was developed, consisting of six negative expressions analogous to the six ethical positions presented above. Indeed, all six indirect justifications were found in public speeches and explanations (table 3).

[8] G. W. Bush, speech held on October 7, 2002, retrieved 9/20/06, from http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html

[9] Red Army Faction in a statement on a bomb attack against Wolfgang Buddenberg, judge of the Federal Court of Justice in Karlsruhe (Germany) on May 20, 1972. English version retrieved 9/20/06 from http://www.germanguerilla.com/red-army-faction/documents/72-05-20.html

[10] Bin Laden, O. (2002). To the Americans. October 6, 2002. In: B. Lawrence (Ed.) (2005). *Messages to the World. The Statements of Osama bin Laden* (p. 163). London: Verso.

Table 3: Examples of indirect justification patterns

Ethical Position	Justification pattern	Example
Indirect Hedonism	The well-being of a certain individual is periled by the enemy's action.	"Buddenberg, the pig, allowed Grashof to be moved from the hospital to a cell when the transfer and the risk of infection in the prison were a threat to his life." [11]
Indirect Intuitionism	The enemy's action reveals a lack of common sense.	"Those who condemn these operations [9/11] have viewed the event in isolation and have failed to connect it to previous events or to the reasons behind it. Their view is blinkered and lacks either a legitimate or a rational basis."[12]
Indirect-particulate Utilitarianism	The enemy's action poses a (potential) threat to a certain group.	"We're concerned that Iraq is exploring ways of using these UAVS for missions targeting the United States."[13]
Indirect-particulate Deontology	The enemy does not fulfill his specific duties.	"We will carry out attacks against judges and state attorneys until they stop committing violations against the rights of political prisoners."[14]
Indirect Utilitarianism	The enemy's action poses a (potential) threat to all humanity.	"This enemy attacked not just our people, but all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world."[15]
Indirect Deontology	The enemy violates norms and values regarded as universally valid.	"And by the will of God Almighty, we will soon see the fall of the unbelievers' states, at whose forefront is America, the tyrant, which has destroyed all human values and transgressed all limits."[16]

[11, 14] Red Army Faction in a statement on a bomb attack against Wolfgang Buddenberg, judge of the Federal Court of Justice in Karlsruhe (Germany) on May 20, 1972. English version retrieved 9/20/06 from http://www.germanguerilla.com/red-army-faction/documents/72-05-20.html

[12] Bin Laden, O. (2001). Nineteen Students. December 26 2001. In: B. Lawrence (Ed.) (2005). *Messages to the World. The Statements of Osama bin Laden* (p. 149). London: Verso.

[13] George W. Bush, speech held on October 7, 2002, retrieved 9/20/06, from http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html

[15] George W. Bush, remarks made after meeting with the National Security Team on September 12, 2001. Retrieved 9/20/2006 from http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010912-4.html

[16] Bin Laden, O. (2001). To the people of Afghanistan. August 25 2002. In: B. Lawrence (Ed.) (2005). *Messages to the World. The Statements of Osama bin Laden* (p. 159). London: Verso.

Forsyth and colleagues (Forsyth, 1980; Forsyth & Nye, 1990; Forsyth & Pope, 1984) found similar ethical positions. Representing the perspective of personality psychology, they define the theoretical background of positions in a slightly different way and use a taxonomy based on the scales of relativism and idealism. In so far, their approach of examining ethical positions differs from the one presented here.

It is essential that "different ethical judgments do not imply different ethical frameworks and similar ethical judgments do not imply similar ethical frameworks" (Hunt & Vitell, 1986, p. 14). Ethical positions have been found empirically in different contexts. The importance of each ethical principle varies with culture (Maeng, 1995), with the quality of the actions that have to be justified (individual, interpersonal, and social actions) (Witte & Doll, 1995), with social identity (Gollenia, 1999), social roles (Witte & Heitkamp, 2005), and with professional socialization (Hackel, 1995).

The study at hand will present the ethical justification patterns of war and terror that occur within the speeches of the four groups examined. In a second step, four hypotheses will be tested inference-statistically. The first two hypotheses claim that (1) there is no significant difference between the justifications of war and the justifications of terrorism in respect to the underlying ethical positions, and that (2) there is no significant difference in the patterns of ethical justifications between the two cultures regarded in this study. Based on previous findings on newsletter articles discussing ethical topics (Witte & Doll, 1995), it will be hypothesized that in the public justifications of war and terror (3) Utilitarian argumentation patterns (U, U-, PU, and PU-) will be the prevalent ethical justifications across groups. Finally, the fourth hypothesis holds that (4) the particulate ethical positions (PU, PU-, PD, and PD-) will be the predominant justification patterns in all four cases examined. The final hypothesis relies on studies on social identity (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1987) and draws on related mechanisms such as the „ingroup favoritism" (Messick & Mackie, 1989) and concurrent attribution processes concerning the "outgroup" (Perdue et al., 1990) that are hypothesized to foster the group-specific level of judgment.

In a third step, further differences between the single groups will be explored through pair-wise testing. Finally, it will be examined whether the occurrence of each single justification pattern is influenced by the type of violence or by the cultural factor.

Method

Sample. In order to contribute to the current political situation, examples of war and terror from both Western as well as Arabian parties and terrorist organizations were chosen. The four resulting combinations of the features “War and Terror” and “Western and Arabian countries” were exemplified by selected speeches and explanations from (1) the American Government justifying the military strikes in Afghanistan (2001-) and the war in Iraq (2003-) (2) the Red Army Faction (RAF) justifying terrorist attacks that they perpetrated in Germany from 1972-1984 (3) the former President of Iraq, justifying the War against Iran (1980-1988) (4) members of Al-Qaeda justifying terrorist acts between 2001-2004.

Material. All speeches and explanations have been extracted from published material. The justifications of the war in Iraq (2003-) and the military strikes against Afghanistan (2001-) were exemplified by five randomly chosen explanations given by the White House. The speeches were translated into German language by “Amerika Dienst”, the media information centre of the U.S. Embassy in Germany. The statements given by the Red Army Faction between 1972 and 1984 were taken out of a collection of documentaries about the German terror organization (Hoffman, 1997). Ten published explanations referring to concrete terror attacks were analyzed. In respect to the Iraq-Iran War, only one speech of the former President of Iraq could by found to address the matter in question. The speech was given on an Islamic summit conference in 1981 (Hussein, 1981). The explanations given by al-Qaeda consist of five speeches taken out of a volume of statements by Osama Bin Laden that were translated into English language (Lawrence, 2005).

Procedure. Two rating procedures were conducted. The first rating process aimed at identifying statements containing a justification, defined as a positive evaluation of an action for which the subject is responsible (Klein, 1987). The procedure was based on argumentation analysis, selecting statements falling under one of the seven categories of normative argumentation as outlined by Kienpointner (1992). Out of 1,728 sentences, 1,035 were identified by two independent raters as containing justifications of war or terror ($\kappa = .571$). The selected statements were then rated in a second process in regard to the underlying ethics, based on operationalizations proposed by Witte & Doll (1995). In total, N = 1,253 ethical positions were revealed and categorized ($N_{USA} = 479$, $N_{RAF} = 125$, $N_{Iraq} = 217$, $N_{al\text{-}Qaeda} = 432$). The number of ethical principles exceeded the

number of selected sentences, as 249 statements contained more than one ethical principle. The second rating procedure was conducted by three independent raters who were trained for this purpose. With respect to the rather complex material, the rating consistency can be regarded as satisfactory (κ = .537) (Wirtz & Caspar, 2002, p. 59). A non-parametric χ^2-test revealed different marginal distributions for the ethical justification patterns ($\chi^2_{(df=11)} = 76{,}065 > \chi^2_{crit,\ df=11,\ \alpha=.05} = 19{,}68$ at $p < .001$). Thus, kappa might be partially influenced by the different baselines.

Results

The results show significant differences in the justification patterns between the four groups. The ethical basis of justifying the "War on Terrorism" constitutes a rather wide range of frequently used arguments (figure 1). While all twelve ethical positions were found in public explanations given by the White House, direct hedonistic arguments (H) could not be identified within the statements made by the Red Army Faction (figure 2). Indirect hedonistic arguments (H-), however, constitute 4.8 % of the justifications given by the RAF, indicating that the adversary is seen to be lacking hedonistic values. The indirect-particulate utilitarianism (PU-), emphasizing the negative consequences of the enemy's action for a certain group, represents the most frequent form of ethical argumentation within the justification pattern of the Red Army Faction (27.2 %).

Figure 3 shows the ethical argumentations used to justify the Iran-Iraq War by the former Iraqi government. Two types of justifications occur strikingly often, namely the negative expression of particulate utilitarianism (28.6 %) and negative-particulate deontology (30.0 %), stressing that the enemy is not fulfilling his duties (PD-) and that his actions have a negative impact on a specific group (PU-). These two forms of vindication have also been found in 16.9% (PU-) respectively 18.5% (PD-) of the explanations given by al-Qaeda (figure 4). Here, the most frequently used arguments, however, are represented by deontological ethics, which are mentioned directly in 21.8 % and indirectly in 16.4 % of the statements.

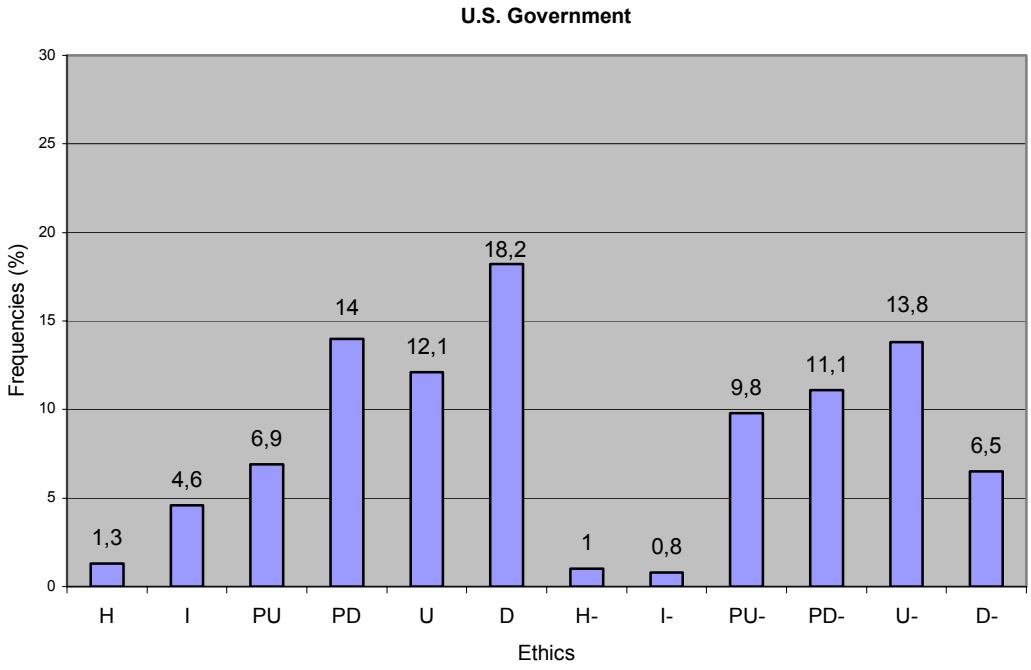

Figure 1: Justification pattern of the U.S. government (N = 479)

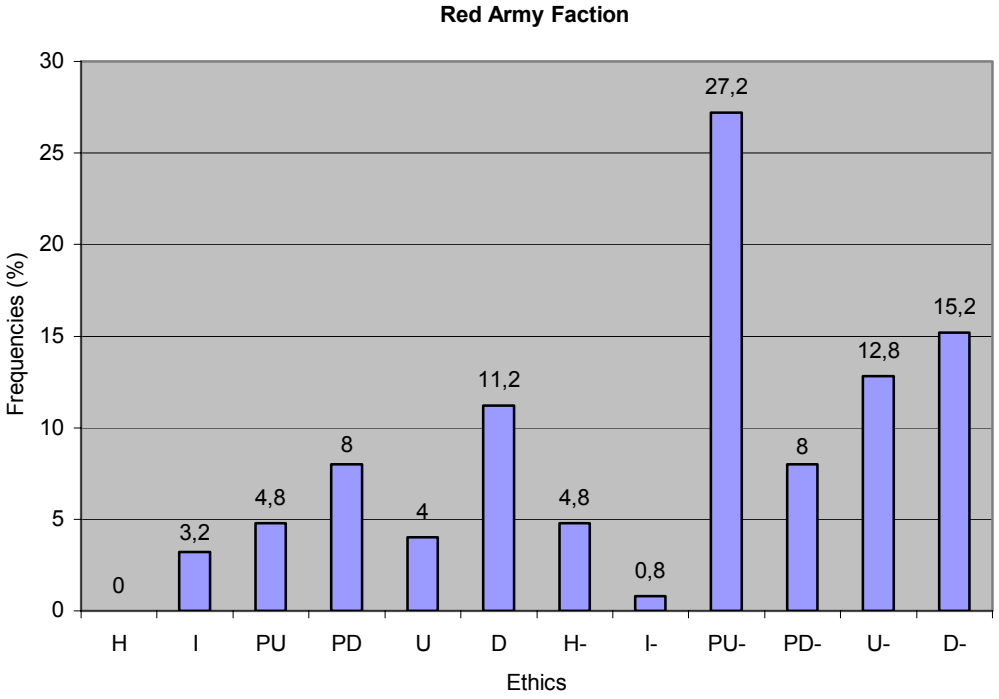

Figure 2: Justification pattern of the Red Army Faction (N = 125)

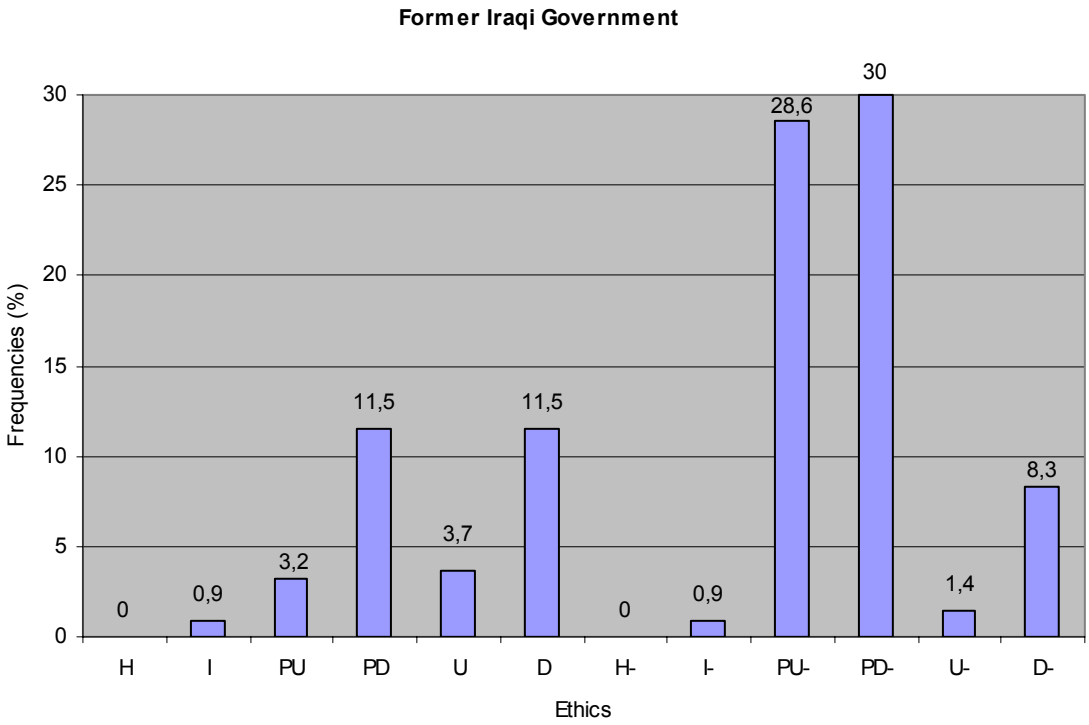

Figure 3: Justification pattern of the Iraqi government (N = 217)

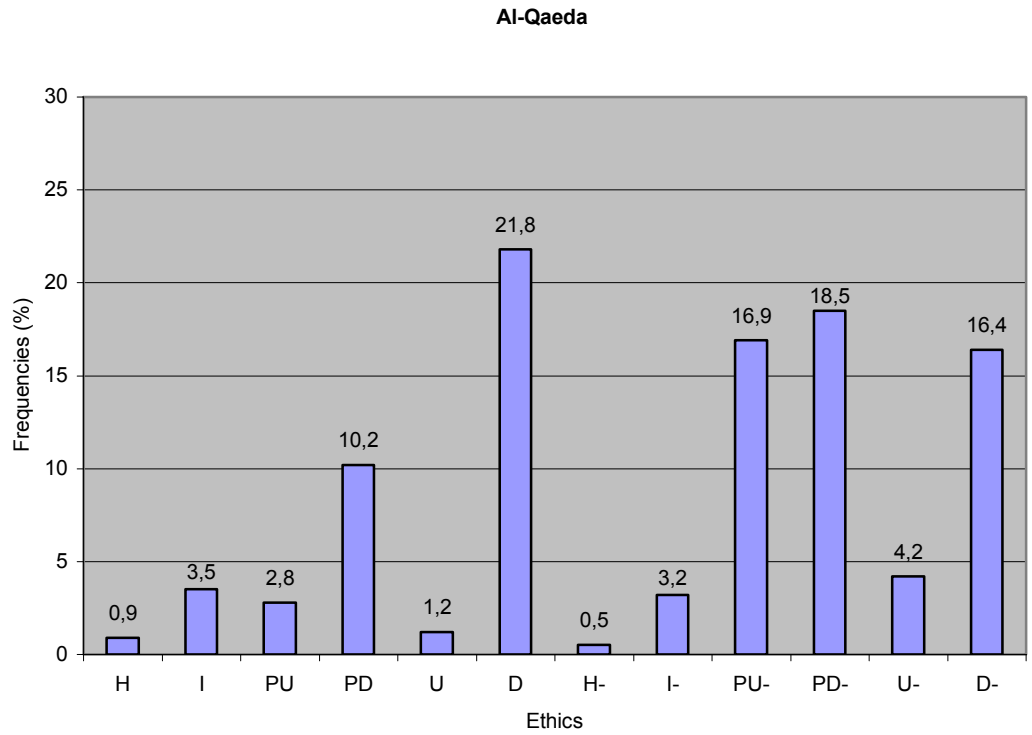

Figure 4: Justification pattern of al-Qaeda (N = 432)

Comparing the direct way of justification with the indirect one that stresses the enemy's violation of ethical principles, the data show an excessive use of the latter practice of justifying acts of politically motivated aggression. The former Iraqi government and the Red Army Faction emphasize on such violations in more than two thirds of their statements. Members of al-Qaeda engage in indirect justifications in 59.6 % of their explanations, while the U.S. government applies this sort of argumentation in 43 % of the sentences (figure 5).

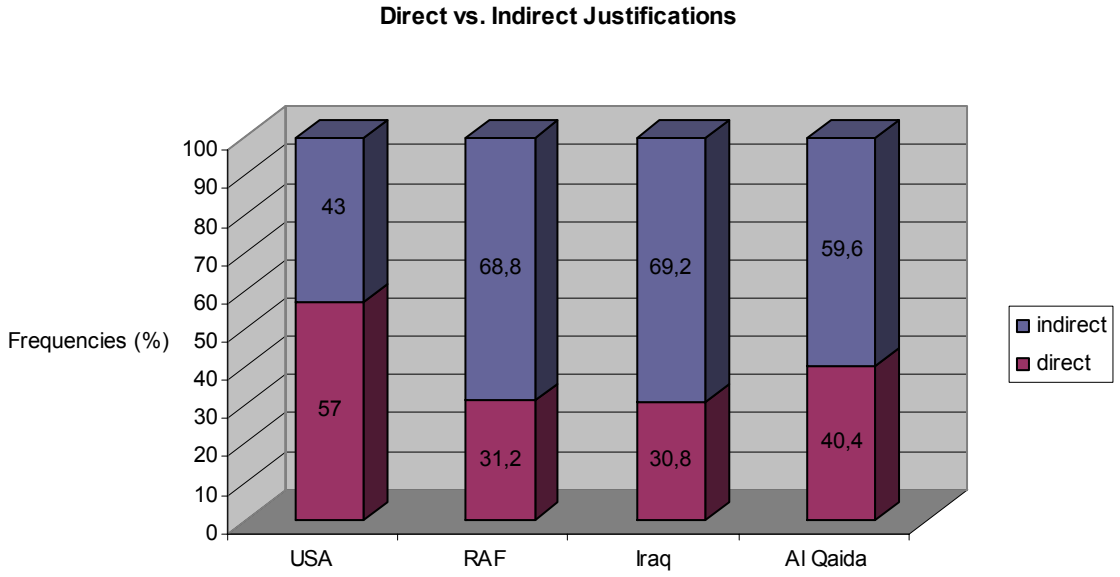

Figure 5: Direct and indirect justifications across groups.

Taking a look at the levels of judgement, it is not surprising that the individual-oriented ethics are underrepresented in the justification of politically motivated acts (6.9 %). In total, the groups engaged more likely in group-specific argumentations (50.1 %) than in ethical judgements with a universally valid perspective (43.0 %).

Testing of Hypotheses

Since χ^2-testing of the hypotheses requires an expected cell frequency of 5, the individual level of judgement cannot be considered in the inference-statistical analysis. The relative frequency of the eight remaining types of argumentation will therefore be re-calculated.

The first hypothesis claims that there is no significant difference between the justifications of war and the justifications of terrorism in respect to the underlying ethical

positions. To test upon differences between the two groups, an omnibus χ^2- test is conducted. It leads to a χ^2-value of 70,639 (df = 7, $p < .001$), showing that there has to be a significant difference in the justification patterns between the two sorts of aggression. In order to determine which ethical positions account for these differences, pair-wise χ^2-tests are conducted. Due to multiple testing, the α-level has to be adjusted. Von Eye (1990) recommends controlling the alpha level by using the Bonferroni adjustment, determining the level of significance by the number of *r* simultaneous tests with $\alpha^* = \alpha/r$. Conducting r = 8 simultaneous tests leads to $\alpha^* = .006$ that is analogous to a significance level of $\alpha = .05$.

Table 4 shows that the two forms of aggression differ in two aspects. While utilitarianism occurs more often within justifications of war (10.1 %), terrorist groups seem to engage rarely in utilitarian argumentation (2.0 %) ($\chi^2 = 31{,}058$ $p < .001$). Instead, negative deontology is predominant in terror justifications (17.6 %) while it has only been found in 7.5 % of the justifications of war ($\chi^2 = 28{,}063$ $p < .001$). In order to interpret the size of proportional differences, Cohen (1977) suggests standardizing the differences through an arcsine transformation (Cohen, 1977, p. 181). The resulting conversions can be interpreted as effect sizes, with h = .20 indicating a small difference between proportions, h = .50 pointing at medium differences and h = .80 highlighting large effects. Referring to this measurement, the difference of 8.1 % on the utilitarian dimension constitutes an effect of h = .36, while the effect sizes between deontological justifications of war and terror comes to h = .31.

Table 4: ***Observed frequencies (%) of ethical justifycations of war and terror including pair-wise χ^2-testing (df = 1)***

Ethics	War	Terror	χ^2	p
PU	6,1 %	3,5 %	4,059	.044
PD	14,0 %	10,6 %	3,171	.075
U	10,1 %	2,0 %	31,058	* .000
D	17,1 %	21,1 %	3,054	.081
PU-	16,6 %	20,9 %	3,513	.061
PD-	18,0 %	17,6 %	0,032	.859
U-	10,5 %	6,7 %	5,368	.021
D-	7,5 %	17,6 %	28,063	* .000
	$N_W = 655$	$N_T = 551$	*df = 1 * p < .006*	

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the patterns of ethical justifications between the Western and Arabian countries regarded in this study. Again, an omnibus χ^2- test is conducted ($\chi^2 = 132{,}381$, df = 7, $p < .001$), indicating significant dissimilarities between the two groups.

The pair-wise χ^2-tests reveal seven discrepancies between the justification patterns of the examined Western and Arabian countries (table 5).

Table 5: Observed frequencies (%) of ethical justifications within Western and Arabian countries

Ethics	Western countries	Arabian countries	χ^2	p	h
PU	7,0 %	3,1 %	9,358	* .002	**.188**
PD	13,8 %	11,3 %	1,710	.191	.062
U	11,3 %	2,1 %	40,403	* .000	**.392**
D	18,2 %	19,5 %	0,343	.558	.026
PU-	14,6 %	22,1 %	11,023	* .001	**.209**
PD-	11,3 %	23,8 %	30,710	* .000	**.348**
U-	14,7 %	3,4 %	46,166	* .000	**.447**
D-	9,0 %	14,6 %	8,679	* .003	**.186**
	$N_W = 556$	$N_A = 610$	*df = 1*	** p < .006*	

No significant differences lie within the deontological and particulate deontological justification. Besides, the effect sizes indicating the magnitude of difference between the Western and Arabian countries within the particulate utilitarianism (h = .188) and the negative deontological argumentation (h = .186) can be only interpreted as tendencies. They imply that negative deontology occurs more often in Arabian countries (14.6 %) than in Western countries (9.0 %), going along with the particulate specification (PD-), which is highlighted in 23.8 % of the justifications given by the Arabian group. Particulate utilitarianism, instead, stressing the positive consequences of one's action for the own group or an affiliated population, seems to be utilized more often in the West (7.0 %) than in Arabian countries (3.1 %), whereas the negative expression of particulate utilitarianism, emphasizing on the bad consequences of the enemy's action for a certain group is underlined more frequently by the Arabian group (22.1 % vs. 14.6 %). The largest effect sizes occur on the utilitarian dimension. While both the direct and the indirect utilitarian argumentations can be found in 11.3 % respectively 14.7 % of the justifications given by the Western groups, they represent only a small proportion of the justifications given by the Arabian countries (2.1 % respectively 3.4 %).

The third hypothesis holds that justifications containing utilitarian patterns of argumentation are predominant in public justifications of violent acts. In order to test this hypothesis, particular and universal utilitarian argumentations are combined and contrasted with the frequency of the combined deontological ethics. Table 6 shows the proportional distribution of justifications comprehending deontological (61.1 %) and

utilitarian (39.9 %) reasoning. Since the rate of utilitarian versus deontological arguments adds up to 1:1.6, the hypothesis cannot be held true. Taking a look at the single groups, the data show that the Red Army Faction is the only one stressing utilitarian aspects. A one-dimensional χ^2-test reveals, though, that the difference between utilitarian and deontological argumentation is not significant within the German terror organization (χ^2 = 0,561, p = .454).

Table 6: Proportional frequencies of utilitarian and deontological justifications

	USA	RAF	Iraq	Al-Qaeda	total (ethics)
U *combined*	46,2 %	53,5 %	37,6 %	27,2 %	**38,9 %**
D *combined*	53,8 %	46,5 %	62,4 %	72,8 %	**61,1 %**
total (group)	*n = 442*	*n =114*	*n = 213*	*n = 397*	*N = 1166*

The fourth hypothesis states that group-specific justifications are dominant within all public justifications of aggressive acts. Table 7 displays the proportional distribution of particulate and universal ethics. It indicates that justifications originating from a group-specific perspective occur slightly more often (53.9 %) than ethics with a universal perspective (46.1 %). A one-dimensional χ^2-tests confirms this difference being significant (χ^2 = 6,947, df = 1, p = .008). However, the proportional difference of 7.8 % constitutes a rather small effect size of h = .16 and can be only interpreted as a tendency.

Table 7: Proportional frequencies of group-specific and general ethics

	USA	RAF	Iraq	Al-Qaeda	*Total (ethics)*
Group-specific ethics	45,2 %	52,6 %	74,6 %	52,6 %	**53,9 %**
General ethics	54,8 %	47,4 %	25,4 %	47,4 %	**46,1 %**
Total (group)	*n = 442*	*n =114*	*n = 213*	*n = 397*	*N = 1166*

So far, the examination of the hypotheses revealed that (1) the justifications of war and terrorism differ substantially in regard to two ethical positions (2) the justifications within the Western and Arabian countries examined in this study vary significantly in respect to six ethical argumentation patterns (3) the percentage of deontological justifications is, in contrast to utilitarian ethics, unexpectedly high within public justifications of aggressive acts, and (4) particulate justifications emphasizing group-specific aspects are slightly dominant across groups.

Exploration of further Differences between the Groups

In a third step, further differences in the argumentation patterns will be explored. Von Eye (1990) proposes a two-step procedure in order to explore different frequencies of configurations between independent groups. The first step consists of χ^2-tests across all groups for each configuration. Should such a test reveal statistical significances, pair-wise asymptotic hypergeometrical tests between the groups will indicate group-specific types of argumentation. As outlined earlier, the alpha-level needs adapting due to multiple testing ($\alpha^* = .006$).

Table 8 shows the results of the χ^2-tests across groups for each ethical configuration. It indicates that out of eight examined ethics, six are used to a different extent by the four groups. The groups do not seem to differ in respect to particulate utilitarianism ($p = .016$) and group-specific deontology ($p = .162$). Significant differences, though, seem to exist in the use of the remaining ethical positions, namely utilitarianism, deontology and the four ethics of negative expression. In order to reveal group-specific differences, pair-wise significance tests will be conducted based on asymptotic hypergeometrical testing. The results are displayed in table 9.

The U.S. government and the Red Army Faction differ in two aspects significantly. The German terror organization engages more frequently in negative-particulate utilitarianism than the North-American government (29.8 % vs. 10.6 %, $p < .001$), pointing at the negative consequences of the adversaries' actions for a certain group of people ($h = .483$). Besides, 16.7 % of the explanations given by the Red Army Faction stress that the adversary's action are not compatible with general responsibilities (D-), while the U.S. American government underlines this aspect only in 7 % of the statements ($p = .003$, $h = .314$).

Table 8: χ^2-tests for each single ethical position across all groups (df = 3)

Ethics	Observed frequencies (%)				Significance tests	
	USA	RAF	Iraq	Al-Qaeda	χ^2 *(df = 3)*	p(χ^2), *2-tailed*
PU	7,5 %	5,3 %	3,3 %	3,0 %	10,309	.016
PD	15,2 %	8,8 %	11,7 %	11,1 %	5,138	.162
U	13,1 %	4,4 %	3,8 %	1,3 %	53,173	* .000
D	19,7 %	12,3 %	11,7 %	23,7 %	16,498	* .001
PU-	10,6 %	29,8 %	29,1 %	18,4 %	43,692	* .000
PD-	12,0 %	8,8 %	30,5 %	20,2 %	41,513	* .000
U-	14,9 %	14,0 %	1,4 %	4,5 %	47,938	* .000
D-	7,0 %	16,7 %	8,5 %	17,9 %	28,471	* .000

Table 9: Pair-wise significance tests between the groups (* p < .006)

Pair-wise Significance Tests (Fisher's exact test, two-tailed) with Effect Sizes (h)												
Eth.	USA-RAF	**h**	USA-Iraq	**h**	USA-al-Q.	**h**	RAF-Iraq	**h**	RAF-al-Q.	**h**	Iraq al-Q.	**h**
U	.007		*.000	**.335**	*.000	**.538**	.773		.049		.073	
D	.077		.011		.179		.860		.009		*.000	**.317**
PU-	*.000	**.483**	*.000	**.461**	*.002	**.20**	.899		.013		*.003	**.261**
PD-	.408		*.000	**.474**	*.001	**.22**	*.000	**.572**	*.005	**.318**	*.005	**.254**
U-	.883		*.000	**.595**	*.000	**.344**	*.000	**.567**	*.001	**.316**	.060	
D-	*.003	**.314**	.523		*.000	**.34**	.029		.889		*.002	**.267**

The Comparison of the justifications given by the U.S. and the former Iraqi government reveals four significant discrepancies. The most striking difference lies within the use of indirect utilitarianism (h = .595). While the North-American government justifies the war against terror by stressing the terrifying impact of terrorist acts for mankind (14.9 %), the former Iraqi government engages in indirect utilitarianism in only 1.4 % of the statements (p < .001). A similar effect can be found on direct utilitarianism (13.1 % vs. 3.8 %, p <.001, h = .335). The Iraqi Government, instead, emphasizes more frequently on the enemy not fulfilling his responsibilities (PD-, 30.5 %) and on the resulting negative consequences for the Iraqi people (PU-, 29.1 %), while the U.S. government applies PD- in 12 % and PU- in 10.6 % of the explanations (p < .001).

Five significant differences lie between the U.S. American justifications and the explanations given by al-Qaeda. Four differences are similar to the ones between the U.S. and the Iraqi government. In contrast to the U.S. government, members of al-

Qaeda tend not to justify their acts with utilitarian arguments, be it in a direct (1.3 % vs. 13.1 %, $p < .001$, $h = .538$) or indirect manner (4.5 % vs. 14.9 %, $p < .001$, $h = .344$). Instead, they rather focus on negative-particularistic aspects on the utilitarian dimension (18.4 % vs. 10.6 %, $p = .002$, $h = .20$) and on negative-particularistic deontology (20.2 % vs. 12.0 %, $p = .001$, $h = .22$). Additionally, the explanations given by al-Qaeda are likely to stress general negative deontological matters (17.9 %), taking the position that the enemy does not follow duties and values seen as universally valid. The U.S. government, on the contrary, engages in negative deontological justification in only 7 % of the statements ($p < .001$, $h = .34$).

The justifications given by the Red Army Faction and the former Iraqi government differ in two aspects. As mentioned above, 30.5 % of the statements given by the Iraqi leaders focus on the enemy not fulfilling his duties, such as breaching particular agreements (PD-). The German terror organization, in contrast, engages in negative-particular deontology only in 8.8 % of the explanations ($p < .001$, $h = .572$). Instead, it tries to justify acts of aggression by pointing at the negative impact of the adversary's actions for the mankind (U-) in 14 % of the statements, while this perspective is only taken in 1.4 % of the justifications given by the former Iraqi government ($p < .001$, $h = .567$).

Similar tendencies can be observed between the Red Army Faction and al-Qaeda, although the effect size diminishes between the two terror organizations (8.8 % vs. 20.2 %, $p < .001$, $h = .318$ within negative-particulate deontology and 14.0 % vs. 4.5 %, $p < .001$, $h = .316$ within negative utilitarianism).

Four differences of rather small effect size can be observed between the former Iraqi government and explanations given by al-Qaeda. The biggest difference lies within deontology, which is used more frequently by al-Qaeda, be it in a direct (23.7 % vs. 11.7 %, $p < .001$, $h = .317$) or in an indirect manner (17.9 % vs. 8.5 %, $p = .267$, $h = .267$). The former Iraqi government, instead, engages more often in negative-particulate utilitarianism (29.1 % vs. 18.4 %, $p = .003$, $h = .261$) and negative-particulate deontology (30.5 % vs. 20.2 %, $p = .005$, $h = .237$).

Interaction Patterns of Culture and Violence

In a final step, the underlying interaction patterns of culture and violence will be determined for each ethical position. The magnitude of influence will be indicated by effect sizes for proportions (Cohen, 1977), with h = .20 referring to small effects and h = .50 implying medium effect sizes. With a sample size of N = 1166, effect sizes of h > .088 can be regarded as significant differences (*) between two proportions. Highly significant differences (**) are accounted for by h > .115. In the following section, only effect sizes reaching h ≥ .30 will be presented.

Tables 10 – 13 display the distribution of each ethical position within the four groups. In addition, the prevalence within the two cultures and the two types of aggression is indicated in italics, while the total prevalence across all groups is printed in bold characters.

Utilitarianism. Table 10 shows an interesting interaction pattern between culture and aggression. While utilitarian arguments have been prevalent within Western explanations (h = .392), it can also be stated that utilitarian patterns occur significantly more often within justifications of war than within justifications of terror (h = .360). Thus, acts of war seem to be justified more likely with achieving the utmost good for the majority.

Table 10: Utilitarianism (U)

	Western Countries	*Arabian Countries*	*Total (type of aggression)*
Terror	4,4 %	1,3 %	*1,95 % (n = 10)*
War	13,1 %	3,8 %	*10,07 % (n = 66)*
Total (culture)	*11,33 % (n = 63)*	*2,13 % (n = 13)*	**6,52 %** *(N = 76)*

Cultural Effect Size: h = .392(**); Effect Size of Aggression: h = .360(**)

Negative Utilitarianism. On the negative dimension, the use of utilitarian aspects seems to be rather influenced by cultural effects (table 11). The Western groups examined in this study employed negative utilitarian aspects significantly more often than the Arabian parties (h = .392).

Table 11: Negative Utilitarianism (U-)

	Western Countries	*Arabian Countries*	*Total (type of aggression)*
Terror	14,0 %	4,5 %	*6,65 % (n =34)*
War	14,9 %	1,4 %	*10,53 % (n = 69)*
Total (culture)	*14,75 % (n = 82)*	*3,44 % (n = 21)*	**8,8 %** *(N = 103)*

Cultural Effect Size: h = .392(**); Effect Size of Aggression: h = .140(**)

Negative-particulate Deontology. The indirect expression of particulate deontology (table 12), shows to be clearly influenced by the cultural factor (h = .348 (**) vs. h = .026 (n.s.)). This result implies that Arabian groups emphasize on the opponent's violation of specific duties more frequently than Western groups do.

Table 12: Negative-particulate Deontology (PD-)

	Western Countries	*Arabian Countries*	*Total (type of aggression)*
Terror	8,8 %	20,2 %	*17,61 % (n = 90)*
War	12,0 %	30,5 %	*18,02 % (n = 118)*
Total (culture)	*11,33 % (n = 63)*	*23,77 % (n = 145)*	**17,84 %** *(N = 208)*

Cultural Effect Size: h = .348 (**); Effect Size of Aggression: h = .026 (n.s.)

Negative Deontology. Within negative deontology, it can be observed that differences between the groups are rather influenced by the type of aggression (table 13). While negative deontological aspects have been stressed in 17.61 % of the statements justifying terrorist attacks, only 7.48 % of the explanations given in order to justify war contained statements focusing on the enemy not fulfilling principles, norms and values seen as universally valid (h = .302).

Table 13: Negative Deontology (D-)

	Western Countries	*Arabian Countries*	*Total (type of aggression)*
Terror	16,7 %	17,9 %	*17,61 % (n = 90)*
War	7,0 %	8,5 %	*7,48 % (n = 49)*
Total (culture)	*8,99 % (n = 50)*	*14,59 % (n = 89)*	**11,92 %** *(N = 139)*

Cultural Effect Size: h = .186(**); Effect Size of Aggression: h = .302(**)

Discussion

The results indicate that certain ethical patterns of argumentation are predominant within the justification of war and terror. Based on the rather naïve assumption that the frequency of the twelve ethical justifications is equally distributed, we would expect a proportional rate of 8.33 % for each configuration. Statistical analysis reveals that only three types of ethical argumentation correspond to this assumption, namely direct utilitarianism, indirect utilitarianism, and negative deontology (figure 6).

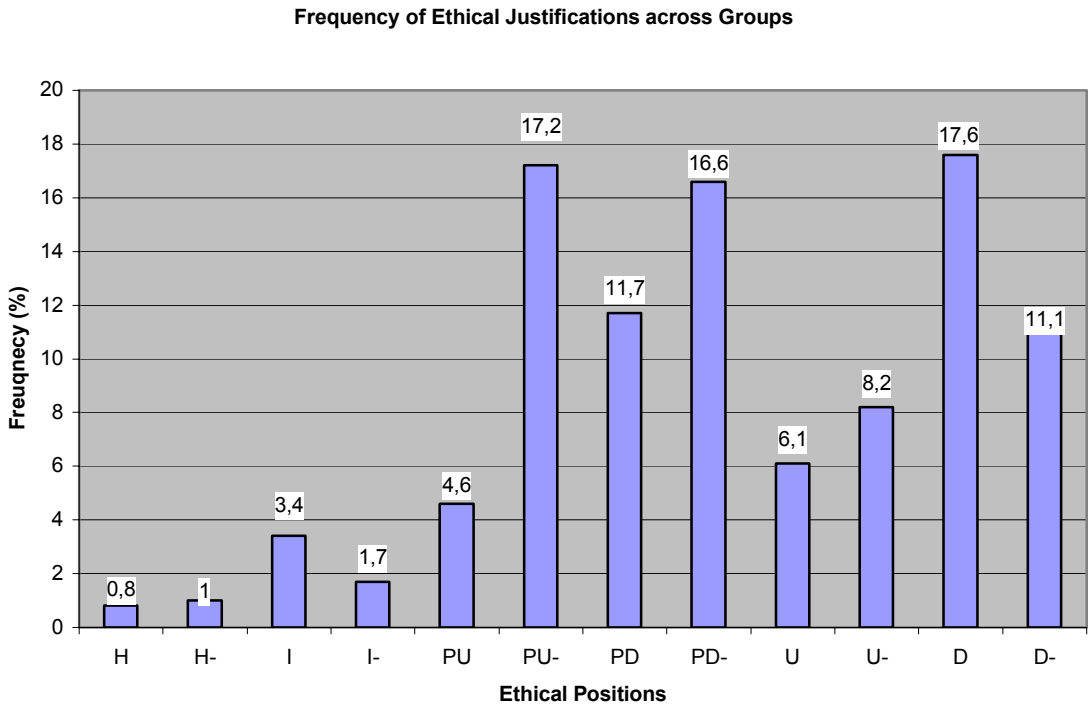

Figure 6: Total frequency of ethical justification across groups.

The individual level of judgement is clearly underrepresented. In addition, the particulate utilitarianism represents a rather seldom form of justification, revealing that the positive consequences for the own group resulting from the committed acts are not stressed in public. Negative-particulate utilitarianism, on the contrary, is a widely used type of argumentation, stating that a specific group will be affected by negative consequences if the enemy is not hindered from engaging in reprehensible acts. The use of negative-particulate utilitarianism often goes along with justifications containing negative-

particulate deontology, stressing that the enemy is not fulfilling his duties. The own behavior, instead, is likely illustrated as being based on group-specific virtues (PD) and especially on universally valid rights and duties (D).

The inference-statistical comparison between the groups shows that out of eight ethical justifications, six are used differently by the four groups. The U.S. government emphasizes utilitarian aspects (U) considerably more often than the other groups, stressing the positive consequences of their action for all of humanity. Justifications containing the negative expression of utilitarianism (U-), pointing at the potential threat of the adversary's action for mankind, seem to be typical for both the U.S. government and the Red Army Faction. Group-specific utilitarianism (PU), in contrast, is rarely used by the four groups, whereas negative-particulate utilitarianism (PU-) is one of the major argumentation patterns observed within the statements of the Red Army Faction and the former Iraqi government. Up to a certain degree, this argumentation pattern can also be observed within statements given by al-Qaeda, while the U.S. government does not put emphasis on specific groups when outlining negative consequences of the adversary's action.

The most prevalent ethical argumentation pattern on the deontological dimension is represented by the direct deontology (D) which mainly occurs within statements by al-Qaeda but not significantly less often within explanations of the U.S. government and the Red Army Faction. Thus, acts of aggression seem to be justified predominantly by referring to general principles, norms and values that are regarded as universally valid. The former Iraqi government, on the contrary, engages more frequently in negative-particulate deontological argumentation, emphasizing the enemy's violation of specific duties. This is not astonishing, since one of the major disputes between Iraq and Iran arouse out of violations of the 1975 Algiers Agreement.

Taking a look at the similarities and differences between the groups, it can be stated that only a few, namely two differences become manifest between the U.S. and the Red Army Faction, the Red Army Faction and al-Qaeda, and the Red Army Faction and the former Iraqi government. Four differences have been observed between the U.S. and the Iraq, and Iraq and al-Qaeda. A clear difference appears between the U.S. and al-Qaeda, originating from five significant deviances. This is a striking result, since the U.S. government and al-Qaeda are direct opponents. While the U.S. demonstrates utilitarian thinking, stressing the utmost good for mankind in regard to her actions, al-Qaeda very rarely engages in this sort of argumentation. Instead, the group outlines the

negative impact of the enemy's action for the Muslim population. Furthermore, they regard the adversary's actions to be not in accordance with group-specific duties, but violating norms and values seen as universally valid. While both regard it as their duty to undertake action against the other, the U.S. takes the standpoint of acting in favor of humanity and fulfilling the country's role as a world power, whereas al-Qaeda justifies the committed acts with making a stand against immoral acts of the West and compensating for the suffering of the Muslim population.

With respect to the influence of aggression on ethical argumentation, two major results were obtained. While war is justified by focusing on the best outcome for the majority, terror intends to fend off external values that are somehow detested and not seen as universally valid. In terms of cultural influences, it can be stated that Western countries tend to utilize general utilitarian argumentations stressing that an action must focus on the utmost good for the majority, while Arabian countries underline negative-particulate aspects on the deontological dimension, pointing at the constant threat for their population that is due to the enemy's violation of specific duties.

The excessive use of indirect justifications displays the perceived need to proceed against specific outgroups. Only the U.S. diverges from this pattern, showing less concern for external influence, but rather pursuing its own values. This, again, could reflect their superior position of holding global power.

The paper sought to introduce the extended prescriptive attribution model as a means to analyze prevalent ethical argumentations that are meant to justify politically motivated acts of aggression. The model constitutes a framework which makes it possible to ascribe the divergent justifications to central aspects, considering both the mode of moral reasoning and the level of judgement. Further, the differentiation between direct and indirect practices of justification represents a considerable refinement within the analysis of argumentation patterns. At the same time, the study indicates that the prescriptive attribution model can be simplified by omitting the individual level of judgement when dealing with the justification of social acts affecting a broad majority.

However, the results need embedding in further research. The results obtained in this study indicate that the justification patterns vary according to cultural influences and the type of aggression. Nevertheless, further context variables should be considered in order to increase the understanding of interaction patterns between specific circumstances and the pursuit of values. Ethical principles that are extracted by analyzing public explanations illustrate primarily how political leaders try to convince a

vast majority that their actions are permissible. We cannot assume that public justifications exclusively reflect the personal beliefs of the actors. Thus, the context of communication needs to be considered more closely. It might be possible, for instance, that the emphasis on certain principles varies according to the addressee. In this regard, a speech in the UN General Assembly might differ from the one addressing soldiers in a military base. In particular, the role of motivation and the relationship between moral cognition and moral action merit examination (Blasi, 1980).

The study revealed that there are significant differences between the groups with respect to the emphasis given to ethical principles. On the contrary, it illustrated that all general and particular justification patterns were employed across the groups. Furthermore, none of the twelve ethical argumentation patterns occurred solely within the justification of war or terror, and none occurred exclusively within Arabian and Western countries. The analysis of underlying ethical argumentations can foster an understanding of what lies behind strong positions that are perceived as radical on both sides. It should be recognized that despite putting different emphasis on certain criteria, all parties involve the very same principles in their thinking.

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