

Contextualized responsibility, 2h

- This lecture/seminar focuses on "ethical dilemmas" and value conflicts, how value conflicts can be disclosed, analysed and resolved in a principled manner. It offers principles and methods for balancing competing interests and values in connection with ICT, sustainability and risk in a global society. When identifying stakeholders, the importance of including distant others and future stakeholders in the analysis is highlighted.

1

What is an (ethical) dilemma?

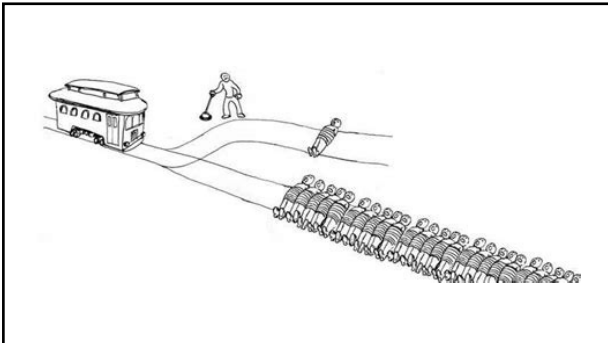
- A situation in which whatever we chose to do, we will have to sacrifice something of **value!**
- Some preliminary distinctions:
 - Values can be final and/or (merely) instrumental
 - Values can defy being translated into monetary value (be incommensurable)
- IN REAL LIFE: A *false dilemma* occurs when a limited number of choices, outcomes, or views are presented as the only possibilities when, in fact, more possibilities exist. As such, it unjustifiably puts issues into black-or-white terms. Thus, there might be an option available that doesn't mean we will have to make a sacrifice.

2

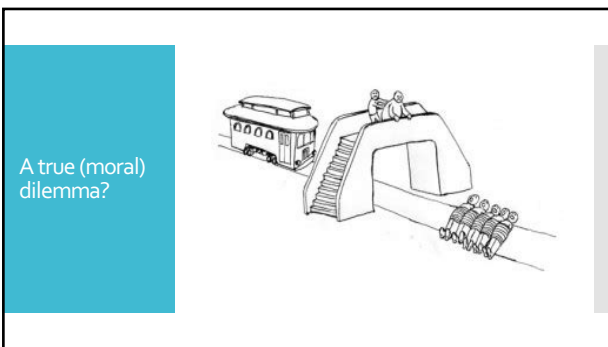
(Classical) Utilitarianism

- A normative theory suggesting that the **morally right action is always the one that maximizes a particular value** (utility – hence "utilitarianism")
- Suggests that there is only **one kind of final value** (value monism)
- The only thing that has final value is:
 - Happiness (hedonistic utilitarianism) OR
 - Desire fulfillment (preference-utilitarianism)
- Rejects that there are any real moral dilemmas! In every situation the right action is that which maximizes utility!

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Deontology (rule ethics) and Rights theory

- We are allowed to strive for well-being, pleasure, happiness (our own and that of other's) but morality provides **restrictions on action**
- These restrictions can be formulated either as **moral rules or principles** (don't lie and deceive, don't kill innocent people) or as **rights** (respect other peoples rights to life, self-determination, or their human dignity).
 - Absolutism = these rules ought never be violated
 - A-priori rules = these rules always carry moral weight, but can sometimes be overridden by other rules (or even, perhaps, utilitarian calculations)

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Justice and Fairness

- Complaint against the utilitarian calculus: We cannot only think about maximizing some value – we also need to think about DISTRIBUTION!
- Deep moral intuition (?): Other things equal we prefer a world in which the utility is distributed as (5,5,5) rather than as (15, 0, 0) – do you agree?
- What about (5,5,5) vs. (16, 0, 0)?

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Discuss!

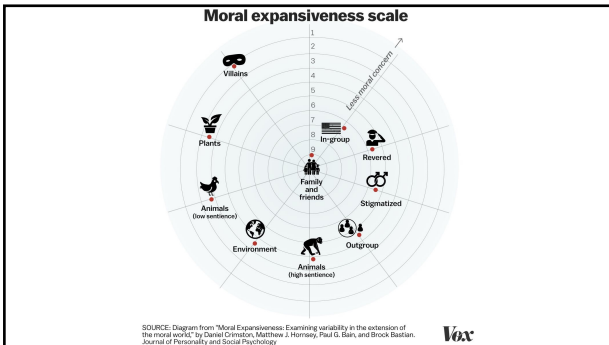
- Think of one of the dilemmas you have encountered so far in the course, and see if you can *identify the value conflict or moral dilemma!* What values/rules/principles are at stake in this particular dilemma? Does the dilemma involve any considerations of justice?
- See if you in the group can think of a way to make the dilemma a false dilemma (if there is some intermediate action to avoid the violation of value) or, if not, you can agree on what value you believe to be the more important one in this particular context.

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Moral responsibility towards whom?

- Value as **moral standing or status**
- To whom/what do we owe moral considerations?
 - Not to material things, for sure, but...
 - Our closest kin only?
 - Our society?
 - All human beings (including future generations?)
 - All sentient beings (other animals)?
 - Nature/eco-systems/wild-life?

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The value of animals/nature

- Do we owe moral consideration to animals/nature directly (because they have moral worth) or do we only owe moral consideration to animals/nature because they have instrumental value to humans (present or future)?
- **Anthropocentrism** the value of nature is solely determined by its value to humans (possible sentient beings).

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New Zealand river granted same legal rights as human being

Spanish parliament approves human rights for apes

MANAGERS + PRO STARTUPKIT

Deliberate to the... with... for CC

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Morally responsible decision-making under uncertainty

- New technology often exposes us to situations where we have to make decisions under great uncertainty, hence we have to deal with RISK in a responsible way.

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Bill Joy: Why the future doesn't need us

- <https://www.wired.com/2000/04/joy-2/>
- Certain areas in technology are associated with great risks!
- "The new Pandora's boxes of **genetics, nanotechnology, and robotics** are almost open, yet we seem hardly to have noticed. Ideas can't be put back in a box; unlike uranium or plutonium, they don't need to be mined and refined, and they can be freely copied. Once they are out, they are out".

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Risk and justice

- We want to avoid risks that are intolerable, but we can also think of risk as something we distribute (over a population).
- Common Cost-Benefit analyses (value of possible outcome times the likelihood that it will happen)
 - simply assess whether the possible gains outweigh the risks, it ignores important moral factors such as distribution.

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Three risk-roles (Hansson, 2018)

- The deciding agent(s)
- The agent(s) that benefit if the risk pays of
- The agent(s) that will loose if it fails

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Some problems in risk distribution:

- when the deciding agent or group is identical to the agent that benefits, but different from the agent or group that loses if it fails (moral hazard), or
- when over a long period of time the benefits tend to pile up to one group and the risks pile up to another...
- "vulnerable groups" seem to be exposed to risk more often than others.

Fairness issues when distributing risk

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Seminar instructions

- This seminar aims to use the ethical theory discussed in Lecture 5 to discuss and develop solutions to engineering problems. This is done with the starting point of **essay section 2**, where you have assessed the merits and drawbacks of an IT solution. You will now describe these pros and cons by relating them to theories of responsibility and the goals of engineering practice.
- Write a short text answering the following questions (approximately 500 words):
 - What problem do you aim to solve?
 - What is your solution to this problem?
 - Which values, principles and ethical theories, if any, does the solution jeopardize?
 - Which values, if any, does the solution promote?
 - Does this problem, or your solution to it raise particular moral demands on programmers?
 - In the context of the problem and your solution, does the globalized and interconnected society require a new form of professional/moral responsibility?
 - Use the literature from to support and argue for your position. During the seminar, we will discuss your answers to these questions in smaller groups as well as the whole class.

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Hand-in, Lisam

- Deadline Nov, 4th 23.00
- Likely to be a campus seminar...
- Any questions?
