

Le Juste Milieu

Hugh Desmond

KU Leuven
UAntwerpen

<https://www.hughdesmond.net/academia-trust-mental-health>

Structure

1. Introduction
2. Exercice Préparatoire
3. Discussion: exercice du juste milieu (Vir2ue)

Rationale

- **Deliberation exercise, but with a particular approach**
- Dilemma game confronts participants with difficult situations, often defying easy solutions; middle position helps show a process of deliberation.
- The first exercise illustrates *ethics* ; the second illustrates *virtue ethics*.



What is virtue ethics?

- **Deontological ethics:** “I must always obey the moral code”

“I must include that data-point that makes my results look bad, even though it is probably the result of instrument malfunction.”

- **Utilitarian ethics:** “I must always choose the action with the largest expected benefit to all”

“I won’t include that data-point when (1) my career benefit is sufficient, (2) the damage to science is not too great.”

- **Virtue ethics:** ““I must act in a way that an *excellent (=integrous)* scientist would.”

No exceptionless rules; no calculation of the consequences

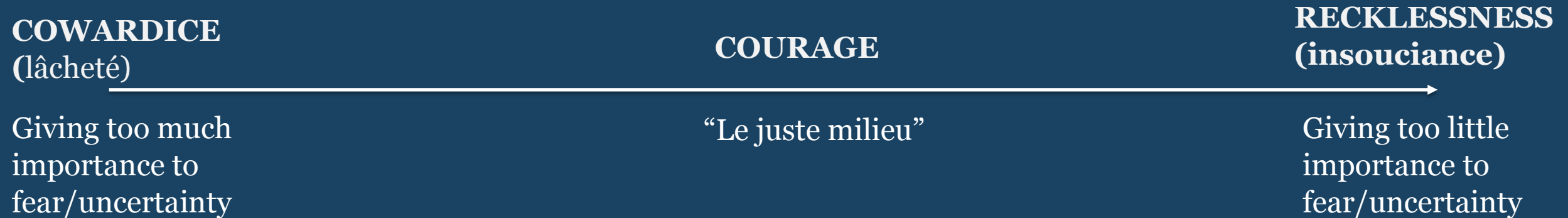
The scientist acts integrously because that is who he/she is. Integrity is a *habit* and *an end in itself*. There is no extrinsic “calculation” involved, or an extrinsic moral code.

Integrity as Practical Wisdom

- Discretion = practical wisdom = choosing the appropriate response to a particular situation
- Not obeying rules, or calculating consequences, but using your *own* judgment
- The *appropriate response* is almost always the **middle position** between two extremes.
- The Aristotelian examples:
 1. Courage = acting when one should be confident, but refraining from action when one should not be confident
 2. Temperance = knowing when to give in to desires, and when not to
 3. Justice = knowing when to be generous and when not to; acting in interest of the community
- **Cannot be taught theoretically** (per definition): testing knowledge of RI codes is nearly useless; what matters is how it is applied.

Integrity as Practical Wisdom

- The Aristotelian examples:
 1. Courage = acting when one should be confident, but refraining from action when one should not be confident



2. Temperance = knowing when to give in to desires, and when not to
3. Justice = knowing when to be generous and when not to; acting in interest of the community

- **Cannot be taught theoretically** (per definition): testing knowledge of RI codes is nearly useless; what matters is how it is applied.

Integrity as Practical Wisdom

Consequence: cannot be taught theoretically (per definition).

- Testing knowledge of RI codes is much less important than how RI codes are applied.
- RI codes are mere guidelines for practical wisdom, for professional integrity. The application of the codes involves ethical reasoning.
- It is possible to guide researchers in how to reason ethically (= how to navigate grey zones, without absolute clarity about what is good)

Why offer training in virtue ethics?

1. *Ethical reasoning skills*. Challenging situations, with professional success on the line, can evoke **strong emotions**. Scientific research not a purely value-neutral activity! Virtue ethics strengthens *agency*: it helps navigate both one's own emotions as well as external challenges.

Unproductive anger
/conflict

appropriate response

Cynicism

Attaching too much
importance to the rules

appropriate response

attaching too little

- Mental health of (young) researchers: !

EDITORIAL • 13 NOVEMBER 2019

The mental health of PhD researchers demands urgent attention

Anxiety and depression in graduate students is worsening. The health of the next generation of researchers needs systemic change to research cultures.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03489-1>

Why offer training in virtue ethics?

2. *Culture of integrity* (ethos): when (young) researchers perceive a lack of integrity among colleagues, this can be disheartening. Affirming integrity as a norm can give courage. Moreover, integrity-as-virtue can only flourish in a culture of integrity.

Exercice Préparatoire



integrity | in'
1 the quality of being h
integrity.

Code de conduite européen pour l'intégrité en recherche

ÉDITION RÉVISÉE

1. Principes



Les bonnes pratiques en matière de recherche reposent sur des principes fondamentaux en matière d'intégrité en recherche. Ces principes orientent les chercheurs dans leurs travaux ainsi que dans leur engagement envers les enjeux pratiques, éthiques et intellectuels inhérents à la recherche.

Ces principes sont les suivants:

- **Fiabilité**, autrement dit garantir la qualité de la recherche, qui transparait dans la conception, la méthodologie, l'analyse et l'utilisation des ressources.
- **Honnêteté**, autrement dit élaborer, entreprendre, évaluer, déclarer et faire connaître la recherche d'une manière transparente, juste, complète et objective.
- **Respect** envers les collègues, les participants à la recherche, la société, les écosystèmes, l'héritage culturel et l'environnement.
- **Responsabilité** assumée pour les activités de recherche, de l'idée à la publication, leur gestion et leur organisation, pour la formation, la supervision et le mentorat, et pour les implications plus générales de la recherche.



”Qualité”

probabilité d'erreur
Résoudre problèmes scientifiques
Perspicacité
Etc.

Fiabilité



probabilité d'erreur

Résoudre problèmes scientifiques

Perspicacité

Etc.

Exercice Préparatoire

TROP PEU

Négligence
(Sloppiness)

Le préjugé (bias)
La tromperie (deceit)

Arrogance
(pas de conscience des sensibilités)

En cas de problèmes,
blâmer les autres

TROP

Perfectionnisme

Pédantisme

Timidité
Obséquiosité
asservissement
(éviter la recherche par peur
d'offenser des personnes - ou de
blesser des animaux / des personnes)
Méfiance
Contrôler les autres

Fiabilité
(Reliability)

Honnêteté

Respect

Responsabilité

Partie 2 - Exercice pour groupes de 4-6 personnes (30 min)

Pour chaque groupe

- a. **Désigner un rapporteur**
- b. Chaque participant présente en 1 min un cas: une situation difficile avec l'incertitude morale et la vertu pertinente. Ne dites pas comment la situation se termine. Les participants votent sur la situation sur lesquelles le groupe se concentrera.
- c. Les trois à cinq autres participants réfléchissent à la situation du présentateur et, si nécessaire, posent des questions de clarification.
- d. Chaque participant fait sa propre délibération éthique (cf. guide)
- e. Discussion

Exercice de Juste Milieu

Guide pour la délibération éthique

1. **Identification₁** : Quelles sont les options d'action ?

2. **Identification₂** : Quelles sont les vertus pertinentes ?

(Vous pouvez vous limiter aux quatre vertus du code européen :
fiabilité, honnêteté, respect, responsabilité.)

3. Deliberation

a. «Extrémité droite »: quelles options d'action manifestent « trop » de comportement lié à la vertu spécifique ?

b. «Extrémité gauche »: quelles options d'action manifestent « trop » de comportement lié à la vertu spécifique ?

--

c. Position intermédiaire: quelles options d'action manifestent le juste milieu ?

4. **Comparaison** : Quelles sont les différences entre les participants concernant les principes directeurs du milieu positions?

Partie 3 – Échange plénier (20 min)

1. Le rapporteur de chaque groupe résume les discussions en les conclusions atteintes (ou les différences restantes)
2. Quelle est l'utilité de la métaphore de la position médiane?
3. La position intermédiaire vous aide-t-elle à faire face aux dilemmes moraux liés à l'IR?

Dilemma Game



The visitor

A co-editor of the leading journal in my field approaches me as department chair to ask if he can become a part-time visiting professor. There is clearly possible synergy in various research projects, and in addition, he mentions that he can ensure that a colleague from my department and I become editors of a special issue of the journal. What do I do?

Results

A

I say yes to the offer. The special issue is a unique chance to put my department



Solo



Menu



Group

Dilemma Game



Results

A

I say yes to the offer. The special issue is a unique chance to put my department on the map.

B

I review the editor on his scientific merits and then decide to accept him as visiting professor.

C

I decline the favour.

D

I contact the other co-editor of the journal and tell him about the situation.



Solo



Menu



Group

Dilemma Game



27   

Put your supervisor first

As a dean I am attending a reception after the graduation ceremony of our master students. I am talking to one of the students who will continue on a PhD track at our school. She tells me that her future supervisor is mentioned as first author on an article she had written on the basis of her graduation project. The supervisor was hardly involved in the project but told her that it would improve her chances for the PhD position. She tells me this in confidence and just wants to know whether this is common practice at our school. What do I do?

Options



Solo



Menu



Group

Dilemma Game



A I tell her that it was her decision at the time and she should just accept it.

B I tell her that if she thinks her master thesis supervisor and future PhD supervisor was wrong she should report this to the integrity officer.

C I immediately go the supervisor to make clear that this kind of behaviour is not tolerated at our school.

D I tell her that I think her supervisor was wrong and that if there are more issues she can always come to me to discuss them.



Solo




Menu





Group

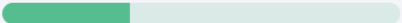
Dilemma Game



A  **1%**
I tell her that it was her decision at the time and she should just accept it.

B  **53%**
I tell her that if she thinks her master thesis supervisor and future PhD supervisor was wrong she should report this to the integrity officer.

C  **14%**
I immediately go the supervisor to make clear that this kind of behaviour is not tolerated at our school.

D  **32%**
I tell her that I think her supervisor was wrong and that if there are more issues she can always come to me to discuss them.



Solo



Menu



Group

Dilemma Game



Mutual favours

A good colleague from my department makes me the following offer: If I make him co-author on my next article and he will do the same for me. We are both coming up for tenure soon, and my colleague has been particularly overloaded with teaching tasks. To the outside world, the co-authorships will not seem illogical, as we are doing research on similar topics. What do I do?

Options

A I let him be a co-author on my article but I do not want to be co-author of his article.



Solo



Menu



Group

Dilemma Game



Options

A I let him be a co-author on my article but I do not want to be co-author of his article.

B I accept the offer, on the condition that we both critically read each other's paper.

C I ask advice from my superior, who also happens to be the responsible professor for my colleague.

D I decline the offer and report the unethical behaviour to the head of our department.

Submit Opinion



Solo



Menu



Group

Dilemma Game



A 9%
I let him be a co-author on my article but I do not want to be co-author of his article.

B 40%
I accept the offer, on the condition that we both critically read each other's paper.

C 32%
I ask advice from my superior, who also happens to be the responsible professor for my colleague.

D 19%
I decline the offer and report the unethical behaviour to the head of our department.



Solo



Menu



Group

Merci!