

Ethical Dilemma In Public Administration

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Ethical Dilemma

Under the utilitarian approach, the solution to an ethical dilemma involves choosing to sacrifice an individual to save a greater number of people. Causing harm to a single person is not wrong when one has to save many people. Utilitarian judgment involves a range of complex issues, such as the rejection of impartial concern for attaining the greater good. The approach involves a cost-benefit analysis that leads to the greater good. It involves “to be willing to sacrifice one person to save a greater number is merely to reject (or overrule) one such non-utilitarian rule. Such rejection, however, is compatible with accepting extreme non-utilitarian rules in many other contexts—rules about lying, retribution, fairness or property” (Jim, Brian, Miguel, & Savulescu, 2015). It is important for public administrators to adopt ethical values in the problem-solving process. The concept emphasizes how public agents will act in public settings. Dealing with ethical dilemmas in public administration requires [critical decision-making](#) as it focuses on choosing the best solution.

The Imperative For Accountability

Public agents adopt the utilitarian approach and accept their accountability. The primary solution for resolving ethical dilemmas involves knowing values. The individual must hold certain values that society recognizes. Before applying the values, an individual must know what those values are. Under the utilitarian approach, the resolution of an ethical dilemma depends on personal beliefs regarding the importance of saving a larger number of people. It also emphasizes sacrificing the self because the emphasis of the theory is on benefiting the larger population. Knowing values involves searching for reasoning associated with every decision of an individual. Reasoning about morality reflects choosing for greater happiness. The moral standards emphasize the happiness of many. It involves thinking if the action is just or unjust.

It states, “Discourse about values that ought to guide conduct was considered as a value in itself that would bring about virtue and happiness if sought after in a persistent and systematic way” (Makrydemetres, 2002). The decision-maker faces sets of alternatives and needs to choose the most appropriate option. They are accountable to the parliament and the public, depicting the need for taking actions that result in the greater good. The principles of virtue motivate them to make decisions that concentrate on the happiness of the masses. Utilitarianism focuses on the status quo of the majority’s happiness. The principle of virtue emphasizes the benefit of many and exhibits the idea of equality. The public agents focus on taking actions that lead to the maximization of satisfaction. Providing benefits to a greater number of people depicts their reliance on a utilitarian approach (Jim,

Brian, Miguel, & Savulescu, 2015).

The imperative of accountability helps public administrators in solving ethical dilemmas. They know that they are accountable to the parliament and the public. The thought keeps them away from taking actions that threaten their accountability. The concept of democratic virtue also explains the role of accountability in their actions and decisions. The principle of accountability will allow them to take actions that help them in fulfilling their duty. They exhibit a spirit of neutrality and discretion in their official capacity in the performance of their duties. Their primary role is to adopt democratic virtues that allow them to perform their duties according to ethical values. Moral integrity is also part of their accountability, allowing them to sacrifice themselves for the benefit of a larger population (Makrydemetres, 2002).

Imperative For Legality

The second principle of virtue identified by the utilitarian approach is the imperative of legality. The principle plays a dominant role in motivating public agents to take roles that are within legal aspects. Max Weber recognizes the principle as a legitimation of authority. It states, "Respect for and application of the principle of legality entails a particular type of control on administrative action that aims to see that [public administration](#) operates within the context of the law established by the legislature (Parliament)" (Makrydemetres, 2002). The purpose of the principle is to allow public agents inefficient decision-making that fulfils the legal conditions. The rule of law states that the agent follows the principles and conditions highlighted by justice and administration. Through the adoption of laws and acting according to the defined rules, the agent acts to promote equity and justice. The principle of legality in administrative performance eliminates the chances of injustice or unfair treatment. Avoidance of abuse of power remains another effective concept of the principle of legality. Through following laws and regulations the agent does not make wrong use of his power that allows him to act according to the ethical norms. The actions that the leaders take are according to law and order.

Imperative Of Integrity

The third option that allows the leaders to act according to the principles of virtue involves the imperative of integrity. The concept of integrity, according to the utilitarian approach, allows public agents to exhibit professional behaviour. The principle states that "professional integrity and autonomy the 'professional virtue', as we may call it, qualifying absolute hierarchical subordination entails that public administration may be brought under political guidance and control but its staff is recruited and serves under the authority of law and in the public interest, and not on the basis of partisan favouritism" (Makrydemetres, 2002). The principle allows public agents to take a professional role that eliminates the issues of ineffective management. The option of integrity emphasizes recruitment of the performance. It emphasizes the measures adopted by the public agents in the

promotion of corporate spirit and self-governance (Jim, Brian, Miguel, & Savulescu, 2015).

The Greatest Amount Of Public Good

The option of the imperative of integrity will give the greatest amount of public good. The option is vital for public leaders to make appropriate use of power and perform duties fairly. The idea of special rights and obligations also promotes integrity. It prevents the agent from engaging in wrongful conduct due to the conduction of judgment in accordance with the standards and principles of virtue. The option is most effective in preventing the public agent from focusing on self-interest. It is also significant in promoting fairness and ethical judgments (Makrydemetres, 2002).

Option Involving The Least Cost

The imperative of legality involves the least cost as it allows public agents to act in accordance with laws and rules defined by the justice system. The agents must act according to the law and adopt values identified in the utilitarian system. The imperative for legality permits agents to articulate a system of rules and laws. The option focuses on taking actions that are according to the rule of law. The principle of virtue motivates agents to avoid indulging in wrongful acts. As the option relies on personal beliefs, it does not involve monetary cost (Graham et al., 2003).

Summary

The three options discussed in the paper are important in promoting principles of virtue. The imperatives of accountability, legality and integrity allow government agents to perform roles that are purely ethical and permit them to take actions for the greater good. The options also fulfil the conditions of the utilitarian approach as they allow agents to act according to ethical principles. The status quo under the influence of these imperatives focuses on the happiness of the greater people. Adoption of the imperatives of accountability, legality and integrity promotes fairness in judgments and neutrality in decision-making.

References

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