

Good essay on prisoners dilemma

[Law](#), [Constitution](#)



According to Cooperation Commons (Para 1), prisoner's dilemma is a situation in which the parties might fail to agree even when it is in the best interests of the two to agree. The term was coined by Melvin Dresher and Merrill Flood who were working at RAND back in 1950. The term prisoner's dilemma came about because the scenario was formulated from the prison perspective where two prisoners are convicted with no proof of the crime. If they do not cooperate, they both risk having a lesser sentence. However, if any betrays the other, the one who betrays is likely to be set free whereas the other gets a severe sentence. If they betray each other, they both face a strict sentence as they incriminate each other. Many logical prisoners would take the option of betraying the other. As a result, they end up getting long sentences, even though it would have in the interests of both to refrain from betraying each other (Katchanovski 154).

The scenario is commonly applied in politics, especially in the American context where there are two dominant political parties; the Democrats and the Republicans. According to Cornell University (Para 3), the American situation makes it easy for the prisoner's dilemma to arise. This is because being affiliated either to the Republican or Democrat side implies that one has to oppose the other; even when collaboration between the two would be the most worth-while decision. Nevertheless, due to the differences in ideologies and political ideas, Cornell University (Para 5) indicates that being a Republican or a Democrat simply means being against the ideas of the other. It is for this reason that Prisoner's dilemma is common in the US. Such a stand-off can be diluted by the institution of the judiciary. In times when the interests of the Americans are at hand, the judiciary has the mandate,

through the Supreme Court, to make a decision that would be in the interests of the Americans as opposed to the interests of the political parties. This happens in cases when the prisoner's dilemma forces the parties to take sides with the citizens in the middle.

Another instance where the prisoner's dilemma can arise in US politics is with reference to the economic and social reforms (Cohen Para 2). Again, this can be seen with reference to the two political parties. As evidenced by the recent elections, the Democrats and the Republicans have different platforms when it comes to the political arena. Each advocates for what is deemed important for its members. In most cases, the Republicans seem to fight for the good for the good of the affluent and the strong. On the other hand, the Democrats seem inclined to the interests of the masses. With such platforms, none of the two seems to waiver in their position. This is because such a move would be termed as agreeing with the opponents ideas. As is the game in politics, such a move would reflect as a weakness, thereby costing the party the elections. This scenario greatly propagates the prisoner's dilemma.

With regard to this case, Sallet, O'Menny, and Myers (Para 3) indicates that the civil society and other interest groups can help in solving the stand-off. These are mainly led by humanitarians and other activists who have the interests of the society at heart. They help in bringing sanity to the political arena by reminding the politicians that they should be more concerned about the rights of the people as opposed to the image of the political parties.

The third scenario that can bring about prisoners' dilemma in the American

politics is based on the interpretation of the constitution by different parties. As explained by Sallet et al (Para 5), many of the politicians tend to take different interpretations of the constitution. As such, a similar portion of the constitution can be interpreted by different individuals in a manner that brings conflict and controversy. Such instances have arisen with the DOMA Act, the PATRIOT Act, and the Bill of Rights with reference to the gay people. Such issues have brought about heated political debates in the US, some of which have become pivotal in elections. Politicians tend to use these interpretations to their own advantage so that they can appease their followers. It is worth noting that some of these interpretations might be misleading. In resolving this issue, the judiciary is the most relevant institution to take action on the same. It can help in interpretation of the constitution to make the people better understand what the constitution has with regard to these issues.

In conclusion, it is evident that the judicial institution as well as the civil rights movements and other interest groups are most suited to deal with issues of prisoner's dilemma. They can help in making sure that the citizens are not held hostage by politicians who are after their own good. To make the institutions more effective, they should be independent. Furthermore, they should be led by individuals who have no political interests. This is the only way to bring sanity into the world of politics.

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