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THESIS

SPECIAL FORCES VALUES: HOW THE REGIMENT'S ETHICAL FRAMEWORK INFLUENCES ITS ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

by

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December 2017

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SPECIAL FORCES VALUES: HOW THE REGIMENT'S ETHICAL FRAMEWORK INFLUENCES ITS ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

Current management theory finds that *deeply held values* provide a significant explanation for the behavior of professionals. Accordingly, this thesis illuminates the positive impact that the 1st Special Forces Regiment's ethical structure—the SF Ethic has on the organization's *effectiveness*. The study describes the SF Ethic through the lens of the two major (opposing) normative ethical theories: consequentialism and nonconsequentialism. It determines that the SF Ethic is a combination of both theories along with *Virtue Theory*. The latter contains the notion of *prudence*, which offers a balanced and deliberative "middle path," a means by which to navigate a tension that exists between the former two theories. The SF Ethic-Effectiveness pathway depicts the process by which an SF soldier operating under the SF Ethic might contribute to effectiveness. Values shape principles that define one's duties. Then professional and prudential judgment—influenced by organizational and operational factors—informs decisions. Essential contextual factors include the environment (often complex and unstable), organizational structure (a professional-adhocracy within a machine bureaucracy), and culture. Organizational theory concepts—commitment, trust, and professionalism—empirically evince the SF Ethic—SF Effectiveness correlation. Likewise, Army and SF publications offer *trust*-based explanations—related to *legitimacy* and *influence*—for the SF Ethic—SF Effectiveness link. Recommendations include organizing the various conceptions of values and attributes to provide a sense of hierarchy, priority, and common definitions across sources; developing a semialgorithmic process guide to help operators systematically think through moral dilemmas; and adding an ethics training block to the SF Qualification Course to professionalize the force and contribute to organizational effectiveness.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| 1SFC (A) | 1 st Special Forces Command (airborne) |
|----------|--|
| ADRP | Army doctrine reference publication |
| AOB | advanced operational base |
| AOR | area of responsibility |
| ARSOF | Army special operations |
| AQI | al-Qaeda in Iraq |
| CI | categorical imperative |
| COG | center of gravity |
| COIN | counterinsurgency |
| CONOP | concept of operations |
| СР | counter-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction |
| DA | direct action |
| DOCTEMP | doctrinal template |
| DOD | Department of Defense |
| ED | emergency department |
| FM | field manual |
| FID | foreign internal defense |
| FOE | future operating environment |
| IED | improvised explosive device |
| IO | information operations |
| LOAC | law of armed conflict |
| JIIM | joint interagency intergovernmental multinational |
| JWT | just war theory |
| KSAs | knowledge, skills, and abilities |
| MDMP | military decision making process |
| MOS | military occupational specialty |
| ODA | Operational Detachment – Alpha |
| ODB | Operational Detachment – Bravo |
| OIF | Operation Iraqi Freedom |
| OPCEN | operations center xiji |

| OSS | Office of Strategic Services |
|------------|---|
| SERE | Survival Evasion Resistance Escape |
| SF | Special Forces |
| SFA | security force assistance |
| SFAS | Special Forces Assessment and Selection |
| SFQC | Special Forces Qualification Course |
| SITTEMP | situational template |
| SO | special operations |
| SOCM | Special Operations Competency Model |
| SOCOM | Special Operations Command |
| SOF | Special Operations Forces |
| SOTF | special operations task force |
| SUPCEN | support center |
| SUT | Small Unit Tactics |
| U.S. | United States |
| UCMJ | Uniform Code of Military Justice |
| USAJFKSWCS | U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School |
| USASFC (A) | U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) |
| USASOC | U.S. Army Special Operations Command |
| USSOCOM | U.S. Special Operations Command |
| UW | unconventional warfare |
| WMD | weapons of mass destruction |

I. ETHICAL MANAGEMENT OF SPECIAL FORCES

A. INTRODUCTION

There is no such thing as a philosophy-free [organization]; there is only an organization whose philosophical baggage is taken on-board without examination.

-Daniel Dennett1

ADRP 1 *The Army Profession* exhorts military leaders to discover the truth: "Situational understanding requires [us]...to discern what is actually so, the truth."² When we consider it in the broadest terms, the first SOF Imperative, "Understand the operational environment," echoes this idea. The truths this thesis seeks to illuminate are under-explored cultural factors related to values and ethics that help explain why members of the SF organization do what they do and how those actions influence the organization's effectiveness.

Professor of management Jennifer Palthe notes that "practitioners need to ask themselves the question: how often do practices in organizations merely continue to exist, not because of their *effectiveness*, but due to organizational inertia?"³ This question is what this thesis attempts to answer with respect to organizational ethics. As Palthe suggests, "Since institutional structures are highly resistant to change, for change to occur, the taken-for-granted quality [institutional structures] must be brought into question," and researchers "must first explore that which holds members of the

¹ This is a play on Daniel Dennett's original line, "There is no such thing as philosophy-free science; there is only science whose philosophical baggage is taken on-board without examination," taken from *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, 1995. I replaced the word "science" with "organization" and used this modified quote to support the contention that it is vital for organizations to assess their own philosophical underpinnings, since principles and norms largely flow from them.

² U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1 The Army Profession* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 2015), 2–8.

³ Jennifer Palthe, "Regulative, Normative, and Cognitive Elements of Organizations: Implications for Managing Change," in *Management and Organizational Studies* 1, no. 2 (May 2014): 63.

organization to their old sets of actions."⁴ Such knowledge will be vital to those seeking to assess the SF organization or affect institutional change.

In recent management research (2017), organizational theorists April Wright, Raymond Zammuto, and Peter Liesch conclude that "*deeply held values*" provide a better explanation of the actions of professionals than the previous (and ubiquitous) *power* and *ego*-based explanations.⁵ Accordingly, this thesis uses organizational theory to assess the empirical and logical connections between *ethics* and *organizational effectiveness*, both broadly, and for Special Forces in particular.

The structure of this thesis is as follows. I first discuss the research questions and the theory that underpins the subsequent chapters. Chapter II describes the Special Forces ethical framework—the *SF Ethic*. Chapter III turns to organizational theory to describe the organization's *environment*, *structures*, and *culture* that serve as the medium in which the *SF Ethic* operates. Here, I also consider factors that link ethics and effectiveness at the individual level of analysis: *commitment*, *trust*, and *professionalism*. Chapter IV then considers the details of what *effectiveness* means for SF and analyzes what Army and SF publications say about the *ethics-effectiveness* link. Finally, Chapter IV uses the illustration of the SF "soldier statesman," made famous by President John F. Kennedy, to show how a professional might navigate the tension between realism and idealism or consequentialism and deontology (defined below) in a way that makes SF both trusted and effective. I conclude with final thoughts and recommendations in Chapter V.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis aims to answer two complementary research questions, one related to normative moral philosophy and one related to organizational theory. The purpose of the first question is to illuminate the normative underpinnings of the *SF Ethic*. The purpose

⁴ Palthe, "Regulative, Normative, and Cognitive Elements of Organizations," 63.

⁵ April Wright, Raymond Zammuto, and Peter Liesch, "Maintaining the Values of a Profession: Institutional Work and Moral Emotions in the Emergency Department," in *Academy of Management Journal*, 60, no. 1 (February 2017): 230.

of the second question is to understand the real-world implications and effects of the *SF Ethic* on the SF Regiment.

1. The SF Ethic: Consequentialist or Non-consequentialist

The said truth is that it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong.

— Jeremy Bentham⁶

Live your life as though your every act were to become a universal law.

— Immanuel Kant⁷

As previously mentioned, the first research question, which aims to provide a description of the *SF Ethic* using normative moral philosophy asks:

"Is the moral framework that underpins the organizational ethics and values in the Special Forces Regiment more consequentialist or deontological?"

The purpose of describing Special Forces ethics and values using this dichotomy is twofold. First, deontology and consequentialism represent the two dominant (opposing) theories in moral analytical philosophy that assess our choices. Second, a rich scholarly body of work is available on both consequentialism (including utilitarianism) and deontology. The two theories have undergone rigorous examination both in principle (normative ethics), and in application (applied ethics). Moreover, the implications of each these moral theories have been well developed. While this dichotomy is far from exhaustive and is perhaps oversimplified, it can still provide useful insights about the normative perceptions in Special Forces that inform decision making. As we shall see, decision making, in practice, is a more complex process.

By *consequentialist*, I broadly mean that the Special Forces culture, norms, and command guidance seem to prefer weighing the possible ends when considering what

⁶ Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1775). A paradigmatic quote to exemplify consequentialism and contrast with non-consequentialism.

⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785). A paradigmatic quotes to exemplify non-consequentialism and contrast with consequentialism.

actions are morally permissible. Consequentialism is the moral philosophy that the rightness of an act is based largely or entirely on its consequences. That is, "the rightness or wrongness of an act is determined by the… results [or expected results] that flow from it."⁸ An objectively right act is one in which, "it is reasonable to expect that it will have the best consequences."⁹ To use the old colloquialism, in consequentialism, "the ends justify the means."

In *utilitarianism* (a form of consequentialism) the right act is simply the one that achieves "the greatest [aggregate happiness] for the greatest number."¹⁰ There is no "lesser evil" when deciding between two apparently bad options, because the action that results in the best overall consequences is the objectively right action. As such, no "moral residue" or so-called "dirty hands" exist for an action that causes harm while bringing about the "greater good." That is because the greater good is, according to utilitarianism, the *only* good; alternative options would be, in fact, wrong to pursue.

For John Stuart Mill, who followed Jeremy Bentham as a founder of utilitarianism, an important moral principle integral to utilitarianism was that, "A person may cause evil to others not only by his actions but by his inaction, and in either case he is justly accountable to them for the injury."¹¹ Thus, for Mill, a person is morally culpable for his actions (commissions) just as much as his inactions (omissions). This utilitarian consideration is important to note because intuition might suggest that (a) *taking a deliberate action* that causes harm—in the interest of reducing aggregate harm is more blameworthy than (b) *taking no action*, even if the results in greater harm than had we acted. Stated another way, one might feel less culpable for (a) failing to act when

⁸ Louis Pojman, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1995), 110. Philosophers Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and Henry Sidgwick are best known for founding and developing consequentialism and utilitarianism. For explanations of these normative moral theories, see *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* by Jeremy Bentham (1775), *Utilitarianism* by John Stuart Mill (1861), and *The Methods of Ethics* by Henry Sidgwick (1907). For a summation of these theories with discussion, see *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, by Louis Pojman (1995), Chapter 6.

⁹ Pojman, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, 119.

¹⁰ Ibid., 109.

¹¹ John Stuart Mill, On Liberty (London: Longman, Roberts and Green, 1869), I.11.

he could have prevented greater harm than he would for (b) acting in ways that cause harm but reduce aggregate harm. Mill rejected this notion.

Accordingly, for SF operators to advocate and act upon the idea that either action or inaction (in pursuit of the aggregate greater good) share equal merit would suggest that the *SF Ethic* is utilitarian in nature. Likewise, if it becomes apparent that members of the SF organization are more open to acts that commit or risk harm in pursuit of the aggregate greater good—acts that others might shy from as unpalatable—from this we might infer a more consequentialist ethic is at work.

Similarly, Henry Sidgwick, who followed Bentham and Mill in the utilitarian tradition, found it to be a self-evident principle that, "the good of any one individual is of no more importance, from the point of view of the universe, than the good of any other."¹² From this principle, Sidgwick felt we might naturally infer that each person "is morally bound to regard the good of any other individual as much as his own."¹³ Such a consideration (either implicitly or explicitly) for the intrinsic equality of worth of persons, when deliberating one's actions—e.g., instances of sacrificing the good of the few for the good of the many—can serve as another possible indicator of utilitarian underpinnings.

In contrast, by *deontological*, I broadly mean that the Regimental culture, norms, and command guidance seem to prefer establishing certain actions as duties irrespective of the outcome. Note that I use the terms non-consequentialist and deontological synonymously throughout this thesis. In deontology, contra consequentialism, the ends do not justify means. In fact, the ends should not be the primary driver in determining right actions. Rather, the principles and intent behind the action are the dominant moral determinations, on this view.

Broadly speaking, non-consequentialist normative theories are those that hold, simply, that the consequences are not all that matter when we make our moral

¹² Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (London: Macmillan, 1907), 382.

¹³ Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, 382.

deliberations. Or, put differently, that there are non-consequentialist reasons and principles that should have significant weight, sometimes even decisive weight, in our moral decision making. There are a range of deontological theories. One of the most well-known is Immanuel Kant's approach.¹⁴

According to Kant's categorical imperative, one should do what is right for its own sake, precisely because it is right, and not because it gives you a better life, for example. Kant considers the "good will," that is, the intention to do what is right for its own sake, to be the one intrinsic good. That is to say, according to Kant's deontology, intentions matter morally rather than the results or consequences for any given action. Moral norms are without exception, but are necessarily and categorically true.

Kant posited several formulations of the categorical imperative, the first of which is, "Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law."¹⁵ This first formulation serves as criterion for judging other imperatives and maxims. According to Kant, we should act in a way that we could (being logically consistent) want the principle upon which we are acting to become a universal law. We cannot act in such a way that we contradict ourselves. Thus, principles must be universally applicable, or they are self-defeating. In his third formulation, Kant contends that we can know what is right through our use of reason. When we act in violation of principles established by reason, we contradict ourselves.

Additionally, Kant believed humans, as moral agents, have intrinsic value and worth and, thus, cannot be used as mere means to some particular end since humans are what he calls "ends in themselves." This principle is based in Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative known as the *principle of ends*, in which he states, "So act as to treat humanity, whether your own person or in that of any other, in every case as an

¹⁴ For a detailed explanation of Kantian deontology, see *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* by Immanuel Kant, (1785). For a summation of deontological theories with discussion, see *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, by Louis Pojman (1995), Chapter 7.

¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), ed. Allen W. Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 37.

end and never merely as a means."¹⁶ What follows from this *principle of ends* is the intrinsic value of individual autonomy or self-direction, which is found in Kant's third formulation of the categorical imperative.¹⁷ In sum, where the *SF Ethic* prohibits using others as *mere* means, assigns unimpeachable value to individual persons, or focuses on duties rather than ends, it is indicative of deontological normative underpinnings.

As one might expect, a study of the *SF Ethic* reveals that it contains both consequentialist and non-consequentialist components. Accordingly, a real tension between these two opposing normative schools of thought emerges. This tension—between two different ways of determining to the right action—is a major source of ethical dilemmas and potential ambivalence that SF operators face.

The *SF Ethic* also contains attributes of a third major ethical theory: *Virtue Theory*. Within *Virtue Theory*, the notion of *prudence* shows promise in helping bridge the consequentialist-non-consequentialist divide (discussed in Chapter IV). Virtue Theory is founded in aretaic thought and focuses on being a good person rather than on "the right thing to do" or the results.¹⁸ It emphasizes one's character or what one should *be* rather than what a person should *do*. In virtue theory, the goal of life is living well. Thus, where deontology might be considered negative proscription in many ways, virtue ethics are more positive or prescriptive, in a general sense. One should do that which is part of a good life including finding a balance and moderation in all, which is what Aristotle calls the Doctrine of the Mean.¹⁹

Virtue then, is a state that decides, consisting in a mean, the mean relative to us, which is defined by reference to reason, that is to say, to the reason by reference to which the prudent person would define it. It is a mean between two vices, one of excess and one of deficiency.²⁰

¹⁶ Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, 47.

¹⁷ Ibid., 49–52.

¹⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2nd Ed., ed. Terence Irwin, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999). Book II discusses "Virtue of Character." (18–30) Book VI, "Virtues of Thought," discusses *knowledge*, *prudence*, *understanding*, *wisdom*, *deliberation*, and *comprehension* (86–99).

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 338.

²⁰ Ibid., 25.

For virtue theoretical approaches, happiness or flourishing is the main end; its method is virtue; and for one to be happy, one must be moral.

Worth mentioning is *ethical relativism* or within it *moral subjectivism*, given (a) their ubiquity in public discourse and (b) my purpose of identifying *objective* normative principles in the SF Regiment. For this thesis, I assume moral realism and reject moral relativism, as the latter fails to provide (logically prohibits) any means to discuss right and wrong, by its own definition. Moral relativism also results in *absurd entailments* including the non-existence of moral progress or reform, the denigration of others' truth claims, and the consequence that we could never condemn even the "worst" actions—say torturing children for fun—if another person felt his actions were permissible. "Right" and "wrong" would simply be matters of opinion.²¹ But, there are objectively better ways to live, and we can use normative ethics to prescribe them.

Accordingly, the SF ethical framework that prescribes behavior (and the reasons for such behavior) is based on principles that the organization implicitly accepts as (either epistemically or ontologically) objectively true.²² While several other moral approaches exist and likely have an influence in the SF moral framework, such outliers fall outside the scope of this research. I have omitted such discussion in favor of brevity and simplicity, I believe, without losing much in the way of explanatory power.

²¹ Relativism asserts that no objective moral truth exists. Thus, the correct attitude is tolerance for differing opinions. However, this "attitude" essentially makes a universal moral claim that we should not make universal moral claims. Thus, it is internally contradictory, incoherent, and self-defeating. Also, (despite the common misconception) the conclusion that objective morals do not exist does not follow from premise that persistent moral disagreement exists. As James Rachels observes, "There is no reason to think that if there is moral truth everyone must know it" (*The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, Chapter 2, New York: McGraw-Hill, 15–29, 1999). That opinions on morality differ is simply descriptive.

²² Philosopher Jeffery J. Lowder provides an explanation of the distinction between ontological and epistemological moral objectivity. The former refers to "the order of being," the latter, "the order of knowing." In the former case one might claim 'murder is wrong' because there is a real property, wrongness, even if no one thought murder was wrong. In the latter case, one might claim murder is objectively wrong because an Ideal Observer when contemplating the act of murder, has feelings of disapproval. Louis Pojman expands on the idea of an "Ideal Desirer," that is, "a person who is impartial and has maximal knowledge of the consequences of all actions. What the Ideal Desirer would choose would be by definition the 'good,' and what he or she would disdain would be the 'bad.'" (*Ethics*, 1995) Lowder asserts that many if not most contemporary philosophers writing on meta-ethics endorse one of two form of objective morality. Taken from "Naturalism, Theism, and Moral Ontology: A Reply to William Lane Craig." Due to its pre-publication status, it is only available in video form: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yH5B5UZvuhw.

2. The Impact of the SF Ethic on Effectiveness

Since the above moral frameworks represent diverging approaches to determining what is good or evil, it would make little sense to judge the *good* or *evil* that results from one moral framework or the other. Such an effort would be circular since each of these frameworks *defines* what we mean by good or evil. Thus, to avoid begging the question, I explore how the extant Regimental moral framework influences *organizational effectiveness* by drawing on organization theory. Accordingly, the second question asks:

In what ways does the SF moral framework increase or decrease—that is, positively or negatively impact—the SF Regiment's organizational effectiveness?²³

While organizational theory includes a number of conceptions of *effectiveness*, many overlap. The McShane-Von Glinow "Team Effectiveness Model" contains five *effectiveness* criteria: (1) "achieve of organizational goals," (2) "satisfaction of member needs," (3) "team growth and learning," (4) "team survival," and (5) "satisfaction of outside stakeholder needs."²⁴ Similar in some regards, Daft defines *effectiveness* in terms of four approaches: (1) "resource based," (2) "internal processes," (3) "stakeholders," and (4) "goals."²⁵

For simplicity and utility, I restrict my definition of *effectiveness* to Daft's "internal processes" and "goals" as well as the three Hill-McCaskey criteria for *effectiveness*: (1) "performance," (2) "member well-being and development" and, (3) "shared capacity to adapt and learn."²⁶ Daft's "internal processes" have important implications for ethics and culture, incentives, and decision-making. As Daft notes,

²³ The following discussion of organizational effectiveness applies likewise to (and holds true for) teams and groups, given that groups and teams are small organizations, and organizations are groups of groups (or teams of teams). This is noteworthy given the importance of teams and groups in SOF.

²⁴ Steven McShane and Mary Ann Von Glinow, *Organizational Behavior* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Irwin, 2007).

²⁵ Richard Daft, *Organization Theory and Design* (Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Pub, 2010), 57.

²⁶ McCaskey model.

"among 'internal processes' the greatest significance is attached to culture"—the latter contains the organization's values and ethics.²⁷

By his goals approach, Daft means, "the degree to which an organization achieves its goals," where "goals" refers to the goals that "satisfy the purpose of the organization's existence."²⁸ This I take to mean the Regiment's ability to *perform* its strategic and operational (irregular warfare) purposes and tasks as described in Special Operations doctrine and covered in detail in Chapter IV. Thus, Daft's goals approach aligns with the first criterion from both McShane-Von Glinow and Hill-McCaskey models. I exclude "resource based" and "stakeholder" approaches, which would introduce many conflicting conceptions of effectiveness.

A key assertion in this research is that the *ethical behavior* of members of the SF Regiment correlates with higher levels of *organizational effectiveness*:

Acting ethically \rightarrow p(organizational effectiveness)

Accordingly, this thesis provides qualitative argument in support of the idea that ethical behavior positively correlates with organizational effectiveness, both as a generalizable principle and also applied to the case of the Special Forces Regiment. I argue that qualitative evidence shows this to be true and that its truth is accepted in U.S. Army and SOF doctrine.

Having defined *effectiveness* in organizational theory terms, I now summarize the organizational theory and Army/SF doctrinal reasons why acting ethically might lead to organizational effectiveness. That is, I give an overview of the various conceptions of the *SF Ethic-effectiveness* link. Organizational theory and Army/SF publications have many overlapping definitions and descriptions; I note them as they appear.

²⁷ Krum Krumov, Knud Larsen, and Plama Hristova, "Organizational management and organizational effectiveness," in *Advances in Psychology: Research Approaches*, Kassel University Press, 2013, 307.

²⁸ Daft, Organization Theory and Design, 22.

In organizational theory terms, *culture, commitment, trust,* and *professionalism* all seem to link ethics and effectiveness, given the SF environment and organizational structure. Chapter III defines these factors and describes how they serve as mechanisms that connect *ethics* and *effectiveness* in SF.

In terms of Army and SOF publications, the *SF Ethic-effectiveness* link seems most clearly conceived as mediated by internal and external *trust*, a bifurcation found in ADRP 1.²⁹ Likewise, USASOC considers trust vital for solving what it considers the "fundamental" irregular warfare problem: expanding physical, cognitive, and moral access.³⁰ This internal-external trust bifurcation appears again within the "moral access" tenet in which *perceived legitimacy* is related to external trust and *strong negotiating position* is related to internal trust.

Thus, I divide the *trust*-mediated *ethic-effectiveness* link into (1) *reputation* or perceived legitimacy considerations (external trust) and (2) *relational influence* or rapport considerations (internal trust). I consider *reputation* and *relational influence* factors distinct from both "acting ethically" and from "organizational effectiveness" and as a mediating mechanism by which the former influences the latter. By way of preserving and building trust, the *SF Ethic* improves *effectiveness*.

Acting ethically \rightarrow p(trust) \rightarrow p(effectiveness) Acting ethically \rightarrow p(trust) \rightarrow p(expanding access) \rightarrow p(effectiveness) Acting ethically \rightarrow p(trust) \rightarrow p(good reputation) \rightarrow p(effectiveness) Acting ethically \rightarrow p(trust) \rightarrow p(relational influence) \rightarrow p(effectiveness)

The torture of Iraqi detainees by American soldiers at Abu Graib provides a stark illustration of these *trust*-based effects. When news of the abuses became known, the immediate result (in addition to violence and reprisals) was a loss of U.S. legitimacy, influence, and access to partner forces and to the indigenous population.³¹ U.S.

²⁹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 3–1, 3–2.

³⁰ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *USASOC Planner's Handbook* v2.0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 2014), V-17.

³¹ Thomas Friedman, "Restoring Our Honor." New York Times, May 6, 2004.

cooperation with Muslims worldwide suffered, and insurgent networks presumably received additional financial and recruiting support.³² Likewise, U.S. commanders may have reconsidered the levels of autonomy they granted their troops due to trust concerns, perhaps increasing micromanagement.

All this is not to say that ethical failings necessarily entail military defeat. Despite Abu Graib, Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) was defeated. Military operations sometimes succeed *despite* ethical failures. However, this fact does not imply that ethical failures have no impact on effectiveness. The evidence herein presented suggests the opposite is true. Effectiveness—both in terms of internal processes and goals or purposes—seems to be hindered by moral failings, even if not catastrophically in this case.

At this point, one might suppose this thesis is implying that ethical behavior (or perhaps that ethical *idealism*) is a panacea. However, in practice, pragmatic concerns and dilemmas abound such as apparent conflicts between ethical behavior and mission accomplishment. Often these dilemmas align with the (previously mentioned) tension that exists within the *SF Ethic* between consequentialism and non-consequentialism. I argue that the notion of *prudence* offers a way to navigate that tension that may optimize effectiveness.³³ Prudence, in its aretaic sense, is the means toward achieving the virtuous end.³⁴ It deals with "…adjusting or applying the universal moral virtues to particular situations," or alternatively conceived, "steering a middle path…between the amorality of realists and the excessive moralism of idealists."³⁵ As an important component of the *ethic-effectiveness* link, I discuss the idea of prudence in detail in Chapter IV.

I chose to evaluate the impact of the Regiment's ethical framework on organizational effectiveness, rather than say, the framework's impact on the family lives

³² Thom Shanker, "Abu Ghraib Called Incubator for Terrorists," New York Times, February 14, 2006.

³³ The idea that prudence might offer an effectual "middle path" between consequentialism and nonconsequentialism is based on International Politics professors Alberto Coll and Richard Shultz's contention that *prudence* can offer a middle path between political realism and idealism.

³⁴ Alberto Coll and Richard Shultz, "Can American Democracy Employ Covert Action as an Instrument of Statecraft?" in *International Law Studies* 67: *Legal and Moral Constraints of Low-Intensity Conflict*, Newport: Naval War College, 1995, 340.

³⁵ Coll et al., Legal and Moral Constraints of Low-Intensity Conflict, 340.

of the organization's members, because the overall effectiveness of Special Forces seemed to be most pertinent both to commanders and civilian leaders, my target audience.³⁶ Thus, this study attempts to answer the vital question of how the Regiment's moral framework influences its ability to fulfill its assigned role.

A framework for understanding the process by which *Ethics* influences *Effectiveness* in this thesis is reflected in Figure 1. This framework depicts a simplified linear model that aims to illustrate several important relationships between elements and variables of both *moral philosophy* and *organizational theory*. This model synthesizes philosopher Louis Pojman's "Schema of the Moral Processes" (which largely makes up the horizontal axis) with organizational theory factors (mostly in the vertical axis).³⁷

Values, such as life, autonomy, and mastery exist in their own right. The normative ethical framework (consequentialist, non-consequentialist, or virtue ethic) helps to shape values into *principles* that define our general duties (such as to promote human flourishing). Next, *judgment* is applying the correct principle for the situation—defined by the organizational considerations, using prudence. Once a decision is reached, willpower (one's ability to overcome acrasia) will result in prudent action.³⁸ The sum of an organization's prudent actions results in organizational effectiveness. Each of these elements listed in Figure 1 receives its own treatment in subsequent sections of the thesis.

³⁶ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Field Manual (FM) 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, June, 2001), 1–9.

³⁷ Pojman, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, the "Schema of the Moral Process," 94.

³⁸ Acrasia refers to knowing the moral good but doing evil, lacking of self-control or self-discipline, or acting against one's better judgment through weakness of will. Aristotle largely ascribes willpower to education and training by habituation *(ethismos)* until one acquires the right habits *(ethos)*. (Aristotle, 19–20) Similarly, virtue "requires training and rational control of one's feelings and capacities by *prudence*." (Aristotle, 324, 338) In *The Power of Habit* (2014), Pulitzer prize winner Charles Duhigg lends empirical support to Aristotle's emphasis on habituation, describing the science of habit formation. Dr. Kelly McGonigal in *The Willpower Instinct* (2011) identifies several additional empirical (psychological and physiological) factors that correlate with improved or diminished willpower.

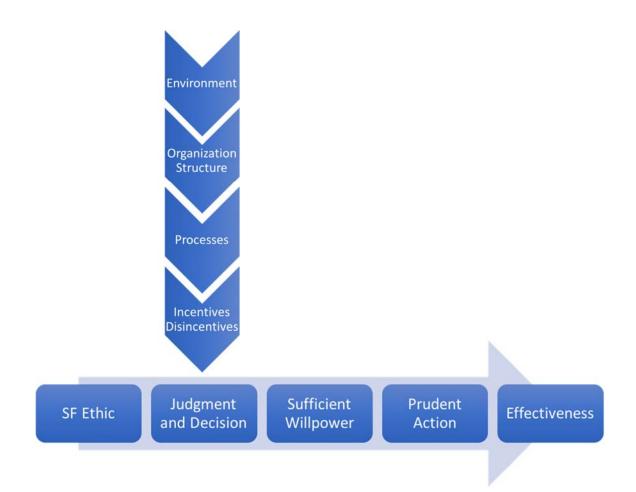


Figure 1. The Impact of the SF Ethic on Organizational Effectiveness.³⁹

C. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Having discussed the two complementary research question and their integration in Figure 1, this section reviews a variety of important background theories that will be used to frame and analyze ideas presented in the subsequent chapters. This section concludes with a philosophical discussion of organizational change in SF before moving on to the SF ethical framework—the *SF Ethic* in Chapter II.

³⁹ Adapted from Louis Pojman, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, the "Schema of the Moral Process," 94 and Organizational Design theory concepts.

1. Qualitative Analysis and Reductionism

The transition from *ethics* to *effectiveness* is a shift from philosophy to social science. As organizational theorist, John B. Miner avers, "To the extent that increased organizational effectiveness is desired, science becomes a means to this goal."⁴⁰ Accordingly, this thesis attempts to connect ethical abstractions with the achievement of concrete SF goals such as the unit's effective performance of its irregular warfare tasks.

As described by Gabriel Almond and Stephen Genco, but applied here to SF, I want to develop and use schemata to better "understand how such non-physical things as purposes, deliberations, plans, decisions, theories, intentions, and values can play a part in bringing about physical changes in the physical world."⁴¹ An example is the model in Figure 1, which emerged from inductive analysis of normative ethics and organizational theory in combination.

This thesis attempts to achieve a degree of "exactness," not through measurably predicting future events or through mathematical language, but by "constructing a theoretical system of idealized models containing abstract constructs of variables and of relations between variables, from which most propositions concerning particular connections can be deduced."⁴² To use the social science "clocks and clouds" analogy, this research is largely cloud-like.⁴³ That is, I provide several models to envision the process being described that exclude numerous interactive variables from the complex system. I leave it to the reader to decide to what extent the models I have developed possess "real" or "instrumental" truth. At a minimum, I hope to provide good evidence for the latter.

To further ensure my claims are proportioned to the evidence, I do not suggest that the schemata presented in this thesis will have the power to predict individual

⁴⁰ John Miner, Organizational Behavior 4: From Theory to Practice (New York: Sharpe, 2007), 4.

⁴¹ Gabriel Almond and Stephen Genco, "Clouds, Clocks, and the Study of Politics," in *World Politics* 29, no. 4 (July, 1977): 491.

⁴² Fritz Machlup, "Are the Social Sciences Really Inferior?" *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*, (Cambridge: MIT, 1994), 11.

⁴³ Almond et al., "Clouds, Clocks, and the Study of Politics," 489–522.

interactions. As Miner asserts, "We know a great deal about the factors that influence peoples work performance, but we do not know enough about the interaction of these factors in specific instances to predict with a high degree of accuracy exactly how well a certain individual will do in a particular position."⁴⁴ Accordingly, I aspire to provide explanatory and probabilistic predictive power at the mezzo and macro (group and organization) levels.

This is not to imply that the individual level of analysis factors discussed in the Chapter III do not impact effectiveness. Rather, I mean that these schemata may have probabilistic predictive power when applied broadly, to groups or organizations rather than to specific individuals. Accordingly, we might say that, as part of a holistic effort, an SF leader could gain insights from the concepts presented in this thesis when formulating a plan to make his organization effective. I consider the conclusions and models herein well supported, but more empirical testing is needed, particularly within the Regiment. Such testing would serve to confirm the applicability of these concepts and the degree of their impact—compared to and in combination with other significant variables.

However, my goal here—rather than to design or engineer a better organization, is simply to explain, that is, to reverse engineer the structures and processes at work in the SF organization. I will leave it to those who follow to consider the implications of the schemata I describe and to address the re-design or re-engineering question.

2. Structural Contingency Theory

The models I employ include the organization's general and task environment as well as structures and processes that have a bearing on this research question. Specifically, I try to adduce particular qualitative connections between ethical organizational culture and effectiveness in the SF Regiment and then organize them in a coherent and useful way. In doing so I distinguish between (a) what SF operators *consider* the "right" thing to do, and (b) why they *actually* do what they do.

⁴⁴ Miner, Organizational Behavior 4: From Theory to Practice, "On the Nature of Theory," 3.

Many interdependent variables impact organizational effectiveness; ethical structure is only one. However, through mostly qualitative analysis I attempt to show that certain ethical structures do seem to have relationships with the degree of effectiveness within organizations, particularly in the case of the SF Regiment's structure. I argue in Chapter III that the Special Forces Regiment (at least at the company level and below) is best described as a hybrid adhocracy-professional bureaucracy, as defined by Henry Mintzberg.⁴⁵

It has been noted also that each SF Group has its own unique culture. This being the case, I accept that my description of the Regiment is generalized and thus accepts some error. However, I also think that *Special Warfare* magazine, SF doctrine, and other SOF publications taken as a whole largely do the work of generalizing the culture.

3. Institutional Theory

Like Structural Contingency Theory, Institutional Theory provides a wellestablished macro-level framework for social behavior. Several terms that overlap with those of institutional theory emerge in Chapter III. Thus, describing this theory will hopefully assist the reader with conceptualizing and categorizing ideas that I present.

Institutional Theory is composed of three pillars: *regulative*, *normative* and *cultural-cognitive*. Attributes of each pillar are listed in Table 1. These pillars provide meaning and stability in social life and might be thought of as what members *have to do*, *ought to do*, and *want to do*, respectively.⁴⁶ The *regulative* pillar includes policy, work rules, army and unit regulations, and law, including the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) as bases of legitimacy.

Values, which "involve acting in the interests of others," represent the *normative* pillar.⁴⁷ The normative pillar is the primary focus of this research as it emphasizes moral

⁴⁵ Henry Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993.

⁴⁶ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 201.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 204.

bases of legitimacy and includes procedures, norms, social obligations, duties, and defines what *means* are legitimate in pursuit of valued *ends*.⁴⁸ As members exhibit institutional values in their everyday work, they maintain the institution or drive change.⁴⁹ The *cognitive* pillar represents legitimacy from a shared mindset, interpretation, mental model, or conceptual belief.

Table 1. Regulative, Normative, and Cognitive Institutional Pillars.⁵⁰

| | Regulative | Normative | Cognitive |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Legitimacy | Legal systems | Moral and ethical systems | Cultural systems |
| Central Rudiments | Policies and rules | Work roles, habits and | Values, beliefs and assumptions |
| | | norms | |
| System Change Drivers | Legal obligation | Moral obligation | Change values are internalized |
| System Change | Fear and coercion | Duty and responsibility | Social identity and personal |
| Sustainers | | | desire |
| Behavioral Reasoning | Have to | Ought to | Want to |

There is a dearth of empirical research that demonstrates the degree to which the three "pillars" are interdependent or if one or two of them are best conceived of as operating within the frame of a third.⁵¹ Given this ambiguity, my conceptualization of the process does not contradict current organizational theory but provides a new multi-disciplinary analytical framework that I hope offers additional insight.

What has been established is that organizational explanations "cannot simply be pared down to the relationships between independent and dependent variables," but "should be viewed as interactions between context and action."⁵² Zilber (2002) suggests, "scholars should take into account the processual and dynamic nature of an organization's institutional elements and the interplay between institutional actions,

⁴⁸ Palthe, "Regulative, Normative, and Cognitive Elements of Organizations," 61.

⁴⁹ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 204. Appendix B details this process.

⁵⁰ Source: Palthe, "Regulative, Normative, and Cognitive Elements of Organizations," 63.

⁵¹ Ibid., 64.

⁵² Ibid.

meanings, and actors."⁵³ The interplay between pillars in practice is "dynamic and complex."⁵⁴ For these reasons, I explore themes from both normative and cognitive pillars to describe how SF ethics impacts effectiveness.

4. A Meta-philosophy of Improvement

How might the Regiment improve from an analysis of its moral framework? Hegelian philosophy suggests that, metaphysically, a dialectic process is continually at work in which each generational zeitgeist is displaced by a new and antithetical zeitgeist, and these are synthesized with (and retain) the best aspects of each.⁵⁵ For Hegel, this metaphysical construct would increasingly approach perfection.⁵⁶

If there were some truth to this Hegelian metaphysical construct, and if we assumed organizations like the 1st Special Forces Regiment are in relevant respects analogous to the societies Hegel described, a normative dialectic within the organization might have the potential to reframe the organization's cohering "spirit," thereby affecting organizational improvement.

It seems likely that the normative paradigm has shifted since the Regiment's inception. Thus, it would also seem sensible for SF leaders to carefully (and regularly) interrogate the current paradigm and thought regimes to retain some and expel others. To assume that our current paradigm is optimal is to ignore the history of change and to be nihilistically cynical of the notion of progress.

⁵³ Palthe, "Regulative, Normative, and Cognitive Elements of Organizations," 64.

⁵⁴ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 234.

⁵⁵ Hegel's dialectic process is described in detail at: Maybee, Julie E., "Hegel's Dialectics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/hegel-dialectics/.

⁵⁶ I selected military historian David Glantz's conception of the Hegelian dialectic process because it seems to provide an adroit metaphor for understanding the process by which SF might improve as an organization. Glantz describes the process as a sort of Gouldian punctuated equilibrium in which the "idea" or "spirit" of the times evolves in discrete stages. (From "The Red Mask: The nature and legacy of Soviet military deception in the Second World War," in *Intelligence and National Security*, 2008, 254.) This conception of discrete, dynamic organizational change seems to align with Gen. Stanley McCrystal's description of cultural shifts in U.S. special operations that often correspond with significant events, such as the 1980 Desert One fiasco (*Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement in a Complex World*, 2015.)

From a pragmatic or political realist sense, it follows that we should understand how our moral structure is impacting our performance and modify it to be more effective, if for nothing more than to win our nation's conflicts and to increase our national power by making the SF Regiment a more honed instrument. But, beyond pragmatic concerns, I hope that discussion of the *SF Ethic* framed in Utilitarian, Kantian, and Aretaic terms, illuminate the intrinsic—rather than simply instrumental—importance of objective moral values and thus the objective importance of being deliberate about our moral culture.

I am under no illusions that this thesis will catalyze such a change of spirit within the Regiment. However, it is plausible that codifying the nature of the organization, by illuminating the normative structure that exists, and through dialectic, perhaps senior leaders can make judgments about new directions to might restructure the Regimental "zeitgeist." Discussions of the normative philosophy of the organization should be part of such a dialectic.

Since the process of ordering is a defining characteristic of civilization and social life, the specific forms it takes are consequential, particularly with regard to the manner in which they mediate between order and chaos. How we think about right and wrong, behaviors and even ways of thought that are circumscribed or framed in a certain way have everything to do with the type of solutions that we develop. If this thesis can expose to light a certain portion of that way of organization thought—the moral sphere—it can contribute to our meta-thinking and allow us to be more deliberate. Essentially, we can understand and thus affect our philosophy, or we can simply hope that our underpinnings are sound.

Chapter I introduced the idea of synthesizing moral philosophy and organizational theory to ascertain the extent to which the *SF Ethic* impacts the SF Regiment's *effectiveness*. I proposed two complementary research questions, the first designed to analyze the nature of the *SF Ethic*. Here, I described two opposing normative theories: *consequentialism* and *deontology*, as well as the aretaic notion of *prudence*. The second research question was designed to ascertain the impact of the *SF Ethic*. I thus described

effectiveness and proposed some important mediating mechanisms by which the *SF Ethic* impacts *effectiveness*. I concluded Chapter I by offering a linear model (Figure 1) to describe the process, as well as a description of the theoretical underpinnings on which this research relies. Chapter II will now describe in detail the *SF Ethic*, noting the indicators of either consequentialism or deontology throughout.

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II. THE SPECIAL FORCES ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

My fondest dream was to return home, and I didn't care at all for the idea of dying in a prison camp; however, prisoner or not, I was still a soldier bound by my code. I was stripped of all material assets, leaving only the intangibles which form the core of our existence: faith, ethics, morals, beliefs.

— Col. James N. Rowe, 1971⁵⁷

Chapter II describes the Special Forces ethical framework—the *SF Ethic*. It includes both exogenous factors that influence SF and endogenous factors that SF publications either enumerate or imply. Exogenous factors include societal values, the law of armed conflict, and the *Army Ethic*. Endogenous factors that relate to the *SF Ethic* include the Human Domain, SF lineage, history, and values, as well as various individual and unit characteristics, traits, and attributes. The latter are divided into two sections—one consequentialist, the other deontological.

A. EXOGENOUS FACTORS

The Special Forces ethical framework lies within the context of the philosophical heritage and traditions of our society, the Army, and the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). These include U.S. founding documents (such as the Declaration of Independence), the Just War tradition, universal norms, the golden rule, and various Army codifications of values including the Army Values, Soldier's Creed, the Warrior Ethos, and mottos such as *Duty, Honor, Country*.

⁵⁷ James N. Rowe, *Five Years to Freedom* (New York: Ballantine, 1971), 119, 232. In his autobiography, legendary Special Forces officer, Colonel "Nick" Rowe, describes his survival in and escape from an enemy prison camp during the Vietnam War. Having discovered as a POW that the *Uniform Code of Military Conduct* was impractical, he authored the *Code of Conduct* still used by all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. It is the basis for POW behavior taught at the U.S. Army Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) School, which he also designed.

1. Societal Values

As a nation, we respect "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness," as "selfevident truths."⁵⁸ According to philosopher Louis Pojman, we would call these truths *values* that exist in their own right.⁵⁹ Pojman gives the following examples of values: "life, loving relationships, freedom, privacy, happiness, creative activity, knowledge, health, integrity, and rationality."⁶⁰ *Values* inform our *principles*. For example, from the intrinsic value integrity, we would derive the principle of being honest. Likewise, the fundamental rights of the American people to national *independence* and *sovereignty* are principles derived from the above "self-evident truths." These principles are also the moral basis for the Army mission and thus foundational to the *SF Ethic*.⁶¹ Based on those rights, the Army exists to *preserve the peace* and to *win the Nation's wars* in accordance with Title 10 of the United States Code.⁶² That is *why we serve*.

Furthermore, the SF Regiment, both explicitly and implicitly, uses *exogenous* ethical factors in describing its own ethical norms, as will become apparent. For example, the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) "Alpha Committee," which designs and implements qualification training for future SF unit commanders, explicitly relies on ethics training grounded in documents external to SF doctrine, such as those mentioned above.⁶³ Thus, in formulating the *SF Ethic*, we will consider the exogenous influences on the *SF Ethic* before analyzing the endogenous ones.

⁵⁸ Thomas Jefferson, *The Declaration of Independence*, July 4, 1776; *ADRP 1 The Army Profession*, 2–2.

⁵⁹ Pojman, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, 93.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 3–4.

⁶² Ibid., 2–9.

⁶³ CPT Michael DiPietro. Alpha Committee, SFQC, October 10, 2017.

2. Law of Armed Conflict

The *law of war* or *law of armed conflict* (LOAC) is one such exogenous source.⁶⁴ The *SF Ethic* operates within the context of the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) and Just War Theory (JWT). The LOAC is defined as "the part of international law that regulates the resort to armed force; the conduct of hostilities, and the protection of war victims; belligerent occupation; and the relationships between belligerent, neutral and nonbelligerent states."⁶⁵ Since the focus of this thesis is the normative (rather than regulative) institutional pillar, I focus on the aspects of the LOAC that influence SF norms, that is, on the underlying normative principles.

According to the "Alpha Committee," the SFQC teaches ethics based on *Field Manual (FM)* 27–10: the U.S. *Department of Defense Law of War Manual* (2015).⁶⁶ The "Alpha Committee" follows directives found in *FM* 3–05 *Army Special Operations* that, "Commanders at all levels ensure their soldiers operate in accordance with the law of war" as described in FM 27–10.⁶⁷ This *Law of War Manual* is the codification of the U.S. view of the LOAC, and it has similar counterparts internationally. At the normative level, the LOAC appeals to the principles of *heritage*, *duty*, and the *consequences* of following the LOAC.

In the case of *heritage*, FM 27–10 describes the LOAC as representative of "who we are," citing George Washington and Abraham Lincoln as enforcers of a code of conduct during (*Jus in bello*) warfare.⁶⁸ Thus, the LOAC has an aretaic grounding in the sense that what we do is important because it defines us as virtuous (or not).

⁶⁴ For an in depth treatment of LOAC applied to Special Forces, see *Law and Morality at War* by Adil Ahmad Haque (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁶⁵ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Field Manual (FM)* 27–10 Law of War Manual (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, June, 2015), 7.

⁶⁶ CPT Michael DiPietro. Alpha Committee, SFQC, October 10, 2017.

⁶⁷ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Field Manual (FM) 3–05 Army Special Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January, 2014), v.

⁶⁸ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 27-10 Law of War Manual, ii.

Next, FM 27–10 appeals to *duty* in a Kantian sense, implicitly emphasizing deontology and grounding morality in reason. FM 27–10 says, "obeying it [LOAC] is the right thing to do"—an implicit appeal to non-consequentialist objective morality. Likewise, the FM cites the post-World War II tribunals in which Justice Robert Jackson describes the "voluntary submission of captive enemies to the judgment of law" as "one of the most significant tributes that Power has ever paid to Reason."⁶⁹ Here, Justice Jackson implicitly recognizes the (Kantian) grounding of morality in reason.

Finally, the FM emphasizes the desirable ends produced by following the LOAC, appealing to practical concerns. Rather than an obstacle, the LOAC is designed to be consistent with the *requirements of winning* in war. Specifically, FM 27–10 cites complying with the LOAC as, "the same good order and discipline necessary to operate cohesively and victoriously in battle."⁷⁰ The FM also describes torture and unnecessary destruction as counterproductive. These factors are consequentialist in nature.

The normative principles upon which the LOAC is grounded, according to FM 27–10 are *military necessity, humanity*, and *honor*. These are the basis for and entail further principles such as *proportionality, distinction (discrimination)*, and *avoidance of unnecessary suffering*.⁷¹ Thus, we can say that the former three principles are likewise fundamental components of the *SF Ethic*.

The first, *military necessity*, implies that military units including SF are morally obligated and justified in using, "all measures needed to defeat the enemy as quickly and efficiently as possible that are not prohibited by the law of war."⁷² The *military necessity* principle is vital for the way SF operators conduct war using imagination and creativity in their methods. This ends-related clause seems consequentialist. However, military necessity includes "broader imperatives" than apply to any particular situation and will fall within the discussion of prudence in Chapter IV.

⁶⁹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 27-10 Law of War Manual, ii.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 27–10 Law of War Manual, 50; ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 3–5.

⁷² U.S. Dept. of Defense, *FM 27–10 Law of War Manual*, 52.

While *military necessity* is permissive or justificatory, the principle of *humanity* is restrictive, that is, it forbids the commission of unnecessary "suffering, injury, or destruction."⁷³ The norm here is the protection of human life and prosperity, which is, in turn based on the notion that humans are intrinsically valuable. Thus, when operating adaptively and creatively under the principle of military necessity, the *SF Ethic* dictates that operators keep in mind the value of people as ends in themselves.

Lastly, *honor* in LOAC relates to the avoidance of perfidy and the treatment of certain classes of persons.⁷⁴ Particularly relevant to SF is the prohibition against "compelling nationals of a hostile party to take part in the operations of war directed against their own country."⁷⁵ To behave honorably, the *SF Ethic* thus prohibits Green Berets who are conducting unconventional warfare from *compelling* indigenous forces to fight. Again, this principle relates to the intrinsic value and respect of persons, including valuing their autonomy and self-determination. Thus, *honor* here seems deontological. From the above principles the U.S. Army has derived, "The Soldier's Rules" (Figure 2), which likewise seem mostly non-consequentialist in nature.

| • | Soldiers fight only enemy combatants. | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| • | Soldiers do not harm enemies who surrender. They disarm them and turn them over to their superior. | | | | | |
| • | Soldiers do not kill or torture any personnel in their custody. | | | | | |
| • | Soldiers collect and care for the wounded, whether friend or foe. | | | | | |
| • | Soldiers do not attack medical personnel, facilities, or equipment. | | | | | |
| • | Soldiers destroy no more than the mission requires. | | | | | |
| • | Soldiers treat civilians humanely. | | | | | |
| • | Soldiers do not steal. Soldiers respect private property and possessions. | | | | | |
| • | Soldiers should do their best to prevent violations of the law of war. | | | | | |
| • | Soldiers report all violations of the law of war to their superior. | | | | | |

Figure 2. The Soldier's Rules.⁷⁶

75 Ibid.

⁷³ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 27–10 Law of War Manual, 58.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 67. Perfidy includes dishonorable conduct that appeals to the enemy's humanity—such as "feigning non-hostile relations—to gain a military advantage." Its egregiousness stems from its contempt for fundamental objective moral principles.

⁷⁶ Source: U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3–0 Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, November, 2016), 3–13. *ADRP 3–0* states, "The Soldier's Rules in AR 350–1 distill the essence of the law of war...and all soldiers should follow them."

3. The Army Ethic

ADRP 1 states that the *minimum* standard for ethical conduct is the UCMJ, regulations, and policies. Command authorized "exceptions to policy" can help mitigate the tension between policies and special operations tasks that are more effectively done in unconventional ways. However, given that the *regulative* institutional pillar is largely outside the focus of this research, I focus on ethical components. As many have noted, what is legal is not necessarily moral, and what is moral is not necessarily legal. This research then, within the *normative* institutional pillar, focusses on what is *moral* to SF.

According to ADRP 1, the professional Army Ethic is, "the evolving set of laws, values, and beliefs, embedded within the Army culture of trust that motivates and guides the conduct of Army professionals bound together in a common moral purpose...to do the right thing for the right reason in the right way."⁷⁷ From this strong doctrinal claim regarding intentions and "right reasons," one can immediately see that a purely consequentialist approach is excluded from the moral decision-making process of soldiers, including SF members, even if the door to some consequentialist reasoning remains ajar. Furthermore, the Army Ethic recognizes the "intrinsic dignity and worth of all people, treating them with respect," a strikingly clear non-consequentialist values statement.⁷⁸

However, the Army Ethic also defines "what is right" as what is "ethical, effective, and efficient."⁷⁹ In this way, the ADRP defines moral action as synonymous with "effective" and "efficient." Both of these terms are clearly ends-related and thus consequentialist.

One lives the Ethic by *being* an honorable member, by demonstrating "*character*, *competence*, and *commitment*," and by following the seven Army Values captured with the acronym LDRSHIP: *loyalty*, *duty*, *respect*, *selfless service*, *honor*, *integrity*, and

⁷⁷ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *ADRP 1 The Army Profession*, 1–1, 1–2.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 2–6.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 2–29.

*personal courage.*⁸⁰ *FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations* articulates that the Army Values "form the basis for standards of conduct for *the whole force.*"⁸¹ Thus, the SF Regiment itself affirms that the Army Values are SF values, and the Army Values lean heavily on non-consequentialism.

ADRP 1 proposes a moral thought process as follows. "Situational understanding requires our individual and collective wisdom and judgment...to discern what is actually so—the truth. With shared understanding we...decide what is right."⁸² This moral epistemology implies objective morals exist and that they are based in reason, as Kant argues at length.⁸³ In "situations of uncertainty...Army professionals base their decisions on the principles of the Army Ethic, ensuring protection of the inalienable rights of all people."⁸⁴ This emphasis on people as ends-in-themselves further suggests a non-consequentialist normative framework at play.

B. ENDOGENOUS FACTORS

What makes Special Forces different? Character and maturity; they can be counted on to do the right thing each and every time. They are reliable and dependable.

- MG Sidney Shachnow, CDR U.S. Army SF CMD⁸⁵

Having considered the exogenous factors related to the *SF Ethic*, which seem to be predominantly, though not exclusively, non-consequentialist in nature, we now turn to endogenous aspects of the *SF Ethic*. These aspects include the Human Domain, SF lineage and values, as well as individual and unit characteristics, traits, and attributes.

⁸⁰ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 2–2.

⁸¹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1–18. Emphasis mine.

⁸² U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 2–8.

⁸³ In *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), Kant argues that morality is based on and can be known through the use of reason. Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) offers a lengthy treatment of this idea.

⁸⁴ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 2–2.

⁸⁵ Peter Dillon, *Ethical Decision Making on the Battlefield: An Analysis of Training for U.S. Army Special Forces* (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, June, 1992), 89.

1. Humans Are More Important than Hardware⁸⁶

The Special Forces motto *De Oppresso Liber—To Free the Oppressed* serves as both moral compass and moral justification for the SF mission. In deontological fashion, it implicitly recognizes the value of human life and the intrinsic importance of promoting human flourishing. Moral theory has everything to do with the flourishing of human beings, and human concerns dominate the language of SOF culture.⁸⁷

This verbiage suggests that the SF culture recognizes both the *intrinsic importance* and *extrinsic practicability* of valuing and respecting people. *ARSOF 2022* uses the word "human" or "people" 38 times (on average, more than a mention per page).⁸⁸ Similarly, "human" or "people" appears 28 times in *ARSOF 2022 Part II*, 50 times in *ARSOF Next*, and 36 times in *USASOC 2035*.⁸⁹ In SF, "Humans are more important than hardware," is the first SOF Truth because it is the most important one.

The top priority in *ARSOF 2022* is "invest in human capital."⁹⁰ The Regiment emphasizes the principle of taking care of its people in tangible ways, providing physical and mental health services and programs including THOR3 (fitness), Strong Bonds (marriage), Operator Resiliency (family support), and Unit Ministry (religious). These all serve to "preserve the force and its families" through physical, psychological, spiritual,

⁸⁶ U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), "ARSOF 2022," In *Special Warfare* 26 (Fort Bragg, NC: USAJFKSWCS Office of Strategic Communication, 2013), 9. The first "SOF Truth."

⁸⁷ Pojman, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, xvi.

⁸⁸ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022."

⁸⁹ U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), "ARSOF 2022 Part II," "ARSOF Next," and "USASOC 2035," In *Special Warfare* 27, 28, and 30 (Fort Bragg, NC: USAJFKSWCS Office of Strategic Communication, 2014, 2015, and 2017, respectively).

⁹⁰ USASOC annual vision statements (2013, 2014, 2015, and 2017) are particularly useful for understanding the *SF Ethic*. They were published as special editions of the *Special Warfare* magazine, an "authorized, official publication" of the USAJFKSWCS. "Its mission is to promote the professional development of special operations forces by providing a forum for the examination of established doctrine and new ideas." http://www.soc.mil/SWCS/SWmag/swmagabout.html. In 2013, *ARSOF 2022* "introduced the vision, clarified the [AR]SOF narrative and identified priorities." *ARSOF 2022 Part II* "focused on institutional change." *ARSOF Next* addressed individual members, organizational culture, core values, and identify and communicate the "ARSOF narrative" ("USASOC 2035," In *Special Warfare*, Volume 30, 2017, 2.) LTG Charles Cleveland, *2014 Green Book: ARSOF 2022: The future of Army SOF*, 2014.

and familial-social programs.⁹¹ Additionally, the Regiment recognizes the importance of developing individuals through education, training, and unique broadening experiences.⁹² This emphasis on the "health of our force" suggests that the *SF Ethic* includes a fundamental respect for the value of people.

Likewise, in combat, SF soldiers are willing to risk the lives of the many for the lives of the one or the few, abiding by the commitment to "never leave a fallen comrade."⁹³ This thought process explicitly rejects any utilitarian calculations and is thus a deontological norm. Accordingly, the Ranger Creed normatively aligns with a prominently displayed plaque at the 75th Ranger Regiment:

Not for fame or reward Not for place or for rank Not lured by ambition Or goaded by necessity But in simple Obedience to duty⁹⁴

The second highest ARSOF priority, "optimize interdependence" (among U.S. conventional forces and interagency partners) also emphasizes people and relationships.⁹⁵ "A successful outcome of Special Forces as an instrument of national strategy depends on unified action in all phases."⁹⁶ Likewise, SF emphasis on foreign language and cultural training implies a regard for understanding the concerns of others, that is, empathy. Thus, the human-centric internal policies and communications described above, as well as the emphasis on objective duties in combat, are all suggestive of deontological norms.

⁹¹ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022 Part II," 21; "ARSOF 2022," 20.

⁹² USASOC, "ARSOF 2022," 18.

⁹³ Neal R. Gentry, *The Ranger Creed*, Fifth Stanza, Fort Stewart, GA: 1st Ranger Battalion, 1974. Many SF operators are Ranger qualified or began their career in the 75th Ranger Regiment. The ubiquity of the Ranger Creed in SF makes it a part of SF culture. The SF Creed mirrors much of the Ranger Creed language.

⁹⁴ Chaplain Randolph Harrison McKim, wrote this in memory of fallen confederate Civil War soldiers, http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/Monuments-and-Memorials/Confederate-Memorial.

⁹⁵ LTG Charles Cleveland, 2014 Green Book: ARSOF 2022: The future of Army SOF, 2014.

⁹⁶ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Field Manual (FM) 3–05 Army Special Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2014), 4–2.

2. The Human Domain and Engagement

However, not only do human concerns appear within how SF treats and communicates with its own people, the SF Regiment and the Army as a whole recognize the strategic importance of the Human Domain, which "encompasses the totality of the physical, cultural and social environments that influence human behavior."⁹⁷ In a shift from an enemy-centric focus to a population-centric one, TRADOC PAM 525–8–5 describes a future environment in terms of the social, political, and economic concerns rather than by describing enemy actions. Current doctrine now describes the *Human Domain* and *Land Domain* as representing two opposite ends of the spectrum of military operations.⁹⁸ Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno noted, "Conflict is a human endeavor, ultimately won or lost in the Human Domain."⁹⁹ Accordingly, the Army considers the Human Domain a critical (or possibly the most critical) aspect of the future operating environment.

Like the Army at large, SOCOM has placed its emphasis for the coming decade on the Human Domain, even though it has long been an ARSOF core competency and area of expertise.¹⁰⁰ LTG Cleveland cites the Human Domain as a contested battle space that is key to success in war.¹⁰¹ Similarly, flag officers Amos, McRaven, and Odierno, have stated that "the 'Human Domain' [is] the key determining factor in future conflicts."¹⁰² Specifically, they have stated that, "the success of future strategic initiatives and the ability of the U.S. to shape a peaceful and prosperous global environment will

⁹⁷ Charles Roulo, "McRaven: Success in Human Domain Fundamentals in Special Ops," American Forces Press, 05 June 2013, http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=120219.

⁹⁸ U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), USASOC Planner's Handbook GEN II v2 (Fort Bragg, NC: USAJFKSWCS Office of Strategic Communication, 2014), VI-4.

⁹⁹ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 4.

¹⁰⁰ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022," 7, 8; U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), *ARSOF Operating Concept 2022* (Fort Bragg, NC: USAJFKSWCS Office of Strategic Communication, September 2014), 20. "The importance of operating within the human domain will surpass the importance of direct military action."

¹⁰¹ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022," 8.

¹⁰² Michael Hoffman, "Generals: 'Human Domain' Will Dictate Future Wars," *DOD Buzz*, May 2013, https://www.DODbuzz.com/2013/05/14/generals-human-domain-will-dictate-future-wars/

rest more and more on our ability to understand, influence, or exercise control within the Human Domain."¹⁰³ These leaders "expect the influence of the human domain to [continue to] grow" in its importance to national security.¹⁰⁴ As it does, the fact that morality has to do with deciding human concerns gives us reason to expect that the importance of moral discourse will grow commensurately with the importance of the Human Domain.

Typifying the recognition among Army leaders of the strategic importance of the Human Domain is the introduction of the seventh *warfighting function: engagement*.¹⁰⁵ *Engagement* is "the Army's most holistic effort to understand the tremendous influence of the human factors of the operational environment. Its intent is to institutionalize...the capabilities to work with host nations, regional partners, and indigenous populations in a culturally attuned manner...to assess, shape, deter and influence foreign security environments."¹⁰⁶ All this institutional emphasis on human concerns implies that the culture within these organizations has a non-consequentialist Kantian quality.

The Army doctrinal term *engagement* is related to the SF term *special warfare*, which is "that form of special operations in which the United States government defends its interests through training, material or even direct combat support to indigenous people and friendly governments *whose interests coincide with those of the United States*."¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, "SOF are uniquely assessed, selected, trained, educated and equipped to affect and influence human behavior to enhance stability or fight and defeat adversaries."¹⁰⁸ To the extent that SF uses others as *mere* means, SF demonstrates

¹⁰³ Hoffman, "Generals: 'Human Domain' Will Dictate Future Wars."¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ ADRP 3–0 Operations, 4–3. The Army's seven warfighting functions (also known as "elements of combat power") are now mission command, movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment, protection, and engagement. "Commanders apply combat power through the warfighting functions using [the final two "elements of combat power"] leadership and information."

¹⁰⁶ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *TRADOC Pamphlet (PAM)* 525–8–5 U.S. Army Functional Concept for Engagement (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 2014), iii.

¹⁰⁷ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022," 12. Emphasis mine.

¹⁰⁸ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022 Part II," 6.

consequentialism. However, if interests align, neither partner is using the other as a *mere* means and the *Ethic* remains deontological.

According to SOCOM, "The Human Domain is about developing understanding of, and nurturing influence among critical populaces."¹⁰⁹ As part of "nurturing influence," empathy and respect for persons emerges as a "core competency," that has both (a) intrinsic value—as captured in the SF motto, *De Oppresso Liber—To Free the Oppressed* and (b) instrumental value in "winning population-centric conflicts"—as articulated in command guidance. Thus, human concerns, including those of the Human Domain, are a persistently vital factor for SOF. In fact, the Human Domain and Engagement represent a Strategic Center of Gravity in which "humanity reinforces military effectiveness."¹¹⁰

In navigating human concerns, SOF doctrine emphasizes projecting competence, persuasiveness, setting the example, and compromise. While persuasion techniques and compromise may seem to imply consequentialism, according to doctrine, SOF must *never* compromise on force security or human rights issues.¹¹¹ Thus, setting the example and the lack of compromise on protecting its own people (security) and protecting others (human rights) imply that doctrine prioritizes non-consequentialism. Overall, as a core value, SF culture explicitly recognizes both the intrinsic and instrumental worth of people within its own ranks, in other U.S. forces and agencies, and in its partners abroad.

3. A Return to First Principles

ARSOF Next: A Return to First Principles is dedicated largely to the idea that the organization's lineage is an explicit source of its principles, values, and identity. LTG Cleveland notes that "U.S. Army special operations units [have] brought great honor to

¹⁰⁹ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022," 7.

¹¹⁰ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 27–10 Law of War Manual, 59.

¹¹¹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, C-10.

the nation, the Army and our profession by their remarkable service during World War II and the numerous conflicts that followed."¹¹² Accordingly, *ARSOF Next* suggests, "The future is written in our past," and that "ARSOF warriors...operate much in the same way their forbearers did, holding fast to the legacy that has been passed down to them."¹¹³ *Next* asserts that "historic first principles...have stood the test of time...and continue to shape [the Regiment] today."¹¹⁴

According to LTG Cleveland, *ARSOF Next* refocuses "on what is most important to ARSOF: our people." It also focuses on "universal truths of the ARSOF Soldier, units, and our promise to the nation."¹¹⁵ Thus, ARSOF Next is a particularly useful source as it specifically addresses principles and values, "characteristics of ARSOF units," and "the collective attributes of individuals."¹¹⁶ It addresses questions like, "Why does ARSOF fight? Why do ARSOF warriors do the things they do, believe what they believe and have such a unique commitment to the nation?"¹¹⁷

LTG Cleveland suggests that ARSOF principles "are deeply ingrained in the traits of the ARSOF Soldier, the characteristics of an ARSOF Unit, and our Promise to the Nation."¹¹⁸ Thus, we can derive ARSOF principles from a review of these *traits*, *characteristics*, and *Promise*. Figure 3 consolidates the ARSOF 5 *Truths*, 10 *Imperatives*, 4 *Unit Characteristics*, 3 *Soldier Traits*, and the *Promise to the Nation*.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹¹⁵ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022 Part II," 4.

¹¹⁶ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 3.

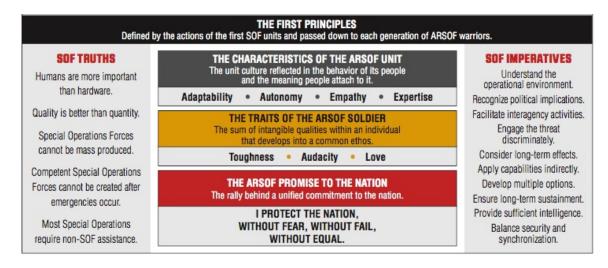
¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹² USASOC, "ARSOF 2022 Part II," 3.

¹¹³ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 4.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Other related figures: The ARSOF / SF Core Attributes (Figure 4), the SF Core Values (Figure 5), and the SOF Operator Attributes and Enduring Competencies (Figure 6), and Consolidated Values, Principles, and Attributes (Figure 7).





4. The Characteristics of the ARSOF Unit

The four "characteristics of the ARSOF unit"—*adaptability, autonomy, empathy,* and *expertise* (Figure 3)—are "shared values" according to *ARSOF Next*.¹²¹ These "characteristics" are synonymous with "esprit d'corps" and "corporate culture" in the business world. The characteristics encompass "the unit culture reflected in the behavior or its people and the meaning people attach to it."¹²² Given this thesis' acceptance of ADRP 1's contention that *culture* and *ethic* are integrated (argued in further detail in Chapter III), these characteristics should weigh heavily in a description of the *SF Ethic*.

ARSOF describes *adaptability* as "the most important trait" and the "one inherent, critical characteristic that grows increasingly more important."¹²³ Adaptability is the units' ability to respond quickly "to strategic and operational change," and "to rapidly change from one mission, theater, or core task...based on the changing operating environment."¹²⁴ Here, *ARSOF Next* describes adaptability as changing quickly between

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Source: USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 3.

¹²¹ Ibid., 26.

¹²² Ibid., 5.

¹²³ Ibid., 27.

tasks rather than as adapting one's principles to ambiguous ethical situations. That is to say, adaptability here is not described in terms of moral flexibility. Thus, this description does not provide strong evidence of a consequentialist ethic. It is uncertain, of course, whether absence of evidence for consequentialism here can be considered evidence of absence. However, adaptability appears again in the "ARSOF [individual] attributes" (below), there with consequentialist implications.

ARSOF Next describes autonomy as "decentralized...independent" and "empowered to act with disciplined initiative within prudent boundaries."¹²⁵ In SOF, it is "accomplishing the mission with just your wits and the commander's intent."¹²⁶ ARSOF Next cites the Alamo Scouts during WWII who operated in small, independent teams and conducted 106 missions, collecting 44 Silver Star Medals, all without losing a man.¹²⁷ The intrinsic value of autonomy is found largely in deontological normative ethics. Likewise, the expectation that rational actors should do the right thing, unsupervised, further reflects non-consequentialist thought. Thus, the SOF characteristic of autonomy serves as inductive evidence for a deontological *SF Ethic*.

The SOF characteristic *empathy* immediately brings to mind an intrinsic respect for persons, a deontological consideration. This seems to be the case in terms of the *SF Ethic*, and it aligns with the SF motto *De Oppresso Liber*. *ARSOF Next* calls empathy "intuitive identification with the thoughts, attitudes, feelings and ideas of others—both friendly and enemy." However, *ARSOF Next* couches empathy, at least in part, in consequentialist terms. Empathy, for SOF is, at least in part, adhering to the first SOF Imperative: "understanding the [physical, intellectual, political, or social] operational environment." According to *ARSOF Next*, with respect to empathy, "Every decision [ARSOF units] make and every resource they expend is done in consideration of the impact on overall mission accomplishment." The ARSOF Operating Concept states, "ARSOF are central to the tasks of first understanding the human domain and then

¹²⁵ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 28.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 29.

shaping it *in accordance with U.S. objectives*."¹²⁸ These statements, especially with respect for the purpose of empathy and the focus on the human domain, are consequentialist. They suggest SOF units exhibit empathy for instrumental reasons. Accomplishing *other purposes*, such as National Security Strategy goals and directives are the real goal—rather than the real objective being the recognition of the intrinsic worth of persons.

In response, one might argue that these instrumental purposes can *coincide* with intrinsic purposes and thus are not exclusively consequentialist. Or we could say that *SF* is respecting the intrinsic worth of persons by providing them with effective (national) security. Regardless, we seem to be implying that, at least to an extent, the ends justify the means. As American revolutionary Nathan Hale professed, "Every kind of service necessary to the public good becomes honorable by being necessary."¹²⁹ This is clear and unambiguous consequentialist thinking.

The historical example of empathy *ARSOF Next* provides shows the possible confluence of intrinsic respect for persons and ends-focused mission accomplishment but does little to illuminate to which side the *SF Ethic* falls. Through truthful, resonant messaging, SOF elements convinced a third of the Lord's Resistance Army under Joseph Kony to defect and cease committing atrocities against central African citizens.¹³⁰ However, this example fails to address how SOF soldiers should respond when the means and the ends are at odds, when the choice seems to be between one or the other, which we might presume is more typical than not. Thus, in the case of *empathy*, *ARSOF Next* seems ambivalent about whether decision making in the *SF Ethic* is consequentialist or not.

We might consider here the example Kant provides of a shopkeeper who refrains from overcharging a child. If he refrains because it is the right thing to do, the shopkeeper possesses the good will and is doing right. But if he refrains simply to stay in the good

¹²⁸ USASOC, ARSOF Operating Concept 2022, 20. Emphasis mine.

¹²⁹ "Nathan Hale's Mission." *CIA Historical Review Program*, July, 1996. https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol17no4/html/v17i4a03p_0001.htm.

¹³⁰ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 31.

graces of other customers who are watching, he has failed to do good, even though the end result was the same. In the latter case, he lacked the good will. Kant says, "It is not sufficient to do that which should be morally good that it conform with the law; it must be done for the sake of the law."¹³¹ Likewise, if SF soldiers exhibit empathy simply for the purpose of other ends, it is hard to see how we could consider their actions non-consequentialist.

However, if Green Berets do what they believe is good, for its own sake, they *are* behaving in a non-consequentialist manner. An example might be Sergeant First Class Jerry "Mad Dog" Shriver, a Vietnam-era Green Beret who cared little for medals (despite his many decorations). What Shriver cared about were the Montagnard tribesmen, "who were his comrades-in-arms."¹³² *ARSOF Next* notes that Shriver "spent all of his money on them, even collecting food and clothes to distribute in the Montagnard villages... [and] living in the Montagnard barracks."¹³³ While few Green Berets may spend their own money on their partner force, the example of SFC Jerry Shriver demonstrates that using a partner force does not entail consequentialism. Like Shriver, Green Berets do not see others as *mere* means to an end. "Irregular warfare...is ultimately about the choices of individuals and the future that *they* desire."¹³⁴ This conclusion seems to implicitly accept the objective importance of recognizing personal autonomy or self-determination in others, a conspicuous non-consequentialist view.

USASOC 2035 notes, "to the Afghan Special Forces the U.S. Special Forces passed on some of their most important lessons: how to think strategically; how to negotiate complex challenges; and how to engage the population and *build trust*."¹³⁵ In the words of a SF soldier, "We work together, train together, eat together, and we spend time together. When we go into the field and shed blood—we do it together."¹³⁶ If a

¹³¹ Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, 6.

¹³² USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 42.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-18. Emphasis mine.

¹³⁵ USASOC, "USASOC 2035," 25. Emphasis mine.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Green Beret is willing to shed his own blood with a partner force in the pursuit of common objectives, it would be hard to defend the notion that the SF soldier is using his partner as a mere means. The existence of a bond of trust implies that both sides share mutual respect; literally, they possess the good will, in the classic Kantian sense.

The last SOF unit characteristic, *expertise*, could be said to be deontological in the sense captured in the film *Good Will Hunting*. That is, "we cannot universalize a maxim to refrain from developing our talents" because of its degenerative effects on a society (if everyone were to refrain from developing his or her talents).¹³⁷ Or stated another way, Kant says, "To neglect…predispositions to greater perfection…would at most be able to subsist with the preservation of humanity as end in itself, but not with the furthering of this end."¹³⁸ Thus, when SF units work to achieve high standards of expertise, they are acting in accord with the Kantian categorical imperative.

5. ARSOF SF Individual Attributes and Traits

According to *ARSOF Next*, "a review of...selection and assessment criteria" (here this thesis enjoys the benefit of previous relevant studies) revealed eight common ARSOF soldier "attributes": *professionalism*, *adaptability*, *integrity*, *perseverance*, *team player*, *operational aptitude* (*capability*), *personal responsibility*, and *courage* (Figure 4).¹³⁹ *ARSOF Next* explains that "the combination of these [eight] attributes within each individual develops the common ethos and manifests itself in three common overarching 'traits': *toughness*, *audacity*, and *love*."¹⁴⁰ These three traits "describe the essence of ARSOF" and are a "common ethos," what "makes ARSOF, ARSOF." They summarize the individual identity and "core values" of SF soldiers "as warriors."¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Pojman, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, 142.

¹³⁸ Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, 48.

¹³⁹ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 35.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. Emphasis mine.

¹⁴¹ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 35; U.S. Dept. of Defense, *FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations*, 1– 18. *Ethos*, a Greek word, is often translated as "habits," or "disposition."

Integrity

Being trustworthy and honest; acting with honor and unwavering adherence to ethical standards

Courage

Acting on own convictions despite consequences; is willing to sacrifice for a larger cause; not paralyzed by fear of failure

Perseverance

Working toward an end; has commitment; physical or mental resolve; motivated; gives effort to the cause; does not quit

Personal Responsibility

Being self-motivated and an autonomous self-starter; anticipates tasks and acts accordingly; takes accountability for his actions

Professionalism

Behaving as a standard-bearer for the regiment; has a professional image, to include a level of maturity and judgment mixed with confidence and humility; forms sound opinions and makes own decisions; stands behind his sensible decisions based on his experiences

Adaptability

Possessing the ability to maintain composure while responding to or adjusting on e's own thinking and actions to fit a changing environment; the ability to think and solve problems in unconventional ways; the ability to recognize, understand and navigate within multiple social networks; the ability to proactively shape the environment or circumstances in anticipation of desired outcomes

Team Player

Possessing the ability to work on a team for a greater purpose than himself; dependable and loyal; works selflessly with a sense of duty; respects others and recognizes diversity

Capability

Maintaining physical fitness, to include strength and agility; has operational knowledge; able to plan and communicate effectively

Figure 4. ARSOF / SF Individual Core Attributes.¹⁴²

In addition to *ARSOF Next*, Special Forces officer training at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) provides a unique source of quantifiable data about the attributes that the SF Regiment values, in the form of weighted criteria used to evaluate SF officers. These criteria are specified in the "Individual Student Assessment Plan" (ISAP). To complete the Special Forces Officer Course, students must receive a specified minimum score, aggregated from three categories (weight indicated below by %): *knowledge, skills*, and *attributes*.¹⁴³

Knowledge evaluation (20%) uses three written exams, a project, and a paper to measure SF doctrinal knowledge and communication ability. *Skills* evaluation (40%) grades the student in one or two leadership positions to observe him putting into practice five equally weighted criteria: *skills, application, influence, judgment,* and *character*. The

¹⁴² Source: U. S. Army, "ARSOF Core Attributes," U.S. Army Special Operations Center of Excellence, http://www.soc.mil/swcs/about.html.

¹⁴³ USAJFKSWCS memorandum, "Individual Student Assessment Plan (ISAP) for Special Forces Officer Course (18A)," June, 2017.

first four are largely self-explanatory. Character refers to the student's ability to demonstrate the SF attributes. *SF attributes* evaluation (40%) is based on two peer and instructor reviews of the individual. It equally weighs the same eight *SF attributes* mentioned above: *professionalism*, *adaptability*, *integrity*, *perseverance*, *team player*, *operational aptitude* (*capability*), *personal responsibility*, and *courage*.

Likely some overlap exists between *knowledge* and *attributes*, and significant overlap seems to exist between *skills* and *attributes*. Thus, we can say the eight *SF* attributes capture a significant portion of what the Regiment values in its members, and thus the *attributes* (Figure 4) describe a big portion of the *SF Ethic*. A competitor for market share of the *SF Ethic* might be the *SF Core Values* (Figure 5), but, as we shall see, much of those values is either explicitly or implicitly is related to the *SF Core Attributes*. Therefore, if we assume that the Regiment rewards what it values, we can say that the *attributes* make up the lion's share of the *SF Ethic* because (1) the *attributes* nave significant overlap with other sources of SF values and ethics.

Also, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has established broad Special Operator *competencies* to serve as the basis for component (subordinate) units (such as the USAJFKSWCS) to use to set their own specific measures of "training, education, experience, and proficiency" for specific operator career profiles.¹⁴⁴ USSOCOM calls these competencies "knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs)."¹⁴⁵ These competencies are captured in the Special Operator Competency Model (SOCM) (Figure 6). The USAJFKSWCS evaluation criteria are derived in part from the SOCM. Particularly, the SOCM helps define, for the schoolhouse, some of the *SF Core Attributes*.¹⁴⁶ In discussing each of the *attributes*, the SOCM descriptions provide additional clarity.

¹⁴⁴ USSOCOM, "Special Operator Competency Model," January, 2014, D-2.

¹⁴⁵ USSOCOM, "Special Operator Competency Model," D-2.

¹⁴⁶ Discussion with CPT Mike DiPietro on October 10, 2017. CPT DiPietro is a member of the 18A Committee, which oversees the design and implementation of training for all Special Forces officers in the SF Qualification Course (SFQC) before they serve as commanders of SF detachments and above.

Warrior Ethos. Special Forces is a fraternity of warriors, the ultimate professionals in conducting special operations when the cause of freedom is challenged. The SF warrior tradition originates from SF's early roles in unconventional warfare and is exemplified by the SF motto, "De Oppresso Liber." Professionalism. SF soldiers provide the nation with a broad range of capabilities to address challenges to our national security and national interests. SF soldiers interface with high-level military commanders, country teams, ambassadors, and heads of state. Through their actions and their range of technical and tactical skills, SF soldiers serve worldwide as operational and strategic assets. Innovation. SF soldiers are creative and inventive in accomplishing their missions through the judicious application of conventional and unconventional problem-solving. They solve problems imaginatively, developing the right solutions outside the constraint of institutional norms. Versatility. SF soldiers adapt quickly to rapidly changing environments, consistently operating and easily transitioning across the entire spectrum of conflict, from peace to war. SF is truly a capability-based organization, providing the widest range of capabilities to accomplish assigned missions. Cohesion. The cohesion within an SF detachment enables it to withstand the most violent shocks and stresses of combat and to perform its duties under demanding circumstances, without definitive guidance, while accomplishing the commander's intent. Character. SF soldiers understand the operational environment. They can be trusted to do the right thing and never to quit. SF soldiers recognize the political implications inherent in their missions. Knowing the cost of failure, they succeed against all odds. Cultural Awareness. SF soldiers use interpersonal skills to work with all foreign cultures, gaining the trust, confidence, and cooperation of the people by winning their hearts and minds. SF soldiers have a situational awareness that enables them to deploy worldwide and accomplish their missions in ambiguous and complex situations.

Figure 5. SF Core Values.¹⁴⁷

The SOCM (Figure 6) breaks down these competencies into three categories (from broad principles to specific technical proficiencies): (1) *operator attributes*, (2) *enduring competencies*, and (3) *targeted competencies*. Elements of the *SF Ethic* are specified or implied in (1) and (2), while elements of the *SF Ethic* are necessary to accomplish (3) for reasons based in *relational influence* and *reputation* factors mentioned in Chapter I. The *operator attributes* (1) are further subdivided into the categories of *intellect, character*, and *commitment*.

¹⁴⁷ Source: U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1–19.

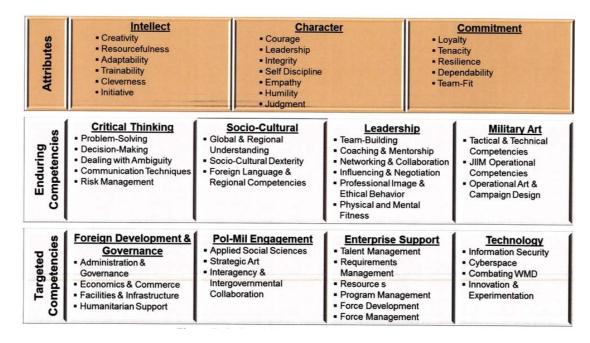


Figure 6. Special Operator Competency Model.¹⁴⁸

In Figure 7, I have consolidated seven SOF values models (for lack of a better word) and assigned their respective terms to categories into which they seem to fall: consequentialist, non-consequentialist, prudential, other, or neutral.¹⁴⁹ This (Figure 7) categorization aligns with the three "most important" ARSOF individual traits (as rated by ARSOF soldiers): *adaptability* (consequentialist), *professionalism* (prudential), and *integrity* (non-consequentialist).

¹⁴⁸ Source: USSOCOM, "Special Operator Competency Model," D-2.

¹⁴⁹ No formal (doctrine or memorandum) synthesis of these exists, to my knowledge.

| MODEL | FIG | Consequentialist | Non-Consequentialist | Prudential | Other | Neutral |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| SOF Truths | 3 | | Humans over hardware | | | |
| Characteristics of the ARSOF Unit | 3 | Adaptability | Autonomy | Expertise | | |
| | | | Empathy | | | |
| ARSOF Soldier Traits | 3 | Audacity | Love | | | Toughness |
| ARSOF / SF Core Attributes | 4 | Adaptability | Integrity | Professionalism | | Courage |
| | | Perseverence | Perseverence | | | Capability |
| | | | Responsibility | | | |
| | | | Team Player | | | |
| SF Core Values | 5 | Innovation | Character | Professionalism | | Warrior Ethos |
| | | Versatiltiy | Cohesion | | | |
| | | | Cultural Awareness | | | |
| SOF Imperatives | 3 | Develop multiple options | Engage the threat discriminately | Ensure long-term sustainability | | |
| | | | | Consider long-term effects | | |
| SOCM | 6 | Intellect* | Character* | | Commitment * | |
| | | Creativity | Courage | | Loyalty | |
| | | Resourcefullness | Leadership | | Tenacity | |
| | | Adaptability | Integrity | | Resilience | |
| | | Trainability | Self-Discipline | | Dependability | |
| | | Cleverness | Empathy | | Team-fit | |
| | | Initiative | Humility | | | |
| | | | Judgment | | | |

Figure 7. Consolidated Values, Principles, and Attributes

The *adaptability-professionalism-integrity* "triad" is noteworthy because a major finding of this thesis is that *professionalism* (which is related to *prudence* and *judgment* as defined in this thesis) seems to be of use in resolving an apparent tension between *adaptability* and *integrity* (Figure 4). Once we compare their respective compositions, we might likewise say a parallel tension (and consequentialist-non-consequentialist dichotomy) exists between *intellect* and *character* (Figure 6) and *audacity* and *love* (Figure 3). This "tension" manifests itself most clearly when dilemmas arise: situations in which the overriding applicable principle and thus the solution are unclear.

In some situations there is a law which students will use to guide their decisions. Some of the other [decisions] are more grey, usually leading to a good discussion, which rarely identifies the "right" answer.¹⁵⁰

When SF soldiers find themselves making "grey area" decisions in morally ambiguous situations, "the right answer" as "more often the least bad decision," that is, the lesser of two evils.¹⁵¹ Ethical dilemmas students (or operators) might see include:

¹⁵⁰ Discussion with CPT Mike DiPietro on October 10, 2017.¹⁵¹ Ibid.

- mistreatment of enemy prisoners by a partner force in a FID environment

- insider threat in a FID environment
- war crimes by a guerilla force commander
- the opportunity to misuse OPFUND due to poor planning or money mismanagement
- black market dealings (e.g., to procure weapons)
- working with a double agent
- meeting a leader of a violent extremist organization to negotiate the release of captives
- hiring locals to find and/or dispose of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)¹⁵²

Each of these situational dilemmas (bulleted above) contains both consequentialist and non-consequentialist considerations. As we have seen above, operators are expected to skillfully use their creativity *and* character—with adaptability *and* integrity—to determine a solution and then take action. What is not immediately clear is how one should balance or prioritize these seemingly conflicting factors.

C. THE NORMATIVE COMPONENTS OF THE SF ETHIC

Having considered the relevant normative models and enumerated the SF values, principles, and attributes, we will now discuss them in more detail. The following sections will cover the attributes or terms by their respective categories (Figure 7): consequentialist, non-consequentialist, prudential, other, or neutral. Chapter II then concludes with a final discussion of the nature of the *SF Ethic*, some of its implications for organizational effectiveness, and recommendations.

1. Consequentialism

What follows is a discussion of the ARSOF terms that seem to largely align with consequentialism. *Adaptability* emerges as "the most important" ARSOF unit trait (Figure 3), one of the top three "most important individual attributes (Figure 4) and as a SOCM attribute (Figure 6). The adaptable SF soldier "adjusts thinking and actions to fit a changing environment; creates *innovative* solutions to complex problems."¹⁵³ The two SF Values, *innovation* and *versatility* are components of adaptability; the latter is defined as

¹⁵² ODAs in Afghanistan recruited, trained and employed a Civil Mine Reduction Group (CMRG) force to counter insurgent IED tactics.

¹⁵³ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 35.

"adapting quickly." To the USAJFKSWCS, excellence in *adaptability* includes modifying "demeanor, posture, or word choice to fit any situation; able to work by, with, and through diverse cultures; a superb problem solver...applies lessons learned to shape his environment...*gets a desired outcome*."¹⁵⁴ The SF Attribute *perseverance* (Figure 4) likewise is defined as "working toward an end."

In the SOCM, *adaptability* is an attribute that falls under *intellect*—along with *creativity, resourcefulness, cleverness,* and *initiative* (all roughly aligned with consequentialism). *Intellect* is "the capacity to acquire and understand knowledge, and then exploit that knowledge and understanding creatively in new situations."¹⁵⁵ This is similar to *intelligent*, meaning "thinks and solves problems in unconventional and creative ways...rational and logical—not emotional."¹⁵⁶ *Creativity* is described as, "thinking inside/outside established conventions or models to generate innovative approaches." *Resourcefulness* includes "imaginative leveraging" of "ideas, networks, and materials to deal with ambiguity." *Cleverness* includes being "ingenious" in "acquiring and applying new knowledge." Last, *initiative* is, "creating and exploiting opportunities by taking appropriate risks *to achieve a desired outcome*."¹⁵⁷

To conclude the consequentialist-leaning terms, the overarching individual trait *audacity* is described as making "bold decisions that no one else will make because they are too hazardous, too ambitious, too *controversial*, or too unconventional... [but] never reckless."¹⁵⁸ A daring hostage rescue is proffered as an example.

Finally, according to the USASOC Planner's Handbook, "consensus building often takes the form of 'power politics." The handbook asserts that the staff planner "should pay respects to the potential Machiavellian side of consensus-building

¹⁵⁴ http://www.soc.mil/swcs/about.html. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵⁵ USSOCOM, "Special Operator Competency Model," D-3.

¹⁵⁶ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 35. *Intelligence* was replaced after 2015 with *Personal Responsibility* in the ARSOF Individual Attributes.

¹⁵⁷ USSOCOM, "Special Operator Competency Model," D-3. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵⁸ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 40. Emphasis mine.

strategies."¹⁵⁹ These include *pruning* (excluding) influential potential dissenters to build a "façade of consensus;" *destroying the credibility* of dissenters; political exchange (quid pro quo); *sidetracking* potential dissenters; *flattery; co-opting, threat* (superior to subordinate); intentional *ambiguity*; and *misinforming*. In the last case, "This tactic is viewed by the liar as a necessary evil, in order to achieve consensus through feigned expertise (i.e., the ends justifies the means); so, they may actually believe this to be a morally-clean tactic."¹⁶⁰ While disagreement exists among scholars, the common conception of Machiavelli is that he was a consequentialist who believed one's desired ends could justify even ruthless or underhanded means.¹⁶¹ Thus, one could consider this concession to Machiavelli evidence of consequentialism in the *SF Ethic* since the handbook offers no further explanation of when or to what extent planners "should pay respects" to Machiavelli—by simply being aware of or by implementing such strategies.

2. Non-consequentialism

Integrity, another of the "top rated" SF attributes "triad," means "trustworthy and honest; acts with honor; unwavering adherence to high ethical standards, without guidance or supervision."¹⁶² Accordingly, *integrity* permits *autonomy* (an ARSOF Unit Characteristic, Figure 3) due to trust between principal and agent. For the USAJFKSWCS, excellence in *integrity* includes being "100% ethical when negotiating and unquestionably loyal to the team." In the SOCM, *integrity* falls under *character*— along with *courage, self-discipline, empathy, humility, leadership,* and *judgment*. I argue that while the first three align with non-consequentialism, the last three are best described as prudential. *Character* in SOCM is "the aggregate traits that determine how a person

¹⁵⁹ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, VII-8.

¹⁶⁰ These consensus building strategies are adapted from Marcia V. Wilkof (1989), "Organizational Culture and Decision Making: A Case of Consensus Management," in *R&D Management* 19, no. 2: 185–200.

¹⁶¹ John Swain, "Machiavelli and Modern Management," in *Management Decision* 40, no. 3: 281–287.

¹⁶² USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 35.

behaves, especially when under stress."¹⁶³ Thus, while its components are deontological, in aggregate, *character* is aretaic.

Courage, in SOCM, includes "willing[ness] to act in the face of danger or adversity *for the greater good*." *Courageous* means "understands calculated risk; able to overcome fear of failure; sacrifices for a larger cause or purpose; stands up for beliefs; is not intimidated."¹⁶⁴ Courageousness, as a trait by itself, may be morally neutral since it could be used for noble or ignoble cause. However, the *ARSOF* explanation seems to imply protecting the intrinsic good. Therefore, unless one presumes that "calculated risk" implies outcome-based moral risk-taking, *courageousness* appears to be framed in a deontological manner.

For similar reasons, the *team player* trait, which is "reliable; loyal; respects others; values diversity; selfless; contributes to a larger cause or purpose; tireless... dependable in all situations with all tasks" seems deontological.¹⁶⁵ An excellent *team player* "always puts the team first, will work with anyone on the team to further the mission; seeks to lead and motivate all members...seeks to form consensus in all situations; selflessly gives the team the credit." The SF Value *cohesion* is the result of and encompasses the attribute *team player*.

The first SOF truth "Humans are more important than hardware," and the SOF Imperative, "Engage the threat discriminately," seem likewise non-consequentialist. The SF Core Value *cultural awareness* relates to *empathy*, which is the ability to "understand the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another person, group, or culture."

The final overarching individual trait, *love*, which expresses "an idea of selfless, brotherly love is a sacred bond of commitment "that transcends everything...even death."¹⁶⁶ It is a love for their job, their country, the mission, their team, their fellow

¹⁶³ USSOCOM, "Special Operator Competency Model," D-3.

¹⁶⁴ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 35.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 43. *ARSOF Next* uses the Greek *agape* form of love, but perhaps *phileo* is a better fit since the former is more often the love for (and from) God, while the latter is usually brotherly love.

warriors. "ARSOF warriors have a capacity for love that is unique in its intensity...those who lack it will...fake it, because they recognize they cannot remain without it."¹⁶⁷ *Love* seems to mean a profound respect for others, and thus is non-consequentialist.

3. Prudence

The third "top rated" trait among ARSOF soldiers is the last "triad" attribute, *professionalism. Professionalism* exists as an SF attribute (Figure 4) and an SF value (Figure 5). *Professionalism* means to serve as a Green Beret standard bearer, who exhibits mature judgment, "confidence tempered by humility; forms candid opinions and makes independent decisions; accountable and characterized by honorable service; a steward of the army profession."¹⁶⁸ He exhibits logical reasoning, and decisive leadership. Likewise, *judgment* is the ability to "make considered decisions or come to sensible conclusions."¹⁶⁹ Accordingly, in response to the above-mentioned tension, the use of sound, professional judgment, in the face of apparent moral conflict, seems to align with *prudence* (discussed in Chapter IV).

4. Other or Neutral Terms

Perseverance means "committed and resolved...a motivated and optimistic selfstarter" who is "emotionally balanced and never quits."¹⁷⁰ This could be deontological in the sense that one should persistently develop oneself or pursue the good as a universal rule (as mentioned above), but since one could just as well persevere in an evil cause, this trait could also be neutral.

Personal responsibility is anticipating tasks and beginning work, seeking responsibility, especially during difficult times, and is accountable. It has to do with motivation and proactivity. Likewise, *self-discipline*, the ability to control one's behavior,

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 35.

¹⁶⁹ USSOCOM, "Special Operator Competency Model, January," D-3.

¹⁷⁰ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 35.

has to do with willpower and is related to extrinsic and intrinsic motivational forces. These attributes have to do with compliance theory and commitment (Chapter III).

Capability (operational aptitude) refers to excellence in knowledge, planning, evaluations, communications, fitness, and overall performance. A capable operator is a "fit, strong, and agile technical and tactical expert," who "effectively plans, communicates, and understands the operational environment." Since aptitude could be used for good or evil, this trait is also morally neutral.¹⁷¹

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

While clear aspects of deontology exist throughout the *SF Ethic*, a trend or positive correlation with consequentialism seems to exist as we move toward the tip of the spear: from societal values to strategic, operational, and tactical or from conventional army to unconventional normative ethics. As one might expect, when it comes to actually getting things done, more pragmatic or ends-related considerations seem to increase in importance.

From the above analysis made in Chapter II, I conclude that the *SF Ethic* is a mix of consequentialism, deontology and aretaic thought. The idea of "balanced judgment" suggests that an adaptation of Aristotle's "Doctrine of the Mean" may serve as a useful construct for framing a more effective process of responding to ethical dilemmas. Specifically, the notion of aretaic *prudence*, in which judgment is applied by experienced professionals, may help resolve a tension between *adaptability* and *integrity* or *consequentialism* and *non-consequentialism*. The organizational theory construct *professionalism* is described in Chapter III; aretaic *prudence* is discussed in Chapter IV.

Many or most of the "ingredients" for optimal effectiveness exist within the *SF Ethic*. However, (suboptimal) organization and prioritization of terms, as well as the lack of a clear doctrinal method for how SF professionals can reconcile ethical dilemmas, hinders optimal application of the *SF Ethic* in practice. These limitations negatively impact the organizational effectiveness of the SF Regiment.

¹⁷¹ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 35.

A significant recommendation from this section is that USSOCOM and USASOC synthesize and organize the various conceptions of "values," "attributes," "traits," "principles," and "characteristics," etc. Furthermore, one might ask, why did "personal responsibility" replace "intelligence" as an ARSOF attribute when the former term may correlate with better outcomes in empirical studies?¹⁷² According to FM 3–05.20, "inherent" in every SF soldier is "maturity, core values, warrior ethos, technical and tactical competency, and flexibility."¹⁷³ Like the seven "models" I considered and consolidated in Figure 8, the preceding sentence typifies the ad hoc manner in which values and principles seem to be combined. Within the models I considered, professionalism and character are both considered "attributes" and "values." Integrity is both an "attribute" and a sub "attribute" of *character*. Adaptability is an "attribute" and a "unit characteristic" and a sub "attribute" of *intelligence*. Definitions of the same term vary from one publication to another. However, a common framework of terms and greater consistency on definitions across publications would help operators think more clearly about the SF ethical principles and how to apply them. A common vernacular would also facilitate dialogue among team members about the right course of action to take in a given situation.

The Army and Special Forces rely on deliberate, systematic processes. Likewise, I recommend a logical hierarchy of normative ethical and values terms be established in line with Pojman's "Schema of Moral Processes."¹⁷⁴ SOF should clearly define the *values* that inform SOF *principles* and try to provide organization and a sense of prioritization. *Principles* clarify the "action-guiding or prescriptive force latent in *values*," e.g., "the principle of *honesty* is derived from the value, *integrity*."¹⁷⁵ And when one or more principles apply to a situation, the use of *judgment* adjudicates, e.g., truthful reporting. Organization of terms can be achieved by specifying which terms are subordinate to or are entailed by other terms. Essentially, Pojman would consider many

¹⁷² Thanks to Dr. Erik Jansen, NPS, for this observation.

¹⁷³ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1–4.

¹⁷⁴ Pojman, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, the "Schema of the Moral Process," 94.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 93.

"attributes" principles. For example, the attribute (principle) *empathy* is derived from the intrinsic value of human life and relationships.

Such a deliberate organization of terms will help refine the Individual Student Assessment Plan (ISAP) at the SFQC as well as assist operators to make decisions in real-life ambiguous environments through a more coherent values system. Also, adding a formal block of instruction during the SFQC on SF values and ethics—there currently is none—is another important recommendation since judgments, decisions, and actions all flow from the unit's normative underpinnings.¹⁷⁶ If systematic and deliberate organization is important—and the Army and SF strongly suggest that it is important in other areas—then we should be systematic and deliberate in all domains, including our normative ethics.

¹⁷⁶ Discussion with CPT Mike DiPietro on October 10, 2017.

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III. THE SPECIAL FORCES ENVIRONMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Effective managing happens where art, craft, and science meet.

— Henry Mintzberg¹⁷⁷

Organizational theorists have noted that "social actions are not context free, but are constrained and shaped by the setting in which they occur."¹⁷⁸ Having discussed the *SF Ethic*, we transition from normative moral philosophy to organizational theory to describe the context in which the *SF Ethic* is at work. Chapter III is divided into two sections. The first briefly considers the SF organization's *general environment*, *task environment*, *structure*, *human resource flow*, and *culture*—all factors at the organizational level of analysis.¹⁷⁹ The second section analyzes individual factors—*commitment*, *trust*, and *professionalism*—that connect the *SF Ethic* to the Regiment's *effectiveness*.

A. ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

Beginning with the storied Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II, Army Special Forces (SF) has developed organizational structures that share little in common with the "big" army. Like the conventional Army, the SF Regiment is divided into companies, battalions, and brigades—although the latter are referred to as "groups" in SF. Aside from this titular commonality, these organizations are quite different. This is because SF missions and methods differ vastly from the conventional army's and therefore necessitate a modified organizational design.

The most drastic divergence from the conventional Army structure occurs at the company-level and below. The company headquarters, or SFOD-B, is structured more

¹⁷⁷ Henry Mintzberg, *Managers Not MBAs* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2004), 10.

¹⁷⁸ Palthe, "Regulative, Normative, and Cognitive Elements of Organizations," 62.

¹⁷⁹ This section will also include the group level of analysis. Chapter III-A is in part the product of Organizational Design research conducted in 2017 by MAJs Eric Hoelscher, Jonathan Kingsley, and William Morgan at the Naval Postgraduate School under the guidance of Dr. Erik Jansen.

like a battalion staff than a traditional infantry company headquarters. The SF Company's heavily decentralized management and employment of its subordinate elements provide another stark contrast to the traditional company. However, the most significant contrasting feature is that the SFOD-B's subordinate elements, SFOD-As, are manned completely by specially selected, trained and experienced soldiers who achieve results by working by, with, and through indigenous forces.

Synchronizing and sustaining six teams of experienced *Green Berets*, executing different mission sets, interacting with multiple stakeholders, and operating in disparate and evolving environments, is a complex task, which in turn necessitates autonomy and empowerment at the lowest level. In accordance with Structural Contingency Theory, this section will analyze the organizational design structure that enables SF operations given the organization's *general* and *task* environment.¹⁸⁰ In the terms of organizational theory, in SF the operational core (the lower ranks) is more highly professionalized.

1. Environment

Daft divides the organizational environment into two aspects: the *general environment* and the *task environment*. I will explain each aspect in turn, as they relate to SF. The *general environment* is composed of those elements and factors that indirectly effect the organization.¹⁸¹ FM 3–05.20 notes that "The global security environment has become increasingly complex, significantly less stable."¹⁸² Likewise, fiscal, political and military changes in the environment at the strategic level often indirectly affect the SF unit. For example, the change from a Democratic administration to a Republican will change national strategy and policy, which will indirectly effect SOF's utilization, budget, authorities and restrictions.

¹⁸⁰ Henry Mintzberg provides an overview of Structural Contingency Theory—the view that, to be effective, organizations should be structured to "fit" variable contingencies in the organization's general and task environment. Henry Mintzberg details these considerations in, "Organization Design: Fashion or Fit?" *Harvard Business Review* (January-February 1981): 1–16.

¹⁸¹ Richard Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory & Design* (Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College, 2001). Ch. 3, "External Environment," 48–49.

¹⁸² U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3-05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1-3.

The USASOC Planner's Handbook notes that, "Collectively, [strategic guidance] documents illustrate a complex FOE [future operating environment] best characterized by uncertainty; ill-structured, population-centric security challenges; constrained resources; and waning popular tolerance or endurance for large-scale extended conflict."¹⁸³ Public support for national strategies directly affects congressional budget allocations for those endeavors. It is also the reason that politicians are generally uncomfortable with risk. Low risk-tolerance is not unique to politicians; it affects senior military commanders as well. These factors shape the way wars are fought, how SOF is employed, and ultimately limit potential effectiveness.

Finally, there is a misperception resulting from representations in television and movies that all SOF are terrorist hunters, almost wholly disregarding the COIN, security force assistance (SFA), FID, UW and IO mission sets. In other words, many fail to appreciate the degree to which "Special Forces units are designed to operate in complex and uncertain environments."¹⁸⁴ This misunderstanding risks leaving military and political decision makers ill-equipped to make informed decisions regarding SOF's application. While indeed some elements of SOF do hunt terrorists, this is not the SF organization's primary mission. This false perception risks promoting a "whack-a-mole" strategy and rewards an unsuccessful strategy with more money, resources, and prestige.

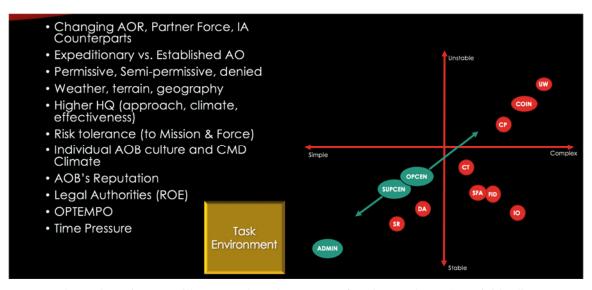
The *task environment*, on the other hand, comprises elements and factors that directly impact the organization's pursuit of its goals.¹⁸⁵ The task environment defines the work, and the work creates the context for structure. In the case of SF, structural contingency theory indicates the most appropriate fit for such a task environment is a hybrid professional bureaucracy-adhocracy (using Mintzberg's configuration theory). Figure 8 depicts the SF operational task environment in terms of functions and eight core

¹⁸³ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, VIII-1.

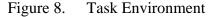
¹⁸⁴ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022," 12.

¹⁸⁵ Daft, Essentials of Organization Theory & Design, Ch. 3, "External Environment," 48–49.

activities.¹⁸⁶ Within the figure, complexity and stability define a space that relates to the structural configuration (i.e., the hybrid professional bureaucracy-adhocracy structure) and the properties that predict an organization's probability of effectiveness. The probability of effectiveness increases when the organization's structure fits the task environment in which it is required to function (given its missions). Organizational structure will be discussed after the task environment.



The Task Environment illustrates where the company functions and core SF activities lie within the complexity-stability space.



As Figure 8 suggests, the core activities generally lie on the complex end of the spectrum, with the most challenging missions (UW, COIN, and CP) residing in the unstable *and* complex region. Most notably, Unconventional Warfare (UW), which lies in the *most* complex and *most* unstable region, is "*the core* SF mission."¹⁸⁷ The green ovals depict the company functions. While the administrative function is relatively stable and

¹⁸⁶ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations*, Ch. 2, "Guidance and Principal Tasks," SOF's 8 Core Activities are Special Reconnaissance (SR), Direct Action (DA), Counterterrorism (CT), Counter-proliferation (CP), Counterinsurgency (COIN), Security Force Assistance (SFA), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Information Operations (IO) and Unconventional Warfare (UW).

¹⁸⁷ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1–4. Emphasis mine.

simple, the logistics support (SUPCEN) and C2 functions (OPCEN) fluctuate in complexity and stability in correlation with the SFODAs' assigned core activities. The complexity of executing these functions is increasingly compounded when subordinate elements are assigned diverse core activities or the AOB is assigned a mission of its own.

The task environment is also affected by constant changes in the physical environment, the human domain, and time. While some units deploy repeatedly to the same country and province, many others will deploy several times before returning to the same country, much less the same province with the same people. This constant change requires a new analysis of factors such as weather, geography, topography. Increased distance between elements can further complicate the procurement and distribution of logistics. The amount of existing infrastructure is another significant consideration. In established theaters like Afghanistan, logistics, basing, and communications systems are already established and integrating into them is relatively simple. Expeditionary countries, in contrast, force the SF element to develop new infrastructure and processes from scratch.

In terms of the human domain, interpersonal relationships are critical to an SF unit's success. Every time the unit deploys to a new country, it is forced to navigate the process of developing new relationships. Whether that means building rapport with the host-nation counterparts or coordinating with members of the JIIM community, it is a critical, but time-consuming process. This is further complicated by the degree of "permissiveness" of a country.¹⁸⁸ Missions in friendly countries are far less complicated than conducting operations in "hostile" environments, where the SF element must conceal its existence from the state or other occupying power.

Time is another critical environmental factor. Missions such as FID, COIN, and UW take years to execute effectively. However, SF AOBs and ODAs generally deploy

¹⁸⁸ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations*. A *permissive environment* is defined as an "Operational environment in which host country military and law enforcement agencies have control as well as the intent and capability to assist operations that a unit intends to conduct." A *hostile environment* is defined as "Operational environment in which hostile forces have control as well as the intent and capability to environment in which hostile forces have control as well as the intent and capability to environment in which hostile forces have control as well as the intent and capability to effectively oppose or react to the operations a unit intends to conduct."

for six months. Thus, the unit will only complete a portion of the campaign plan and must be prepared to hand the remainder over to its relieving unit, hoping that the plan and work is carried forward. Furthermore, commanders and decision makers are often impatient, demanding results before subordinate elements can feasibly accomplish them. These factors place significant time pressures on an SF unit and can produce detrimental effects.

Overall, for SF to be effective given its general and task environment requires continued professionalization of the whole system including the education to make autonomous judgments, at increasingly lower levels, about complex problems. It also means lateral communications, including direct liaison authority (DIRLAUTH) is essential.¹⁸⁹ These considerations relate to the organizational structure, which is discussed next.

2. Organizational Structure

A key function of structure is to align power and information. The SF company is operationally structured as a professional bureaucracy, but often operates as an adhocracy due to the complexity and instability of its environment, which requires significant mutual adjustment, collaboration, and coordination. Thus, an SF company is usually configured as a professional bureaucracy-adhocracy hybrid, and is slightly modified depending on the situation.

Constructing a universal prototype to show how an AOB and its ODAs always operate is not feasible. However, a recent example still provides a general idea of how an typical AOB might operate, now or in the future. The structure and processes discussed in this section will accordingly reflect an AOB conducting combat operations in Afghanistan. It is important to remember this caveat because without it the permutations and potential counter-arguments would be endless.

¹⁸⁹ "DIRLAUTH is that authority granted by a commander (any level) to a subordinate to directly consult or coordinate an action with a command or agency within or outside of the granting command." http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1.pdf.

During Afghan combat operations, the AOB resembles an adhocracy with features similar to a professional bureaucracy. It is like an adhocracy in terms of having a professional core that is supported by a robust support staff, and whose structure narrows at the strategic apex (Figure 9). Additionally, the lines between the techno-structure, support staff, and midline are extremely blurred.¹⁹⁰ It also has characteristics of a professional bureaucracy in that highly experienced and trained experts who are expected to make complex judgments are concentrated in the professional core. By contrast an adhocracy's experts are dispersed throughout all the other parts of the structure (i.e., not just in the core but also in what are blurred staff and midline positions).¹⁹¹

The professional core consists of up to six Operational Detachment-Alphas (ODAs), which each contain approximately twelve soldiers. These soldiers undergo between 18 months and two years of training to become qualified as Special Forces soldiers.¹⁹² Thus, professional specialization and standardization at the operational core level is extremely high; this is similar to both adhocracies and professional bureaucracies.¹⁹³ These professionalized soldiers are then inserted into a team where they carry out tasks specific to their individual specialization (i.e., weapons, communications, engineering, intelligence, and medical); this again suggests organic processes of an adhocracy. Furthermore, adhocratic flexibility comes from decentralization and the lateral processes that become at least as important as the vertical processes (e.g., teams of teams, liaisons, and task groups).

¹⁹⁰ Mintzberg, *Organization Design: Fashion Or Fit*, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University (February 1981), 11.

¹⁹¹ Mintzberg, Organization Design: Fashion Or Fit, 10.

¹⁹² USAJFKSWCS, *Intro to the Special Forces Regiment*, power point brief used for new students throughout 2016.

¹⁹³ Mintzberg, Organization Design: Fashion Or Fit, 10.

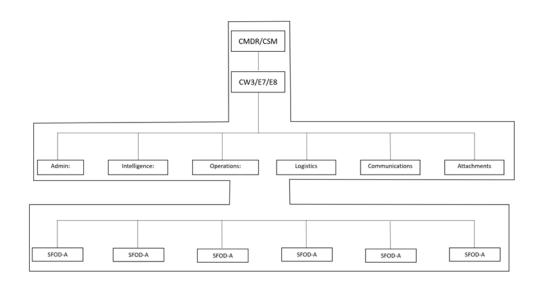


Figure 9. Mintzberg-Adapted SF Company Configuration

Regarding the professional core, each ODA usually operates in a divisional element within the AOB. These divisions are a means of managing task complexity though decentralization as well as increasing—over time—allowing operators to gain experience relevant to their particular task environment. ODAs are generally used to effect a specific area separate from other ODAs, which gives each ODA mission its own unique qualities and needs. As previously mentioned, the specific elements and factors that generate environmental complexity and stability vary for each ODA. Therefore, establishing specific mechanistic processes that reliably lead to effective results tends to be difficult or impossible.¹⁹⁴ The AOB's subordinate elements generally maintain pooled interdependence with respect to each other, and each ODA is affected by finite resources that the AOB judiciously allocates.¹⁹⁵ These resources range from personnel support to aerial assets.¹⁹⁶ This support limitation requires mutual adjustment; ODAs thus need to maintain regular horizontal communication to ensure that one operation does not use so

¹⁹⁴ Daft, *Essentials Of Organization Theory And Design*, Chapter "Environmental Domain and Adapting to Uncertainty," 52.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., Chapter "Workflow Interdependence Among Departments," 277.

¹⁹⁶ As observed by MAJs Eric Hoelscher, Jonathan Kingsley, and William Morgan during four deployments to Afghanistan.

many vital resources that it restricts the operations of another ODA. Consequently, the interdependence between ODAs fluctuates between pooled and sequential.¹⁹⁷ In this case, the output of one ODA operation is not only the successful completion of the mission, but also the release of vital assets for another ODA. The released assets can then be input into an adjacent ODA's operation, making the interdependence sequential. Many times, horizontal coordination is enough to synchronize operations; however, other times there are irreconcilable conflicts between the ODAs. Often this conflict results because ODAs do not have complete visibility of adjacent operations or a full awareness of the theater commander's priorities. These issues are the reason for the existence for the support staff, otherwise known as the B-Team.

The B-Team operates within several different functional groups: administration, intelligence, operations, logistics, communications, and enabler support (Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, etc.).¹⁹⁸ This kind of horizontal mechanism is what one would expect to find among units with this kind of interdependence in complex, unstable and hence uncertain task environments. Each function serves different tasks for the AOB and, at times, works departmentally, especially within the administrative and logistical arenas. However, a primary function of an AOB is to support operations and, in doing so, many of the functions integrate to develop a balanced approach to the entire area in which the AOB is operating.¹⁹⁹

3. Selection, Training, and Socialization

The human resource (HR) flow for AOB personnel includes the following components: recruitment, selection, training pipeline, career management (progression), placement, operational rotations, promotions, turnover, and retirement. Special Forces personnel either come from different Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs), or they join the Army with an "x-ray" contract, meaning they enter directly into the SF training

¹⁹⁷ Daft, *Essentials Of Organization Theory And Design*, Chapter "Workflow Interdependence Among Departments," 278.

 ¹⁹⁸ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations*, 2–27 to 3–28.
 ¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 2–27.

"pipeline." After completing Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS), trainees attend the SF Qualification Course (SFQC). Officers also attend the SOF Captain's Career Course. During the SFQC, trainees are segmented into their respective specialties, where they gain standardized skills in one of the following: Command (18A), Weapons and Tactics (18B), Engineering and Demolitions (18C), Medicine and Trauma Care (18D), and Communications (18E). Throughout the training, cadre provide mentorship, indoctrination into the SF culture and continue to identify trainees who demonstrate behavior that is maladaptive to SF culture.

The final exercise, Robin Sage, brings the trainees from all 18 series MOS's together to conduct a realistic training event as a team. Here experienced prior SF soldiers conduct in-role mentorship of the trainees and challenge trainees with operational and ethical dilemmas. Upon graduation, *Green Berets* transition to their units and then conduct six weeks of "green platoon" training in which they gain further specialized, standardized technical skills, including procedures, operating specialized equipment, and infiltration / exfiltration techniques. They also begin socialization and indoctrination into their respective units' culture.

Aspects of *culture* that are part of indoctrination include developing a shared *identity, assumptions, meanings, values, mindsets, perceptions, ideology,* and *norms.* Individual *Green Berets* come to understand what their peers and the organization expects of them. Here they begin to experience normative pressures including competition in marksmanship and physical training. A key message in SF education is, "It pays to be a winner." The "winner" is rewarded both extrinsically and intrinsically.

Internalization of values and norms allows members to become self-directing and autonomous, which is necessary given the organization's organic and decentralized structure, as well as the complex, quickly changing environment. They also receive on the job training to fulfil ad hoc requirements and cross-functional training to understand the other team members' roles, which helps members generate synergistic effects. In contrast, "enablers," or non-Special Forces members of the AOB receive specialized training to fulfil narrower roles and duties. Table 2 depicts the AOB personnel composition. Of note, all but three are 18 series (Green Berets). This table represents what an AOB *should* look like, doctrinally. However, in reality, AOBs are rarely manned with an executive officer, assistant operations sergeant, junior communications sergeants, or supply specialist. The AOB is usually populated with operators who have completed two to four years on an ODA. While AOB personnel "should be" the most experienced and competent members of the organization, due to personnel shortages, AOB commanders often allow the ODAs to retain the best operators.

| Position | MOS | Professional Military Education | Supplementary Education | Function/Role |
|-------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Commander | 18A | SFQC, OBC, CCC, ILE | JM, Postgraduate School | C2 |
| SGM | 18Z | SFQC, BLC, ALC, SLC, SMA | Various Schools | C2, Maneuver, Sustainment |
| Exec. Officer | 18A | SFQC, OBC, CCC | | Sustainment, C2 |
| Ops Warrant | 180A | SFQC, WOBC, WOAC | Intel Manager's Course, JM | C2, Intel |
| Ops Sgt. | 18Z | SFQC, BLC, ALC, SLC | JM | Maneuver, Fires, Intel |
| Ass. Ops Sgt. | 18B | SFQC, BLC, ALC, SLC | | Maneuver, Fires |
| Intel Sgt. | 18F | SFQC, BLC, ALC, SLC, SFISC | | Intel |
| Weapons Sgt. | 18B | SFQC, BLC, ALC | SFARTIC | Fires, Maneuver, Protection |
| Engr. Sgt. | 18C | SFQC, BLC, ALC, SLC, | UMO, HAZMAT | Logistics, Protection |
| Medical Sgt. | 18D | SFQC, BLC, ALC, SLC, | Non-Trauma Module, Med-refresher | Sustainment, Protection |
| Snr. Commo Sgt. | 18E | SFQC, BLC, ALC, SLC, | JTAC | C2, Fires |
| Jnr. Commo Sgt. (x2) | 18E | SFQC, BLC, ALC | | C2 |
| Supply Sgt. | 92Y3P | MOS, BLC | | Sustainment |
| Supply Specialist | 92Y | MOS | | Sustainment |
| Chemical NCO | 74D | MOS, BLC | | Sustainment |

 Table 2.
 AOB Modified Table of Organization (MTOE)

Doctrine is not reality. While the Professional Military Education (PME) shown on the table is largely accurate, supplementary education varies, as do roles and functions. No PME exists to assist in the transition from ODA to AOB. As previously alluded to in the structure portion of this paper, AOB members learn all their roles and how to fulfil their functions on the job. Disparities in education and experience among those who report to the AOB results in an ad-hoc division of labor. Often the functions, roles, and additional duties do not correspond to the assigned position title. Likewise, individual Green Berets on ODAs, despite their specialized MOS training, employ their professional knowledge and expertise to adapt in an ad hoc fashion to unique task environments. This ad hoc set up is (potentially) ripe for overworked top performers and free-riders given the difficulty supervisors have in judging workload or assessing how long an assigned task *should* take.

While NCOs may remain on one or more ODAs for five to ten years, assignments to the AOB are also usually short in duration, sometimes a year or less. Such high turnover and lack of formal training limits the AOB's effectiveness. It is rare to see the same personnel on an AOB for a second deployment. As a result, the continuity between deployments is often lost and systems are repeatedly recreated. To offset these problems, AOBs sometimes receive personnel augmentation from non-deployed AOBs or ODAs.²⁰⁰ For a more formalized structure and training regimen to emerge from this ad hoc system would require a larger budget and a lower operational tempo.

Army Human Resources Command (HRC) dictates the promotion schedules and manages the personnel evaluation system. However, each NCO and officer is evaluated annually and is in direct competition with his peers. Commanders rank order the personnel under their command numerically and can use particular verbiage to strengthen or weaken a member's file for promotion review. Thus, the team and AOB leadership are able to re-task operators who fail to perform autonomously as professionals.

4. Culture and Ethic

The preceding section has illustrated the non-technical human dynamics at work in an SF company onto which we project organizational theory. Having considered the environment, structure, and human resource flow, the final organizational level of analysis factor to be covered here is *culture*. This section begins to demonstrate the

²⁰⁰ ARSOF 2022 describes the USASOC commander's directive to "operationalize the CONUS base" to provide support to deployed AOBs and ODAs and to serve as a conduit between the deployed unit and the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC).

ethics-effectiveness link in earnest, relying heavily on established organizational theory models. The *SF Ethic* is largely considered synonymous with *culture* to align with both army doctrine and organizational theory. ADRP 1 calls *culture* and *ethic* "integrated, interdependent, evolving, and enduring."²⁰¹ Thus, the *SF Ethic* cannot be divided from the SF culture; the two must be considered together.

Culture, in SF, is a coordination mechanism that supports the professional adhocracy with values that are a hybrid of consequentialism, non-consequentialism, and virtue ethics. According to Richard Daft, "culture reinforces the strategy and structural design the organization needs to be effective in its environment."²⁰² Cultures, "influence behaviors and shape the identity of their members [and] reflect what is acceptable and functionally effective...essentially how we do things."²⁰³ An organization's culture is deeply embedded and difficult to change, unlike *climate* (members' feelings and attitudes), which can often be changed quickly.

According to ADRP 1, the professional Army Ethic is, "the evolving set of laws, values, and beliefs, embedded within the Army culture of trust that motivates and guides the conduct of Army professionals bound together in a common moral purpose...to do the right thing for the right reason in the right way."²⁰⁴ Similar to the definition of *ethic*, culture is "the set of values, guiding beliefs, understandings, and ways of thinking that is shared by members of an organization and taught to new members as correct."²⁰⁵ Furthermore, according to Daft, "Of the values that make up an organization's culture, ethical values are now considered among the most important."²⁰⁶ Thus, we can conclude that *ethic* is essentially tantamount to *culture* and that, to a significant extent, what an organization's *culture* affects, its *ethic* likewise affects.

²⁰¹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, A-1.

²⁰² Richard Daft, *Essentials Of Organization Theory And Design*, Chapter "Organizational Culture and Ethical Values," 112.

²⁰³ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, A-1.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 1–1, 1–2.

²⁰⁵ Daft, "Organizational Culture and Ethical Values," 112.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 119.

Organizational theory also shows a direct connection between *culture* and *effectiveness* via several organizational theory models. The Hill-McCaskey model shows a direct link between group culture and effectiveness, the latter being the model's final output (Figure 10). Similarly, Michael McCaskey's model shows that *culture* leads directly to *outputs*, which lead to *outcomes* (Figure 11). Likewise, in Jansen's adaptation of Galbraith's framework, *culture* is an *emergent factor* that directly ties to organizational *performance* (Figure 12). The fact that *performance* is an element of *effectiveness* in the Hill-McCaskey model provides further support to the direct connection between culture and effectiveness.²⁰⁷ Furthermore Daft notes, "CEOs say that organizational *culture* is the most important mechanism for attracting, motivating, and retaining talented people," which, in turn, Daft points out, is the "single best predictor of overall excellence."²⁰⁸ Daft also asserts, "Many researchers underline...specifically the importance of organizational culture for the effectiveness of the organization."²⁰⁹ Thus, overall a picture forms that, according to major design frameworks within organizational theory, *culture* directly relates to *effectiveness*.

This section has provided an argument that appears to reveal a strong relationship between (a) *ethics* and *culture* and between (b) *culture* and *effectiveness*. If this argument succeeds, we can then posit a relationship showing that *ethics* and *effectiveness* are strongly related, in support of this thesis' original contention.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Hill-McCaskey Model.

²⁰⁸ Daft, "Organizational Culture and Ethical Values," 112.

²⁰⁹ Daft is cited in Krumov et al., "Organizational management and organizational effectiveness," 307, which specifically mentions concurring researchers J.B. Barney, A. Wilkins, and W.G. Ouchi.

²¹⁰ This deduction is possible via hypothetical syllogism, a chain of reasoning that uses a transitive relationship between variables.

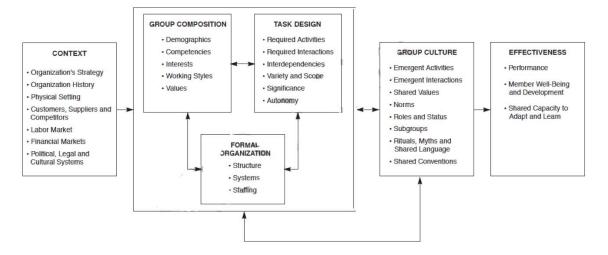


Figure 10. Hill-McCaskey Model

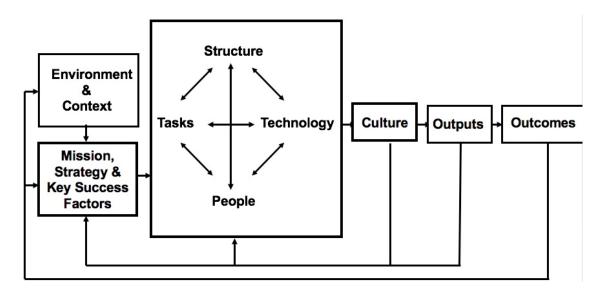


Figure 11. McCaskey Model

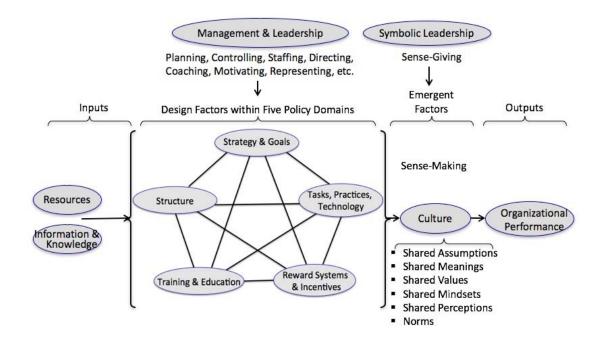


Figure 12. Jansen's Adaptation of Galbreath's Star Model

B. INDIVIDUAL LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

Having completed a review of the important contextual factors at the organizational level of analysis—*environment*, *structures*, *human resources*, and *culture*—we now turn to the individual level of analysis to understand the decisions and behaviors of operators. Here we cover *commitment*, *trust*, and *professionalism*, elements of organizational theory that seem to lend significant empirical support to the *SF Ethic-effectiveness* link.

1. Commitment, Reward Systems, and Moral Factors

While culture is a *shared* understanding or mindset, commitment is an individual one. This section focuses on a recent theory of *commitment* to describe why SF operators do what they do. *Commitment* is a better predictor of effectiveness than individual *perceptions* or *affective mindsets* about an organization, which relate the feelings or attitudes of members without directly relating these to their (potential) actions. That is to

say, "the *summary evaluation* of a target is distinct from *volitional dedication* [i.e., commitment] to a target."²¹¹ That is, commitment leads to dedicated actions.

Furthermore, the following theory of *commitment* parsimoniously incorporates other prior theories that included considerations such as extrinsic and intrinsic reward systems, motivation, and compliance. Equally important is the fact that the theory's four components or "bond types" reflect a largely parallel structure to the normative-ethical component of this thesis from Chapter II, including the "neutral attributes" that the SF Regiment values but that are not clearly consequentialist or deontological.

Last, *commitment* is an excellent metric because it aligns with *identification*; in fact, according to Klein, "measures of organizational *commitment* and *identification* are largely indistinguishable."²¹² Since *identification* is "the merging of the self with the target," *identification* predicts that an individual will do what is good for the organization, as he would for himself. Such behavior, when incorporated into the culture at large, logically correlates with organizational effectiveness. The theory of commitment provides the mechanism or process by which ethical frameworks are instantiated as actions that effect the organization's internal process and external effectiveness.

The authors consider their theory of *commitment* "a more precise theory [than its predecessors] for understanding and managing workplace commitment bonds." They conceive of *commitment* as "a particular type of bond reflecting volitional dedication and responsibility for...any workplace target."²¹³ They further describe *commitment* as a "continuum" of discrete bond types: (1) *acquiescence*, (2) *instrumental*, (3) *commitment*, and (4) *identification*.²¹⁴ Table 3 summarizes each bond type's defining features, how individuals experience each bond type, "the corollaries of experiencing the different bond

²¹¹ A target is "the specific foci to which a bond is formed (e.g., the "organization, professional associations, supervisors, work teams, projects, decisions, goals, values, career)," Howard Klein, Janice Malloy, and Chad Brinsfield, "Re-conceptualizing Workplace Commitment to Redress a Stretched Construct: Revisiting assumptions and removing confounds," in *Academy of Management Journal* 37, no. 1 (2012): 138. Emphasis mine.

²¹² Klein et al., "Re conceptualizing Workplace Commitment," 133.

²¹³ Ibid., 130.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

types," and how the four bond types align with prior theoretical conceptions of commitment.²¹⁵

| Bond Differentiators | Acquiescence | Instrumental | Commitment | Identification |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Defining feature | Perceived absence of alternatives | High cost or loss at stake | Volition, dedication, and responsibility | Merging of oneself with the target |
| How the bond is experienced | Resignation to the reality of the bond | Calculated acceptance of the bond | Embracement of the bond | Self-defined in terms of the bond |
| Corollaries of experiencing bonds differently | Low internalization Indifference Psychological withdrawal Low task significance Prevention focus Controlled motivation Minimal effort | Psychological involve | | High internalization High concern Psychological investment High task significance Promotion focus Atonomous motivation High effort |
| Alignment of prior commitment conceptualizations | | | | |
| Kelman (1958) | | Compliance | | Identification and internalization |
| Becker (1960) | | Sunk costs and side bets | | |
| Etzioni (1961) | Alienative | Calculative | | Moral |
| Kanter (1968) | Control and continuance | Continuance | | Cohesion |
| Salancik (1977) | | Behavioral consistency | | |
| Mowday, Steers, & Porter (1979) | | | | Identification and involvement |
| Brickman (1987) | Have to | Have to | Want to | Want to |
| Meyer & Allen (1991) | Normative and continuance | Normative and continuance | Affective and normative | Affective and normative |

Table 3. A Continuum of Bonds²¹⁶

At the far left of the continuum is *acquiescence*, in which a person is committed due to extrinsic or external coercive factors, compulsion, or a lack of perceived alternatives. Next is *instrumental*, which is utilitarian, calculative, or transactional. It includes intrinsic task motivation, which is deriving happiness or satisfaction from the task itself, as one would experience from a hobby. It also includes expectation of extrinsic rewards and the desire to avoid aversive situations—including the "costs or losses... incurred if the bond was severed."²¹⁷ Thus, this second bond type can be taken to align roughly with consequentialism. The third bond type is *commitment*, which "is characterized by volition, dedication, and responsibility to the target."²¹⁸ This bond type aligns with what I described as "neutral" SF attributes that are neither consequentialist

²¹⁵ Klein et al., "Re conceptualizing Workplace Commitment," 130.

²¹⁶ Source: Ibid., 134.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 135.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

nor non-consequentialist: *perseverance, personal responsibility, self-discipline*, and perhaps *capability (operational aptitude*).²¹⁹ "Commitment" attributes of the SOCM include: *loyalty, tenacity, resilience, dependability,* and *team-fit* (Figure 6).²²⁰ The last and most critical bond type for SF (for reasons I discuss next) is *identification*. It is a bond that involves normative-moral and emotional or affective connections and is related to strong cultures and values. As previously mentioned, *identification* is "merging of the self with the target."²²¹ It is also the bond most highly related to "values maintenance work."²²²

Thus, the bond types at the right end of the continuum are those that most affect commitment of SF soldiers given the SF task environment and structure. Accordingly, we will consider that end of the spectrum in greater detail. Particularly, Etzioni's "normative-affective" or "moral" considerations are germane. These suggest that "people may be committed to an organization because they have internalized the norms" and these norms "are deeply emotional (grab them by their gut)."²²³ Dr. Erik Jansen suggests that these "normative-affective" internal intrinsic motivations relate to what we might describe as "a calling," "standing tall" or "being proud of being a member (soldier, SEAL, professor)." This type of motivation is neither extrinsic nor calculative nor intrinsically task-related but seems related to high internalization. This commitment is related to the "life's meaning" that comes from a position. These factors are almost certainly high in SF, resulting in high commitment.

Another important motivation for SF is Intrinsic Task Motivation (ITM): "the intrinsic motivational aspects of doing the task itself - versus receiving a reward that is

²¹⁹ See Chapter II for descriptions of these terms.

²²⁰ USSOCOM, Special Operator Competency Model, D-2.

²²¹ Klein et al., "Re conceptualizing Workplace Commitment," 133.

²²² The Emergency Department case in Appendix B describes the "values maintenance work" process.

²²³ Thanks to Dr. Erik Jansen, NPS, for this observation. A model of "self-management…that directs behavior toward a purpose," is captured in the Dr. Jansen's (and Kenneth Thomas's) "Self-Management Process" flow chart in Kenneth Thomas, *Intrinsic Motivation at Work: Building Energy and Commitment*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koeler, 2000, 28. Thomas also discusses "committing to a meaningful purpose" and autonomous "self-management" in the same work.

contingent on doing the task."²²⁴ ITM is both a better motivator and more available to professionals like SF operators than it would be to non-professional employees or conventional soldiers. ITM "works in the context of collaboration and innovation" or "the adhocratic space" that one might find in an SF team room or AOB.²²⁵ Ken Thomas's four-factor theory provides a particularly useful explanation of ITM. For Thomas, ITM includes a sense of: (1) progress, (2) purpose, (3) autonomy, and (4) competence. I will describe each of these and how they directly relate to SF teams and SF ITM.

Regular deployment rotations can provide a sense of continuity—and thus a sense of *progress* (which is more *affective* than normative) in tasks that have a long duration. For example, *Plan Colombia* took more than a decade to fully succeed, but many of those involved felt an enduring sense of pride or *purpose* (a more normative consideration) that motivated their behavior, seeing the fruit of their contributions over time. Likewise, teams had broad guidance but *autonomy* in their methods, giving them a sense of control over their actions, the situation, and the outcome. ADRP 1 calls autonomy "a high degree of discretion."²²⁶ As SF successfully weakened the FARC through their partner force they felt a sense of *competence*. All these ITM factors contribute to commitment.

Breakdowns occur in ITM when long-term progress is suspect. For example, as an ODA commander my motivation to take significant risks in setting up a new remote outpost in Afghanistan was diminished by the fact that U.S. withdrawal from the area was imminent. Given the importance of intrinsic rewards to desirable operator behavior, the following seem to positively associate with commitment: decentralized command and control (C2), coaching, providing purpose, permitting choice, "scorekeeping or cheering," and inspiring (leading for meaningfulness).²²⁷ Managing SF operators by fear, quotas, inappropriate extrinsic rewards, or micromanagement are likely ineffective or counterproductive.

²²⁴ Dr. Erik Jansen, NPS, via email correspondence, November 13, 2017.²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 1–2.

²²⁷ Thomas, Intrinsic Motivation At Work: Building Energy and Commitment, 47.

Because of the important role moral emotions play in the values maintenance process, it follows that we should expect to see values maintenance work positively correlate with other *identification* aspects including high concern, high internalization, and autonomous motivation (Table 3). These moral emotions seem to indirectly promote effectiveness in accordance with the values maintenance process from the Emergency Department case study (Appendix B). Briefly, moral emotions—self-critical (shame, guilt), other-condemning (contempt, righteous anger, disgust), other-suffering (empathetic concern, compassion), and other-praising (pride, elation)—shape "perceptions of the rightness or wrongness of particular actions" when evaluated against the profession's values.²²⁸ The case's authors cite "a stream of literature" which has argued that moral emotions link moral values and behavior.²²⁹ In the study, "Value misalignment triggered a cognitive and affective process of [values maintenance] work on the part of the...specialist to solve the problem and maintain the...profession's value."230 Thus, moral emotions of committed individuals can play an important role in effectiveness by sustaining professional values—values that are directly related to organizational effectiveness.

We next consider the Process Model of Commitment (PMC) in which Klein et al. assert, "commitment is a function of how the target and environment are perceived."²³¹ (Figure 13) They identify four perceptual evaluations as most critical to experiencing a commitment bond: positive affect (a positively evaluated target), target salience (target's prominence in one's perception), trust (of various targets), and perceived control (over the situation and outcome).²³² Presumably all of these are higher in SF than in many organizations—correlating with higher commitment.

²²⁸ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 204, 228.

²²⁹ Ibid., 204.

²³⁰ Ibid., 225.

²³¹ Klein et al., "Re conceptualizing Workplace Commitment," 140.

²³² Ibid.

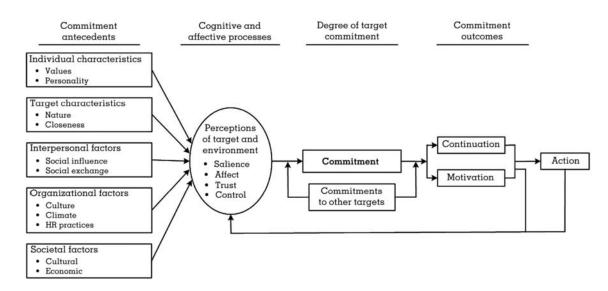


Figure 13. "Process Model of Commitment to Any Workplace Target."233

In the preceding paragraphs I have considered the PMC aspects *affect* and *control* (Etzioni, Thomas, Wright, et al.). Next, I will focus on the *trust* evaluation. To Klein et al., *trust* occupies "the central role of dedication and responsibility in commitment." Prior research and the Klein theory both ascribe a "strong" connection between trust and commitment.²³⁴ To provide a more detailed examination of *trust*, we briefly consider a case study of *trust* carried out in a task environment similar to SF.

A 2011 study in *Academy of Management Journal* showed that, "trust in 'high-reliability' task contexts (those marked by high levels of situational unpredictability and danger)...was based on coworkers' integrity."²³⁵ This is contrasted with "typical task contexts" in which trust "was also based on benevolence and identification."²³⁶ Also, in "high-reliability task contexts" (such as those in which SF often operates) an increase in

²³³ Source: Klein et al., "Re conceptualizing Workplace Commitment," 139.

²³⁴ Ibid., 140.

²³⁵ Jason Colquitt, Jeffrey Lepine, Cindy Zapata, and R. Eric Wild, "Trust in Typical and High-Reliability Contexts: Building and Reacting to Trust among Firefighters," in *Academy of Management Journal* 54, no. 5 (2011): 999. Integrity is a deontological principle.

²³⁶ Of note, all three of these factors—integrity, benevolence, and identification—are normative-moral considerations.

trust correlated with an increase in *performance*.²³⁷ The strength of this trustperformance correlation increased with the frequency of unpredictability and danger.

Thus, if this study of firefighters is generalizable and sufficiently analogous to SF, we might expect that—in the dangerous and unpredictable environment in which SF operates—high *trust*, which itself is a function of *integrity*, will correlate with higher *performance* and thus *effectiveness*. To strengthen this correlation further is the strong connection that trust fundamentally has to commitment, as Klein et al. identified. We might show this connection as follows:

Integrity \rightarrow p(trust) \rightarrow p(performance) \rightarrow p(effectiveness)

Thus, these studies seem to support this thesis' original assertion that:

Acting ethically \rightarrow p(organizational effectiveness)

Army and joint doctrine support the above conclusion: "Trust is earned and reinforced as Army professionals contribute to the mission and perform their duty, seeking and communicating the truth and acting with integrity. With trust, there is less need for detailed guidance and close supervision."²³⁸ Similarly, JP 1 says, "For the joint force to function at all, there must be a high degree of mutual trust."²³⁹ ADRP 1 concludes that the *lack of trust* is insidious. "If leaders allow disconnects between word and deed—between professed values and actual practices—they breed cynicism, compromise mutual trust, and degrade organizational esprit de corps…"²⁴⁰ If these considerations apply to the army as a whole, they apply even more to SF operators working autonomously.

We might consider the notion that an integrity-effectiveness correlation implies, to some degree a connection between a *non-consequentialist* organizational ethic and effectiveness. If this is the case, evidence such as this might suggest that to optimize effectiveness, the pendulum of norms should swing toward non-consequentialism to

²³⁷ Colquitt et al., "Trust in Typical and High-Reliability Contexts," 999.

²³⁸ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 3–2.

²³⁹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, Joint Pub 1, Pg IV-18.

²⁴⁰ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, A-1.

optimize effectiveness. Likewise, if we considered the right end of the commitment spectrum non-consequentialist, we would have further *instrumental* reason to prescribe a non-consequentialist ethic to increase effectiveness. The irony here is that this would essentially be prescribing a non-consequentialist ethic for consequentialist (ends-based) reasons.

According to the Klein model of commitment, organizational factors, such as culture, climate, HR practices, and subcultures are associated with various types of commitment.²⁴¹ HR practices such as "rewards, socialization efforts, mentoring programs, flexible work hours, and training"—all of which the SF Regiment offers to one degree or another—"can create bonds, which may be experienced as commitment." However, HR practices that "handcuff" employees, such as long re-enlistments for sizeable bonuses in the case of SF, "would not be expected to create commitment bonds."²⁴² As the previous discussion suggests, given the SF task environment such extrinsic rewards—on their own—are insufficient to elicit the commitment needed to make SF effective. As one might expect, studies found that *productivity* climate and *burnout* climate were associated with higher and lower organizational commitment, respectively.²⁴³ Clearly "dwell time" and "troop to task" considerations are as important to keeping SF effective as the command makes them out to be.²⁴⁴ Again we see an alignment between the *practicality* and *intrinsic value* in respecting and caring for soldiers rather than using them as *mere* means to a military end.

The Army as a whole operates within a task environment that is different from other organizations, notably because its "work" includes risking or sacrificing one's own lives and the lives of others, and killing those deemed the enemy. Thus, an army is a

²⁴¹ Klein et al., "Re conceptualizing Workplace Commitment," 142.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Dwell time refers to the time an SF operator remains non-deployed and is able to take leave and conduct home-station training. Troop to task assessments review unit workloads and tasks, given time and resources available.

"moral force."²⁴⁵ Like the organizational structure, the reward system must align with the task environment. As a moral force, the intrinsic is more critical: not just intrinsic to the task, but intrinsic in the moral sense. The army agrees. ADRP 1 emphasizes using "intrinsic rewards to foster commitment."²⁴⁶ The SF Regiment faces the same concerns but is further challenged by the *uncertainty* and *complexity* of the tasks. Thus, the identification and internalization at the right end of the commitment continuum seem to be more critical in SF than in organizations with different environments or structures.²⁴⁷ Given the requirement for SF to operate autonomously in such a task environment, we would expect effectiveness in SF (even more than conventional forces) to positively correlate with the degree to which its members' bonds align with the right end of the continuum.

The more we professionalize and decentralize in response to the FOE's requirements, the more we ask SF operators to bear the burden of moral responsibility. In tasks that involve life and death, emotion laden values expressed by inspirational, charismatic, and passionate leaders serve to motivate SF members according to a normative-affective dynamic. These values are critical to commitment and motivation because they provide justification for the terrible and morally weighty tasks operators are asked to do.

²⁴⁵ Thanks to Dr. Erik Jansen, NPS, for this observation.

²⁴⁶ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 1–2.

²⁴⁷ See Appendix A for a discussion of how Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development further supports the idea that internalized moral norms are associated with commitment.

2. Professionalism

"Our force must maintain its high degree of professionalism."

-LTG Charles Cleveland²⁴⁸

The last organization theory *ethics-effectiveness* link to be covered is *professionalism*. If SF leaders and strategic guidance is correct, effectively responding to the future operating environment will demand continued or increased professionalization of the force. With SF playing such an increasing role in national defense, there seems to be a commensurate increasing professionalization of the operational core and increasing communication about appropriate professional conduct. This section argues that we can expect professionalization of the SF Regiment to positively correlate with organizational effectiveness.

Management theorists Kerr, Von Glinow, and Schriesheim have argued that *professionalism* is a "multidimensional construct" consisting of "five specific attitudinal dimensions" or characteristics:

(1) desire for professional autonomy, (2) commitment to the profession,
 (3) identification with the profession, (4) professional ethics, and (5) belief in the collegial maintenance of standards.²⁴⁹

The attributes align with the requirements of the future operating environment (FOE), thus logically implying that professionalization will in fact be important to SF *effectiveness* in that FOE. Furthermore, all five dimensions correspond with the *identification* bond type at the right side of the commitment continuum (Table 3, previous section). As mentioned in the previous section, the bond types at the right end of the continuum are those that most affect commitment of SF soldiers given the SF task environment and structure. Likewise, research shows that the "professional dimensions... influenced organizational commitment in a positive direction." Thus, having established the commitment-effectiveness link (in the previous section) the evidence seems to

²⁴⁸ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022," 3. LTG Cleveland is a prior USASOC commander.

²⁴⁹ Kathryn Bartol, "Professionalism as a Predictor of Organizational Commitment, Role Stress, and Turnover," in *Academy of Management Journal* 22, no. 4, 1979: 816.

suggest professionalism in SF strongly correlates effectiveness, in large part via the former's connection to organizational commitment.

Of possible concern, this study found that "Collegial maintenance of standards was *negatively* related to organizational commitment."²⁵⁰ Professional adhocracies *require* professional standards and collegial maintenance of those standards. However, this finding seems to conflict with the emergency department case study (Appendix B), which found that "values maintenance work" *positively* correlates with effectiveness. Thus, the effect of these factors seems inconclusive based on two studies.

In conclusion, for SF, effectiveness seems to correlate with continued professionalization of the whole system including (1) education for judgment "to make considered decisions," (2) standards that they have to produce, and (3) prudence, which includes balancing higher normative concepts with getting good results.²⁵¹ Additionally, (1) "perceptions of the reward system as valuing professional behavior are associated with higher organizational commitment and lower turnover," and (2) "professional attitudes generally were found to be related to greater...commitment to organizations." These factors suggest that more command emphasis on and communication about the importance of professional behavior might help catalyze greater commitment—as well as the associated effectiveness.²⁵² For example, praising and promoting those who volunteer for additional professional education might correlate with higher levels of commitment and effectiveness.

The study offers the caveat that, "Replicative studies also will be necessary to establish the generalizability of the present results to other professional groups."²⁵³ Thus, ideally, such a study of professionalism in SF would be conducted to confirm the degree to which this study's findings apply to the SF organization.

²⁵⁰ Bartol, "Professionalism as a Predictor of Organizational Commitment," 820. Emphasis mine.

²⁵¹ USSOCOM, Special Operator Competency Model, D-3.

²⁵² Bartol, "Professionalism as a Predictor of Organizational Commitment," 820.
²⁵³ Ibid.

C. CONCLUSIONS: FIT AND EFFECTIVENESS

The Hill-McCaskey model defines effectiveness as, "Performance, member wellbeing and development, shared capacity to adapt and learn."²⁵⁴ As previously discussed, SF is operationally structured as a professional bureaucracy, but often operates as an adhocracy due to the complexity and instability of its environment. The environment requires significant mutual adjustment, collaboration, and coordination. The professionalism and education of the organization's professional core, high levels of commitment and intrinsic motivation, and a willingness to adapt makes it an effective structure to achieve success in a dynamically complex task environment. An adhocracy can be a difficult organizational structure to control and creates the potential for inefficiency or failure due to lack of regulation. However, the Special Forces' normative culture and guiding principles act as regulatory mechanisms to cultivate endogenous trust, protect the unit's reputation, and allay major derailments in effectiveness.

²⁵⁴ Hill-McCaskey Model.

IV. HOW SF ETHICS IMPACT SF EFFECTIVENESS

Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is doing the right things.

- Peter Drucker Father of Management Theory²⁵⁵

A. INTRODUCTION

Having considered the *SF Ethic* in Chapter II and the organizational context as well as organizational theory *ethics-effectiveness* links in Chapter III, Chapter IV now further clarifies what specifically *effectiveness* means for SF and analyzes what Army and SF publications say and imply about the *ethics-effectiveness* connection. Chapter IV includes a discussion of *relational influence* and *reputation* (introduced in Chapter I), both of which seem to positively correlate with effectiveness. Chapter IV concludes with the illustration of the SF "soldier statesman," made famous by President John F. Kennedy, to show how a professional SF operator might use *prudence* to navigate the tension between consequentialism and deontology, adaptability and integrity, or realism and idealism in a way that sustains both *trust* and *effectiveness*.

What is the significance of SF being effective; why does SF being effective matter? According to the ARSOF Operating Concept, "Irregular warfare, which comprises more than three-quarters of the conflicts in the world today, can be expected to predominate in future decades."²⁵⁶ SF is the nation's primary and best equipped force for irregular warfare. Thus, the future of U.S. national security will be hugely impacted by the effectiveness of the SF Regiment as it uses "discreet, precise, politically astute, and scalable capabilities" to conduct its irregular warfare tasks.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ John Kyriazoglou, Business Management Controls: A Guide, IT Governance Ltd, 2012.
²⁵⁶ USASOC, *ARSOF Operating Concept 2022*, 8.
²⁵⁷ Ibid., 11.

B. CONCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS

What is *effectiveness*? As described in the introduction, the overarching definition of *effectiveness* used in this thesis is "the degree to which an organization achieves its goals."²⁵⁸ To avoid a stakeholder analysis, which would be a major undertaking and would include conflicting answers, we narrowed our definition to "satisfying the purpose of the organization's existence" and "member well-being." This definition includes the SF Regiment's ability to perform its doctrinal tasks, i.e. "performance." It thus aligns with organizational theorists Daft, Hill, and McCaskey as well as Army doctrine, which defines *effective* as "Likely to accomplish its purpose, accepts prudent risks."²⁵⁹

What is the SF Regiment's purpose? Most broadly, it is the Army's purpose: "to protect our nation against its enemies worldwide."²⁶⁰ The purpose of ARSOF in the U.S. Army's operating concept is to "<u>Shape</u> operational environments in the countries and regions of consequence, <u>Prevent</u> conflict through the application of special operations and conventional deterrence, and when necessary help <u>Win</u> our nation's wars."²⁶¹ As we narrow the scope further, LTG Charles Cleveland calls the purpose of the Regiment to remain, "a relevant and indispensable partner to the joint and interagency team against belligerent nations and non-state actors [and terrorist networks] who employ nonconventional means against the United States and its allies."²⁶² Furthermore, the SF purpose is to provide national leaders with "the option of applying coercive force to deny [the] impunity [of state or non-state actors] across an increasingly large global geographic extent... [and to achieve] a favorable, sustainable political solution."²⁶³

²⁵⁸ Daft, Organization Theory and Design, 22.

²⁵⁹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 2–7.

²⁶⁰ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 3. The promise: "I protect the Nation; without fear, without fail, without equal."

²⁶¹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3–05 Special Operations, 2012.

²⁶² LTG Charles Cleveland, 2014 Green Book: ARSOF 2022: The future of Army SOF, 2014.

²⁶³ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-18, I-2.

To further progress from strategic to the operational, Richard Daft calls an organization's *mission* its "reason for existence" and thus a way to define organizational effectiveness. As mentioned in Chapter III, Green Berets' nine doctrinal missions are:

unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, direct action, counterinsurgency, special reconnaissance, counter-terrorism, information operations, counter proliferation of WMD, and security force assistance.²⁶⁴

The Regiment is thus *effective* to the extent it can accomplish these nine missions.

C. CONCEPTIONS OF THE ETHICS-EFFECTIVENESS LINK

Having defined effectiveness, both in general organizational theory terms and in terms specific to the SF Regiment, we now consider various conceptions of how the *SF Ethic* leads to *effectiveness*. There is some overlap among them. Conceptions I discuss below include (1) the USASOC Theory of Special Operations, (2) member well-being, (3) relational influence, and (4) reputation. Section D will then discuss how the use of prudence might correlate with effectiveness.

Broadly speaking, SF is *effective by* accomplishing its "goals" or its nine missions listed above through the four *Pillars of ARSOF Capability*:

(1) an Indigenous Approach to Operations, (2) Precision Targeting
 Operations, (3) Developing Understanding and Wielding Influence, and
 (4) Crisis Response.²⁶⁵

Within ARSOF, the human-centric pillars (1) and (3) are particularly important for effectiveness in SF, and they appear as a common thread running through the five conceptions of the *ethics-effectiveness* link mentioned above and described next.

1. USASOC Theory of Special Operations

USASOC has developed a schema or causal model for effective irregular warfare. The model is composed of three tenets (with their subordinate components) that make up

²⁶⁴ "Preparation of the environment" is listed in place of "information operations" in U.S. Dept. of Defense, *FM 3–05 Army Special Operations*, 2014, 4–2; http://www.soc.mil/usasfc/hq.html.

²⁶⁵ USASOC, "USASOC 2035," 5.

a theory of special operations.²⁶⁶ According to the theory of *Special Operations Operational Art*, to be effective, "Special operations campaigns should build a position of continuing relative advantage through steady expansion of *physical*, *cognitive*, and *moral* access...to favorably influence the population, allies, and enemies."²⁶⁷ As mentioned in Chapter I, USASOC considers expanding such access "the fundamental problem" that SF units must overcome to be effective.²⁶⁸

Special operations campaigns that are *effective* are designed, with each tactical action, to "steadily expand the campaign's physical, cognitive, and moral access over time." This access creates "a position of continuing relative advantage [and] influence" from which to achieve the strategic objective.²⁶⁹ Specifically, to be effective, SOF elements must "physically access the terrain where irregulars are fighting, cognitively access the opaque situation, and have the moral access to build legitimacy."²⁷⁰ While one might expect the *SF Ethic* to most impact the *moral access* tenet (and in turn, effectiveness), I argue that the *SF Ethic* impacts all three tenets—*physical, cognitive*, and *moral*—because all three require trust, which in turn, is a function of the *SF Ethic* (as described in Chapter III and in further detail below).

Physical access usually requires establishing a willing—and trustworthy reception party and logistical support for the SF team entering the operational area. Both the SF element and the host must have some degree of trust for the other as well as an expectation that the other party will behave somewhat ethically—at least to one another. Likewise, "non-standard" or clandestine logistics, an often necessary component of physical access, requires a degree of trust, respect, and ethical behavior, by each partner toward the other.

²⁶⁶ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-12.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., V-17. Emphasis mine.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., V-12.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., V-9.

Cognitive access, that is, "understanding the physical, human, and enemy situations," is in many ways related to intelligence collection and thus, presumably, a degree of trust between principal and agent.²⁷¹ Furthermore, the *USASOC Planner's Handbook* suggests that "every soldier" be involved in "defensive, offensive, or political intelligence [collection]" through daily interactions with locals.²⁷² For a soldier to have any hope of learning useful intelligence from the population, a measure of trust must exist between them. A source of information is likely only to risk his or her life if trust (born of ethical treatment and respect) between partners exists. Thus, as seen above, even the *physical* and *cognitive access* tenets seem to be built on *trust* and ethical treatment of each party by the other.

The third tenet of effective irregular warfare, *moral access*—is defined as "provid[ing] the standing and credibility necessary to form an alliance of interest with the host of groups and individuals who at in irregular warfare."²⁷³ As described above, the *moral access* tenet is foundational to the other tenets and allows them to function. If fact, moral access, along with coalition warfare, is called, "the very core of irregular and special operations warfare."²⁷⁴ If, (a) the *SF Ethic* and the ability for SF to generate moral access are indeed highly interrelated (as I argue), and (b) moral access is a vital component of modern warfare for SF, then it follows that the *SF Ethic* takes on vital operational and strategic significance. We should want to be good for its own sake (Kant) and because it is part of a good life (Aristotle). But deontological and aretaic considerations aside, the *SF Ethic* seems to have important consequentialist, instrumental significance in making SF *effective*.

In further support of the importance of the moral access tenet, Dr. Joe Strange notes that the "moral center of gravity" is a salient feature in Clausewitz's discussion of strategic centers of gravity. He further noted that the moral center of gravity is based on

²⁷¹ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-14.

²⁷² Ibid., V-15.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

public opinion, including perceived legitimacy, which in turn impacts the degree of influence SF can project.²⁷⁵ Accordingly, USASOC points to three influence-related elements of moral access that "support the pursuit of strategic objectives." They include:

...maintaining *a strong negotiating position* with the principle partners [to influence them toward the strategic purpose], *building legitimacy* [to expand the coalition], and *dividing the enemy's coalition* [to limit the enemy's influence].²⁷⁶

The possession of influence and legitimacy, when one's enemy lacks it, seems to be one of the decisive factors related to successful irregular warfare, which takes place mostly within the Human Domain. One can, in some instances, "rent a warlord," bribe individuals, or pay for compliance. However, the USASOC Planner's Handbook cites scholarship showing that, "material benefits do not effectively buy allies," even if, material benefits "can cement alliances of interest after their formation."²⁷⁷ Effective alliances must be established, at best with good will, at least with a measure of legitimacy and trust. Thus, the USASOC Theory of Special Operations seems to support this thesis's contention that the *SF Ethic* impacts effectiveness, in this case, due to enhancing *physical, cognitive,* and *moral* access.

2. Member Well-Being Effectiveness

Supporting the Hill-McCaskey "member well-being" conception of effectiveness is the direct guidance of ARSOF senior leaders. "The number one guiding direction from the Chairman is to ensure the success of our nation's warfighting forces by preserving unit readiness, cohesion, and morale."²⁷⁸ Likewise, ADRP 1 asserts that Army leaders have a moral obligation based on the office they hold "to care for the people and

²⁷⁵ Joe Strange, "Understanding Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities," in *Marine Corps University Perspectives on Warfighting*, no. 4 (1996). Center of Gravity (CoG) is defined in JP 1–02 as "the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act." For example, the population is often considered the CoG in a counter insurgency (COIN) campaign.

²⁷⁶ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-15. Emphasis mine.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Joseph Votel, "A Message from the Commander and Command Senior Enlisted Leader, U.S. Special Operations Command," December, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgfmBANgBk8.

resources entrusted to them by the American people."²⁷⁹ Or as *ARSOF Next* puts it, "As long as the force remains true to its first principles: having the right people, aggregated into amazing teams, rallied behind a unique commitment to the nation, it will succeed."²⁸⁰ Thus, member well-being is an end in itself as well as a measure of effectiveness; it correlates with achieving organizational goals or missions, which also defines effectiveness.

3. Overview of *Trust*

Before considering the two types of *trust* introduced in Chapter I—*relational influence* and *reputation*—we will review ways in which aspects of *trust* apply to both explanations: how *trust* broadly seems to impact *effectiveness*. ADRP 1 calls *trust*, "the bedrock of our profession."²⁸¹ As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey said, "On the foundation of trust, we will overcome any challenge that we confront in the future."²⁸² Likewise, Admiral McRaven avers, "Success in the human domain will depend upon understanding it and establishing trust to prevail in populationcentric strategies or struggles."²⁸³ Furthermore, "The tactical and strategic levels of war are very close in irregular warfare."²⁸⁴ This being the case, individual moral decisions often hold greater strategic or operational weight for SF than for conventional forces, in terms of their impact on national security, hence the importance of endogenous and exogenous trust for the unit to be effective. Senior conventional and SOF leaders agree that *trust* is vital for organizational *effectiveness*.

Additionally, several of the SOF Imperatives seem to relate directly to preserving both types of trust. These include *recognizing the political implications; considering long-term effects; facilitating interagency activity; ensuring legitimacy and credibility of*

²⁷⁹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 6–2.

²⁸⁰ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 5.

²⁸¹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 3–1.

²⁸² Ibid., 3–3.

²⁸³ Claudette Roulo, "McRaven: Success in Human Domain Fundamental to Special Ops," *American Forces Press Service*, Washington, June 5, 2013.

²⁸⁴ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-10.

special operations; anticipating and controlling psychological effects; and *ensuring longterm sustainability*. Ethical mistakes (breaches of trust) threaten to upend each of these Imperatives.

Last, the operational need for *autonomy* seems to relate to both trust types. Autonomy is a normative ethical value, a SOF unit characteristic, an organizational theory driver of commitment, and an attitudinal aspect of professionalism. Autonomy is made possible by trust. The irregular warfare environment is one in which ODAs operate independently and make decisions autonomously because "institutions face a severe limit in their ability to exert control over distance."²⁸⁵ SF soldiers are must work autonomously due to the isolated and "low visibility" environment in which they operate. "Low-signature operations," by nature, limit communication and virtually prohibit direct oversight of the operator or team by the higher unit, for example. However, the ARSOF Operating Concept calls such low-signature operations "the defining hallmark of Special Operations" in the future operating environment.²⁸⁶ Thus, both the physical and task environments demand "unsupervised predictability of soldier conduct," which is, "the goal of battlefield ethics."287 ARSOF Next states, "To be able to send an element, sometimes as small as a single Soldier, to a foreign country representing not only the regiment but in some instances the United States Government without worry is a significant characteristic of our force today."288 Given the above factors, it follows that the SF Ethic currently has a positive impact on SF effectiveness via autonomy.

Furthermore, *ARSOF Next* suggests that autonomy enhances effectiveness directly and via improved efficiency. "When we empower the individual, the expert and the lowest-tactical-formations and we let people run because we trust them to do the right thing, we exponentially increase the speed and effectiveness of our forces and

²⁸⁵ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-10.

²⁸⁶ USASOC, ARSOF Operating Concept 2022, 19.

²⁸⁷ Peter J. Dillon, *Ethical Decision Making on the Battlefield: An Analysis of Training for U.S. Army Special Forces.* CGSC, 1992, abstract.

²⁸⁸ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 30.

operations."²⁸⁹ The essential element here (in addition to competence) is "doing the right thing," that is, ethical behavior. Thus, ARSOF seems to fully support the notion that *effectiveness* follows from *ethical behavior*.

Having considered how *trust* broadly impacts effectiveness, we now cover in more detail the two trust-related explanations—*relational influence* (endogenous trust) and *reputation* (exogenous trust)—for why ethical behavior seems to lead to organizational effectiveness.

4. Trust: Relational Influence and Rapport

The Human Domain is where SF will succeed or fail, and The ARSOF Operating Concept recognizes *trust* as "the glue of every human relationship."²⁹⁰ Accordingly, ARSOF 2022 notes that the similarity between SF's FID, COIN, and UW missions or capabilities is that "they cultivate relationships with partner forces and seek shared security interests."²⁹¹ As discussed in Chapter I, acting ethically seems to lead to organizational effectiveness because acting ethically preserves the *relational influence*, which impacts SF *effectiveness* in the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) environment. Acting ethically seems to preserve endogenous trust. Examples of relationships in which *relational influence* seems to be essential might include the Geographic combatant Commander (GCC) to SOF elements operating in the GCC's area of responsibility (AOR); AOB commander to his ODA team leaders; ODA team leaders to ODA members; and an ODA to its partner or proxy forces.

An important aspect of *relational influence* is rapport. Rapport, in SF doctrine is "a harmonious or sympathetic relation or connection," that is, "a relationship between people in terms of mutual trust, understanding, and respect."²⁹² While command

²⁸⁹ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 28.

²⁹⁰ USASOC, ARSOF Operating Concept 2022, 20.

²⁹¹ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022," 13. As discussed in Chapter II, this alignment of interests and respect for human relationships—rather than, say, using others for ends that provide them no benefit—is indicative of deontological norms.

²⁹² U.S. Dept. of Defense, *FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations*, C-9, 1–4. This SF doctrinal definition of rapport also seems to align with non-consequentialism.

authority may represent traditional or legal power (in terms of influence over the behavior of others), in SF the complex task environment and adhocratic, professional bureaucratic structure make rapport (even within vertical relationships) important. SF doctrine emphasizes that, *"interpersonal relations* are key to the successes experienced by Special Forces in the field."²⁹³ The USASOC Planner's Handbook likewise avers that war is a "collective human endeavor" requiring cooperation and rapport to respond effectively under "the most trying of circumstances."²⁹⁴

Effectiveness is thus a function, in large part of enduring partnerships and relationships sustained by good rapport. USASOC 2035 strongly concurs with this assertion noting, "The SOF network of personnel, assets, and international partnerships represents the means to obtain early understanding of emerging local, regional, and transregional threats and opportunities for advancing U.S. objectives...[and] to influence outcomes in all campaign phases."²⁹⁵ Such improved situational awareness and ability to influence emergent events thus appear to be largely functions of human relationships. Likewise, SF's "culturally astute means" of accessing populations engenders their essential support for (or cooperation with) our cause and also demonstrates a respect for others in a Kantian sense.²⁹⁶ As USASOC notes, "special operations forces cannot dominate irregular campaigns without the willing support of the indigenous people. The people must willingly agree to the strategic end state that the intervening power desires. Otherwise, the campaign will fail. The fighting is a subordinate element of the political movement."²⁹⁷ Once again we see that for both pragmatic and intrinsic reasons, respect for persons is an integral part of the SF Ethic. Overall, building trust-based rapport (through ethical behavior) seems to sustain JIIM relationships and relational influence that correlates with effectiveness.

²⁹³ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *FM 3–05 Army Special Operations*, 4–1. Emphasis mine.

²⁹⁴ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-16.

²⁹⁵ USASOC, "USASOC 2035," 5.

²⁹⁶ USASOC, "ARSOF 2022," 19.

²⁹⁷ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-18.

5. Trust: Reputation and Perceived Legitimacy

Next, acting ethically seems to lead to organizational effectiveness because acting ethically preserves the *reputation of the organization*, which influences effectiveness. In other words, sustaining the SF reputation preserves exogenous trust. I take reputation to be here roughly synonymous with *perceived legitimacy* and *credibility*. The more those outside the SF organization see SF as legitimate or credible, the more SF will have success in building coalitions, the latter being a vital component of irregular warfare.

Operating in the Human Domain requires SF to have support from the international community, the local indigenous community in which they operate, and the American public.²⁹⁸ Social scientists and SOF doctrine seem to agree on this point. Management professor Jennifer Palthe asserts that, "as subsystems of a wider social system, [all organizations] depend on the acceptance of the society in which they operate" to achieve organizational goals.²⁹⁹ Similarly, FM 3–05.20 calls legitimacy "the most crucial factor" in sustaining popular support.³⁰⁰ Thus, societal perception and legitimacy seem to be connected to effectiveness in the Human Domain.

In the battle for perceptions, both the disciplined individual behavior of operators and the legitimacy of the cause itself seem to correlate with positive perceptions. This observation seems to align roughly with *jus in bello* and *jus ad bellum* laws of Just War Theory, respectively. In the first case, "highly disciplined individuals" are a requirement in SF because both their personal conduct and their methods of mission accomplishment are under observation. The USASOC Planner's Handbook suggests that, "behavior [of SF soldiers] both on duty and off, may have profound effects on their mission accomplishment."³⁰¹ Whether it be an alcohol-related incident during a JCET or a lack fire discrimination in combat—instances of individuals failing to exercise ethical

²⁹⁸ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-18.

²⁹⁹ Palthe, "Regulative, Normative, and Cognitive Elements of Organizations," 62; U.S. Dept. of Defense, *ADRP 3–05 Special Operations*, 1–6.

³⁰⁰ U.S. Dept. of Defense, *FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations*, 1–21.

³⁰¹ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-16; U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1–21.

judgment tarnish the unit's reputation and give the enemy an advantage in building his coalition and discrediting the friendly one. However, SF actions that are perceived as ethical preserve legitimacy and moral access, allowing successful coalition building and political warfare, both measures of effectiveness in irregular warfare. Both also align with the first and third *Pillars of ARSOF Capability*: (1) an Indigenous Approach to Operations and (3) Developing Understanding and Wielding Influence.

In the second case, the legitimacy of the *cause*, ADRP 3–05 emphasizes that perceived legitimacy is also based on the "morality of, and justification for, the actions undertaken."³⁰² SF cannot expect to preserve its legitimacy, influence, and reputation if it is fighting for an unjust cause. Again, we might cite the counterexample of insurgents defeated in Iraq in 2007—despite OIF being highly problematic in terms of the justice of the cause. However, this is again an example of success *despite* ethical problems rather than strong evidence that ethics are unimportant. It was the legitimacy of the cause of the Sunni militias of the Anbar Awakening that was in large part responsible for an effective response against AQI. Accordingly, missions that are of "obvious national or humanitarian interest"—such as the *Sons of Iraq*—strengthen the perception that the cause is legitimate.³⁰³ Thus, when deciding on a mission, SF and national leaders demonstrate prudence by carefully considering the military necessity, objective ethical considerations, and expected public perception of an action.

Since it is the *perception* of legitimacy, rather than legitimacy itself, that correlates with popular support, U.S. forces, including SF, must effectively communicate their legitimate intent to the populace. Such communication, according to ADRP 3–05, is "critical to establishing and maintaining legitimacy."³⁰⁴ This includes communicating how the benefit of military action outweighs the risk to American lives and the lives of those who might suffer in war.

³⁰² U.S. Dept. of Defense, *ADRP 3–05 Special Operations*, 1–7.
³⁰³ Ibid.
³⁰⁴ R.H. 1, 0

On the issue of legitimacy, ADRP 1 seems to advocate deontological principles, e.g. "we cannot violate the rights of others" while pointing out the consequentialist reasons for doing so: to "maintain legitimacy as a profession, the trust of the American people, and the respect of the international community."³⁰⁵ If we should protect others' rights because it will maintain our own *perceived* legitimacy in the eyes of the public, such thinking is consequentialist. Kant would call this an "if-then" hypothetical imperative, rather than a categorical one: if we want X, then do Y to get it.³⁰⁶ To appeal strictly to deontological norms, in contrast, we would simply assert, "we cannot violate the rights of others" because it is categorically the right thing to do.³⁰⁷

Regardless, it seems unrealistic to deny that the *SF Ethic* contains underlying consequentialist reasoning. The ubiquity of outcome-based reasons for moral decision-making makes this apparent. However, we can likewise reasonably argue that deontological reasons (e.g., the importance of protecting human lives and honestly communicating intent) are part of the *Ethic* since they are the norms that seem to be "legitimate" in the first place.

In this section, I have considered four conceptions of how the *SF Ethic* seems to impact organizational effectiveness: (1) the USASOC Theory of Special Operations, (2) member well-being, (3) relational influence, and (4) reputation. Each of these four conceptions of the *SF Ethic-effectiveness* link has offered inductive evidence that, taken collectively, seems to show a strong positive relationship between the *SF Ethic* and effectiveness.

Having reflected on these trust-based conceptions of how the *SF Ethic* leads to *effectiveness*, we will now discuss how a professional SF operator might approach navigating the environmental ambiguity and complexity that this thesis has described. To do so, we consider the example of the statesman trying to balance or decide between political realist and idealist concerns.

³⁰⁵ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 3–3.
³⁰⁶ Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, 37.
³⁰⁷ Ibid., 139–157.

D. LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT AND STATESMANSHIP

The Special Forces soldier is the true embodiment of the term "soldier statesman," for he is the soldier and statesman of our time.

- President John F. Kennedy³⁰⁸

1. Introduction

This section presents an argument that the broad normative principles of international behavior for the statesman—including principles for covert operations and other operations legally defined as "low-intensity conflict"—are in large part analogous to the principles the SF operator will need to employ, perhaps on a smaller scale. I argue that the analogy of statesman to SF leader is both strong (in the sense that there exist important commonalities that lend the analogy validity) and useful (the analogy provides insights about the implications of SF values and behavior on effectiveness). I also argue that various modes of operating under specific moral frameworks will have similar results and implications for Special Operators as for Statesmen, thereby making use of the more robust scholarship that exists about the latter than the former.

Specifically, this case study will consider the arguments for political realism and idealism, with the idea that these arguments will apply to the discussion of the consequentialist - non-consequentialist dichotomy that is at the heart of this thesis. The impacts on effectiveness of adopting one or the other, for a statesman, I argue will be similar to the impacts adopting one or the other mode of normative thinking will have on the Regiment's effectiveness. Thus, we can make use of the case of statesmen to make predictions about how the *SF Ethic* will impact *effectiveness*.

If we consider the definition of "Statesman" to be "involv[ing]...an ability to act competently and confidently in the world without damaging the integrity of a nation's character and principles," at first glance such a definition applies to the SF operator. SF operators are essentially statesmen in the Aristotelian sense that they must act prudently

³⁰⁸ Clyde Sincere, "Special Forces," in USA Airborne – 50th Anniversary (Paducah, KY, Turner Publishing, 1990), 324.

on behalf of the state.³⁰⁹ Sometimes called "warrior diplomats," SF soldiers appreciate "the political aspects of their operational environment" and can articulate U.S. policies, goals, and objectives in ways that convince foreign counterparts to support them.³¹⁰ The USASOC Planner's Handbook notes that, "the proximity of the strategic and tactical levels in irregular war makes the special operators political operatives because they are directly affecting the strategic level of actors in the irregular war."³¹¹ SF personnel are more like statesmen than conventional forces due to the autonomous nature of the SF mission and the degree of leeway, autonomy, or discretion they have in determining the method, the 'how' of mission accomplishment.

While differences may exist in authorization vs implementation in the *jus ad bellum* versus *jus in bello* sense, both statesmen and SF soldiers use similar political tools. For example, International Politics professors Alberto Coll and Richard Schultz define covert action as "employed to influence politics and events in another country without revealing one's involvement or at least while maintaining plausible deniability."³¹² They suggest that covert action is becoming increasingly difficult to apply as an instrument of statecraft in the modern global environment. Similarly, FM 3–05.20 (2001) says, "SF conducts its operation in either an overt, low-visibility, covert, or clandestine manner," and FM 3–05 emphasizes that SF operations "are typically low visibility or clandestine."³¹³ Types of covert action include Propaganda, Political action, Paramilitary assistance, Coup d'état, Secret intelligence support—providing training to a foreign leader to help him preserve his regime.³¹⁴ That each of these types of covert action potentially applies to an SF mission-set lends additional credence to the applicability of statesmanship to SF.

³⁰⁹ Coll et al., Legal and Moral Constraints of Low-Intensity Conflict, 339.

³¹⁰ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1–8.

³¹¹ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-15.

³¹² Coll et al., Legal and Moral Constraints of Low-Intensity Conflict, 325.

³¹³ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1–14; FM 3–05 Army Special Operations, 4–1.

³¹⁴ Coll et al., Legal and Moral Constraints of Low-Intensity Conflict, 327.

Most notably, Unconventional Warfare (UW), according to army doctrine, is "*the core* SF mission," "at the core of ten principal Special Forces tasks."³¹⁵ In fact, FM 3– 05.20 notes that, "SF represents the U.S. Army's only unconventional warfare (UW) capability."³¹⁶ Unconventional warfare is defined as "activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area."³¹⁷ UW operations can also be conducted with a more limited scope to "pressure an adversary," typically in an environment "characterized by very high political sensitivity and very low visibility of U.S. involvement." Any of these operations not conducted in an aboveboard manner possess both the possible benefits and the inherent risks of political realist polices, discussed next.³¹⁸

2. Political Realism

Every kind of service necessary to the public good becomes honorable by being necessary.

-Nathan Hale, inscribed at CIA Headquarters³¹⁹

Prior to being hanged in 1776 for spying on the British, Nathan Hale spoke the above words, making implicit his belief that *ends justify means* in defense of one's nation. This is a consequentialist justification, that the right action is the one calculated to result in maximal national power or benefit. Political realism is not without rational defense. There are several reasons we might think that an (amoral) political realist strategy might contribute to effectiveness.

³¹⁵ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05 Army Special Operations, 3–4; FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1–4.

³¹⁶ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1–1.

³¹⁷ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05 Army Special Operations, 2–1.

³¹⁸ NPS thesis *From successful defense to problematic offense* (Timothy Ball, 2016) discusses in detail the legitimacy problems with offensive UW.

³¹⁹ "Nathan Hale's Mission." *CIA Historical Review Program*, July, 1996. This article discusses Nathan Hale's own struggle between his idealist and political realist moral beliefs. https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol17no4/html/v17i4a03p_0001.htm.

First, we might say that covert or clandestine action against an enemy state is a legitimate and effective tool of policy in a Clausewitzian sense—even if the enemy government is a "legitimate" one. Such a description of covert action aligns with the ostensibly-pragmatic realist notion that actions are (morally) justified if they support national interests because international politics are "a sphere without justice."³²⁰ Realism argues that imposing moral restrictions on ourselves, when our enemies do not, creates a power imbalance in which the enemy has a significant advantage since they presumably have more options. Furthermore, a realist might ask, what is the harm in gaining a strategic advantage through underhanded means—say by a covert action that U.S. civilians or perhaps congress would not approve—if it is never discovered?

Along these lines, Lt. General James Doolittle (of Doolittle raid fame) codified the U.S. national *realist* position during the Cold War with the "Doolittle Standard," advocating that "fair play must be reconsidered."³²¹ The types of activities Doolittle suggested the U.S. should be proficient in included "Paramilitary support to foreign governments, paramilitary special operations...counterterrorism and counter-narcotics," subversion, sabotage, and destruction of our enemies "by clever, more sophisticated, and more effective methods than those used against us."³²² Here he may as well have been describing the Special Forces Regiment by name as the description is apt. Doolittle likewise suggested, "the American people should be acquainted with, understand, and support this [he conceded] fundamentally repugnant policy."³²³ The SF soldier-statesman finds himself in a similar dilemma. Given the commander's intent and broad leeway to act within it, should he not use underhanded means to gain advantage? Can SOF afford not to be Machiavellian in "an increasingly disordered world that is punctuated by competitors capitalizing on hybrid-warfare capabilities?"³²⁴ Certainly, the insurgents,

³²⁰ Julian Korab-Karpowicz, "Political Realism in International Relations," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2017. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/realism-intl-relations/

³²¹ Coll et al., Legal and Moral Constraints of Low-Intensity Conflict, 337.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid., 338.

³²⁴ USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 7.

terrorists, and narco-trafficker's that the operator is up against will use unethical means in pursuit of often unethical causes.

Having considered some of the potential benefits of political realism, we now turn to look at how an amoralist strategy might be *detrimental* to effectiveness. *Political realism* (as a high risk for loss of legitimacy), seems to fail on pragmatic—if not moral grounds. From a pragmatic view, covert action can compromise diplomacy in other areas, and put at jeopardy the advantage the U.S. now enjoys that is a function of its reputation. If we violate these principles we can no longer impugn others for such violations without hypocrisy. Likewise SF units operating abroad must equally consider how their actions might be viewed in terms of U.S. reputation since these units are U.S. representatives. Non-consequentialist concerns notwithstanding, the consequentialist or even Machiavellian problems with realism might be summed up:

With respect to large-scale combat operations, the presence of increased globalization, international media, and the prevalence of cellular hand-held media devices amplify the negative utilitarian consequences of acting immorally. In other words, organizational military ethics may not be morally based—but a desire to accomplish the mission and win the war drives the ethics into a de facto synchronization with Revisionist's *Jus in Bello* morals to guarantee success.³²⁵

Thus, while this does not comment on the status of the foundation of military ethics, it provides good reasons why political realism may not be pragmatic or utilitarian, despite the claims to the contrary of realism's proponents.

Former CIA official Ralph McGhee argues that covert action "helped destroy democracy around the world...breed[ing] disrespect for the truth...[and] for the rule of law [both international and domestic]. Years of hardening in the ugly business...have surely taken their toll."³²⁶ The latter concern might be described as an insidious "ethical fading" in which making morally questionable choices leads to more and more ethically

³²⁵ Thanks to Scott Orr, NPS, for this insight.

³²⁶ Coll et al., Legal and Moral Constraints of Low-Intensity Conflict, 330.

dubious behavior over time. This might be considered the inverse of the positive habituation Aristotle describes.³²⁷

This concern applies equally to SOF soldiers who work to accomplish the mission in the "grey zone." Could it be that the activities in which SF is involved likewise "take their toll" on members of the community or the organization as a whole, or is this alarmism? A number of incidents with the elite SEAL Team Six have recently highlighted this risk.³²⁸ SF is not without its own examples.³²⁹ I argue in the Emergency Department case study (Appendix B) that ethical fading is a threat worth addressing within SF Regiment.

The case study found that tragic or significant events can elicit strong emotions that "can focus people into creating a system that works."³³⁰ However, it seems plausible that the extended time horizon of most of SF missions (FID, UW, COIN) may degrade the urgency of moral emotions. Since "professional values are defended and maintained or lost" in interactions in organizational contexts, if regular events fail to cross the threshold of sufficient moral emotion to elicit a "values maintenance work" response, suboptimal ethical norms may be established like a frog slowly boiled.³³¹ Moreover, SF norms that emphasize "finding a way" or "getting it done" (potentially in a manner that conflicts with the *SF Ethic*, including the *Army Ethic*) might act as an additional catalyst for *ethical fading*. A reasonable recommendation seems to be that, for the SF organization to stay effective, it should remain aware of the possibility of "ethical fading" and deliberately track "artifacts" that might indicate an increasing trend toward it.

³²⁷ Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 19–20.

³²⁸ Mark Mazzetti, "SEAL Team 6: A Secret History of Quiet Killings and Blurred Lines," *New York Times*, June 6, 2015. John Ismay, "Navy Seals Investigated in Green Beret's Death Also Under Scrutiny in Theft," *New York Times*, November 13, 2017.

³²⁹ CNN Wire, "2 Secret Service supervisors ousted in prostitute scandal identified," *CNN*, April 19, 2015. Roy Eidelson, "Neuroscience, Special Forces, and Ethics at Yale," *Psychology Today*, March 6, 2013.

³³⁰ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 218.

³³¹ Ibid., 201.

In sum, political realism seems to fail on both pragmatic or consequentialist and non-consequentialist or deontic grounds. Given the real threat that it poses to legitimacy, the notion that realism might contribute to effectiveness, even given the "benefits" mentioned, is dubious at best. "Breeding disrespect" for truth and the rule of law seems to be a recipe for ethical fading. Furthermore, the notion that, in the international political sphere, there exists some separate version of moral norms seems likewise implausible. Having considered one end of the spectrum, we now consider its opposite: idealism.

3. Idealism

According to Coll and Shultz, the moral virtues of the statesman are based in the traditions of the Greeks and American founding documents. From the Greek tradition, the moral virtues of the effective statesman include *justice, moderation, liberality, honor*, and *proper ambition*, and from America's founders the principles: *equality, inalienable rights*, and *self-determination*.³³² These values are inexorably the groundwork upon which the SF values lie. To diverge from them within the SF Regiment's own culture would be logically incoherent in the sense that Kant describes in his first formulation of the categorical imperative.³³³ Idealism rejects basing decisions on calculated outcomes but instead demands that we perform the actions that our values demand, irrespective of the outcome. The concern with idealism is that its moral rigidity is impractical. Kant even seems to suggest that doing what is prudent lacks moral weight. He says, "prudence... cannot command at all, i.e., cannot exhibit actions objectively as practically necessary; they are sooner taken as advisings than as commands of reason."³³⁴ According to Kant then, "the precept of prudence is always hypothetical; the action is commanded not

³³² Coll et al., Legal and Moral Constraints of Low-Intensity Conflict, 345.

³³³ For example, we could not logically make it a universal law that units should ignore higher guidance or moral norms within their own moral frameworks. Not only would this suggest relativism, but to generalize this maxim would entail contradictions in cases where subordinate and superior norms diverged.

³³⁴ Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, 35.

absolutely but only as a means to another aim."³³⁵ Thus, Kant always considers prudence instrumental. Having considered the stringency of idealism, we now consider prudence.

4. Prudence: Walking the Line between Realism and Idealism

Virtue ensures the correctness of the end at which we aim and prudence that of the means toward it.

— Aristotle, Book VI of *The Ethics*³³⁶

We have thus considered political realism and idealism and found them to be suboptimal in terms of realizing *effectiveness* for both the statesman and the soldierstatesman. We now consider this thesis' contention that aretaic prudence might offer a means to be effective without sacrificing morals that seem to be both practical and of intrinsic value. Accordingly, the prudent person, herein defined, takes into account both realist and idealist considerations.

Like the idealist, the prudent statesman or soldier-statesman uses universal moral principles to guide his or her actions, including values we hold as a nation. For example the prudent soldier-statesman considers idealist values such as those of the self-evident truth of "natural rights" and equality found in the Declaration of Independence. This respect for persons reflects Kant's second formulation of the Categorical Imperative—that persons are ends in themselves and have *inherent* rather than *instrumental* value. We see this value codified in the first SOF Truth: "Humans are more important than hardware." This "Truth" reflects both the intrinsic worth of people as well as the pragmatic truth that effective people and relationships are preeminent requirements for mission accomplishment.

Like the realist, however, a good statesman has the aretaic prudential traits "practical intelligence, experience, and knowledge of the particular characteristics of his regime and the world around it."³³⁷ We might encapsulate the latter with the expression,

³³⁵ Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, 33.

³³⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 97 (1144a).

³³⁷ Coll et al., Legal and Moral Constraints of Low-Intensity Conflict, 340.

"Understand the operational environment," the number one and preeminent SOF imperative. Overcoming the tension that emerges between these idealist and realist concerns is the topic of this section. An example of this tension played out in 2015.

The Declaration of Independence established that the government exists based on the consent of the governed. Thus, American institutions, including the DOD, are subject to popular consent. In late 2015, General Joseph Votel as commander of USSOCOM, while discussing gender integration, described how the culture of the SOF organization is a microcosm of U.S. society at large.³³⁸ In this case he argued that equality of opportunity is an important American cultural norm that should likewise exist in SOF.

While Votel's opinion, which was also shared by many SOF subordinate commanders was primarily non-consequentialist (although it included consequentialist elements as well), much of the backlash to gender integration from the members of SOF has been framed in a consequentialist manner. Specifically, many operators argued that the mission, the end, was more important than a duty to individuals, to permit them equality. Thus, here we see a clear tension between those who consider pragmatic concerns as primary versus those who consider as primary doing "the right thing" for its own sake—because they consider it to be "the right thing to do." The latter argue that the consequences are secondary; actions should not mainly be chosen because of the outcomes we expect them to affect.

Consequentialist concerns are not without warrant. The *SF Ethic* must be practical to be effective. Mission success defines effectiveness: "Risk management considers not only the potential loss of ARSOF units and equipment but also the risk of adverse effects on U.S. diplomatic and political interests if the mission fails."³³⁹ Legitimacy and credibility are not simply a function of ethical behavior; they are also a function of success. Effectiveness itself lends credibility, which in turn leads to effectiveness, in a circular fashion. As many operators are aware, and as General Douglas MacArthur so

³³⁸ Joseph Votel, "A Message from the Commander and Command Senior Enlisted Leader, U.S. Special Operations Command," December, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgfmBANgBk8.

³³⁹ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05 Army Special Operations Forces, 1–11.

succinctly put it, "There is no substitute for victory." One might argue however, that sometimes there *are* substitutes for victory—times in which achieving victory might come at too high a (moral) cost.

Prudence, an Aristotelian virtue, shows promise in helping us respond to this debate among other dilemmas.³⁴⁰ According to Aristotle, "Deliberating well is the function of a prudent person...[and] the unqualified good deliberation is the sort that promotes the unqualified end (i.e., the highest good), while the limited sort correctly promotes some limited end."³⁴¹ Thus, for Aristotle, the prudent person prioritizes the most intrinsic value—over instrumental or perhaps shorter term considerations—when deciding on an action.

For Aristotle, prudence (*phronesis*) or "good deliberation," is much like "wisdom" (*sophia*), and is indicative of "intelligent awareness in general."³⁴² Accordingly, one might suggest that "wisdom" is a better candidate than "prudence" for effectively managing the above tension. But Aristotle makes an important distinction between the two virtues. One can be "wise, but not prudent," in that, "what he knows is extraordinary…but useless, because it is not human goods that he looks for."³⁴³ We might take from this that, in the pursuit of success in activities that have *instrumental* value or utility, one should not lose sight of the intrinsic final good that is the purpose of the instrumental task at hand. If the task threatens what is intrinsically valuable, e.g., the dignity of persons, the task or method should probably be reconsidered.

In addition to keeping the highest ends in mind, if we want to actually obtain those ends, Aristotle says the details matter. That is, prudence identifies ones highest duty and then uses reason to chart the most expedient course to that end. To chart such a course, prudence "requires a grasp of the *particulars* [that is, contextual details], since

³⁴⁰ To Aristotle, "Prudence is a state [of] grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about things that are good or bad for a human being." *Nicomachean Ethics*, 91.

³⁴¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 94.

³⁴² Ibid., 345.

³⁴³ Ibid., 91.

this is needed... [to successfully conclude] deliberation."³⁴⁴ Thus, prudence is about understanding "universals" or generalizable principles. But, even more it is about "knowledge of particulars, since [prudence] is concerned with action and action is about particulars."³⁴⁵

These particulars are a function of experience to Aristotle, which he seems to mean the study of general principles applied to particular cases. One might thus achieve experience by many iterations of (personally) applying universal principles to particular instances in practice—so as to be proficient in applying universals to particulars. Alternatively, one might gain vicarious understanding or experience by studying many cases of universals applied to particular cases.³⁴⁶

Accordingly, the importance of details or "particulars"—as well as taking the long view—seem to align with SOF doctrine. FM 3–05.20 states "SFODAs must look at each problem in its broader political, military, and psychological context. They must then develop a long-term approach to solving the problem."³⁴⁷ For example, while unethical actions such as indiscriminately detaining civilians to elicit tactical intelligence might be effective in the short term, such a policy would almost certainly result in long-term failure. Considering the particulars and long-term effects would reveal this mistake.

By nature of the task environment, operators must do things without public knowledge. Thus, Coll and Shultz offer sage advice for statesmen that applies equally to SF operators: "Proceed only where there is a good chance that there would be a national consensus behind that action if it became known to the public [either during or after the operation]," and in a way that does not contradict overt American policy.³⁴⁸ This "test of exposure" simulates what actual oversight might provide and serves to restrict those actions that might go beyond the bounds of prudence.

³⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 345.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 92.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 341.

³⁴⁷ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1–20.

³⁴⁸ Coll et al., Legal and Moral Constraints of Low-Intensity Conflict, 333.

Prudence for SF entails what today we might call professionalization: cultivating an intelligent, trained, and educated force. Aristotle asserts that "Each virtue...requires training and rational control of one's feelings and capacities by prudence."³⁴⁹ Thus, Aristotle seems to describe precisely what organizational theorists have empirically validated (as described in Chapter III). Namely, that professionalization includes education to make autonomous judgments, at increasingly lower levels, about complex problems. With what might be called either prudence or professionalism, FM 3–05 concludes that "Blending their skills and experience enables Special Forces Soldiers to navigate ambiguous environments that affect the political, social, religious, and humanitarian aspects of today's uncertain environments."³⁵⁰ Overall, SF professionals are effective when they are experienced, educated, ethical, and they understand nuance and context. We might capture all these attributes under the notion of prudence." and, in fact, "all the virtues...require prudence."³⁵¹

As a final thought we might consider the question, "Is following Kant's deontological ethics, in all reality, impractical or perhaps imprudent?" Kant seems to be saying, for example, that OSS-supported partisans in France should not kill their Nazi occupiers as part of an insurgency.³⁵² Philosopher Helga Varden analyzes this scenario as a critique of Kantian ethics:

Being a hero is not something anyone can be legally or ethically required to do. This is why many of those who took part in the active resistance were publicly acknowledged—by means of various national medals of honor—as heroes after the war was over. Kant's account makes perfect sense of why we see some actions as heroic, or supererogatory (going beyond duty), and others not. As embodied human beings, therefore, we can be forced into situations from which there are no morally unproblematic exits. That so many of the WWII war heroes later found their violence hard to live with is therefore not a symptom of their lack of

³⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 338.

³⁵⁰ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05 Army Special Operations, 4–1.

³⁵¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 98.

³⁵² SF traces its lineage to the OSS, the Office of Strategic Services.

virtuous character, but rather a reflection of their commitment to virtue and right—or morality in general—under circumstances where virtuous, rightful interaction was coercively deprived them.³⁵³

This is precisely the position that Green Berets volunteer for—exposure to situations in which there may be "no morally unproblematic exits." This is why the public considers them heroes, and perhaps why many of these heroes later struggle with PTSD. It is not just bravery shown in battle that makes them heroic; it is the willingness to bear the moral weight of their decisions long after they have made them.

In our democratic society, it is the duty of national and military leaders to "use well" the lives of citizens who serve as soldiers and not squander them.³⁵⁴ It is likewise the duty of leaders to minimize the harm of those in their charge while completing the mission. Accordingly, it seems that national and military leaders have a duty to professionalize and educate those who have volunteered to accept the moral burden of decision in war. To do so is to justly minimize their injury.

Professionalization, including the training for ethics, can arguably reduce the moral weight operators bear by (1) helping them make the best decision possible, perhaps the one that is least morally problematic, and (2) helping them understand *why* in terms ethics, the decision they made was the "lesser of two evils," thus potentially reducing the enduring moral burden. As we would not send a solider into combat today with a flintlock rifle, likewise we must make every effort to arm today's Green Beret with the tools he needs to navigate a complex and morally ambiguous operating environment.

Overall, prudence indeed seems to offer an effectual middle path in responding to the tension between *adaptability* and *integrity*, *consequentialism* and *non-consequentialism*, and *realism* and *idealism*. Navigating this tension using *prudence*, with

³⁵³ Helga Varden, "Kant and Lying to the Murderer at the Door…One More Time: Kant's Legal Philosophy and Lies to Murderers and Nazis," in *Journal of Social Philosophy* 41, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 421.

³⁵⁴ James Dubik discusses the *Jus in bello* (not just *Jus ad bellum*) responsibilities of national and military leaders to use well the lives of soldiers in *Just War Reconsidered: Strategy, Ethics, and Theory*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016).

dogmatic commitment to neither pole, likely correlates with organizational effectiveness in the SF Regiment.

E. CONCLUSIONS

Chapter IV has provided a description of what *effectiveness* means for SF as well as an analysis of what Army and SF publications say and imply about the *ethicseffectiveness* link. Chapter IV also provided a bifurcated description of *trust* that explained how *relational influence* and *reputation* both seem to correlate with *effectiveness* in SF. Chapter IV concluded with a discussion of *prudence* using the illustration of SF as "the embodiment of the 'soldier statesman.'" This section concluded with the idea that professionals can preserve or enhance effectiveness by walking a middle path that is both practical and principled. THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is not the strongest...nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.

-Charles Darwin³⁵⁵

This thesis originally proposed two complimentary research questions, one related to normative moral philosophy and one related to organizational theory. The first question was designed to illuminate the nature of the Special Forces ethical framework— the *SF Ethic*. The purpose of the second question was to ascertain the impact of the SF ethical framework on the effectiveness of the SF Regiment.

In answer to the first question, the *SF Ethic* is a mix of deontology, consequentialism, and virtue theory. Deontology is important throughout, but a trend toward consequentialism emerges as we consider unconventional methods for which SF is known. The answer reveals a tension and source of ambivalence between the first two ethical frameworks. However, within the third framework lies the aretaic notion of prudence, which seems to offer a "middle path," helping to resolve the tension and potentially bridge the consequentialist-non-consequentialist divide.

Of interest, the three "most important" ARSOF individual traits (as rated by ARSOF soldiers) seemed to align with the three normative theories just described. Adaptability seems to align with consequentialism; Professionalism seems to be defined in terms that align with prudence; and Integrity aligns with non-consequentialism. This thesis concluded that the prudential middle path seems to correlate more with effectiveness than either extreme. A strictly Manichaean perspective seems to be unpractical and analytically implausible.

In answer to the second question, ethical behavior seems to positively correlate with organizational effectiveness, both as a generalizable principle and also applied to the

³⁵⁵ Leon Megginson, "Lessons from Europe for American Business," in *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 44 no. 1; (1963): 4.

case of the Special Forces Regiment. In Chapter I, I provided a linear model to describe the *SF Ethic - Effectiveness* pathway (Figure 1) that depicts the process by which an SF soldier operating under the *SF Ethic* might contribute to effectiveness. Within the *SF Ethic*, values shape the principles that define one's duties. Then professional and prudential judgment—influenced by organizational and operational factors (Chapters III and IV, respectively)—informs our decisions. Given sufficient willpower to act prudently, the sum of individual actions results in organizational effectiveness.

To provide essential context for the *SF Ethic*, Chapter III described the environment (complex, unstable), organizational structure (professional-adhocracy), human resource flow, and culture. The latter began to depict the process by which ethics seems to impact effectiveness via the transitive relationships between ethic and culture and culture and effectiveness.

At the individual level of analysis, *commitment*, *trust*, and *professionalism* provide empirical theoretical evidence for the link between the *SF Ethic* and SF Effectiveness. Increased commitment seems to correlate with increased effectiveness in SF. Commitment is also associated with identification, internalization, and dedicated actions, which all likewise seem to correlate with effectiveness (particularly given the SF structure and environment).

Trust occupies "the central role of dedication and responsibility in commitment." Prior research and the Klein theory both ascribe a "strong" connection between trust and commitment. In high-reliability task contexts (such as those in which SF often operates) an increase in *trust* correlated with an increase in *performance*. Thus, *trust*, which itself is a function of *integrity* (a deontological trait) correlates with higher *performance* and thus *effectiveness*.

Professionalism means to serve as a Green Beret standard bearer. To be effective in the FOE requires continual professionalization to make autonomous, sound, mature judgments. Operators must have the information, training, education, and authority to act adaptively, creatively, and ethically to accomplish the mission. We can expect professionalization of the SF Regiment to positively correlate with organizational effectiveness, in part due to the empirical connection between professionalism and *commitment* and in part due to its logical connection to *prudence*.

From Chapter III we also see that HR practices that can create commitment bonds include a productivity climate, socialization efforts, mentoring programs, flexible work hours, and training. Bonuses may convince people to stay but do not correlate with volitional dedication. Burnout climate (think "dwell time" and "troop to task" considerations), managing by fear, quotas, inappropriate extrinsic rewards, or micromanagement are associated with lower commitment and are thus probably ineffective or counterproductive for Special Forces soldiers.

A high level of professional education and rewarding those who pursue continued professional education will likely correlate with higher commitment and effectiveness in SF. Additionally, leadership behaviors that seem to positively correlate with commitment include decentralized command and control (C2), coaching, providing purpose, permitting choice, scorekeeping, and inspiring.

Chapter IV provided additional support for the *SF Ethic-effectiveness* link, both stated in and inferred from Army and SF publications. As it does in organizational theory, here *trust* seems to provide a clear mediating link between the *SF Ethic* and *effectiveness*. By way of preserving and building trust, the *SF Ethic* improves *effectiveness*. Senior conventional and SOF leaders agree that *trust* is vital for organizational *effectiveness*. Ethical mistakes (breaches of trust), however, threaten to upend several of the SOF imperatives and thus negatively impact effectiveness. Additionally, *autonomy*—a normative ethical value, a SOF unit characteristic, an organizational theory driver of commitment, and an attitudinal aspect of professionalism—is made possible by *trust*.

Reputation and *relational influence* factors are likewise related to *trust*, and they sustain perceived legitimacy and rapport, respectively. One can also consider them mediating factors between the ethical behavior and organizational effectiveness. According to SF doctrine, legitimacy is "the most crucial factor in developing and maintaining domestic and international support."³⁵⁶ This support allows SF to be effective. Likewise, legitimacy is sustained through ethical behavior. For example, ADRP 1 states, "If we are to maintain legitimacy as a profession...we cannot violate the rights of others."³⁵⁷ Similarly, building rapport through ethical behavior seems to sustain JIIM relationships and *relational influence* that correlates with effectiveness.

Chapter IV also identified the apparent weaknesses in *idealism* and *realism*, namely that idealism seems to be impractical, and realism neither ethical nor practical. Chapter IV uses an illustration of the SF soldier-statesman to show how a professional might use aretaic *prudence* to help resolve the tension between *adaptability* and *integrity*, *consequentialism* and *non-consequentialism*, and *realism* and *idealism*.

SF professionals can likely help preserve or enhance the effectiveness of the SF Regiment by walking a middle path that is both principled and practical, that makes SF both trusted and effective. This aligns with the U.S. founding fathers' admonition for statesmen to reject "absolute adherence to, nor the complete avoidance of, our values" and to "refrain from the *unlimited* pursuit of abstract doctrines in whatever form they take."³⁵⁸ Accordingly, prudence is a balanced and informed judgment. It is deciding the right course of action based on "good deliberation" and consideration through a grasp of the particulars—contextual details. Prudence entails balancing higher normative concepts with getting good results and "adjusting or applying universal moral virtues to particular situations."³⁵⁹ Prudence is a means toward virtuous ends.

As the Regiment professionalizes and decentralizes, it puts the burden of moral responsibility on SF operators. Thus, operators should be afforded every possible advantage in navigating the moral terrain. Accordingly, I recommend (1) synthesizing and organizing the various conceptions of values, principles, attributes, characteristics, traits etc., to provides a sense of hierarchy and priority as well as common definitions

³⁵⁶ U.S. Dept. of Defense, FM 3–05.20 Special Forces Operations, 1–21.

³⁵⁷ U.S. Dept. of Defense, ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 3-4.

³⁵⁸ Coll et al., *Legal and Moral Constraints of Low-Intensity Conflict*, 344.
³⁵⁹ Ibid., 340.

across doctrinal sources. (2) I also recommend SF develop a semi-algorithmic process guide to help operators systematically think through moral dilemmas. I would recommend it incorporate the reorganized terms, describe the moral "tension" inherent in the *SF Ethic*, and discuss ways to resolve the tension, including prudence. (3) Last, I recommend adding an ethics training block to the SFQC as this will likely contribute to organizational effectiveness by helping to professionalize the force.

The notion that the SF ethical framework should be organized more coherently is supported by the operational need to act decisively under ambiguous circumstances. Aristotle implies that a puzzle with paradoxical results precludes action because it cannot be solved, and what to do is indeterminate.³⁶⁰ However, Bertrand Russell says, "To teach how to live without certainty and yet without being paralyzed by hesitation is perhaps the chief thing that philosophy in our age can still do for those who study it."³⁶¹ Accordingly, SF officers who can articulate their moral reasoning, both to themselves and others, will presumably act more swiftly, more correctly, and perhaps more resolutely.

ARSOF Next has noted that "to counter today's increasingly ideologically based threats, ARSOF must understand...who it is as an organization. This self-knowledge and understanding becomes ARSOF's greatest weapon."³⁶² Accordingly, it is vital for the SF Regiment and its soldiers to understand the Regiment's philosophical underpinnings— our values, principles, and norms—since judgments, decisions, and actions largely flow from them. We should want to understand our normative underpinnings to win, to be effective, to optimize. But, more importantly, understanding the basis of objective moral decision-making is itself intrinsically valuable.

Furthermore, if what we do does not align with our professed values, either our routines or values need to change. It is a leader's responsibility to identify *and resolve* such value-routine misalignments rather than simply punishing those who (a) make

³⁶⁰ Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 101.

³⁶¹ Anders Österling, "Award Ceremony Speech: The Nobel Prize in Literature 1950," *Swedish Academy*, 1950.

³⁶² USASOC, "ARSOF Next," 5.

mistakes while trying to navigate misalignment (b) violate routines in favor of values or (c) violate values in favor of routines.

According to the USASOC Planner's Handbook, "In terms of one's knowledge structure and framing, more *disaggregated* operations require unorthodox situation framing, often necessitating creative and unique views of situations."³⁶³ Likewise, this thesis' description of the structure of the *SF Ethic* as it impacts *effectiveness*, has required some "unorthodox framing." While unique, my approach seems to align with the USASOC operational art and design method in the sense that thesis has assumed "a more anthropological approach that takes into account relational, indeterminate, and complex causality" and has tried to provide "rich description and narrative."³⁶⁴ There is some precedent to this as even the USASOC Planner's Handbook suggests that "complex problems...might be best resolved though...using a range of multidisciplinary approaches."³⁶⁵

As Miner avers, "knowledge of the dynamics of organizations and their capacity to predict the occurrence of particular structures and processes would seem to offer the possibility of engineering a situation to maximize organizational effectiveness."³⁶⁶ I hope that the preceding schemata have contributed to that knowledge base and will allow SF leaders to make better organizational design decisions, particularly those regarding SF ethical and cultural indoctrination. The analysis, conclusions, and recommendations of this research, while hopefully internally consistent, only follow under the assumption that the philosophical and organizational theory tools used are sufficient to answer the question. If that assumption holds, than my conclusions likewise have merit.

³⁶³ USASOC Planner's Handbook, VI-3. The handbook describes "disaggregated operations" as "how SOF act relatively autonomous, independent of the conventional force – not requiring traditional forms of command and control and planning methods more associated with centralized or horizontal (top-down) decision making."

³⁶⁴ Ibid. The Handbook portrays these factors as important to describing the Human Domain.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., VIII-5.

³⁶⁶ John B. Miner, "On the Nature of Theory." 4.

The Special Forces Regiment, conducting its irregular warfare mission, will be essential to U.S. national security in the coming decades. An important and interesting note is that the use of indigenous or proxy forces does not necessarily entail consequentialism. As noted in Chapter II, if a Green Beret is willing to shed his own blood with a partner force in the pursuit of common objectives, the idea that the SF soldier is using his partner as a *mere* means seems implausible. Green Berets do not see others as *mere* means to an end. Rather, irregular warfare, according to USASOC "is ultimately about the choices of individuals and the future that *they* desire."³⁶⁷ The existence of a bond of trust between international partners implies that both sides share mutual respect. In alignment with Kantian deontology, they possess the good will.

The indigenous approach is, "empowering populations that live in the region."³⁶⁸ If our national objectives align with what is morally right, then our military strategies that flow from them can likewise be just. Then, by empowering and providing autonomy to those who will not take it from others, SF will respect people as ends in and of themselves and truly free the oppressed.

Interesting to note is a dichotomous thread that runs through this thesis. I have already described the Idealism—Realism, Non-Consequentialism—Consequentialism, and Integrity—Adaptability parallel bifurcations. But other divisions have appeared too, and they seem to align with or be reminiscent of the dualism between light and dark, good and evil, or yin and yang. The SOCM divides its individual attributes between two categories: Character and Intellect. These categories and the traits that lie within them roughly align with Non-Consequentialism and Consequentialism, duty and pragmatism, or moral rigidity and flexibility. Surprisingly, even the organizational structure professional bureaucracy–adhocracy reflects order and chaos, authority and anarchy. At its core, this thesis attempts to synthesize philosophy and science, rationalism and empiricism. Whether this seemingly recurrent dualism has some sort of metaphysical significance, I leave to the reader to decide.

³⁶⁷ USASOC, USASOC Planner's Handbook, V-18. Emphasis mine.
³⁶⁸ USASOC, "USASOC 2035," 35.

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APPENDIX A. KOHLBERG'S THEORY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Lending further support to the commitment model by Klein et al., and specifically to the notion that internalized moral norms are a major source of commitment for SF members, is the Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Figure 14). SF members are often noted for their "maturity." Given the need to operate autonomously, it follows that SF would select for and foster a culture that aligns with the sixth stage of Kohlberg's moral development, that is, "principled conscience": doing right for its own sake.³⁶⁹

Arguably, stage six is the most resistant to moral failing since it seems to be the least self-interested or egoistic. According to Richard Daft, only a few people reach the highest level of moral development on the Kohlberg scale.³⁷⁰ Assuming members consider the organization an ethical one, it follows that a member's score on the scale would positively correlate with his commitment to the organization. An interesting caveat here is that we would expect to see less commitment from a stage 6 individual who deems his team to be corrupt.

A strict theory x leader might make a Machiavellian appeal to the idea that to secure compliance "it is better to be feared than loved," that carrots and sticks best achieve results. However, because of the autonomous environment in which SF operates, commitment based in "higher" moral reasoning and empowerment is almost certainly more effective than extrinsic rewards and punishments alone. Thus, SF intelligence testing, including testing for abstract reasoning (that permits higher *moral* reasoning) is both in keeping with the more sophisticated moral reasoning that exists in the *SF Ethic* and seems empirically relate to organizational effectiveness.

³⁶⁹ Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development loosely correspond to Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development in which "Formal Operations" (e.g., abstract logic and theoretical reasoning) become possible at the most advanced stage. (https://www.psychologynoteshq.com/kohlbergstheory/) Paiget seems to provide empirical support for the meta-ethical position that objective morals can be grounded in abstract objects (e.g., proposition, concepts). To do so, clearly one would have to possess the cognitive faculties and development to employ effectively abstract logic and reasoning.

³⁷⁰ Daft, *Essentials Of Organization Theory and Design*, Chapter "Organizational Culture and Ethical Values," 121.

Premoral Level

| Stage 1: | Make moral decisions strictly on the |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Punishment-Avoidance | basis of self-interests. Disobey rules |
| and Obedience | if can do so without getting caught. |
| Stage 2: Exchange of favors | Recognize that others have needs, but make satisfaction of own needs a higher priority. |

Conventional Level

| Stage 3: Good boy/Good girl | Make decisions on the basis of what will please others. Concerned about maintaining interpersonal relations. |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Stage 4: Law and order | Look to society as a whole for guidelines about behavior. Think of rules as inflexible, unchangeable. |

Principled Level

| Stage 5: Social contract | Recognize that rules are social agreements that can be changed when necessary. |
|---|--|
| Stage 6: Universal ethical principle | Adhere to a small number of abstract principles that transcend specific, concrete rules. Answer to an inner conscience. |

Figure 14. Kohlberg Scale of Moral Development.³⁷¹

 $^{^{371}} Source: https://i.pinimg.com/originals/7c/66/8b/7c668bf9726c0f015108efae20126bfc.jpg.$

APPENDIX B. CASE STUDY: MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL VALUES IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

1. Generalizability and Utility of the Case

Having defined the military occupation and particularly the SF branch as a profession, I find a real possibility exists that lessons from other professions are be insightful to the extent the professions share common traits. Again, because of the limits of scholarship, or more importantly, the more robust scholarship that has addressed other professions, we now turn to this academic study of ethics in a non-military setting. The medical profession, and specifically, the Emergency Department (ED), provides such a case. This is because it addresses maintaining values and morals of a profession that seems to share useful similarities to the SF Regiment. This case also lends additional empiricism to an ideologically grounded inquiry.³⁷²

The case itself enumerates a series of conditions for generalizability of the relationships it discovered (discussed below). One condition they specify is actors being closely committed to the values of the institution. Specifically, "*commitment* is necessary to elicit moral emotions of sufficient strength to motivate action."³⁷³ SF operators are selected for and demonstrate such commitment. The authors note that "Rather than behaving like the self-interested experts portrayed in many prior studies (Brint, 1994), the specialists in our study were fundamentally people who were committed to a core professional value and reflective about its maintenance in their everyday work." Likewise, SF selects for and socializes such conscientiousness in its organization members, making this case particularly relevant.

Also, both organizations operate in resource-constrained organizational environments. Next, member decisions in both are made quickly and are weighty, often directly related to life and death—or strategic impact in the case of SF. As the authors

³⁷² The authors note that their analysis "followed established procedures for inductive theory building from qualitative data" based on J. Corbin and A. Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research* 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008).

³⁷³ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 230. Emphasis mine.

describe it, "...our model...reflects the perspective of a specialist engaged in everyday work that can be characterized as time-critical, unpredictable, and with high-stakes outcomes."³⁷⁴

In addition to the guidelines for generalizability of the case's lessons, other important commonalities exist between the ED and the SF Regiment. First, they are both professional bureaucracies. That is, they are both professions—which have specific traits such as selflessness, self-policing, and providing a service society cannot do for itself. They are also flat organizations. Last, they both operate with a higher degree of autonomy and authority than other types of organizations. With all these similarities in mind, I will suggest that insights from ED will be valuable when applied to SF. I will discuss limitations of the comparison at the conclusion of this section.

On to the significance of the case to this thesis. First, this case demonstrates how such organizations maintain their professional values—particularly how relational influence (in which members act in the interest of others) is sustained. The functioning of relational influence is critical to effectiveness in SF.

Next, this recent study (2017) demonstrates the importance of values in organizational behavior. It provides "strong support for values-based explanations of the everyday work of specialists."³⁷⁵ That is to say, this research supports the contention that, despite the claims of earlier research, *coordination problems* and *contests over power and status*, "offer [only] a superficial account of the conflict between different specialists." These researchers instead assign a much greater role to "*deeply held values* of the profession [that] shape different specialists' cognitions and emotions during interactions."³⁷⁶ As noted earlier, Wright, Zammuto, and Liesch found only "limited support" for the idea that *power* and *ego*-based explanations of professional action obtain. This insight is also novel in the sense that "…most empirical research, especially in

³⁷⁴ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 234.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 230.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

professional settings, has been silent on values-directed institutional work," work, that I contend leads to lesser or greater degrees of effectiveness.³⁷⁷³⁷⁸

If this conclusion is generalizable, including for SF, it supports my own claim that the *SF Ethic* is a critical variable in the complex system that impacts effectiveness, that is, one that, at least qualitatively, appears to have a strong correlation with effectiveness. Thus, the role of values in achieving effectiveness has almost certainly been underestimated within the organizational theory research community and probably within SF organizational leadership.

This case is about the process of sustaining values in a professional bureaucracy, which is one that compartmentalizes activities into areas of specialty expertise.³⁷⁹ We see this compartmentalization in SF Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs) more than in conventional MOS's. In the former, broad responsibilities are delegated to individuals with significant training associated as well as (often) OJT expertise related to their unique roles. For example, the 18B Weapons Sergeant manages site security and both partner force and ODA tactical training. In conventional forces, many individuals either (a) share a common indoctrination and homogenous unit, full of the same MOSs (i.e., an infantry platoon) or (b) their MOS training is technical rather than broad in application. The point here is to establish that the SF organization is in fact a professional bureaucracy with specialties analogous to the ED workers who are the subject of this case.

2. The Values Maintenance Process

In general terms, the authors' major claim was that they uncovered the following relationship: *moral emotions* elicit *institutional work* which aligns (a) organizational processes and individual behaviors with (b) values and effectiveness. Said another way, *professional values* can serve as "...a source of [useful] conflict...a motive for professional action inside organizations...[that] mobilizes collective action in

³⁷⁷ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 204.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 201. Organizational theorists note that "despite calls for greater explanation of 'how the professions may retain normative value...the puzzle has received little scholarly attention."

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 203.

institutional maintenance work that changes the organizational practice."³⁸⁰ To illustrate graphically:

professional value-and-practice misalignment \rightarrow problem perceptions \rightarrow moral emotions \rightarrow value maintenance work \rightarrow professional value-and-practice alignment \rightarrow effectiveness

I will now briefly cover each step in process described above and how it applies to SF. First, *professional values* are "conceptions of the preferred or the desirable [values], together with the construction of standards [ethics, norms] to which existing structures or behaviors can be compared and assessed."³⁸¹ Within the ED, the overriding professional value to optimize patient well-being is also the key measure of effectiveness. Here the SF organization diverges, since in the latter organization, values are encapsulated by the *SF Ethic*, and *readiness* and *mission accomplishment* are primary measures of effectiveness. In the same way doctors in the study "used language of primacy of patient's need when describing the profession's values," SF operators speak of the primacy of mission and men.³⁸² While the *components* of the values and effectiveness is the same.

This study calls proactive specialists the "glue that binds professions, values, and specialization together at the micro level of everyday work."³⁸³ Like medical specialists do in the ED, SF NCOs and officers use their greater autonomy and decision-making authority (than in conventional units) to shape their organizations. They maintain professional values, despite the challenges that specialization brings, by making the connections between problems and professional values and taking individual and collective actions to resolve those problems in ways that sustain the *SF Ethic*.

³⁸⁰ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 200.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Ibid., 217.

³⁸³ Ibid., 230.

The two types of *problems* that emerge are (1) conflicts among individuals interpreting the macro organizational values in *episodic events*, and (2) conflicts between *systemic practices* that conflict with macro organizational values.³⁸⁴ In the case of (1), "different specialists who share the same values at the macro level of the profession may interpret the profession's values differently... [in practice] at the micro level."³⁸⁵ This creates "conflict in…interactions at organizational interfaces," including "communication, coordination, and jurisdictional responsibility."³⁸⁶

Such conflict might emerge between any of the following entities: (a) Special Forces team members' different specialties (b) ODA and AOB, (c) conventional and special operations forces working in a common AOR, or (d) the ODA and other agencies or country team. For example, episodic problems can result from "divergent risk assessments." In such cases, one entity might perceive that the other has made the error of underestimating the risk of mission failure and thus the latter entity does not seem (to the former) to be acting in alignment with the profession's value of preserving mission and men.

While SF soldiers of different occupational specialties (MOSs) are trained separately for their MOS-specific (largely technical) training, situational training is conducted with all the SF specialties combined. This largely prevents the formation of distinct MOS-based values. For example, the training events SFAS, SUT, SERE, and the Robin Sage CULEX include all MOSs combined. Thus, the first challenge (at least within the organization) is somewhat mitigated by the structure of the SF training pipeline, which cultivates a common values picture from micro to macro.

The second challenge, however, is one that SF faces in earnest. In the case of (2), organizational practices, goals, or requirements (such as budgetary or resource constraints, superfluous online training, or suboptimal performance metrics) can

³⁸⁴ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 200.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 201.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 203.

inadvertently undermine the values of the profession.³⁸⁷ "Moral emotions elicited by systemic problems were experienced within and across groups of specialists and were enduring."³⁸⁸ When specialists in the study observed system problems that elicited collective moral emotions, they acted collectively "to maintain the profession's value by changing the [dissonant] organizational practice."³⁸⁹

Moral emotions, broadly speaking, are those that a judge or agent feels toward the interests or welfare of persons or society (other than himself).³⁹⁰ Thus, the organizational theory definition of morality is consistent with morality defined by philosophers in that morality has to do with the well-being of conscious creatures.

Moral emotions are a particular category of emotions elicited by "perceptions of a problem [described above] with achieving the profession's values.³⁹¹ That is, they emerge in response to either violations (negative emotions) or upholding (positive emotions) of the moral code. Moral emotions shape "perceptions of the rightness or wrongness of particular actions" when evaluated against the profession's values.³⁹² Moral emotions can be classifies into four families: self-critical (shame, guilt), other-condemning (contempt, righteous anger, disgust), other-suffering (empathetic concern, compassion), and other-praising (pride, elation).³⁹³ This case's authors cite "a stream of literature" which has argued that moral emotions link moral values and behavior.³⁹⁴

moral values — (moral emotions) → p(behavior)

- ³⁹² Ibid., 204.
- ³⁹³ Ibid., 208.
- ³⁹⁴ Ibid., 204.

³⁸⁷ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 200.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 227.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 225.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 200.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 209.

Moral emotions trigger one of three forms of moral/value *maintenance work*: (1) *advocacy*, (2) *sanctioning*, and (3) *brokering*.³⁹⁵ Maintenance work "entails 'supporting, repairing, or recreating the social mechanisms that ensure compliance" with the regulative, normative, or cultural-cognitive pillars of the profession.³⁹⁶ In the case of the normative pillar, maintenance work to maintain the profession's values can be either *individual*, in the case of addressing episodic problems, or *collective*, in the case of fixing systemic ones.³⁹⁷ "Value misalignment triggered a cognitive and affective process of institutional work on the part of the…specialist to solve the problem and maintain the…profession's value."³⁹⁸

For such work to occur, individuals must possess a "high cognitive and emotional investment in the institutional order... *Emotions* might be expected to be prominent in institutional work directed at maintaining normative values inside organizations because someone who is committed to the values of an institution 'really cares' about holding organizations to those values and standards."³⁹⁹ As discussed earlier, the crucible of SF training selects for and inculcates such an intrinsic sense of concern, which can be degraded, though, by asymmetry in values and daily activities.

Values of the profession (encapsulated by the *SF Ethic*) translate to interpretation and follow the pathway of value maintenance in the everyday work of organization members that terminates in degree of effectiveness.

³⁹⁵ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 209.

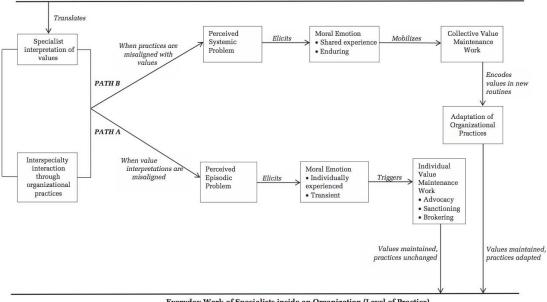
³⁹⁶ Ibid., 230.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 202.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 225.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 204.

Values of a Profession (Institutional Level)



Everyday Work of Specialists inside an Organization (Level of Practice)

Figure 15. Value Maintenance Pathway⁴⁰⁰

3. **Conclusions, Lessons, and Recommendations**

The study speculates that "a relationship may exist between [a] the characteristics of a specialist's everyday work and their cognitive perceptions of particular types of problems and [b] the intensity and type of moral emotions elicited in response as a trigger for value maintenance work."401 The study mentions SWAT teams by name as an example of another organization (besides the ED) in which tragic or significant events that are a function of [a] can elicit strong emotions that "can focus people into creating a system that works."402

I would in turn speculate that the extended time horizon of most of SF missions degrades the urgency of moral emotions. Since "professional values are defended and maintained or lost" in interactions in organizational contexts, if regular events fail to

⁴⁰⁰ Source: Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 229.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 234.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 218.

cross the threshold of sufficient moral emotion to elicit a response, suboptimal norms may be established like a frog slowly boiled in a pot.⁴⁰³ Furthermore, the SF practices that emphasize "finding a way" or "getting it done" (potentially in a manner that conflicts with the *SF Ethic*, including the *Army Ethic*) might act as a further catalyst for *ethical fading*.

Values conflict that elicits institutional work that "arises when specialists are expected to perform practices that inadvertently undermine the profession's values writ large," Such values conflict might not emerge in a way that is sufficient to elicit institutional work in some cases. Thus, the risk of deferred institutional work that sustains organizational values and effectiveness might be more acute in SF than in, say, a special missions unit (SMU) or commander's response force (CRF).

To mitigate this risk, the study encourages specialists to be reflective about the moral emotions they experience. "Maintaining the values of a profession, which exist at the macro level, requires purposive effort by reflective professionals inside organizations at the micro level."⁴⁰⁴ Such reflection may be particularly important in SF, where the extended missions could lead to insidious *ethical fading* rather than jarring ethical conflicts that elicit moral emotions and corresponding action.

Another practicable lesson was that "Correctly identifying the source [of moral emotion] as [an] organizational practice provides the capacity to mobilize collective action...to change organizations in ways that better uphold the profession's values." Likewise, leaders can "provide opportunities for groups...to reflect collectively on problems to distinguish those that elicit shared and enduring moral emotions" for possible procedural modification.⁴⁰⁵

The article expresses a tendency for members to over-prioritize their own patient over the group of patients.⁴⁰⁶ Analogously, SF operators might prioritizing their own

⁴⁰³ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 201.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 234.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 235.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 217.

mission or task despite the fact that other missions may be more decisive. A comprehensive picture of the operational environment is needed for ODA commanders and SOTF synchronizers.

Accordingly, in the study, one participant noted that he had reminded a surgical specialist: "You're not just a [surgeon] with a knife. You're a doctor as well." Hospital managers warned that specialists "reduced themselves to little more than technicians" if they failed to manage holistic care of patients.⁴⁰⁷ Likewise, operators must have the information, training, judgment, and authority to act in a way that corresponds to both the higher mission and in accordance with the *SF Ethic*.

Once again, the study emphasizes that, for specialists within a professional bureaucracy, leaders must rely on specialists' judgment. The case mentions an interview with a manager who says, "Jill is an expert in cardiac research. If she says, "We should be doing this and this," I'm going to say, "Yeah, go for it...I'm just going to support them."⁴⁰⁸ Trustworthy individuals are selected and trained within SF and granted the autonomy to complete their respective missions. To do otherwise would create a misalignment between organizational structure and practice in a way that would be deleterious to effectiveness.

When values conflicts arise, the authors advocate focusing on "the practice, rather than the violated or violator...to solving systemic problems."⁴⁰⁹ As a hospital manager noted, "The best way to arbitrate is [to ask], well what's the best thing for the patient?"⁴¹⁰ Likewise, SF commanders can ask, "well what's the best thing for [insert primary value]. It is the work of organization leaders (and collective junior leaders) to align values with routines rather than simply punishing those who (a) make mistakes while trying to navigate misalignment (b) violate routines in favor of values or (c) violate values in favor

⁴⁰⁷ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 224.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 220.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 235.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 225.

of routines. Leaders must keep in mind that certain polices or processes can potentially hinder the very values they were created to sustain.

Lastly, as Wright, Zammuto, and Liesch point out, "Individuals maintain the profession's knowledge base and status by theorizing, educating, and creating new routines; policing jurisdictions; deploying rhetorical tactics and narrative acts; and reproducing the profession in client interactions."⁴¹¹ Accordingly, further research is needed on what procedures best affect the balance between the *SF Ethic* and *effectiveness* as well as what methods best institutionalize those norms.

By using this case study, I make the assumption that important parallels exist between the specialists at work in an emergency department and those in the SF organization. I apply the more robust research that exists on the former analogously to the latter. If the analogy holds, which I think it does, important insights can be made about the SF organization that might not otherwise be available—i.e., if we remained cynical about the transferability of insights between professions, for example if one was to assert that the Mintzberg organizational structures differ, so the lessons do not apply. In sum, risk to mission and men probably elicits the most acute moral emotions and the corresponding institutional work to align practices with the *SF Ethic*. However, an empirical study of this assertion is warranted.

⁴¹¹ Wright et al., "Maintaining the Values of a Profession," 204.

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