

Utilitarianism

- One ought to do the action/adopt the rule or policy which will create more social utility than any alternative possible action.
- Social utility: overall balance of negative and positive utility, over long term, for all concerned.

Decision procedure for Utilitarianism

- List possible actions/rules/policies.
- Consider the consequences of adoption of each action/rule/policy.
- Select the action/rule/policy with the most utility.
- Apply the rule/policy.

Kant

Follow moral rules that are universalizable.

– This means you should only accept a moral rule that a rational person would accept as binding for all persons.

- Always treat persons as ends and never merely as means.

– This means that we should recognize that each person has the same basic moral worth as we do.

Decision procedure for Kant

Rules:

– Consider what rules would apply in a given situation.

– Decide whether each rule could be universalized.

– Decide acting upon each rule would respect persons.

- Respect

– Decide what action/policy would be most respectful of all persons.

Moral Rights

Differ from legal rights

- Are claims that society should enforce
- Imply duties
- Cannot be waived
- Cannot be overridden
- Apply universally

Decision Procedure for Rights

- What possible rights are involved?
- Are these really rights?
- Are the rights being violated?
- What would respecting these rights require?
- If rights are coming into conflict, how can we balance them?

Virtue

- What kind of a person do I want to be?
- What kind of a society do we want to live in?
- What character traits do we need to be good citizens, friends and to fill our social roles well in this society?

Decision Procedure For Virtue

- What virtues/vices did we see in this case?
- What role did these virtues/vices play?
- What will be the effect on character of behaving this way?
- What virtues should have been displayed?
- How would things have turned out differently if these virtues were displayed?

Care

- Moral attention
 - Attention to the facts
- Sympathetic understanding
 - Awareness of what the other would want you to do, and of what would be best for the other.
- Relationship awareness
 - Awareness of existing relationships, of need to create and sustain community
- Accommodation and Harmony
 - Balancing interests and preserving harmony in so far as you can.

Decision Procedure for Care

- Be sensitive to all the facts about each particular case.
- Be open to sympathetic understanding.
- Be aware of the need to sustain and preserve networks of care.
- Try to preserve harmony.
- Short cut: What would my ideal caring self do?

Decision procedure for Professional Codes

What are the relevant professional codes?

What do these codes of ethics tell us to do in circumstances like this?

What are the moral obligations usually associated with this profession?

What other materials are available through relevant professional associations?

Fairness: Social Contract Rules

The right moral rules are those which would be chosen by rational persons under the right circumstances.

–no overriding self-interest

–no coercion

–commitment to live by the rules

•Rawls' Rules:

–The right moral rules are those which would be chosen by rational bargainers, in the Original Position, behind the veil of ignorance.

Rawls' Decision Procedure

•What are the possible rules?

•For each rule

–Would it be chosen by rational bargainers in the OP behind the VI?

–Would it be acceptable to the least well-off?

Justice

–What would a just society look like?

–What kinds of rules do we need in a just society? (procedural and substantive).

–How can we fairly distribute benefits and burdens?

•Competing conceptions of fairness: equality, contribution, need, difference principle.

Rawls' Principles of Justice

•Each person has an equal right to the most extensive liberties compatible with similar liberties for all.

•Basic social goods should be

–available to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity;

–distributed by appeal to the benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the difference principle)