Exploring Ethics to Understand Executive Choices
Reflecting Disinterest in the Common Good (9/22/10 edit)

William A. McConochie, Ph.D.

Introduction. The ethical orientations of executives in many organizations,
private and public, have come into the spotlight of public concern in recent
years.

The behavior of recent U.S. Government administrations has raised
many questions about political ethics in politicians. For example, several
administrations have resisted cooperation with the United Nations. The
G.W. Bush administration was accused of violating human rights as
espoused by the U.N., specifically in terms of treatment of prisoners of war.
The invasion of Iraq has been considered by some to be a violation of that
nation's sovereignty and thereby a violation of U.N. non-aggression
principles. President G. W. Bush has been rated the lowest of all U.S.
presidents on the Big Five Trait of Openness (Simonton, 2006). He referred
to himself as "The Decider", perhaps a manifestation of close-mindedness
consistent with low Openness.

Several U.S. administrations have resisted cooperation with
international global warming initiatives, such as the Kyoto Conference.

Congressional deregulation of the financial industry has been
considered a direct cause of the major meltdown of that industry recently.
High executives in the financial industry have given large bonuses to
themselves in spite of receiving billions of dollars of bailout money from the
government because they had made poor decisions that led to their near
insolvency and were considered to be "too big to fail".

The behavior of some psychologists has been severely criticized for
participating in the design and implementation of torture of military
prisoners in recent years. The American Psychological Association has been
criticized for defending such psychologists, interpreting ethics codes to

permit psychologist compliance with employer requests, even when they conflict with ethics regarding respect for human rights.

Congress members are under constant criticism for accepting lobbyist money from special interest groups to influence their decisions on legislation. They are seen as serving these special interest groups instead of the common good.

All of these have raised questions of ethics motivating behavior of professionals, and of business and government leaders.

Method

A questionnaire was drafted by the author in an attempt to clarify ethics that might underlie political and executive behavior of the sort brought into question by these recent political and economic events. The questionnaire has 212 items and measures more than a dozen traits created by the author for prior studies (McConochie, 2004-9), in addition to over 100 items measuring ethics.

The questionnaire was loaded on the author's website and 28 adult students and their professor at a local Christian university completed it in the winter term, 2010. They ranged in age from 19 to 63, in education from 14 to 21 years and 64% were males. While this was a very small sample, data analysis was performed by SPSS software out of respect for those students to give them some at least initial estimates of how such a study can produce findings of potential interest. The intention was to gain larger samples and reanalyze data again later. In the spring of the same year, local community college students completed the questionnaire for extra credit in their psychology classes, taught by a colleague of the author. This raised the total subject pool to 115. The data was then reanalyzed.

Results. The basic statistics for the scales are presented in Table 1. Most of the scales have reasonably good reliability. For authoritarianism (scale 9) a revised scale was created (9a) to improve reliability for the initial sample of 28, using just the three items that correlated well with the initial total score for the trait. For a few scales the reliability data was disappointing (scales 5, 7, 9a and 16). This was puzzling, as such scales for other populations have been adequate. For the larger sample of 115, reliabilities were generally satisfactory.

Table 1. Basic Statistics.

	Trait	No. of items	Items	Range of mean item scores, U sample	Mean of mean item scores	Standard Deviation	Cronbach alpha reliability N = 28	Cronbach alpha N = 115 KR-21 reliability for scales 23-28.	Frequency (% => 3.5 mean item score). U & CC. (4.5 for scales 12-16, .70 for 23-29)
1	Warmongering	6	153-158	1.17-3.50	2.37	.59	.70	.80	4*, 2
2	Violence risk	7	113-119	1.00-3.43	1.85	.62	.84	.76	0, 1
3	Positive Foreign Policy	6	147r, 148-152	2.67-4.50	3.69	.51	.62	.77	72, 80
4	Valuing Religion	7	88-94 (3 & 4 r)	1.57-5.00	3.90	.81	.90	.94	76*, 39
5	Fundamen-talism	7	100,101,102,106,107,109,111	2.14-4.00	2.91	.50	.22	.76	12*, 3
6	Kindly religion	7	99,103,104,105,108,110,112	3.00-4.71	3.97	.48	.67	.55	76, 86
6.5	Social/political elitism	8	23, 52, 61, 66, 67, 68,69,84	1.5-4.25	3.06	.71	.81	.63	28*, 8
7	Meta religion	4	95-98	2.50-4.50	3.61	.45	.28	.69	76, 54
8	Public democracy	5	159r,160r,161r,162r,163	2.80-5.00	4.27	.50	.67	.67	92, 92
9	Authoritar-ianism	14	120-133 (some reversed)	2.36-3.43	2.96	.22	.08	.80	0*, 1
9a	Author-3	3	120,121,128	2.00-4.67	3.2	.55	.54	.00	28, -
10	Human rights	7	134-140	2.86-5.00	4.14	.51	.76	.79	92, 91
11	Environmen-talism	6	141-146	2.83-5.00	4.14	.59	.90	.90	88, 98
12	Extroversio	2	169&170	2.50-	5.40	1.44	.89	.72	79*, 61

	n			7.00					
13	Agreeable-ness	2	171&172	1.00-7.00	4.94	1.55	.79	.57	61, 76
14	Conscien-tiousness	2	173&174	2.00-7.00	5.72	1.44	.96	.85	89, 83
15	Stability	2	175&176	2.00-7.00	5.06	1.22	.87	.84	71, 64
16	Openness	2	177&178	2.50-7.00	4.66	1.12	.29	.55	68, 84*
17	In-group Elitism21	21	See Addendum	1.43-4.24	2.31	.60	.93	.82	4, 0
18	In-group Elitism6 or 9	6	See addendum	1.00-4.50	2.03	.78	.88	.80	4, -
19	Common Good Concern14	14	See addendum	1.63-4.50	3.04	.69	.92	.83	32, 45*
20	Common Good Concern6	6	See addendum	1.33-4.67	3.21	.85	.88	.84	32, -
21	Messianic Nationalism	15	See addendum	1.87-4.27	3.33	.55	.76	.71	40*, 9
21a	Mess. Nat. 6	6						.79	
22	Guarded self-protection	13	See addendum	2.54-4.46	3.45	.51	.81	.57	44*, 19
22a	Guard. Self-prot. 6	6						.67	
23	Prosocial factor	See text	See text	45-84	66	8.9		.90	37%,18%
24	Religious missionism	"	"	48-93	69	9.9		.90	40, 62
25	Confident warrior	"	"	42-76	58	6.4		.81	1.7, 1.1
26	Naïve fundamentalist	"	"	45-82	59	6.3		.80	2.2, 7.1
27	Gadabout	"	"	45-93	68	9.1		.87	37, 46
28	Belligerent anarchist	"	"	49-82	66	7.1		.86	16, 30*

* An asterisk means that the mean item scores are significantly different between the Christian University sample and community college sample. The asterisk indicates the group with higher mean score on the trait.

<u>Ethics items analysis</u>.

In spite of the small initial sample of Christian university students, a factor analysis was performed of the ethics items. Factor analysis on the larger sample of 115, including the community college students, was not as productive in identifying clusters of items, so the results of the initial factor analysis were retained and used to create scales.

Factor analysis of the ethics items (items 1-87 and 179-212) calling for four factors with Eigen values of 1 or larger was conducted. The factors accounted for 13, 10, 8 and 7 percent of variance respectively.

The items for the first of these scales, "In-group elitism", are presented in Addendum 1.

<u>Addendum 1. In-group Elitism Scale Items. (Factor loading follows each.)</u>
2. There is one code of ethics for all people that is so clear to me that I seldom have to reconsider my opinions. (.503)
9. Corporate executives are more deserving of government favors, such as bailouts and tax deductions, than are citizens who claim physical or mental disabilities. (.691)
15. Business executives have a greater obligation to their fellow executives than to the public stockholders. (.551)
20. Our nation should give more health, food and educational help to other nations. (.517)
29. Our government best serves our nation by serving special interest groups. (.500)
32. Organizations to which I belong deserve more government favors, contracts and subsidies than do other organizations. (.593)
34. It is wisest for our government to borrow and spend now than to confine programs to a balanced budget. (.514)
38. If I were a top leader of a corporation, I would not want to have to take orders from the board of directors. (.540)
42. As a leader, I would rather make decisions myself than delegate responsibility to others. (.536)
52. When helping another person, I think it is more important that I give good advice than that I listen to what the troubled person has to say. (.649)
60. The best leaders are naturally driven by a need for power. (.669)

61. I like the athletic coach slogan: "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." (.625)
62. I like the motto "Service above self." (-.818)
66. It is reasonable for national authorities to sanction torture of suspected terrorists to get information from them. (.644)
68. It is natural for a person to want to be a member of a social elite. (.546)
72. I sometimes enjoy a feeling that I am above the law. (.608)
73. Apologizing to other people is a sign of weakness in a leader. (.574)
74. I seldom say 'thank you' to other people. (.763)
167. Government should serve my group primarily. (.586)
184. I believe in the superiority of my own ethnic group. (.789)
206. We should control our access to any natural resources we need from any nation. (.560)

The content of these items, and especially those with the highest positive loadings, suggest a label for this factor of "In-group elitism" (IGE). The content of the items is consistent on this theme with one exception, item 20, which seems generously out of character. Notice that item 2 gives an ethical anchor for this factor. The content of the items is rather strongly reminiscent of the policies of the G. W. Bush administration (especially items 2, 29, 34, 38, 42, 66, 72, and 206). The content also resonates with the implicit values of executives of large financial institutions that required bailouts recently (note in particular items 9, 15, 29, 32, 34, 60, 62, 72, and 167).   A deeply selfish disposition is reflected in item 62, reverse scored. A scale made up of these items was highly reliable (alpha .93) for the university sample. The 6 items correlating highest with the total scale score are 9, 61, 62 reversed, 66, 74 and 184. They have an alpha of .88, providing a brief measure of this trait. The alpha coefficients for the larger sample of 115, .80 is presented in Table 1, as they are for the other three ethics factor traits discussed below.

The 16 items loading heaviest on the second factor, Common Good Concern, are presented in Addendum 2.

Addendum 2. Common Good Concern Scale. (Concern for the Common Good of Citizens). Scale Items (and loadings).
   5. I believe that corporate leaders of financial companies bailed out by the government for financial problems should be tried for crimes of mismanaging their company assets. (.561)

7. We should have strong regulations of banks to guard against misbehavior of bank executives. (.551)

8. In general, corporations should be freer of government regulation in order to compete most effectively in the world economy. (-.696)

13. Businesses have an obligation to help nonprofit organizations in their communities. (.629)

18. I support the missions of the United Nations. (.811)

19. I believe the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a proper guide for our nation. (.840)

21. I support government programs promoting health care and public education for all citizens. (.827)

27. The citizens of our nation, by public polls or other voting, should have more direct say in how long we stay in wars. (.569)

43. I prefer top-down organizational structure rather than horizontal structure. (-.574)

44. When leading a group, the opinions of group members would be more important than my own. (.641)

69. I like to think of our nation as the best in the world. (-.666)

77. Humans are naturally more competitive than cooperative. (-.603)

165. I think of myself as a Conservative, politically. (-.615)

190. The government ought to take responsibility for the individual and social welfare of its citizens. (.717)

192. Wealthy people should have a higher tax rate than poor people. (.574)

199. Our nation is better than all other nations. (-.750)

The content of the items loading heavily on the second factor led to its label, "Common Good Concern". This theme is reminiscent of concerns expressed by some newspaper columnists and citizens writing letters to the editor, and of many members of socially concerned groups such as Psychologists for Social Responsibility and the Peace and Justice Studies Association. It is also suggestive of a liberal political worldview, though this was specifically reflected only in a reversed-scored item (165), denying a conservative worldview. As revealed by item content, it is anchored in modesty, a non-competitive disposition, trust in international guidelines for peaceful cooperation between nations and concern for the welfare of all citizens, not just the advantaged and powerful. Democratic decision-making is favored.

The 16 items of this scale provide a very reliable measure, with an alpha of .92. The best 6 items are 8r (8 reverse-scored), 199r, 18, 19, 21 and

190. They produce a scale with an alpha of .88, just as the brief scale for In-group Elitism scale did.

The third factor has 15 items, listed in Addendum 3, and termed "Messianic Nationalism."

Addendum 3. Scale items for the Messianic Nationalism factor, with factor loadings.

22. Most years I give money to charitable causes. (.581)
29. Our government best serves our nation by serving special interest groups. (-.576)
34. It is wisest for our government to borrow and spend now than to confine programs to a balanced budget. (-.504)
41. I am familiar with Roberts' Rules of Order or another set of rules for running meetings efficiently so that everyone gets a fair chance to speak and vote on issues. (.555)
50. I sometimes feel divine inspiration to lead. (.691)
57. Religious leaders who have sex with their parishioners should be barred for life from their pastoral jobs. (.525)
68. It is natural for a person to want to be a member of a social elite. (-.547)
179. Religion should play the most important role in civic affairs. (.677)
185. People ought to be motivated by something beyond their own self-interest. (.548)
186. I have profound respect for historical institutions, laws, and traditions. (.598)
187. I love and am devoted to my country. (.563)
188. I believe in government by law with the consent of those people governed. (.608)
193. We ought to welcome foreigners to enter and become part of our nation. (-.545)
201. Our nation is our God's chosen one. (.544)
202. Our nation's religion is better than all other religions. (.576)

The content of the items in this scale is anchored in a sense of messianic leadership inspiration (item 50), including a national vision (item 187), with beliefs in melding church and state (item 179), devotion to selfless service (items 50, 185 and 187), and in-group favoritism based on religious faith (items 201, 202 and 193). Though a conservative political view is hinted at in items 34 and 186, this factor is more associated with

Independent political views (item 164, loading of .378), than with Conservative ones (item 165, .255) or Liberal ones (item 164, -.352). Implicit in these items is a religious worldview. While loyalty to nation and some fellow humans is central, one's ultimate loyalty seems to be to one's chosen God.

The 15 items of this scale form a modestly reliable measure, with an alpha of .76. Given the modesty of this value, creating a briefer measure seemed ill- advised. The content of the scale is rather diverse; creating a briefer scale would sacrifice some of the richness of this diversity. However, a 6-item scale based on the larger sample of 115 persons yielded an alpha of .79.

The 13 items of the fourth factor are presented in Addendum 4, with loadings. This factor is termed "Guarded Self-Protection".

Addendum 4. Items of the "Guarded Self-Protection" factor, with loadings.

6. Banks that lend money to home-buyers should hold those mortgages rather than bundle them and sell them to other banks or investors. (.523)
7. We should have strong regulations of banks to guard against misbehavior of bank executives. (.533)
26. Our nation spends too much money on military activities. (-.503)
33. I support the idea of an independent citizen organization to investigate and inform the public on the ethical behavior of elected government leaders. (.650)
40. If leading a group, I would be careful to have everyone voice their opinions before decisions were made. (.526)
45. My opinions were respected in my childhood family. (-.412)
46. In my childhood family, my opinions were asked for in dinner conversations. (-.532)
78. I feel more responsible to my own conscience than to the needs of other people. (.623)
79. My own conscience and the needs of other people are virtually one and the same. (-.514)
196. Convicted criminals need rehabilitation instead of punishment. (-.512)
198. I am opposed to the death penalty (execution) as a punishment for crimes. (-.679)
207. We must protect our homes and our possessions. (.563)

212. Our citizens should have personal weapons in their homes to protect themselves and their possessions. (.522)

The content of these items reflect an interest in self-protection. To this end it embraces the use of weapons at both a national level (item 26) and personal level (items 207 and 212). The factor reflects a self-oriented conscience (items 78 and 79), perhaps anchored in reaction to childhood disrespect (items 45 and 46). It includes a strong concern for wealth security, reflected in attitudes about keeping financial institutions sound (items 7 and 33) and harsh treatment of criminals (items 196 and 198).

The content of this factor is reminiscent of current interest by some citizens in carrying handguns openly in public. It may be reflected in gated communities. It is manifest in periodic revisiting of death penalty laws and conflicts in criminal budgets between incarceration and rehabilitation. It addresses recent debate about the regulation of the U.S. financial industry. At its core, it seems to focus on self-protection of wealth, possessions and personal safety.

These 13 items constitute a scale with alpha reliability of .81, high enough for use with confidence but not high enough to warrant reduction to a briefer measure without further research. Indeed, for the sample of 115, the alpha for the scale is .57 for all 13 items and .67 for the best 6 items, suggesting that more research with new or expanded items might yield a better scale.

Scales created by simply summing across the items in the scales, after reverse-scoring items that loaded negatively on the factor, correlated very highly with their respective factor scores (.94, .98, .94 and .97), suggesting that they are very adequate measures of these factors.

Discussion of basic statistics for all scales.

The relationships between the basic scales is consistent with several other studies by the author. For example, on the overall sample of 115, including both the Christian university students and community college students, warmongering endorsement correlates with other scales as follow: male gender .32**, violence-proneness .36**, positive foreign policy endorsement -.57**, valuing religion for a guide to one's personal life .23*, religious fundamentalism .43**, kindly religious beliefs -.46**, social and

political elitism .51**, meta-religion endorsement -.24*, public democracy endorsement -.20*, authoritarianism .56**, human rights endorsement -.46**, environmentalism -.44**, agreeableness -.37**, and openness -.38**. These correlations appear to reflect prior study findings that demonstrate religious fundamentalism as an anti-social trait and kindly religious beliefs as a pro-social trait.

Warmongering endorsement correlates significantly with all of the four ethics scales: in-group elitism .47**, common good concern -.50**, messianic nationalism .24**, and guarded self-interest .37**. These correlations suggest that in-group elitism, messianic nationalism and guarded self-interest are anti-social traits and that common good concern is a pro-social trait.

The two student groups differ significantly on many of the scales, with the Christian university students higher than the community college students on warmongering, valuing religion, religious fundamentalism, social and political elitism, authoritarianism, extroversion, messianic nationalism, guarded self-interest, years of education, and identification with mainstream Christianity. They are also higher on high school grade point average and conservative political orientation. The community college students are higher on openness, common good concern (ethics), income level and liberal political orientation.

The Christian university sample is very small, so replication on larger samples would be wise before drawing firm conclusions about these many group differences. However, the differences in many respects are as one might expect, for example on the religious traits. If these differences hold up on replication, serious implications will be present, as the Christian students appear to be oriented in anti-social ways that will not appear in the best interests of the nation, specifically higher on warmongering endorsement and many traits that correlate with warmongering.

The basic statistics are interesting also in terms of the frequency of persons having high scores, that is mean item scores of 3.5 or higher (last column, Table 1). The percentages for the present sample of persons are generally similar to those for other samples studied by the author. For example in prior studies approximately 6% of persons have endorsed warmongering and religious fundamentalism (scales 1 and 5). In the present

sample the figures were 4 and 12% for the university group. In prior samples 90% have endorsed public democracy (scale 8). In the present sample the percentage is 92. The high percentages obtained in the present sample for human rights and environmentalism are typical of prior studies.

Notice that the brief measures for two of the ethics factors (scales 18 and 20) identify the same percentage of persons (32 and 4) as identified by the longer scales for the same traits.

Percentages for the community college sample of 87 are presented also in the last column of Table 1. An asterisk indicates that the two groups differ significantly in mean item scores for that scale. The group with the higher score has the asterisk. These differences have been reported a few paragraphs above.

Factor analysis of all scales.

To explore the general positioning of the four factors extracted from the ethics items, a factor analysis was performed on all of the traits in this study. Six factors were required to position all four ethical scales within the framework of the many traits included in the study. The prominent scale loadings on the six factors are presented in table 2.

Table 2. Factor loadings of scales on six factors.

Trait	1	2	3	4	5	6
Frequencies: % above .70, NWCU and LCC	18%, 38%	62, 40	3.6, 1.1	7.1, 2.2	46, 37	30, 16
Warmongering	-.50		.60			.40
Violence	-.60	-.60				
Positive foreign Policy	.90					
Value religion		.60	-.60			
Fundamentalism	-.40			.60		
Kindly religion	.60			.40		
Meta religion	.60					

Pub Democracy				-.70		
Authoritarianism	.40					.40
Hum rights	.70				.40	
Environment	.70					
Extroversion					.80	
Agreeableness	.50	.40			-.50	
Conscientious.		.50	.40			
Stability			.70	.40		
Openness					.40	-.50
Common Good Concern Ethic	.80					.40
In-group Elitism Ethic		-.60	.50	.40		
Messianic Nationalism Ethic		.60	-.40			.40
Guarded Self-Protection				-.40		.70
Liberal politically	.80	-.50				
Conservative	-.60	.60				
Independent					.40	

General pro-social factor. Factor 1 is anchored most heavily in endorsing a positive foreign policy, protecting the environment, the common good concern ethic and liberal political outlook. Additionally it reflects kindly religious beliefs, endorsing a meta religion and human rights, and agreeableness. It is *not* a conservative outlook (-.60). As such, it might be labeled a general pro-social factor.

Religious Missionism. Factor two is anchored most heavily in valuing religion in one's daily life, having a messianic and nationalistic outlook, endorsing conservative politics but *not* endorsing in-group elitism. It also reflects non-violence, agreeableness and conscientiousness. As such, it might be labeled religious missionism or service.

Confident Warrior Mentality. Factor three loads most heavily on warmongering and emotional stability (not feeling anxious or depressed),

with additional elements of indifference to religion, being conscientious and endorsing in-group elitism. It might be labeled the confident warrior mentality.

Naive Fundamentalism. Factor four loads most heavily on eschewing public democracy. It loads on fundamentalism, emotional stability and in-group elitism. It also eschews guarded self-interest. As such, it might be termed naive fundamentalism.

Self-confident Gadabout. Factor five loads most heavily on extroversion, with elements of human rights endorsement, high openness and low agreeableness, as well as an independent stance in politics. It might be termed the self-confident, happy-go-lucky gadabout.

Belligerent Anarchist. Factor six loads heaviest on another of the four ethics traits, guarded self-protection. It has elements of warmongering, authoritarianism and closed-mindedness. It might be termed the belligerent anarchist.

Keep in mind that factors by definition are independent of each other. This means that a person can be high on one and either low or high on the others.

Regarding frequencies, the two samples, Christian university students and community college students appeared to differ. These frequencies are presented in the first row of Table 2. These are the percent of subjects with high mean item scores, defined as at or above the equivalent of 3.5 on a 5-point Likert scale.   A different scaling technique was required for computing these scores, as the factors are made up of scores with five-point scales for most traits and seven-point scales for the case of the Big Five measures.

However, these group frequencies differences disappeared for all but the belligerent anarchist factor when controlling for gender, age, income, high school grade point average and liberal/conservative orientation. The university students were more conservative than the community college students.

A moderate proportion of the sample were high on the Prosocial factor (18 and 30%). A rather substantial proportion were high on the

Religious Missionism factor, which may be a concern, as nationalism and religious fervor have been capitalized upon to incite citizens to hostile movements, as during World War II.

The proportions of students high on Confident Warrior and Naïve Fundamentalism are small, raising no particular concern. A substantial number are high on the Self-confident Gadabout factor, which seems innocent enough.

More of the Christian university students were high on the belligerent anarchist factor (30% versus 16% of community college students). These percentages are particularly disturbing, considering the content of this factor, which seems similar to what we might imaging characterizes the attitudes of some political extremists in the United States, cf Tea Party. Even a small proportion of citizens with an anarchist worldview warrants concern, as this can be the stuff of rebellion and revolution, perhaps leading to civil war, which has troubled many nations in recent decades.

The Pro-social factor correlates .28** with income. The Belligerent Anarchist factor correlates -.28** with income. This is desirable in the first case, as wealthier citizens can be motivated by a pro-social disposition to share with less fortunate citizens. However, the latter correlations suggests the possibility that poverty may feed resentful, rebellious attitudes toward society. In this light, the increasing income spread between the upper and lower classes in the U.S. during recent decades may warrant concern.

Liberalism / conservatism trait differences.

Many of the traits correlated significantly with the measure of liberalism and conservatism, the "lib/con" scale, made up of two items, the measures of how strongly the person identifies with the liberal and conservative political orientations. The lib/con scale is the liberalism score plus the inverse of the conservatism score. These two correlate -.70 with each other in this study.

The correlations with the lib/con measure are: warmongering -.48**, positive foreign policy .54**, valuing religions -.55**, religious fundamentalism -.61, kindly religious beliefs .32**, meta religion endorsement .35**, authoritarianism -.37**, human rights .46**,

environmentalism .45**, openness .40**, common good ethic .72**, messianic nationalism ethic -.48** and guarded self-protection ethic -.32**.

Using all of these trait measures to predict political orientation yielded an R of .76, significant at the .000 level. Using just the primary predictors (valuing religion, religious fundamentalism and meta-religion endorsement) yielded an R of .70, also significant at the .000 level.

The correlations between the 6 factor scores and lib/con score were: pro-social .81**, religious missionism -.80, confident warrior .12, naïve fundamentalism -.24**, self-confident gadabout .23* and belligerent anarchist -.44**. Using all but the confident warrior factor to predict political orientation yielded an R of .95, significant at the .000 level. This figure is somewhat inflated by the presence of liberalism and conservatism measures within some of the factor scores.

Overall, these correlations between traits and political orientation are compatible with those of other studies. For example, the author has measured 64 traits that differentiate liberal from conservative orientation (McConochie, 2010). In that study, a multiple correlation between the 10 summary measures of these traits and the lib/con measure was .82. The R was .79 when just the three strongest predictors were used (religion, government type preference and foreign policy attitudes).

Discussion.

This initial study is of such a small sample that all immediate conclusions must be considered only hints of what might be found when the data is analyzed on an adequately large sample. Ideally, this should total several hundred, especially considering the large number of factors found in the various factor analyses. The many factors suggest that there is a rich diversity of information contained in the many scales and ethics items.

Given this precaution, several interesting features are evident. It appears that it is possible to measure ethical beliefs as clusters of statements or ideas. The content of the ethics factors in the present study is clearly suggestive of coherent psychological traits that seem to correspond with important recent political themes. The policies of the Bush administration and the selfish, reckless behavior of top financial industry leaders are

consonant with the ethics factor of In-group Elitism. If, indeed, this trait is endorsed by only a tiny minority of citizens (up to 4 percent in the present study), then this raises serious concerns about how such a very small but very destructive group of persons can get control of national institutions and governments to the detriment of the majority.

The second ethics factor is also interesting politically. It appears to be a broadly pro-social disposition with concern for the common good. It is endorsed by 8 times more persons than the first factor is. Why is this factor not more evident in the behavior of national leaders? Or is it present and the media tend to down-play its influence?

And if the percentage of citizens who endorse human rights, a positive foreign policy and environmentalism is anywhere near the suggested figures of the present study (72 to 98%), then we must wonder why national policy is not more reflective of these attitudes than of what some view as almost constant warmongering.

The messianic nationalism reflected in the third ethics factor is held by 40 percent of Christian university students in the present sample. This may not represent Christian college and university students in the nation as a whole. However, considering the dangers of nationalism gone wild in World War II, the present evidence for a trait that reflects this worldview should raise interest. This trait appears to be alive and well in American citizens. How extensively present is it in the general population? How can it be managed to avoid dangers inherent in messianic leadership coupled with or co-opted by militants?

Finally, the guarded self-protection ethic documented in the fourth ethics factor resonates vividly with the recent surfacing of gun-toting extremists whose attitudes against taxes, regulations and government in general raise concerns about the future safety of generally peaceful citizens. Are we sufficiently alert for terrorists in our own midst?

Age correlated negatively and strongly with the In-group Elitism factor. It also correlated moderately and positively with Messianic Nationalism. Younger persons in this sample of 25 were more likely to endorse In-group Elitism. Older persons were more likely to endorse Messianic Nationalism. Women were more likely to endorse a Positive Foreign Policy.

Consistent with prior studies, years of education did not correlate significantly with any of the 22 scale measures for the Christian university students, suggesting that teaching citizens about war, sustainability, religious beliefs, human rights, personality traits and ethical dimensions such as the four measured in the present study may have little impact on the presence of such traits in a given group of citizens or on an individual person's amount of such traits.

It is possible that focused education might have an impact. The present "education" number is simply years of general education. Perhaps one can change ethical beliefs via education focused on ethics, politics, culture and related themes. This could be easily explored by administering measures of ethical beliefs of various sorts to students before and after a course is taught to assess the amount of change.

A related interesting question is whether it is the role of a college or university to change citizen ethical beliefs. If a school has a mission to foster ethical behavior in its students and graduates, then the school is faced with several interesting questions: Which set of ethics should the school foster? What if ethical systems are in conflict? Which should they favor? If it is a religious institution, should it foster fundamentalist ethics or ethics embodied in kindly religious beliefs? Should it promote messianic nationalism, even at the risk of developing students who might be recruited by militarists to promote a warmongering national agenda? Should the school promote or openly discourage militant anarchism, another factor reflected in a cluster of ethical and other traits? How should the school decide these questions? By an authoritarian body? By a vote of alumnae or faculty? By a vote of the current student body? By a vote of all of these groups?

Or should their mission simply be to teach ethics very broadly, to include information from studies such as the present one, and let students struggle personally with the issues and choices implied?

The data on the 6 comprehensive factors, those made up of all the traits and ethics factors raises several additional issues. Human traits cluster together in factors that provide measures of further interest, perhaps the most interesting of which is that basic political orientation, as measured by the liberalism/conservatism concept, appears to be a manifestation of underlying

psychological traits involving religious beliefs, attitudes about the common good and attitudes about handling fear.

In spite of the fact that the founding fathers of the United States tried to separate church and state, religious beliefs appear to be intimately related to political attitudes, with kindly religious beliefs falling in the liberal political camp and fundamentalist beliefs in the conservative camp.

Another interesting finding is the cluster of traits that reflect what is labeled "belligerent anarchist". This trait represents 16% of the community college students and fully 30% of the Christian university students. These are disturbingly high numbers considering the danger such an attitude represents if organized politically, especially in a nation, such as the United States, that permits citizens to bear arms. The facets of this belligerent anarchist factor... warmongering, authoritarianism, closed mindedness, messianic nationalism, guarded self-protection and belief in the common good... would appear ready material for a messianic national leader to capitalize upon politically and militarily, perhaps in the style of Hitler or other dictators.

This concern is furthered by the rather high proportion of subjects who are high on another factor, "religious missionism. 40% of community college students and 62 percent of Christian university students are high on this factor. While religion can inspire good behavior in citizens, it can also be blended with political and military fervor, as evident in Iraq in recent years. Thus, this psychological trait complex or factor poses an additional potential challenge to civil society.

Fortunately, the pro-social factor revealed in the present study is endorsed by a substantial proportion of subjects, 38 and 18 percent of the community college and Christian university students. So, there is evidence also of constructive traits that can be capitalized upon by pro-social leaders.

Conclusion.

The present study demonstrates that important political human behaviors, such as ethical beliefs, can be studied not just as people, but as traits. We need not have 40 presidents, cabinet members, investment bankers, or political extremists in our research study populations. We can create measures of psychological traits that mirror the presumed motivating

attitudes of such important groups. These measures then provide us with a convenient tool for exploring the origins and manifestations of these attitudes. Insights may then inform or inspire efforts to constructively manage the attitudes and related behaviors and persons who manifest them.

For example, persons high on the Common Good Concern trait could be selected for entry into seminary programs or schools of social work. Persons high on In-group Elitism could be screened out of candidacy for political office in democratic-focused governments. Parenting programs could train adults to listen carefully and with respect to their children at the dinner table to guard against budding guarded self-protectionism. Perhaps measures of sexual behavior ethics could be created that could be used to select for the priesthood students who are not prone to pedophilia or other sexually exploitative behavior.

And perhaps citizens can strive to minimize the political power of individuals high on traits that are incompatible with national constitutional principles. Citizens can strive to enhance the political voice and power of the majority of citizens who have attitudes and traits necessary for sustainable, peaceful living in the present and for generations to come.

This initial study is on two relatively small groups from only one community. Replication on larger, more diverse populations will be necessary before firm conclusions should be drawn about the ethical traits studied.

Readers interested in furthering research on this matter are invited to contact the author. For example, subjects anywhere in the world with Internet access can enter the web site and complete the questionnaire to increase the sample size.

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