

The Responsible Administrator, An Approach to Ethics for the Administrative Role, by Terry L. Cooper

Chapter 1

Comment

1. 'Ethics is a science of human intentionality.'
2. 'Law is moral minimum.'
3. 'Sometimes laws need to be challenged on ethical grounds.'
4. 'Responsibility' defines the scope of accountability in the context of law as well as culture.
5. 'Responsibility in a democratic context does not end with acting ethically.'

Responsible administrator must be able to account for their conduct to relevant others such as supervisors, elected officials, the courts and the citizenry.

Points

- Performing the role of civil servant's responsibility
- What is the role of civil disobedience in bringing about ethical administration?
- What do you know about these terms? Role, responsibility, accountability
- Responsibility defines the scope of accountability.
- Who is a responsible spouse? And a responsible citizen?
- What is the role of discretion in decision making? How should it be exercised?
- p- case studies are to see if you are responsible administrator, not just ethical administrator
- Design approach – solutions and alternatives – immediate or long term – personal, organizational, social, legal – 3 x 2 dimensions

Chapter 2

6. 'Ethical standards and sensitivity are crucial to the responsible use of discretion.'
7. 'Ethical public administrator requires a theoretical perspective on the role of the public administrator.'
8. 'Ethical theories are essential ingredients in a professional ethic, but they are only a beginning.'
9. "Code of ethics, which is official statements of appropriate conduct that reflect noble but often general and abstract principles, is no guarantee of ethical conduct in an organization."
10. "Public accountability in a heterogeneous society requires reasoned application of ethical principles rather than metaphysical assertions."
11. "How would I defend this particular option if required to do so before a broad audience?" is one way out of ethical dilemmas. Do you think so?
12. "To the extent that we cultivate a pattern of consistently acting in ways that combine sound reasons with affective confidence, we develop integrity."
13. "Development of ethical autonomy calls for awareness of one's own values as well as external obligations under which values are realized."

Chapter 2

- Legal/ethical, short term/long term, organizational/public, confidential/open, informal/formal
- Conflict of interest – in love, but in administrative relationship [The Wire example]
- Appearance of ethical conduct as important / as ethical conduct - Rama example!
- Professional character – professional ethics - how different from general ones?
- Value ordering is important – what values are in conflict – what we prioritize
- Value of liberty – do not interfere in that person's conduct if he is not harming is a principle – values and principles are linked.
- What is meant by postethical level? – question of why one should be moral? – consensus may be difficult here – religious background may play a role, or even socialization
- Step wise/ fold wise
- How can ethical dilemmas threaten personal integrity?
- How do we bring affective elements in decision making?
- The test of publicity?

Cases

- 1) Soon after you assumed your duties, you discovered that the payroll clerk was falsifying the payroll account by continuing to carry the names of laid-off employees. Should you fire him quietly or consider formal charges and prosecution?
- 2) You are the director of a unit within a federal regulatory agency that is charged with monitoring the use of potentially harmful commercial chemicals. Linda, a junior project manager under your supervision, is responsible for studying a broad-spectrum insecticide used in agriculture by small grain farmers. She has been assigned to determine whether this product should be removed from the market. At a party, Linda met a man named George, who she later learnt was the representative for the insecticide manufacturer. After several dates with him, she became rather fond of him. She decided to tell you about her relationship with George. She said she considered herself mature enough to maintain a separation between professional and private lives. She said she never even discussed the chemical in question. Should you support her right to freedom in her private life?
- 3) Your spouse works for a contractor that provides support services to your organization under contract. You learn through grapevine that the contract with her organization may be terminated in near future, but that is kept as a secret not to affect the present performance. You have no role in the decision making regarding the contract termination. Should you tell your spouse about the termination?
- 4) You are a department manager for a public utility district that produces electricity through steam-driven turbines. The department has constructed a lake for this purpose, which is also open to the public for recreational use. Recently a man was injured in a boating accident and finally died. You came to know that it is due to dangerous bacterium in the lake. When you report this to your superior he asks you to be quiet and do not generate public outcry. What is your responsibility?
- 5) Your lady secretary tells you about a clerk fudging accounts. On investigation, you find she gave you an exaggerated picture because the clerk's behavior is sexist. What is your responsibility?

Your superior asks you to give confidential information about your colleague for the consideration of his promotion. That colleague is also your friend. If you give your frank assessment of him that may deny him his promotion. What will you do?

CHAPTER 3

1. Simply imposing authority does not work in this kind of world. Many areas of our life are left for various subgroups to fashion diverse perspectives.
2. Civil servants "are citizens in lieu of the rest of us; the common good is, so to speak their specialty."
3. "The responsibility of the public administrator must be grounded in an understanding of the responsibility of the citizen."
4. The boss asks you to hire his friend. Will you report it to the press, because it is an unethical act from the boss.
5. "What is required is a new understanding of administrative rationality that is rooted in notions of diversity, complexity, turbulence, and disorder and where rationality is not strictly linear."
6. "Rules that are intended to be neutral, perhaps, but they favor some individual or group in spite of the best intentions. Continued attempts to be a more rational society bring about rationality's own corrosion."
7. "Full citizenship requires ability to consume public services."

Questions

1. How is bureaucracy a part of modernization?
2. How is postmodern bureaucracy different from modern one – in terms of administrative ethics?
3. How is modern society different from traditional society?
4. Family vs. organization, religion vs. nation, citizen vs. officer
5. Traditional-public and private one, modern separate, postmodern?
6. What is 'ethical compartmentalism' of the modern world?
7. Value relativism is also postmodernism – cultural relativism is postmodernism
8. Pluralization of modern society – disparate worlds, unconnected
9. What is our relationship with caste? – traditional, modern, postmodern
10. Diverse citizenry
11. Separation of politics and administration – Woodrow Wilson (1887), Max Weber (1946), Goodnow (1900) – now not possible
12. In a postmodern society- how is role conflict resolved is not made clear
13. Delegated legislation left too many gaps – given the increasing complexity of administration
14. Using institutions to settle scores with opponents
15. Whom is an officer supposed to serve? Why is he called civil servant? – citizenry, not political executive
16. What is the role in policy making, not just in implementation?
17. What is the role of interest groups in administrative process?
18. Earlier the approach was principles approach, lack of attention to culture, diversity
19. Equality is not equity.
20. Only online applications will be taken...

21. Should think of participation costs
22. The role of bureaucrat in educating the public is not acknowledged generally.
23. Education of the elected, as well as being educated from them. Is important.
24. Education between the citizens and administrators – its importance – knowledge of constraints, peoples demands
25. Why is education important for democracy?

Exam questions

“Max Weber said that it is not wise to apply to public administration the sort of moral and ethical norms we apply to matters of personal conscience. It is important to realize that the state bureaucracy might possess its own independent bureaucratic rationality” Analyze. (2016)

- Modern is a global term for describing the social, cultural and economic attributes associated with urban industrial society.
- Postmodern is a term intended to characterize a world in which foundational assumptions are being discredited as final and absolute.
- The government that is based on bureaucratic rationality, attempting to offer standardised services and goods, increasingly alienates a diverse citizenry.
- Communicating substantive information to the public is essential if self-government is to be even approximated.

CHAPTER 4

1. “Subjective responsibility is not only an unavoidable fact of human experience, growing out of our socialization and our other roles, but its conscious and systematic development is essential for carrying out objective responsibility in a consistent, rational and dependable fashion.”
2. You are an administrator allocating funds for highway constructions. You have to review the roads for EIA. You can’t take a park unless there is no other way. There is a demand for road widening at a particular place from many quarters, but a park is going to be occupied if road is done. How would you go about it?
3. Is Rawls’s theory useful in finding public interest?
4. You are in charge of redesigning a city, where you have to identify which buildings can be repaired and which should be demolished. You have come across a house belonging to an old lady. If normal rules are applied, the house has to be demolished. The woman has no resources to rebuild. You believe if women of that age have to be relocated after staying for many decades in her own house, they may go senile and die soon. Will you as per the rules?
5. ‘Ethical conflict is resolved when we are able to imagine an alternative that satisfies the need for consistency in our fundamental self-image. This allows us to maintain our sense of integrity, a feeling of being an identifiable whole, someone whom we and others recognize as the person we imagine ourselves to be.’

- Objective responsibility- for somebody, for something
- Administrator is responsible for many – that is the problem – including to the parliament, to the citizens, to the government
- Hierarchy of responsibilities – the higher, the more distant
- Discretion – hierarchy linked – as is power
- Weberian model – does not see consultation between the layers of admn.
- What did Rawls say on public interest
- Objective rationality is about O and S level expectations.
- Subjective rationality – conscience based – beliefs, attitudes and values constitute this
- Subjective role vs objective role
- Why important – because a) multiple responsibilities, b) conflicting responsibilities, c) easier ways to escape, d) need not be proactive e) demanding, changing context – to be one has to have values

p- almost like why values are important

Chapter 5

- 1) How is role conflict linked with integrity?
- 2) What impact on resolution of role conflict will have on integrity?
- 1) Your superior tells you to transfer a woman working under you on the grounds that she is not efficient. But you find she is efficient, and your superior is acting on the basis of personal grievance against her. What do you do?
- 2) You are an officer in charge of safety standards. City corporation was organizing an event for tens of thousands. You find sanitation and safety standards are very poor. Your superior who has always helped you, in whose judgement you always trusted, says it is onetime event and Corporation needs money to raise funds and people want that event so be lax on the standards that are usually set. You already have an image that you are tough on safety. What do you do?
- 3) "There should be a moral basis for the solution of moral conflicts. This may involve redefining the values that govern a role's enactment. This is one of the tasks of the management."
- 4) You are promoted as a supervisor of department became a part of management. Your subordinates are your former colleagues and equals. Your subordinates are not happy with 2% salary rise proposed after long years of stagnant salaries. They want you to take up the issue with the higher ups, they trust you, after all you were one of them. On the other hand, your superiors expect you to behave like being a part of management and convince your subordinates that 2% rise is correct. What do you do?
- 5) "The affects of overgrazing are borne by all the herdsmen, the negative utility for the herdsmen is only a fraction." Explain what is meant by 'tragedy of commons'?
- 6) "Conflict of interest is the conflict between a government employee's official responsibility and his private economic interests." Is bribery a case of conflict of interest?
- 7) "Conflict of interest may be defined as a situation in which a public employee has a private or personal interest sufficient to influence or appear to influence the objective exercise of his official duties." Should conflict of interest mean economic gain?

- 8) Is using making policy to promote one's own caste a case of conflict of interests?

Chapter 6

- Professional socialization – inculcation of professional values and ethical decision making in training programs
- 1) This is what a Report on education department had said: 1) Books written by two officers are recommended as textbooks across all schools – earning substantial royalties to the authors. 2) One officer is involved in buying material from one company close to him for the needs across the schools in the state. 3) one officer is imposing a particular prayer on all the students across the schools. 4) Money is being taken in the transfer of teachers. What steps should be taken to stop unethical practices?
 - 2) Is political control the most important form of control in a democracy over a public organization?
 - 3) Is code of ethics an aspect of internal control or external control?
 - 4) “The servants of the public are not to decide their own course but rather they are to be responsible to the elected representatives of the public, and these are to determine the course of action of the public servants to the most minute degree that is technically feasible.”
 - 5) “Servants of the public are not to decide their own course.” Explain the need for external controls in brining ethical administration.
 - 6) “The honour of the civil servant is vested in his ability to execute conscientiously the order of the superior authorities, exactly as if the order agreed with his own conviction. This holds even if the order appears wrong to him.” Max Weber.
 - 7) “Ethics laws can rule our certain types of conduct, btu they do not prescribe, in a positive fashion, the highest expectations for performance. Codes can do this.”

Chapter 7

1. “The honour of the civil servant is vested in his ability to execute conscientiously the order of the superior authorities, exactly as if the order agreed with his own convictions. This holds even if the order appears wrong to him and if, despite the civil servant's remonstrances, the authority insists on the order.” Max Weber
2. “Case studies have been used to cultivate an internalized professional ethic.”
3. “Virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods.” [external goods are money, fame, power]
4. “Ethical judgement is not simply a skill using an ethical theory to solve a problem. It is more crucially linked to moral character – to virtue.”
5. “The primary business of ethics ought to be with qualities of character, with the virtues and the vices.”
6. “How an organization can be designed to support ethical conduct is one of the big questions in administrative ethics.”
7. “Some organizations arouse suspicion, hostile rivalry, anxiety and put brakes on social relationships, regardless of how much individual goodwill there might be.”

8. “The most powerful influence on the culture of an organization is the conduct of its leaders. The unique and essential function of leadership is the creation of right culture.”