

UNIT II

HEINZ'S DILEMMA

The famous example used by Kohlberg was called "Heinz's dilemma". A woman living in Europe would die of cancer unless she was given an expensive drug. Her husband, Heinz, could not afford it. But the local pharmacist, who had invented the drug at only one tenth of the sale price refused to sell it to Heinz who could only raise half the required money from borrowings. Desperation drives Heinz to break into the pharmacy and steal the drug to save his wife.

When respondents were asked whether and why Heinz should or should not steal a drug to save his wife from a life-threatening illness. The responses of the individuals were compared with a prototypical response of individuals at particular stages of moral reasoning. Kohlberg noted that irrespective of the level of the individual the response could be same, but the reasoning could be different.

For example, if a child reasoning at a 'preconventional' level might say that it is not right to steal because it is against law and someone might see you.

At a 'conventional' level, an individual might argue that it is not right to steal because it is against law and laws are necessary for society to function.

At a 'postconventional' level, one may argue that stealing is wrong because is against law and it is immoral.

CONSENSUS AND CONTROVERSY

CONTROVERSY:

- All individuals will not arrive at same verdict during their exercising their moral

autonomy.

- Aristotle noted long ago that morality is not as precise and clear-cut as arithmetic.

- Aim of teaching engg ethics is not to get unanimous conformity of outlook by indoctrination, authoritarian and dogmatic teaching, hypnotism or any other technique but to improve promotion of tolerance in the exercise of moral autonomy.

CONSENSUS:

The conductor of a music orchestra has authority over the musicians and his authority is respected by them by consensus as otherwise the music performance will suffer. Hence the authority and autonomy are compatible.

On the other hand, tension arises between the needs for autonomy and the need for concerns about authority. The difference between the two should be discussed openly to resolve the issue to the common good.

PROFESSIONS AND PROFESSIONALISM

Engineers normally imagine that they are servants to organizations rather than a public guardian. Responsibility to the public is essential for a professional.

Who is a professional?

- Obviously a *member* of a profession.

What is a profession?

‘JOB’ or ‘OCCUPATION’ that meets the following criteria from which a person *earns his living*.

- Knowledge – Exercise of skills, knowledge, judgment and discretion requiring extensive formal criteria.
- Organization - special bodies by members of the profession to set standard codes of ethics,
- Public good-The occupation serves some important public good indicated by a code of ethics.

Who is a professional engineer?

- Has a bachelor's degree in engineering from an accredited school
- Performs engineering work
- Is a registered and licensed Professional Engineer
- Acts in a morally responsible way while practicing engineering

Differing views on Professionals

“Only consulting engineers who are basically independent and have freedom from coercion can be called as professionals.”

-Robert L. Whitelaw

“Professionals have to meet the expectations of clients and employers. Professional restraints are to be imposed by only laws and government regulations and not by personal conscience.”

-Samuel Florman

“Engineers are professionals when they 1) attain standards of achievement in education, job performance or creativity in engineering and 2) accept the most basic moral responsibilities to the public as well as employers, clients, colleagues and subordinates.”

-Mike Martin & Roland Schinzinger

MOTIVES FOR PROFESSIONALISM

- A desire for interesting and challenging work and the pleasure in the act of changing the world.
- The joy of creative efforts. Where a scientist's interest is in discovering new technology, engineers interest is derived from creatively solving practical problems.
- The engineer shares the scientist's job in understanding the laws and riddles of the universe.

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- The sheer magnitude of the nature – oceans, rivers, mountains and prairies – leads engineers to build engineering marvels like ships, bridges, tunnels, etc., which appeal to human passion.
- The pleasure of being in the presence of machines generating a comforting and absorbing sense of a manageable, controlled and ordered world.
- Strong sense of helping, of directing efforts towards easing the lot of one’s fellows.

The main pleasure of the engineer will always be to contribute to the well-being of his fellow-men.

MODELS OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS

1. SAVIOR: The representative engineer is a savior who will redeem society from poverty, inefficiency, waste and the drudgery of manual labour.
2. GUARDIAN: Engineers know, the directions in which and pace at which, technology should develop.
3. BUREAUCRATIC SERVANT: The engineer as the loyal organization person uses special skills to solve problems.
4. SOCIAL SERVANT: Engineers, in co-operation with management, have the task of receiving society’s directives and satisfying society’s desires.
5. SOCIAL ENABLER AND CATALYST: Engineers play a vital role beyond mere compliance with orders. They help management and society understand their own needs and to make informed decisions.
6. GAME PLAYER: Engineers are neither servants nor masters of anyone. They play by the economic game rules that happen to be in effect at a given time.

TYPES OF ETHICAL THEORIES

S.NO	TYPES	BASED ON
1	Virtue ethics	Virtues and vices

2	Utilitarianism	Most good for most people
3	Duty ethics	Duties to respect persons
4	Rights ethics	Human Rights

VIRTUE ETHICS

- “*The unexamined life is not worth living.*”
(Socrates, 470-399 B.C.)
- “*The happy life is thought to be virtuous; now a virtuous life requires exertion and does not consist in amusement.*” (Aristotle, 384-322 B.C.)

The Four Main Virtues

- Prudence (mind): to think about a moral problem clearly and completely
- Temperance (emotions): control attraction to positive emotions
- Fortitude (emotions): control aversion for negative emotions
- Justice (will): choose according to truth and fairness.

Virtue Ethics

- Focuses on the type of person we should strive to be
- Actions which reflect *good character* traits (virtues) are inherently *right*
- Actions which reflect *bad character* traits (vices) are inherently *wrong*
- Virtue ethics are tied more to individual behavior than to that of an organization (e.g. business, government)

ARISTOTLE says that moral virtues are tendencies, acquired through habit formation, to reach a proper balance between extremes in conduct, emotion, desire and attitude i.e. virtues are tendencies to find the Golden Mean between the extremes of too much and too little.

Some of the virtues are defined using examples here:

Virtue	Too much	Too less
(Golden mean between extremes)		
<i>Courage</i>	<i>Foolhardiness</i>	<i>Cowardice</i>
<i>Truthfulness</i>	<i>Revealing all in violation of tact and confidentiality</i>	<i>Being secretive or lacking in candor</i>
<i>Generosity</i>	<i>Wasting one's resources</i>	<i>Being miserly</i>
<i>Friendliness</i>	<i>Being annoyingly effusive</i>	<i>Sulky or surly</i>

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Being morally responsible as a professional.
- Most basic and comprehensive professional virtue.
- Creation of useful and safe technological products while respecting the autonomy of clients and public, especially in matters of risk taking.

This encompasses a wide variety of the more specific virtues grouped as follows:

1. SELF DIRECTION VIRTUES:

Fundamental virtues in exercising our moral autonomy and responsibility. e.g. self understanding, humility, good moral judgment, courage, self discipline, perseverance, commitments, self-respect and dignity

2. PUBLIC SPIRITED VIRTUES:

Focusing on the good of the clients and public affected by the engineers' work by . not directly and intentionally harming others i.e. 'nonmaleficence'.

Benificence, sense of community, generosity are other virtues falling in this category.

3. TEAMWORK VIRTUES:

Enables professionals to work successfully with others. E.g. collegiality, cooperativeness, the ability to communicate, respect for authority, loyalty to employers and leadership qualities.

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4. PROFICIENCY VIRTUES:

Mastery of one's craft that characterize good engineering practice e.g. competence, diligence, creativity, self-renewal through continuous education.

MORAL INTEGRITY

Moral integrity is the unity of character on the basis of moral concern, and especially on the basis of honesty. The unity is consistency among our attitudes, emotions and conduct in relation to justified moral values.

SELF-RESPECT

- Valuing oneself in morally appropriate ways.
- Integral to finding meaning in one's life and work
- A pre-requisite for pursuing other moral ideals and virtues.
- Self-respect is a moral concept of properly valuing oneself but self-esteem is a psychological concept of positive attitude towards oneself.

Self-respect takes two forms.

1. *Recognition self-respect* is properly valuing oneself because of one's inherent moral worth, the same worth that every other human being has.
2. *Appraisal self-respect* is properly valuing ourselves according to how well we meet moral standards and our personal ideals.

VARIOUS SENSES OF RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility ascribed by i) virtue, ii) obligations, iii) general moral capacities of people, iv) liabilities and accountability for actions and v) blameworthiness or praiseworthiness.

1. By virtue: A person is said to be a responsible person when we ascribe a moral virtue to the person. We expect that the person is regularly concerned to do the right thing, is conscientious and diligent in meeting obligations. In this sense, professional responsibility is the central virtue of engineers.
2. By obligation: Moral responsibilities can be thought of as obligations or duties to perform morally right acts.
3. By general moral capacity: When we view a person as a whole rather than one with respect to a specific area, we are actually thinking about the active capacity of the person for knowing how to act in morally appropriate ways e.g. the capacity of children grow as they mature and learn.
4. By accountability: Responsibility also means being accountable, answerable or liable to meet particular obligations. The virtue of professional responsibility implies a willingness to be accountable for one's conduct.
5. By being blameworthy: When accountability for a wrongdoing is at issue, responsible becomes a synonym for blameworthy. When right conduct is the issue, the context is praiseworthiness.

CAUSAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Causal Responsibility: consists simply in being a cause of some event. E.g. lightning as being responsible for a house catching fire.

Legal Responsibility: consists simply in being a cause for harm that was so unlikely and also unforeseeable that no moral responsibility is involved

UTILITARIANISM

- That which produces the maximum benefit for the greatest number of people (e.g. Democracy)
- Tries to achieve a balance between the good and bad consequences of an action
- Tries to maximize the well-being of society and emphasizes what will provide the most benefits to the largest group of people
- This method is fundamental to many types of engineering analysis, including risk-benefit analysis and cost-benefit analysis

Drawbacks:

- Sometimes what is best for the community as a whole is bad for certain individuals in the community
- It is often impossible to know in advance which decision will lead to the most good

Organizing Principles to Resolving Ethical Issues

- Utilitarian thinking
 - a standard that promotes those individual actions or rules that produce the greatest total amount of utility to those affected.
 - A code that enjoins engineers to promote the safety, health, and welfare of the public.
 - What is utility, though? Happiness?
- Preference utilitarianism
 - promote those conditions that allow each individual to pursue happiness as he or she

conceives it.

- Two conditions necessary for this: freedom and well-being.
- Practically, for engineers, this advocates cost/benefit analyses.

Problems with Utilitarianism

- Difficult to quantify benefits for ALL those affected.
- “Greatest good” difficult to apply to an all-inclusive population.
- Someone gets “shafted” – approach justifies perpetrating injustice on individuals, i.e., someone gets left out.

- Three approaches:
 1. Cost/benefit – quantifiable approach. Maximize positive utilities (benefits) against negative utilities (costs).
 2. Act utilitarian – “Will the course of action produce more good than any alternative course of action that I could take”?
 3. Rule utilitarian – “Would utility be maximized if everyone did the same thing in the same circumstances”? Adoption of commonly accepted rules.

1. COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS:

- Assess the available options
- Assess the costs and benefits of each option for the entire audience affected
- Make the decision that is likely to result in the greatest benefit relative to cost.

2. ACT-UTILITARIANISM:

(professed by John Stuart Mills)

- Focuses on individual actions, rather than general rules.
- An act is right if it is likely to produce the most good for the most people involved in the particular situation.
- Rules may be broken whenever doing so will produce the most good in a specific situation.

- Happiness is the only ‘intrinsic’ good and all others are ‘instrumental’ goods that serve as the means of happiness.

3. RULE-UTILITARIANISM:

(professed by Richard Brandt)

- This regards moral values as primary.
- We should follow the rules and avoid bribes, even when those acts do not have the best consequences in a particular situation, because the general practice of following rules and not bribing produce the most overall good
- Rules should be considered in sets called ‘moral codes’. A moral code is justified when followed, would maximize the public good more than alternative codes would.

DUTY ETHICS (Immanuel Kant’s view)

Contents that certain acts (or duties) should be performed because they are inherently ethical such as:

- be honest,
- keep promises,
- do not inflict sufferings on other people,
- be fair,
- make reparation when you have been unfair,
- how gratitude for kindness extended by others
- seek to improve own intelligence and character,
- develop one’s talents,
- don’t commit suicide.
- Duties, rather than good consequences, is fundamental.
- Individuals who recognize their ethical duties will choose ethically correct moral actions

These duties should meet Kant’s 3 conditions i.e.

1. It should express respect for persons,

- People deserve respect because they have capacity to be *autonomous and for exercising goodwill*.
- Goodwill is the *conscientious and honest effort* to do what is right according to universal principles of duties.
- Moral motives and intentions play a prominent role in duty ethics rather than utilitarianism.

2. It is an universal principle

- Duties are binding on us only if they are applicable to everyone. They must be universalisable.

3. It expresses command for autonomous moral agents. Duties prescribe certain actions categorically, without qualifications or conditions attached. Valid principles of duties are *Categorical Imperatives*. They contrast with non-moral commands called *Hypothetical Imperatives* which are conditional.

The above —▶ ‘RESPECT for PERSONS’

Drawback of Kant's duty ethics: It has failed to be sensitive to how principles of duty can *conflict* with each other thereby creating Moral dilemmas.

Rawls Development on Kant's Duty Ethics

Rawls argues that all rational people would agree to abide by two basic moral principles:

1. Each person is entitled to the most extensive amount of liberty compatible with an equal amount for others and
2. Differences in social power and economic benefits are justified only when they are likely to benefit everyone, including members of most disadvantaged groups.

RIGHTS ETHICS (JOHN LOCKE – 1632-1704)

- Everyone has inherent moral rights
- Everyone has rights that arise from *EXISTING* (i.e. right to Life, maximum individual Liberty, and human Dignity are Fundamental Rights).
- Other rights arise as a Consequence.
- Duties arise because people have rights, not vice versa.
- Any act that violates an individual's moral rights is ethically unacceptable.
- Rights ethics was highly individualistic.
- Rights are primarily entitlements that prevent other people from meddling in one's life. These are referred to as Liberty Rights or Negative Rights that place duties on other people not to interfere with one's life.

e.g. Individuals do not have rights to life because others have duties not to kill them. Instead, possessing the right to life is the reason why others ought not to kill them.

Drawbacks

- How do we prioritize the rights of different individuals?
- Rights ethics often promote the rights of individuals at the expense of large groups/society

A.I. Melden's version of Rights Ethics

- Human rights are intimately related to communities of people.
- This version is known as POSITIVE WELFARE RIGHTS and is defined as rights to community benefits for living a minimally decent human life.

EVALUATION OF ETHICAL THEORIES

We are basically not interested in which of the ethical theories is the best. It is believed that there are areas in which each theory complements others by how they differ.

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Procedure for General Evaluation:

1. The theory must be clear and formulated with concepts that are coherent and applicable.
2. It must be internally consistent in that none of its tenets contradicts any other.
3. Neither the theory nor its defense can rely upon false information.
4. It must be sufficiently comprehensive to provide guidance in specific situations of interest to us.
5. It must be compatible with our most carefully considered moral convictions about concrete situations.

SELF-INTEREST AND ETHICAL EGOISM

Psychological Egoism

All of our actions can be reduced to self-interest

- We always do what we most *want* to do. e.g., a man who helps others has *chosen* to do so, so he sees doing it, is in his *self-interest*
- We do what makes us feel good. e.g., a man who helps others must get *pleasure* from doing it – hence it is in his *self-interest*

The Problem of Counter Examples

What about *charity* and *pity*?

These require the egoist to distinguish selfish and unselfish *acts* from selfish and unselfish *motives*

- Charity – I enjoy showing *my power*
- Pity – I worry that it might happen to *me*

So again, doing these, we act from *self-interest*

Confusion over self-interest and selfishness

- Not all actions are done from selfishness
- Brushing my teeth (self-interested but not selfish)

Also confusion over self-interest and pleasure

- Not all actions are done from self-interest
- Smoking cigarettes (pleasurable but not self-interested)
- *Self-interest = any interest the self has*

What do all major Ethical Theories say about this?

All major theories acknowledge the *importance* of Self Interest.

- Utilitarians take into account one's own good as well as others.
- Duty ethics emphasizes duties to ourselves.
- Right ethicists talk about our rights to pursue our own good.
- Virtue ethicists emphasize the importance of self-respect.

But all these theories also emphasize that the pursuit of self interest must be balanced with our moral responsibilities to others.

Ethical Egoism

- A different view, which talks of morality as only the pursuit of self interest
- Self interest is a 'rational concern' requiring consideration of one's long-term interests.

E.g., taking bribe may appear to serve one's self interest but it does not serve the long-term interest of self. Hence taking bribe is not acceptable since it would not do any good on a long-term. This was professed by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Ayn Rand (1905-1982).

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- Ayn Rand – with only one life to live, the individual is of utmost importance
- ◆ It is in one's self-interest to adopt the Moral Point of View (Hobbes' Social Contract)

CUSTOMS and ETHICAL RELATIVISM

Relativism:

- Distinction between “morals” (“treatment of others”) and “mores” (“harmless customs”)

Cultural (Descriptive) Relativism:

- Factual Claims: “x is considered right in society y at time t” and “is considered wrong in society z at time t”
- Empirical Conclusion: Moralities are relative
- This is either true or false (anthropology –a study of mankind , its customs, beliefs, etc.can figure it out)

Normative (Ethical) Relativism:

- Normative Claim: “What is considered right in society x at time t *is right for that society*”
- A particular culture cannot be judged from outside of that culture.
- ‘Ethical Relativism’ says that actions are morally right when they are approved by law and custom.
- They are wrong when they violate laws and custom.
- Ethical *egoism* tries to reduce moral reasons to matters of self interest, ‘ethical *relativism*’ attempts to reduce moral values to laws, conventions and customs of particular societies.

Consequences of Normative Relativism

- We cannot say other “morals” are inferior to our own society’s
- We decide the value of our actions based only on what our particular society thinks
- We should show a lot of tolerance for different customs and outlooks in a society in which we live in. It means that customs can have moral significance in deciding how we should act. This view is called ‘ethical pluralism’.

Reasons for Acceptance Of Ethical Relativism

The reasons professed for acceptance of ethical relativism is threefold.

1. Laws seem so tangible and clear-cut. They provide a public way ending seemingly endless disputes about rights and wrongs. But many times, moral reasons seem to be at variance with laws e.g. apartheid laws.
2. Moral standards vary dramatically from one culture to another. The only kind of objectivity possible is limited to a given set of laws in a given society. Acknowledging this relativity of morality encourages the virtue of tolerance of differences among societies.
3. Moral judgments should be made in relation to factors that from case to case, usually making it impossible to formulate rules which are simple. Customs and laws are usually morally relevant factors that should be taken into account.

RELIGION and DIVINE COMMAND ETHICS

Ethics and Religion:

Moral issues and religious belief are related in several positive ways.

- First, they are shaped over time from the central moral values of major world religions.
- Second, religious views often support moral responsibility by providing additional

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motivation for being moral.

- Third, sometimes religions set a higher moral standard than is conventional.
- Societies often benefit from a variety of religions that make prominent particular virtues, inspiring their members to pursue them beyond what is ordinarily seen as morally obligatory.

Divine Command Ethic:

- This says that an act which is right is commanded by god and the one which is wrong is forbidden by God.
- The difficulty in this is to know precisely what God's commands are and in knowing whether God exists.

We can view that moral reasons are *not reducible* to religious matters, although religious belief may provide an *added inspiration* for responding to them.

Uses Of Ethical Theories

1. Ethical theories aid in identifying the moral considerations or reasons that constitute a dilemma.
2. They provide a precise sense of what kinds of information are relevant to solving moral development.
3. They sometimes, offer ways to rank the relevant moral considerations in order of importance and provide a rough guidance in solving moral problems.
4. The theories help us identify the full moral ramifications of alternative courses of action, urging a wide perspective on the moral implications of the options and providing a systematic framework of comparing alternatives.
5. The theories augment the precision with which we use moral terms and they provide frame works for moral reasoning when discussing moral issues with colleagues.
6. By providing frame works for development of moral arguments, the theories strengthen our ability to reach balanced and insightful judgments.