

Relationship between ethics and public administration: competing ethical obligations...

[Politics](#), [President](#)



Ethics in the public sector is usually the moral justification for the various decisions that lead to the actions made in the daily completion of duties performed, when working in the government and nonprofit organizations. It is a standard which the public use to scrutinize work performed by the members in such organizations. The principles are supposed to hold ground when subjected to public and therefore, they ensure that no internal set of principles are set. The way they conduct their personal lives is also scrutinized, therefore it is an added burden to these officers (Stillman, R. J. (2010). The main role of these ethics in the public sector is to create an open atmosphere within the operations of the government.

Dwight Waldo believed that the ethical behavior in the public offices is a complex matter full of chaos. It has no clear discourse since the ideas from which it would be based are ambiguous and unreliable. The ideas have to be directed in way that they bring about the good of the citizens in general. This makes decision making a lengthy process as a lot of variables have to be considered for a decision to be made. Dwight found it intriguing that not all the many decisions made on public behalf are moral if scrutinized by an individual. I. e. Capital punishments: death penalty law that enables the government to sentence the death of a person who has been proven as a rapist because this preserves peace and order. The relative of the rape victim is however not allowed to kill the rapist as the society views this as an act that is morally wrong.

Waldo created a map that the administrators should respond to because they are employees of the government. The obligations are to: the constitution, democracy, the nation, professionalism, family and friends,

organizational norms, self, middle range collectivities and the public interest. The puzzle in the obligations that are conflicting is that the administrators must then go ahead and choose which to follow; those that give a priority to his country and his family as well (Stillman, R. J. (2010). The list is not fixed and it is subject to changes in the order of arrangements, inclusions and removals as the degrees of prioritizing the obligation vary. On most occasions they are seen in bad light but we should consider that they respond to various conflicting issues on ethics and with many demands hence it is a hard task. I. e. An increase in wages for the minimum wages is a welcome by laborers but would bring about resentment from the sectors of business. There would be a conflict between the interest of the business sector and that of the workers and laborers. The public administrators have to be applauded for their ability to deal with these situations as very few can be able to handle the government moral complexities well.

In the case the Blast in Centralia No. 5 a state inspector of mines had done some inspection of the site and found out that the mine was hazardous. He voiced out his concerns of the mine not being safe and that some corrections needed to be done to ensure the safety of the workers. One of the concerns being too much dust that covered the workers' shoes and them coughing coal chunks when they went home. This coal was believed to cause an explosion if it built up. He further recommended the cleaning of the haulage and the sprinkling roads. The major public sector professionals knew of the hazardous situation from the many union complaints and letters and they never did something about the situation. They failed to prioritize the dangers by taking the recommended corrective measures and this led to an explosion

that caused a loss of life of 111 hardworking men. Investigations into the fire show that the cause was the open lights of the many shot fires or the shot that was not properly stemmed that ignited the coal dust and set the explosion.

Lessons learnt: To ensure the people that work in the areas that you inspect are safe at all time. When informing the top management on anomalies that you find in the area of work you are assigned you should ensure that they work on it. You should not wait for the worst to happen but rather if you have the capacity to bring change you should go ahead and do it. When working in the public office your decisions affect a lot of people hence caution should be always observed. I. e. choosing to clear the buildup of coal in the site, and clearing the haulage roads. One should always consider all the variables he is faced upon with and consider the best cause of action that involved keeping the people safe.

George tenet helped to bring morale back to the CID since it had lost its glory years. He loved the people he worked with, he walked around in the office, talked with people in the corridors and people loved his leadership styles. Tenet focus on ensuring they had addition funding for the agency that helped to improve technology that helped in retaining, recruiting and improving data collection and analysis helped to boost the morale of the employees in the agency. He was given the position during President Clinton second leadership and many people believed that he was not qualified for the position since he lacked leadership skills but he proved them all wrong (Stillman, R. J. (2010). He was able to get access to the president and give him regular briefings on the happenings n Afghanistan and Osama Bin Laden

but the information he was giving was not as good as it ought to have been. His priorities were not right as during his rule the USA missed the India's nuclear test of 1998, the 9/11 five year cycle of preparation, bombing of Chinese Embassy in Belgrade even though he frequently briefed the president. He was a very social person and was able to hold on to his position and deal with the public administration office as much as he could by the time he retired in 2004 during President Bush rule. He left at a time when investigations were being done on the intelligence in Iraq and he knew some of the information he had given to Colin Powell were not true and leaks were coming out of the CIA. Since the CIA is a secret agency and giving explanations on the cases would betray some of the sources he had spent his long term in the public office and had the public at heart when he resigned from his post.

Lessons learnt: Despite the public disagreeing on the ability of George tenet to work in the office he proved them all wrong by working hard and being able to remain in the same position in President Bush and Clintons rule.

Never strive to please the people you work for and with but to always do the right thing. When working in the public right if you make decisions and they go wrong you should not quit as a way of avoiding facing the situation but you should work on resolving it. As a public officer one should ensure that the information she/he is giving is accurate to avoid contradicting himself in the future this is because the decisions made and information given affects the lives of many. One's focus should not be directed to his/her ability to attend closed door meetings but on ensuring that the input he delivers is helpful to the lives of the people he manages.

References

Stillman, R. J. (2010). Public administration: Concepts and cases. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.