The Ethics Map:

A Map of the Range of Concerns Encompassed

by 'Ethics and the Public Service'

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Abstract

The article provides a typology or map of ethical behavior. The map is detailed in the table in the article. In the table a wide range of behaviors that can be found in the public service are listed. These behaviors are grouped into three categories:

"Value-Based Ethics": Behaviors that serve the public good and maximize the values of life, health, and freedom, values that can be seen as being reflected in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution;

"Value Neutral or Relative Ethics": Behaviors that reflect an indifference to Value-Based Ethics," and

"No Values": Behaviors that reflect values that are at odds with the public good.

While the map has primary applicability to those who serve in the public sector, it can also be seen as having applicability to those in the private sector. This is particularly the case among those in the private sector who strive to balance the goals of making a profit with contributing to the public good. While individuals in the private sector are not obliged to act in ways that give high priority to serving the public good, those in the public sector are so obligated. A major purpose of the map is to compare and contrast behaviors across the three categories and to

awaken understanding and insight that might serve as an impetus for nurturing and strengthening value-based behavior among those who serve in government.

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There is an old adage, "If you don't know where you're going, you could end up anywhere."   It has been seen by some as having great relevance to the field of public administration. A luminary in the field, Dwight Waldo, had made a similar observation over thirty years ago in his article entitled "Public Administration and Change: Terra Paene Incognita" (Waldo, 1969). He asserted that the field was bereft of a philosophy of change or sense of direction. Indeed, his work influenced my selection of a dissertation topic that addressed this absence of a philosophy or change or sense of direction in the field.

In my doctoral dissertation, *Public Administration in the Public Interest: A Democratic Humanist Paradigm of Public Administration* (1975), I offered a paradigm of public administration based on an explicit philosophy of value-based change. Fundamental was a definition of what it meant to "act in the public interest". "To act in the public interest" was "to act in a way that maximizes the values and ethical principles upon which this nation was founded."   Those values in my view included life, health, and freedom. (In should be noted that "health" is used here to encompass the concepts of the "General Welfare" which can be interpreted as including human welfare, societal health, and psychological health and well being.)

In the '70s, I constructed a typology of ethical behavior, "A Map of the Range of Concerns Encompassed by 'Ethics and the Public Service'," based on this normative view of the meaning of "acting in the public interest." (Gordon, 1978). "The Ethics Map" provides an overview of a wide range of behaviors, behaviors that can be found in the public as well as the private sectors. (The focus here is primarily on the public sector.)

In The Ethics Map, the same general behavior is viewed in light of three different categories: "No Values", "Value Neutral or Relative Ethics: Indifference to Value-Based Ethics," and "Value-Based Ethics." For instance, in the Ethics Map (see Table), the stance with respect to the commission of illegal acts in each of these three different categories is depicted. A list of numerous other behaviors is also characterized.

The following four pages exhibit a graphical representation of the Ethics Map.

No Ethics	Value Neutral or Relative Ethics - Indifference to Value-Based Ethics	Value-Based Ethics
Committing or delegating the commission of illegal acts	Not committing or delegating the commission of illegal acts because they are illegal, not because they are wrong	Not committing or delegating the commission of illegal acts
Engaging in or delegating the engagement in other forms of wrongdoing	Not engaging in or delegating the engagement in other forms of wrongdoing because it is not expedient to do so	Not engaging in or delegating the engagement in other forms of wrongdoing
Failing to report of failing to take action concerning wrongdoing	Selectively reporting or taking action concerning wrongdoing when it is expedient to do so	Reporting wrongdoing or taking action concerning wrongdoing
Covering up wrongdoing	Selectively dealing with wrong-doing	Uncovering wrongdoing
Lying or giving a false impression of the truth	Being truthful selectively	Being truthful
Engaging in conning	Giving false impressions when it is expedient to do so	Not giving false impressions wittingly
Engaging in practices or in games for bureaucratic or personal gain	Being motivated by prevailing non-humanistically-oriented values or value-neutral approaches of the kind that too often characterize business and science	Not being motivated by bureaucratic or personal gain
Engaging in "quid pro quo-ism"	Doing what is right when it is expedient, acting on the basis of situational ethics	Doing what is right and honorable regardless of the consequences
Engaging in self-aggrandizement	Being motivated by non-humanistically-oriented values or value-neutral approaches of the kind that too often characterize business and science	Being motivated by fundamental concern for the public good: the preservation and enhancement of life, health, and freedom (Gordon, 1975)
Allowing blinding ambition or compulsion to get in the way of serving the public good, of addressing the public interest	Being blinded by an overweening reliance on the rational and empirical	Not being blinded by ambition or compulsion
Abusing perquisites of station	Taking undo advantage of perquisites of station when it is possible to get away with it	Not abusing perquisites of station
Playing games with procedures	Elevating the sophistication with which the game is played	Not playing games with procedures
Broom-closeting or dead-ending good people or people who are a threat or make waves	Treating people as functionaries, or means to an end, and without regard for human feelings and values	Treating people fairly, equitably, and humanely and going out of one's way to encourage and support responsible action and ethical conduct
Making life difficult and career advancement impossible for those who perform their duties well or expose wrongdoing	Not really being fundamentally concerned with or attentive to individual or organizational integrity	Seeing to it that those who do their jobs do not lose their jobs; seeing to it that those who are critical do not lose their jobs
Keeping worthy persons out of responsible positions: not allowing persons with understanding and commitment to play an appropriate role, or assume appropriate responsibility	Tending to keep worthy persons out of responsible positions because of their value-based orientation to the role of the public servant and the purpose of government	Seeking out worthy persons for responsible positions; providing persons with understanding and commitment an opportunity to play an appropriate role and to take on appropriate responsibilities

Providing disincentives for truthful and open communication and self-expression leading to the withholding of information or advice likely to prove unpopular or bring disfavor	Focusing on fact, reason, "empirically valid truths" while expressing little or no concern for honesty and openness or any sense of societal values and purposes	Fostering truthful and open communication and self-expression through example, through the setting of a tone, and through one's words and actions
Providing disincentives for good work	Using incentive systems based on a very narrow definition of what constitutes good work	Not providing disincentives for good work
Constraining the development and contributions of others	Effectively constraining the development and contributions of others	Fostering the development and contributions of others
Not seeing to it that those who fail to serve in the public interest are removed from the public service if they do not change their ways	Failing to subscribe to a public good concept of the public interest (Leys) and failing to see any value-based way of defining what it means to act in the public interest	Seeing to it that those who fail to serve in the public interst are removed from the public service if they do not change their ways
Using power in authoritarian, coercive, or Machiavellian ways	Seeing power in terms of equity, equalizing power relationships, being more concerned with the fairness of the process than with the human and social purposes served by the process	Seeing power as a creative, self-generating force to be used in constructive ways (Follett) and to be spread, used, and nurtured using educational, normative strategies
Failing to resolve or try to resolve personal value conflicts ethically and legally	Focusing on process and law in the resolution of conflicts, possible reliance as well on situational ethics	Trying to resolve personal value conflicts, ethically and legally and doing so without sacrificing integrity, fairness, and humanity
Being guided by primary mentality assumptions of coercion, compromise, and cutthroat competition (Shepard)	Guided by an imperfect mesh of primary and secondary mentality assumptions (Shepard)	Being guided by secondary mentality assumptions of consensus-seeking, cooperation, collaboration (Shepard)
Playing games with information or withholding or distorting information to circumvent the law, or the intent of legislation; keeping needed information from others in government; keeping information from the public or anyone with a rightful claim to it	Adopting different approaches according to what the traffic will bear	Maintaining honesty and openness in the communication of information and withholding information only when legally or ethically necessary
Being disinterested in knowing what is really happening or in developing a real understanding of what needs to be done to protect or serve the public interest	Having no commitment to serving the public interest in the public good sense of the concept (Leys); interested in knowledge that will assist in maximizing value-neutral or scientistic values and the value in process as an end in itself	Being committed to serving the public interest; acting in such a way as to maximize the values of life, health, and individual and societal freedom
Flaunting or disregarding judicial decisions, constitutional rights, human rights, human values	Being effectively indifferent to constitutional and human rights	Acting in accordance with the law with constitutional and human rights
Acting in such a way as to negate, neglect, or minimize the values of life, health, and freedom	Effectively acting in such a way as to negate, neglect, or minimize the values of life, health, and freedom	Acting in accordance with the public interest; acting in such a way as to maximize the values of life, health, and individual and societal freedom
Disregarding or devaluing freedom	Effectively disregarding or devaluing and undermining freedom	Basing action in a firm regard for individual and societal freedom

Conducting business, delivering services, addressing societal problem poorly and inhumanly, in such a way that science and technology are used to disserve human and societal aims or are seen as being ends in themselves	Conducting government in such a way that government fails to be responsive to the public good in that it is not fundamentally concerned with the public good	Conducting business, delivering services, addressing societal problems well, humanly, in a humanhearted way, responsively, effectively, and in such a way as to conserve valued human, natural, and/or fiscal and material resources, and in such a way that science and technology serve human aims and are employed in human ways
Allowing organizational efforts to become characterized by bureaupathology (Caiden, 1971)	Seeing to it that organizational efforts focus on process and not purpose, and on maximizing values that do not advance the public good concept of the public interest	Seeing to it that organizational efforts are characterized by organizational or bureaucratic health where purpose, service, reality, and adaptability are more important than process, authority, form, and precedence (Caiden, 1971)
Focus on procedures in such a way as to evade responsibilities or thwart the purpose of the procedure	Focus more on process than on purpose; focus more on the process of attaining the public good than on the public good itself	Focusing on purpose, service, reality, and adaptability and on serving the public good
Allowing organizational jurisdictions, efforts at policy-making, implementation, and problem solving, and regulation to become so confused and overlapping as to make the proper conduct of government impossible and the solving of complex problems and the meeting of human and societal needs impossible	Allowing concern for process and structure to stand in the way of purposeful action and the resolution or amelioration of complex societal problems	Organizing in such a way that the activities of government can be carried out well, responsively, and effectively with humanity
Being unconcerned with purpose and service, failing to emphasize the responsibility and obligations of public servants to serve in the public interest	Paying too much attention to process, so much attention that process can become an end in inself; focusing on participation or decentralization in way that they become ends in themselves and lead toward "double-democratization," furthering some of the processes integral to a representative democracy, but thwarting others; failing to take into account the problem of accountability and the necessary vesting of responsibility for governmental actions in public servants; focusing on processes thought to insure accountability rather than on the essence of responsibility and public service in the public interest	Making sure that purpose and service take precedence over process; emphasizing the responsibility and obligations of public servants to serve in the public interest
Encouraging or taking part in bureaucratic gameplaying for individual or bureaucratic gain	Refining the rules of the game along scientistically-oriented lines, scientism being defined as the divorcing of science, rationality, and empiricism from human values and concerns	Discouraging or not taking part in bureaucratic game playing for individual or bureaucratic gain

Failing to seek solutions to problems affecting the public interest	Assuming an aggregationist or process-oriented approach to the public interest, not a public good approach (Leys)	Seeking solutions to problems affecting the public interest, assuming a public good approach, being concerned for the preservation and enhancement of individual and societal well being
Not seeking solutions because of the possible or expected unpopularity of such solutions	Problems addressed when it becomes pragmatically and politically feasible to do so; allowing values of effectiveness and efficiency to dominate in the selection of problems to be addressed	Being guided by integrity and a sense of what is right in seeking solutions to and implementing solutions to problems
Conducting government in such a way that government fails to be responsive to the public good or it disserves or is indifferent to the public good and emphasizes pseudopolitical concerns or narrow self- or group interests, or it is value neutral or nihilistic (without value, purpose, or meaning)	Conducting government in such a way that government fails to be responsive to the public good in that it is viewed as not being fundamentally concerned with the public good	Conducting government in a way that serves the public interest by acting to maximize the values of life, health, and individual and societal freedom while striving to make the best use of resources in accomplishing these aims. Statesmanship reigns along with the addressing of human needs and problems, and humanistic and democratic values essential to a free society and freedom in the world.
Failing to act on available information, understanding, and knowledge to avert loss of life, threats to health and freedoms; failing to act when the solution to a problem is at hand; failing to search for solutions	Failing to protect and preserve and enhance the public interest through a selective indifference to all of the kinds of information, understanding, and knowledge that bear on the preservation of human values and the solution of human problems	Acting to protect and preserve and enhance the public interest
Failing to assume an attitude of stewardship and responsibility for the protection, preservation, and enhancement of human and natural resources	Assuming an attitude of pragmatic expediency or indifference	Assuming an attitude of stewardship and responsibility for the protection, preservation, and enhancement of human and natural resources
Failing to address crises, take mitigative action, or prevent them before they arise; and failure to develop such capabilities	Paying far more attention to matters of process and structure than to matters of societal purpose, sustainability, or survival	Taking mitigative action, recognizing and addressing crises and, as possible, anticipating and preventing them before they arise.
Contributing to a "dog eat dog" mode of existence; contributing to the worsening of problems and the weakening of the social fabric	Acting in a way that is implicitly directionless, nihilistic, without long range goals; embracing a disjointed incrementalism unconcerned with any overall developmental goals	Conducive to a government oriented toward healthy change and development with those in government serving as change agents and solvers of societal problems
Failing to be responsive to public outcries that government is not serving in the public interest	Focusing on the process of being responsive, but failing to be committed to acting in a way that serves the public good concept of the public interest	Being as responsive as possible to those in and outside government who feel that the public interest is being disserved

The Ethics Map was initially incorporated in training material for workshops for local administrators held by the U.S. Department of Justice in different parts of the nation. The training material was produced by Stanford Research International (Fletcher, Gordon, and Henzell, 1978).   The Ethics Map portion was used in the '70's as the basis for workshop sessions for the Training Bureau of the then United States Civil Service Commission and the Federal Executive Institute. It has subsequently been used in courses and in panel and workshop presentations.   A revised version of The Ethics Map appears in the table in this article.

In the '90's, I came across a book by Archie Carroll entitled *Business and Society (*1996). In it was a somewhat similar typology of ethical behavior. Carroll had constructed his typology with the private sector in mind. It also had three headings: "Immoral," "Amoral," and "Moral." While Carroll did not parse out specific behaviors as had been the case in The Ethics Map, the approaches turn out to be quite compatible.   It should be noted that neither typology can be said to be derivative of the other, since neither of us had known of the other's work.

Gerald Caiden focuses in yet another way on immoral and amoral behaviors in "What is Public Maladministration?" (1991). In an early book of his, *The Dynamics of Public Administration*, he also considers the range of healthy and unhealthy or "bureaupathological" behaviors in public organizations (1971). Building on James Thompson's concept of "bureaupathology," Caiden notes the chief characteristics of an unhealthy or bureaupathological organizational culture as one in which the following can be found:

Process is more important than purpose;

Authority is more important than service;

Form is more important than reality;

Precedence is more important than adaptability.

Unhealthy organizational cultures serve to nurture and sustain bureaupathological behavior. Such unhealthy behavior can be seen as falling under the "No Values" or "Value Neutral" categories of The Ethics Map and the "Immoral" or "Amoral" categories of Archie Carroll's typology.

Of course, value-based or moral behaviors can still occur in organizational cultures that can be characterized as being "bureaupathological". However, acting in a value-based or moral way in an organization that has a pathological organizational culture can present hazards and can also pose the greatest of challenges to character and integrity.

One can argue that acting in value-based or moral ways contributes to and helps sustain the healthiness of an organizational culture, whether or not the organization is a public or private sector organization. One can also argue that value-based or moral behavior can play a decisive role in transforming a pathological culture into a healthy one (Gordon, 2003).

There is an important distinction to be made concerning behaviors in public and private sector organizations. It has to do with the nature of the obligation that those who serve in government have. As Appleby said, "Government is different" (1945). Some would continue to argue, I among them, that government is different in that those serving in government have an obligation to act in a way that serves the greater public good, in a way that serves the public interest. Further, it can be argued that while those in the private sector are not similarly obligated to act in such a manner, they are free to conduct business in a way that significantly contributes to the greater public good. Indeed, trends have been noted in business and industry that reflect an increasing emphasis on a balancing of the goals of making a profit and contributing to the public good (Chappell, 1993; Nichols, 1994; and Halal, 1996). These trends can also be seen in the national organization, Business for Social Responsibility (www.bsr.org).

There are numerous examples of "new age companies" that strive to balance such goals (Nichols, 1994 and Halal, 1996). Examples include Southwest Airlines, Starbuck's, Whole Foods (Fresh Fields), Timberland, Jet Blue, and Tom's of Maine. In fact, Tom Chappell in **The Soul of a Business: Managing for Profit and the Common Good**, has described the way in which he arrived at a personal philosophy and an approach to business that aim at balancing profit-making and contributing to the public good (1993).

Efforts to educate those who are, or will be in the public service, as well as efforts to educate those who are or will be in roles of responsibility in the private sector need to be equally focused on cultivating understanding of what constitutes ethical behavior. Those in both sectors need to have moral compasses that work. They need to be conversant with the true stories, cases studies, as well as journalistic accounts of what can happen in organizations where ethics and morality are lacking. They need as well to be familiar with examples of what can happen when ethical behavior is a driving force. If students can successfully grasp the issues and moral conflicts in even a small number of selected case studies, they will have broadened their comprehension of the essential elements of The Ethics Map and gain a deepened understanding of the importance of having a moral compass.

Case studies that can serve such a purpose for those in either sector include such real life accounts as John Bartlow Martin's "The Blast in Centralia #5 ~ The Mine Disaster That No One Stopped" (1953) and Kermit Vandivier's "The Aircraft Brake Scandal" (1992). Accounts of the decisionmaking process

leading up to the *Challenger Disaster* and the *Shuttle Columbia Disaster* are also instructive.   A multitude of documentaries, instructional videos, and films, including films made for television, can be used to illustrate ethical behavior at its best and at its worst. "The Gathering Storm," "Apollo 13," "Serpico," and "The Dish" are but a few films that contain valuable lessons. "The Parable of the Sadhu," "Groupthink," "The Abilene Paradox," and "Talking 9 to 5" are some instructional videos that also contain lessons.

These various media can provoke serious reflection concerning the character and consequences of ethical and unethical actions.   They can also help individuals increase their understanding of human motivations and aspirations. Those that feature ethical actions can also serve as a source of inspiration and provide examples that can be emulated.

While The Ethics Map reflects one perspective concerning ethical behavior, it too can serve to nurture the development of ethical behavior in the following ways:

~ by provoking discussion concerning what constitutes ethical and unethical behavior;

~ by providing a way of characterizing what constitutes proper and improper behavior;

~ by helping true one's moral compass;

~ by helping develop one's conscience and sense of responsibility and one's understanding of the importance of acting honestly and with integrity.

Those in the field of public administration can play a crucial role in bringing about the kind of focus and consideration of ethical behavior that is needed in a world where moral compasses are too often broken or where they fail to be in evidence. Those involved in teaching as well as those who are practitioners in the field can help others by setting the standard through their own exemplary actions. Moral values and principles, and a sense of responsibility can be imparted through example. They can be cultivated in others through the sharing of experience, common sense, understanding, knowledge, wisdom, and insight. A sense of what acting in the public interest means can be gleaned by direct or indirect exposure to the actions of the best who have served in public life. Those coming up, as well as others already in place, can learn much from both the successes as well as the failures of the past.

Public administration and public service in the United States are rooted in the normative, value-based vision of the nation's Founders and those who have followed most closely in their footsteps. The ethical character of the actions of those in the public service today can be greatly enhanced through the awakening

or reawakening of integrity, a sense of responsibility, and a dedication to serving the public good. It is such fundamental integrity and principled action that should once again define the aspirations, actions, and attitudes of all those who strive to serve the public good through their roles in public service.

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