

Kants deontology

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



Introduction

The word Deon is a Greek word and it means duty. According to the deontological theory actions are wrong or right in themselves, quite distant from their effect. In this theory certain actions are allowed or prevented by the argument that each of the action is either right or wrong in accordance with the ethical obligations. So those who believe in using a deontological theory would bring in consideration the basic rights and duties of groups or individuals and act according to their moral duties.

Immanuel Kant the great philosopher, who had lived in the 18th century, proposed the work which is used for the reference of deontology. According to him each individual has got self-respect and dignity in inheritance. He believes that no one has right to treat others in a negative way for his own means.

Kantian Deontology

Kant argues that only good will is completely good rather than the happiness, pleasure or something else. Those who perform bad deeds are never happy and pleased. The thing which is in accordance with and acts for the sake of duty is good will. Kant seems to suggest that only those actions have moral worth which is performed for the sake of duty. He determines the moral value of one's deeds by the reluctance towards his sake of duty means greater one is disinclined towards the sake of duty, more the moral worth of action. Thus moral duty is independent of and comes before the concept of goodness.

The good will does not need any qualification for being good, thus it is good on its own. . Kant does not believe in the idea of being willed well because of the result being produced by it For Kant a person is accountable for only those things that are under his control. Even though what we will for our deeds is within the power of us but the results of our acts are not. In the same way even if less positive consequences are produced by the actions of a person of good will, he deserves praise.

Kant suggests that good will is only acted solely by the right intention. The intention of good will is for the sake of duty. The different intentions for actions are either acting out of self-interest or for the sake of duty or acting through inclination. For understanding the difference among the different intentions for the actions being performed, relate this to the corporate world example of a salesman at any organization whose customers are very satisfied and he has goodwill. (Karl, 1982)

This is because he has never been dishonest to his customers and clients, since he has never overcharged to those customers and clients who are inexperienced. Now there can be three reasons for him to be honest. Firstly he treats honestly just because of an intense competition in his organization. He thinks that if he would be truly honest with his customers, they would not go to his competitors and would therefore prefer to do business with him as a result he would be awarded by the organization. So in this he is honest just because of self-interest and not for the duty and for Kant this act is not the moral act because it is performed for the sake of self-interest rather than the duty.

Another reason for him to be honest is due to an inclination. This means that he derives pleasure from his honesty which has come naturally to him and according to Kant such kind of actions which are performed due to inclination, are also immoral. This is because the inclination is entirely unreliable and irrational, and is followed because of its caprice not because of its reason. These same feelings from which we are inspired and perform kind acts may also inspire us to perform the unkind and cruel acts. That is why inclination is unreliable. (Karl, 1982)

Thus according to Kant, the person who acts honestly because he thinks that it is his duty regardless of his inclinations to perform those functions, that is a person of goodwill. So those who are generous but help the poor just because of their internal feeling of being pity are not behaving morally, rather than those being stingy and help for the sake of duty. The later ones are acting morally. For Kant the need of acting out of respect for universal law is duty. The person who acts establishes the moral and ethical value.

The basic moral principle according to Kant is the Categorical Imperative. An imperative is just an obligation or command. The concept of a categorical imperative is different from that of hypothetical imperative and can be better and can be understood in its contrast. A hypothetical imperative involves those actions which are performed in order to accomplish various goals. But it does not involve those actions whom one does not care for achieving the goals.

The main distinction of categorical imperative is that it only emphasizes how to act irrespective of the result or goal one may achieve. Kant believes that a categorical imperative is where, when there is a fundamental principle of

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morality. This is because the ethical and moral causes dominate the other reasons and causes. For example an organization has a self interested reason to cheat its customers by making lower quality products but if morality is grounded in a categorical imperative, then it's moral.

But if morality is grounded in a categorical imperative than the moral cause againstcheatingthe customers dominates the self interested cause. . The formulations of Kant's Categorical Imperative are that we should always treat ourselves and others at ends not for your means of our ends. Maxim is a principle on which we act willingly. Kant holds that perform only those maxims which always will to be a universal law. (Howard, 1995)

These formulations are used by Kant for different expressive ways for same basic principle of respect and value for others They are not synonymous but can be used for expressing the same in that each formulation helps one to perform in the same manner. The first formulation holds that persons should be treated as beings that have intrinsic value means they have got value which is independent of their worth for any purpose.

It rejects the idea of using a person for one's own purpose. But it tells us that one should never use a person merely as a means to your own ends. This means that if someone is willing to do our work than that is acceptable but if he is forced that is unethical so we should not deceive others in doing our will. Categorical Imperative forbids compulsion and deception. In compulsion or deceiving others, we violate their will and disrupt their autonomy.

The second formulation permits to perform only those actions whose maxim can become a universal law of nature. One acting on maxim requires the test

of universalization so that everyone can act on it. It is not necessary that a certain maxim should always be a universal law but it must have to be applied on a universal basis, only that is morally permissible. This can be related to the corporate work world in the way that if an employee working in an organization deceives everyone by cheating his employer and by not performing his functions well thinking that what he is doing, is right.

If his motives are good then he passes the first test of deontology, but if he applies all his above discussed actions on a universal basis that everyone would start cheating then would this cheating work? Of course not, for the reason that cheating depends on deception. People would not be deceived if they are expected to be cheated. So for Kant and his Categorical Imperative cheating is morally wrong. So it is must to decide that maxim can be applied on a universal scale. If it can then the action is deemed to be good, if it cannot then the action is deemed to be morally bad.

Corporations have highly formalized decision-making structures since they are social groups and they have to keep in concern the benefits of the people present in their internal as well as external environment and have a strong influence on the faiths and decisions and beliefs of the persons who are members of the large-scale corporation. So according to Kant corporate intentions cannot be reduced to the individual members' aggregate decisions. In fact, all the decisions must be applied on universal basis which are morally acceptable. Thus the individuals have the power to change the course of the corporate character by retaining their ability, provided that sufficient number agrees on that change which is required. (Howard, 1995)

References

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