

Application: Policing Ethics

Names

Institutional affiliation

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Deontology and Consequentialism are two theories that are widely used to explain ethical behavior. Deontology argues that rules and principles should be put in place and implemented to guide ethical behavior while consequentialism looks at the outcome before judging on the course of action. Arguably these two are different theories and scholars have for long argued which one should be used to guide ethical decisions. Deontologists claim that rules and regulations should be devised and implemented for people to live in harmony and peace (Alexander, & Moore, 2007). There is a need for rules, regulations, and procedures to guide people. Procedures are significant in a working environment and are useful to differentiate the levels of the staff members. On the other hand, consequentialists claim that the only best action is the one with the best outcome. They turn a blind eye of the rules were broken to achieve a positive result. What one may view as wrong can be done to achieve a positive outcome and at the same time what is deemed as right can be done to achieve a negative result. These theorists forego the fact that damage can be done to do what is right and ignore the damage caused.

In policing different scenarios dictate the theory one might use to choose a course of action (Banks, 2011). For instance, in a foot or highway speed chase, one should opt for the deontology theory. This means that they should stick to the procedure they are required to follow during a chase. For example of a person is running from arrest they should stick to the procedure of chasing them and not shooting them while they run. Also in a highway speed chase, they may just follow the individual while calling for back up. The backup should then set road blocks to stop the individual. The same does not apply if the suspect is armed and dangerous and endangering the lives of other civilians. Here the police may opt to use the consequentialist's

way of thinking. This means that they should try to stop the suspect no matter what it takes. They may damage property while doing so but at least the bad guy will have been stopped from committing more crime and hurting civilians.

The police play a significant role in society since they are entitled with the prevention and solving of crime while protecting civilians from criminal activities (International Association of Chiefs of Police, n.d.). Despite the heavy task assigned to them, they are still limited by law. They are supposed to work within the law while performing their duties and it is for this reason that they have procedures on how to approach different scenarios. Some scenarios like a foot chase simply require them to follow the procedures they learned in training. Even when handling complicated cases they still have procedures to follow. The procedure involves how to speak to suspects when arresting them and how to behave when in complicated situations. However, some situations require the quick thinking of an officer to prevent them from deteriorating (Varona and co-researchers, 2012). Although such cases are rare police officers are advised to use critical thinking in cases where they feel they have the situation under control. If they feel that they can handle the situation without any damage to civilians, then they are advised to act and stop the perpetrator before more damage. The breaking of procedures is not allowed in the police force and officers can be fired from the force if found guilty of breaking procedure and causing damage.

References

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