

GOVERNING WITH INTEGRITY: ETHICAL REASONING FOR PUBLIC SERVICE



Tabitha Raber
Taft College

Governing with Integrity: Ethical Reasoning for Public Service

Tabitha Raber

Taft College

This text is disseminated via the Open Education Resource (OER) LibreTexts Project (<https://LibreTexts.org>) and like the thousands of other texts available within this powerful platform, it is freely available for reading, printing, and "consuming."

The LibreTexts mission is to bring together students, faculty, and scholars in a collaborative effort to provide an accessible, and comprehensive platform that empowers our community to develop, curate, adapt, and adopt openly licensed resources and technologies; through these efforts we can reduce the financial burden born from traditional educational resource costs, ensuring education is more accessible for students and communities worldwide.

Most, but not all, pages in the library have licenses that may allow individuals to make changes, save, and print this book. Carefully consult the applicable license(s) before pursuing such effects. Instructors can adopt existing LibreTexts texts or Remix them to quickly build course-specific resources to meet the needs of their students. Unlike traditional textbooks, LibreTexts' web based origins allow powerful integration of advanced features and new technologies to support learning.



LibreTexts is the adaptable, user-friendly non-profit open education resource platform that educators trust for creating, customizing, and sharing accessible, interactive textbooks, adaptive homework, and ancillary materials. We collaborate with individuals and organizations to champion open education initiatives, support institutional publishing programs, drive curriculum development projects, and more.

The LibreTexts libraries are Powered by [NICE CXone Expert](#) and was supported by the Department of Education Open Textbook Pilot Project, the California Education Learning Lab, the UC Davis Office of the Provost, the UC Davis Library, the California State University Affordable Learning Solutions Program, and Merlot. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 1246120, 1525057, and 1413739.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation nor the US Department of Education.

Have questions or comments? For information about adoptions or adaptations contact info@LibreTexts.org or visit our main website at <https://LibreTexts.org>.

This text was compiled on 05/15/2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Licensing

Part I – Foundations of Ethics in Public Service

- 1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters
 - 1.0: Introduction
 - 1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined
 - 1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service
 - 1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies
 - 1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration
 - 1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service
 - 1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service
 - 1.7: Chapter 1 Summary
- 2: Understanding Values and Ethics
 - 2.0: Introduction
 - 2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making
 - 2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service
 - 2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?
 - 2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy
 - 2.5: Aesthetics and the Public Good
 - 2.6: Chapter 2 Summary
- 3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels
 - 3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics
 - 3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service
 - 3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams
 - 3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies
 - 3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels
 - 3.5: Chapter 3 Summary

Part II – Theories of Ethical Reasoning

- 4: Theories of Individual Ethics
 - 4.0: Introduction
 - 4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches
 - 4.2: Utilitarian Ethics (Outcome-Based)
 - 4.3: Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based)
 - 4.4: Virtue Ethics (Character-Based)
 - 4.5: Communitarian Ethics (Community-Based)
 - 4.6: Chapter 4 Summary
- 5: Theories of Organizational Ethics
 - 5.0: Introduction
 - 5.1: Ethics in Public Administration (Organizational Ethics)
 - 5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability
 - 5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics
 - 5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service
 - 5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership

- 5.6: Chapter 5 Summary
- 6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics
 - 6.0: Introduction
 - 6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice
 - 6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care
 - 6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service
 - 6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration
 - 6.5: Chapter 6 Summary

Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice

- 7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service
 - 7.0: Introduction
 - 7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct
 - 7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know
 - 7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing
 - 7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture
 - 7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice
 - 7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector
 - 7.7: Chapter Summary
- 8: Principles of Fighting Corruption
 - 8.0: Introduction
 - 8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy
 - 8.2: Rule of Law
 - 8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention
 - 8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control
 - 8.5: Summary
- 9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics
 - 9.0: Introduction
 - 9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability
 - 9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience
 - 9.3: Transparency in Government
 - 9.4: Active Community Engagement
 - 9.5: Summary
- 10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View
 - 10.0: Introduction
 - 10.1: Introduction to Policy Making
 - 10.2: Policy Making and Development
 - 10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development
 - 10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development
 - 10.5: Conclusion

[Index](#)

[Glossary](#)

[References/Attributions](#)

[Detailed Licensing](#)

Licensing

A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in [Back Matter/Detailed Licensing](#).

SECTION OVERVIEW

Part I – Foundations of Ethics in Public Service

1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters

- 1.0: Introduction
- 1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined
- 1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service
- 1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies
- 1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration
- 1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service
- 1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service
- 1.7: Chapter 1 Summary

2: Understanding Values and Ethics

- 2.0: Introduction
- 2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making
- 2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service
- 2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?
- 2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy
- 2.5: Aesthetics and the Public Good
- 2.6: Chapter 2 Summary

3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels

- 3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics
- 3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service
- 3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams
- 3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies
- 3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels
- 3.5: Chapter 3 Summary

This page titled [Part I – Foundations of Ethics in Public Service](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of ethics and integrity in public service and their role in fostering public trust.
2. Describe how ethical behavior supports fairness, accountability, and the rule of law in government operations.
3. Identify the consequences of unethical practices such as corruption, inefficiency, and loss of public confidence.
4. Analyze common ethical challenges in public service and the factors that influence ethical decision-making.
5. Evaluate strategies to promote integrity in public administration, including training, legal frameworks, and institutional reforms

Ethics in public administration is a fundamental pillar of effective and trustworthy governance. Integrity, a core ethical principle, plays a crucial role in shaping the conduct of public officials and institutions. Upholding high ethical standards ensures that government actions are conducted with fairness, transparency, and accountability, ultimately fostering public trust and confidence. Here's why ethics and integrity are vital in public administration and how they influence the effectiveness of governance.

[1.0: Introduction](#)

[1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined](#)

[1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service](#)

[1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies](#)

[1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration](#)

[1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service](#)

[1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service](#)

[1.7: Chapter 1 Summary](#)

This page titled [1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

1.0: Introduction

This page titled [1.0: Introduction](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined

According to the U.S. Department of the Interior, as a public servant, there are defined expectations for any person going into public service. The foundation for ethical public behavior is outlined in Executive Order 12674 and states:

“Thomas Jefferson enunciated the basic principle of public service: “When a man assumes a public trust, he should consider himself as public property.” This sentiment has been expressed by numerous others, over time becoming the familiar principle “Public service is a public trust.” To ensure public confidence in the integrity of the Federal Government, Executive Order 12674 (as amended) forms the framework for the ethical behavior required and expected of all Federal employees. As a condition of public service, you are expected to adhere to these fundamental principles of ethical behavior:

- Public service is a public trust, requiring you to place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain.
- You shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.
- You shall not engage in financial transactions using non-public Government information or allow improper use of such information to further any private interest.
- You shall not, except pursuant to such reasonable exceptions as are provided by regulation, solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by your agency, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of your duties.
- You shall make no unauthorized commitments or promise of any kind purported to bind the Government.
- You shall put forth honest effort in the performance of your duties.
- You shall not engage in outside employment or activities, including seeking or negotiating for employment, that conflict with your official Government duties and responsibilities.
- You shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.
- You shall satisfy in good faith your obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those such as Federal, state, or local taxes that are imposed by law.
- You shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunities for all Americans regardless of race, religion, color, sex (including pregnancy), parental status, national origin, age, disability, family medical history or genetic information, political affiliation, and military service.
- You shall not use your public office for private gain.
- You shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
- You shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activity.
- You shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that you are violating the law, the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (5 C.F.R. part 2635), the DOI supplemental ethics regulation (5 C.F.R. part 3501), or Executive Order 12674.”

Citation: Content created by Tabitha L. Raber; and citation from the U.S. Department of the Interior – [Basic Obligation of Public Service website](#).

This page titled [1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service

Integrity is essential for building and maintaining public trust:

- **Confidence in Government:** When public officials demonstrate integrity by acting honestly and ethically, it enhances public confidence in government institutions. Citizens are more likely to trust that their government is acting in their best interests and managing public resources responsibly.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Integrity ensures that government actions are transparent and that officials are held accountable for their decisions. Transparent practices and accountability mechanisms reinforce the belief that the government is committed to ethical conduct and open governance.

Ethical behavior in public administration promotes fairness and equity:

- **Equal Treatment:** Public officials with integrity are committed to treating all individuals fairly, without favoritism or bias. This commitment ensures that government services and resources are distributed equitably, promoting social justice and inclusivity.
- **Impartial Decision-Making:** Integrity requires that decisions are made based on merit and established criteria rather than personal interests or external pressures. This impartiality helps prevent corruption and ensures that decisions are made in the best interest of the public.

Integrity contributes to the overall effectiveness of public administration:

- **Efficient Operations:** Ethical behavior helps create a positive work environment where employees are motivated and committed to their roles. When officials act with integrity, it fosters a culture of respect and cooperation, leading to more efficient and effective government operations.
- **Reduced Corruption:** A strong ethical foundation reduces the likelihood of corruption and misconduct. By adhering to ethical standards, public officials help prevent practices such as bribery, fraud, and abuse of power, which can undermine the effectiveness of government institutions.

This page titled [1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies

Ethics and integrity ensure compliance with laws and regulations:

- **Legal Adherence:** Public officials are bound by laws and regulations that govern their conduct. Integrity ensures that officials comply with legal requirements and adhere to ethical standards, preventing legal violations and promoting lawful behavior.
- **Regulatory Frameworks:** Ethical principles guide the development and enforcement of regulatory frameworks that govern public administration. By upholding integrity, officials support the creation of robust frameworks that promote good governance and protect the public interest.

Integrity is not only a personal virtue; it is also a cornerstone of democratic government. In democracies, citizens entrust elected leaders and public officials with power, resources, and decision-making authority. Unlike in authoritarian systems, where power is concentrated in a single ruler or small elite, democracies depend on ongoing trust between the people and those who govern. Integrity is what makes that trust possible.

When public officials act with honesty, transparency, and consistency, citizens are more likely to believe that government decisions are being made for the public good rather than for personal gain. This builds legitimacy—the idea that government has the right to rule because it reflects the will and best interests of the people. Without integrity, that legitimacy quickly erodes.

Real-world examples:

- **Transparent elections:** When election officials manage voting fairly and openly, citizens can accept the results even if their preferred candidate loses. But if ballots are mishandled or results are hidden, the entire democratic system is questioned.
- **Fair policing:** In communities where law enforcement treats all people equally and holds officers accountable, trust in public safety grows. In contrast, corruption or discriminatory practices undermine both justice and faith in democratic institutions.
- **Honest budgeting:** Citizens expect that taxes will be collected fairly and used responsibly. When officials openly publish budgets and explain spending, people can see their money at work. Misuse of funds, on the other hand, creates anger and disengagement.

Integrity, then, is not optional in a democracy—it is essential for keeping the system alive. Without it, citizens may disengage from voting, ignore laws, or lose faith in government entirely. With it, public servants help ensure that democracy remains strong, resilient, and responsive to the needs of the people.

This page titled [1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration

Ethics and integrity are not abstract ideals—they are working principles that determine how government operates and how citizens experience public service. When public servants uphold strong ethical standards and act with integrity, they create systems that promote transparency, accountability, and effective service delivery.

Ethics and Integrity as the Foundation

- Ethics provides the moral framework—principles such as honesty, fairness, justice, and respect for human dignity.
- Integrity ensures consistency in applying those principles, even when it is difficult or unpopular.

Together, they create a culture where decisions are guided by what is right, not simply what is convenient or politically advantageous.

Ensuring Transparency

Ethics and integrity drive openness in government actions. A commitment to truthfulness prevents the hiding of information, the manipulation of data, or misleading communication. For example, publishing accurate budget reports or making meeting agendas public are ethical practices that build citizen trust. Transparency flourishes when officials believe the public has a right to know and act accordingly.

Ensuring Accountability

Accountability means officials take responsibility for their decisions and accept consequences for their actions. Ethics reinforces this by demanding honesty and fairness, while integrity ensures that leaders do not cut corners or excuse misconduct. Ethical and accountable leaders set the expectation that misuse of power or resources will be addressed, not ignored. This discourages corruption and strengthens public trust.

Ensuring Service Delivery

Public service exists to meet the needs of society. Ethics demands that services be distributed fairly, without favoritism, discrimination, or personal gain. Integrity ensures that rules and standards are applied consistently, so programs reach those they are designed to help. When officials prioritize the common good, citizens receive reliable, equitable services—whether in education, public safety, healthcare, or infrastructure.

Ethical behavior fosters accountability and responsibility:

- **Answerability:** Officials who act with integrity are more likely to take responsibility for their actions and decisions. This sense of accountability ensures that officials are answerable to the public and are committed to addressing any issues or concerns that arise.
- **Responsiveness:** Integrity-driven public administration promotes responsiveness to citizen needs and concerns. Officials with high ethical standards are more likely to listen to and address public feedback, enhancing the quality of government services.

This page titled [1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service

When ethics and integrity are weak, the entire system of public service begins to break down. Instead of promoting fairness and the common good, public institutions risk becoming corrupt, self-serving, and ineffective. The first and most damaging consequence is the loss of public trust. Citizens who see dishonesty, corruption, or favoritism in government lose faith in its ability to represent their interests. This loss of trust often leads to disengagement from civic life—people may stop voting, avoid participation in community programs, or become openly skeptical of any government action. Even well-designed policies struggle to succeed when the public doubts the motives of those who enforce them.

Weak ethics also create fertile ground for corruption and abuse of power. When honesty and accountability are absent, bribery, favoritism, and the misuse of public funds become more common. Leaders may prioritize personal or political gain over public need, and decisions can be shaped by self-interest rather than fairness. This misdirection of resources not only hurts those who are most in need of government support but also undermines the legitimacy of the system.

Service delivery is another area that suffers when integrity fails. Public programs and services may no longer be distributed equitably. Instead, they may favor those with wealth, political influence, or personal connections, while vulnerable populations are left behind. Such inequities deepen social divisions and increase frustration among citizens who already feel excluded or marginalized.

Over time, the absence of ethics and integrity also leads to inefficiency and poor performance. When officials cut corners, falsify reports, or ignore established rules, they may achieve short-term gains, but these practices weaken the system in the long run. Institutions lose their ability to perform effectively, wasting resources and failing to meet the needs of society.

Finally, weak integrity can destabilize governments themselves. Corruption scandals often result in lawsuits, investigations, or the removal of leaders, creating political instability. In more severe cases, the erosion of ethics can undermine democracy and open the door to authoritarian control.

Without integrity, the very foundation of public administration—serving the people with fairness, accountability, and justice—begins to collapse.

Case Study Example

An example of a recent issue involving alleged corruption can be found in the San Francisco Department of Public Works (SFPW). In this case, multiple department employees and contractors were accused of engaging in bribery, fraud, and conflicts of interest. Investigations revealed that some officials provided favorable treatment on contracts and permits in exchange for personal benefits.

Here are some details:

- Officials and contractors allegedly colluded to manipulate permit approvals and contracts, giving favorable treatment to some in exchange for kickbacks.
- Inspectors approving work for properties owned by family members or closely connected contractors involved in fraud.
- Over 20 employees, contractors, and consultants implicated.

Questions for thought?

1. How does corruption in a public agency affect citizens' trust in government and democracy?
2. In what ways can scandals like this lead to unfair or unequal delivery of public services?
3. What long-term damage might a city face—financially, socially, or politically—after a corruption scandal?
4. What steps should public agencies take to restore trust and prevent future ethical failures?

Strategies for Promoting Integrity

To promote integrity in public administration, several strategies can be implemented:

- **Clear Ethical Guidelines:** Establishing and communicating clear codes of conduct and ethical guidelines helps ensure that public officials understand and adhere to expected standards of behavior.

- Training and Education: Regular training and education on ethical principles and practices are vital for reinforcing the importance of integrity and equipping officials with the tools to make ethical decisions.
- Ethics Committees: Creating ethics committees or advisory boards can provide support and oversight for ethical issues, ensuring that ethical standards are upheld and that officials have access to guidance and resources.

Public administration in the United States is essential for managing the country's complex systems and addressing the needs of its vast population. Integrity in public administration is a fundamental principle that influences the effectiveness and efficiency of governance. This article explores the significance of integrity in the Indian public administration context and its broader implications.

This page titled [1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service

Ethics and integrity are not optional ideals in public administration—they are the very principles that sustain effective and trustworthy government. **Ethics** provides the framework of moral values and principles, such as fairness, honesty, justice, and respect for human dignity. **Integrity** is the commitment to live out those principles consistently, even when it is inconvenient or personally costly. Together, ethics and integrity ensure that public servants use their power and resources to serve the public good rather than private interests.

Improving Service Delivery

Ethics and integrity directly influence the quality and fairness of service delivery. Ethical standards demand that resources be distributed based on merit and need, while integrity ensures that officials resist pressure or temptation to bend the rules. When both are present, citizens can trust that services—whether in education, healthcare, policing, or infrastructure—are delivered equitably and transparently. For example, ethics demands that a housing program prioritize families who qualify by law; integrity ensures that administrators actually follow those rules rather than granting special favors to friends or donors. In this way, ethics sets the standard, and integrity makes sure it is upheld in practice.

Upholding the Rule of Law

In democratic societies, the **rule of law** ensures that no one is above the law and that rights are protected equally for all citizens. Ethics provides the moral reasoning behind fair and just laws, while integrity ensures that officials apply those laws consistently and without bias. For instance, freedom of information laws reflects an ethical belief in transparency and citizen oversight. Integrity ensures that administrators honor those laws by releasing accurate information instead of concealing or distorting it. Upholding both ethics and integrity protects against the misuse of power and builds confidence that government institutions act for the common good.

Consequences of a Lack of Ethics and Integrity

When ethics and integrity are absent, public service collapses into corruption, inefficiency, and inequality. Corruption diverts public resources into private hands, leaving fewer funds for schools, healthcare, or infrastructure. Inefficiency follows, as officials who cut corners or falsify data fail to meet the real needs of the people. The greatest consequence is the erosion of **public trust**. Citizens who see leaders acting without ethics or integrity lose faith in government, disengage from civic life, and may even resist laws and policies altogether. Weak ethics leads to poor decision-making, while weak integrity means even good policies are not carried out faithfully. Together, these failures stall development, widen inequality, and weaken democracy.

Promoting Ethics and Integrity in Public Service

Because ethics and integrity are so critical, societies must intentionally cultivate and protect them. Strategies include:

- **Ethical Training:** Regular training helps officials recognize ethical dilemmas and equips them to respond with integrity.
- **Strong Legal Frameworks:** Laws such as anti-corruption acts and freedom of information policies enforce ethical standards and require integrity in practice.
- **Active Civil Society:** Media, watchdog organizations, and engaged citizens shine light on misconduct and hold leaders accountable.
- **Institutional Reforms:** Streamlining processes reduces opportunities for corruption and ensures systems operate fairly.
- **Whistleblower Protections:** Safeguards for those who report unethical behavior encourage honesty and integrity within public institutions.

This page titled [1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

1.7: Chapter 1 Summary

Integrity in public administration is not merely a desirable quality but a fundamental necessity for effective governance. In the Indian context, where public administration faces significant challenges related to corruption and inefficiency, upholding integrity is crucial for restoring and maintaining public trust. Integrity fosters transparency and accountability, enhances the quality of public service delivery, and upholds the rule of law.

The consequences of a lack of integrity—such as corruption, inefficiency, and loss of public trust—highlight the urgent need for measures to promote ethical behavior in public administration. By implementing robust ethical training, strengthening legal frameworks, encouraging active civil society participation, and ensuring the protection of whistleblowers, India can address these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of its public administration.

The consequences of a lack of ethics and integrity in public administration are severe. Corruption, inefficiency, and nepotism undermine public trust, hinder economic development, and exacerbate social inequalities. These issues often result in reduced civic engagement and can erode the legitimacy of government institutions. Therefore, promoting ethics and integrity is critical for sustaining a healthy democratic process and ensuring that governance serves the public good.

In conclusion, prioritizing integrity in public administration is essential for building a more just and equitable society. It ensures that public resources are used effectively, laws are applied fairly, and citizens' rights are protected.

Citation for Chapter One

This chapter draws on multiple sources. Core concepts were adapted from:

- Yadav, B. (2024). *Ethics in Public Administration: Why Integrity Matters?* RESEARCH REVIEW International Journal of Multidisciplinary, 9(1), 282–286. <https://doi.org/10.31305/rrijm.2024.v09.n01.035> (open access)
- U.S. Department of the Interior. *Ethics Guidance and Standards for Public Service*. Retrieved from doi.gov (public domain content).
- Original instructional content written by **Tabitha Raber**.
- Supplemental adaptation, simplification, and expansion were generated with the assistance of AI tools to align with undergraduate teaching needs.

Chapter One: Key Terms

Ethics – A system of moral principles that guide behavior, ensuring actions are just, fair, and aligned with societal values. In public service, ethics provide the framework for responsible governance.

Integrity – The quality of being honest, consistent, and morally upright, even when it is difficult. Integrity in public service means acting in accordance with ethical principles without favoritism or personal gain.

Public Trust – The belief that government officials act in the best interests of society. Integrity and ethical behavior are essential to maintaining public trust in democratic institutions.

Transparency – Openness in government processes and decision-making, allowing citizens access to accurate information and ensuring officials are accountable.

Accountability – The obligation of public officials to take responsibility for their actions and decisions, and to face consequences when standards of ethics or law are violated.

Rule of Law – The principle that all individuals and institutions, including government officials, are subject to the law, applied fairly and consistently.

Corruption – The misuse of public office or resources for personal gain, including bribery, favoritism, fraud, and abuse of power.

Conflict of Interest – A situation where personal, financial, or political interests interfere with the fair and impartial performance of public duties.

Service Delivery – The provision of government services to the public. Integrity ensures that delivery is equitable, efficient, and based on need rather than favoritism.

Impartiality – Acting without bias or favoritism, ensuring decisions are based on merit and established criteria rather than personal connections or external pressures.

Executive Order 12674 – A U.S. directive establishing ethical obligations for federal employees, including loyalty to the Constitution, avoidance of conflicts of interest, and disclosure of waste, fraud, and abuse.

Whistleblower Protection – Safeguards for individuals who report misconduct, corruption, or unethical behavior within public institutions, protecting them from retaliation.

Check for Learning

Chapter One – Fill in the Blank Questions

1. Ethics in public administration provide the _____ framework for how officials should act in service of the public good.
2. _____ is the quality of being honest, consistent, and morally upright, even when faced with challenges or personal cost.
3. The principle “Public service is a _____ trust” reflects the responsibility of officials to act for the benefit of citizens rather than private gain.
4. When government actions are conducted openly and information is made accessible to citizens, this is known as _____.
5. The obligation of public officials to accept responsibility for their actions and decisions is called _____.
6. The principle that all individuals, including government officials, are subject to and protected by the law is known as the _____ of law.
7. Misuse of public office or resources for personal benefit, such as bribery or favoritism, is an example of _____.
8. A situation in which personal or financial interests interfere with public duties is called a _____ of interest.
9. Delivering government programs fairly and efficiently, based on need rather than favoritism, is referred to as _____ delivery.
10. Laws and safeguards that protect individuals who report unethical practices or corruption are known as _____ protections.

Answer Key

1. **moral** (or ethical)
 2. **Integrity**
 3. **public**
 4. **Transparency**
 5. **Accountability**
 6. **Rule**
 7. **Corruption**
 8. **Conflict**
 9. **Service**
 10. **Whistleblower**
-

This page titled [1.7: Chapter 1 Summary](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Understanding Values and Ethics

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Differentiate facts from values and explain why this distinction matters in ethical decision-making within public service.
2. Identify and analyze basic questions about values (such as fairness, justice, and responsibility) and connect them to issues in governance and administration.
3. Explain the concept of metaethics and discuss how questions about the foundations of morality influence laws, policies, and public trust.
4. Evaluate the role of well-being in shaping public service priorities, such as access to healthcare, education, and safety.
5. Recognize the relevance of aesthetics in public service, including how community spaces, cultural programs, and public art contribute to the public good.
6. Apply value theory concepts to real-world public service dilemmas, demonstrating how values guide ethical decision-making and public policy.

[2.0: Introduction](#)

[2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making](#)

[2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service](#)

[2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?](#)

[2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy](#)

[2.5: Aesthetics and the Public Good](#)

[2.6: Chapter 2 Summary](#)

This page titled [2: Understanding Values and Ethics](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

2.0: Introduction

In Chapter 1, we explored why ethics and integrity matter in public service, emphasizing how honesty, accountability, and transparency form the foundation of trustworthy governance. But to fully understand what it means to act ethically in public administration, we need to step back and examine the broader question: *What do we mean by values, and how do they guide our decisions?*

Chances are, you have found yourself in a debate about judgments of what is “good” or “bad.” These debates may involve controversial moral issues such as the death penalty or abortion, but they also extend into everyday decisions—whether to attend college, pursue a career in the military, or even how we evaluate art, movies, or community projects. At the core of all these debates is the concept of values—what people believe to be important, worthwhile, or right.

The study of values, often called value theory, is part of philosophy. In its narrow sense, value theory refers to ethical concerns about right and wrong. In its broader sense, it addresses the full range of human values—social, political, religious, and even aesthetic (such as beauty in art). Philosophers use value theory to help people think critically about what they value in life as individuals and as communities, especially when those values intersect with morality, justice, and the public good.

For public service professionals, this matters because government decisions are value-driven. Policies about education, healthcare, taxation, and criminal justice all reflect underlying beliefs about fairness, responsibility, and the common good. Public administrators cannot avoid values; every budget decision, enforcement action, or regulation reflects judgments about what matters most.

This chapter will help you:

- Understand what a value is and how it differs from a fact.
- Explore questions and distinctions that allow people to discuss values and their relationships.
- Consider how philosophical approaches to values—such as metaethics, well-being, and aesthetics—connect to the work of public service.

By connecting the study of values to the realities of public administration, we can see how abstract debates in philosophy shape concrete choices in governance. Just as integrity provides the backbone of ethical action, values provide the compass that points public servants toward fairness, justice, and service to the public good.

This page titled [2.0: Introduction](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making

Values are central to how public servants make decisions and relate to the communities they serve. The ideals of fairness, justice, accountability, and respect for human dignity guide public service in ways that go beyond technical procedures. These are not just personal preferences—they are judgments about how things ought to be in government and society. For example, a city council member may support affordable housing not only because data show a shortage of homes (a fact), but because they believe ensuring shelter for all residents is good and just (a value).

Philosophers call this the fact–value distinction. Facts describe what is—the reality of conditions, policies, or outcomes. Values describe what ought to be—what people believe is fair, right, or important. In public service, this distinction helps clarify the difference between evidence (such as budget numbers or crime rates) and the moral principles that guide how such evidence should shape action.

The line between facts and values is not always obvious. A statement like “corruption is bad” may feel like a fact, but it is a value judgment that reflects ethical expectations of integrity. Recognizing whether a claim is descriptive (about reality) or evaluative (about what should happen) is essential for ethical decision-making in government.

Descriptive vs. Evaluative Claims in Public Service

- **Descriptive claims** state how the world is. They can be verified with evidence. Example: “The city’s crime rate increased by 10% last year.”
- **Evaluative claims** express judgments about what should be done. Example: “The city should invest in community policing to reduce crime.”

Evaluative claims are often based on descriptive claims but go further by prescribing action. For instance:

- Descriptive: “Public transportation ridership dropped during the pandemic.”
- Evaluative: “The city ought to increase investment in public transit to make it more accessible and equitable.”

Understanding the relationship between descriptive and evaluative claims allows public servants to ground their decisions in facts while also acknowledging the values that drive policy choices.

The Is–Ought Problem in Public Service

The Scottish philosopher David Hume pointed out the difficulty of moving from “is” statements to “ought” statements. Just because something exists a certain way does not mean it should be that way. For example:

- Fact: “Low-income neighborhoods often lack grocery stores.”
- Value/Action: “The government ought to support policies that increase food access.”

The fact alone does not demand a policy response; it is the value judgment about fairness, health, and justice that compels action. Public administrators must therefore be careful not to assume that data alone determines the right course of action. Facts and values must be evaluated together.

Why This Matters in Public Service

Public servants face daily choices where facts and values intersect. A budget report may present facts, but values guide whether funding goes to policing, education, or social services. Data may show unequal arrest rates, but values determine whether reform is pursued. By distinguishing between facts and values, public administrators can:

- Make their reasoning more transparent.
- Avoid confusing personal opinions with objective evidence.
- Build trust by showing citizens how decisions balance facts with shared values.

In short, understanding the fact–value distinction equips public servants to navigate complex dilemmas where data and moral responsibility must work hand in hand.

Real-World Scenario: City Budget Allocation

A mid-sized city has recently conducted a study showing that its downtown area has a higher concentration of homelessness compared to surrounding neighborhoods. The report presents **facts**:

- Homelessness increased by 15% in the past three years.
- 60% of those experiencing homelessness lack access to healthcare.
- Emergency room visits by unhoused individuals cost the city \$3 million annually.

At a city council meeting, different **values** emerge in response to these facts. Some members argue that resources ought to be directed toward building more affordable housing. Others argue that public safety should take priority, suggesting stricter ordinances to regulate encampments. Both groups rely on the same facts but interpret them through different values: equity, compassion, and public health on one side; order, safety, and fiscal responsibility on the other.

This debate shows how **facts describe the situation**, but **values guide what action should be taken**.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In this scenario, which statements are descriptive (facts) and which are evaluative (values)? Why is it important for public servants to recognize this distinction?
2. How might different values (such as fairness, safety, or compassion) shape different policy responses, even when everyone agrees on the same set of facts?

This page titled [2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service

Public servants spend much of their time making decisions about what is “good” for their communities. But what do we really mean when we say something is “good” in government or public policy? What does it mean to value something in public service? And when values conflict—such as safety vs. liberty, or efficiency vs. fairness—can those conflicts be resolved?

These are fundamental questions because values guide decision-making in public administration. They shape laws, budgets, hiring practices, and how services are delivered. Understanding how values function allows public servants to better explain and justify their choices.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Value in Public Service

Some values are considered **intrinsic**—they are good for their own sake. For example, justice and fairness are often treated as intrinsic goods in public administration. We do not usually ask, “Why is justice valuable?” because it is understood as good in itself.

Other values are **extrinsic**, meaning they are good because they lead to something else. Efficiency in government is an example: it is valuable not just for its own sake but because it allows resources to be used effectively, leading to better public outcomes such as improved healthcare, education, or public safety.

In practice, public servants must balance intrinsic and extrinsic values. For instance, a government might value efficiency (extrinsic) but must ensure it does not come at the expense of fairness (intrinsic).

Monism vs. Pluralism in Public Service Values

Some philosophers argue for **monism**, the idea that there is one ultimate value that guides all decisions. In public service, this might be the belief that “the greatest good for the greatest number” (a utilitarian principle) should guide all policies.

Others argue for **pluralism**, the idea that there are many intrinsic values that cannot all be reduced to one. In public service, pluralism might mean recognizing that fairness, justice, liberty, and public safety are all intrinsic goods, even though they may sometimes conflict. For example, increasing surveillance may improve public safety but could reduce privacy rights and personal liberty. A pluralist framework recognizes these as real and sometimes incommensurable values that must be balanced carefully.

Incommensurability in Public Service

Some values are so different that they cannot be easily compared or measured against each other. For instance, how do you weigh the value of **public safety** against the value of **free speech**? Both are essential in a democratic society, but they cannot be directly compared using a single standard. These tensions often appear in policymaking when leaders must prioritize between competing values that are equally important.

Pluralism vs. Relativism in Public Service

Pluralism is not the same as relativism. Pluralism accepts that there are multiple values, but it does not mean “anything goes.” Relativism, on the other hand, would suggest that each culture or community’s values are equally valid, even if they conflict with universal principles of justice or human rights. In public service, this distinction matters: governments may respect cultural differences, but they are also bound by constitutional principles and universal rights, such as equality under the law.

For example, a pluralist perspective might recognize that communities hold different cultural values around gender roles. But a relativist perspective could prevent the government from challenging harmful practices (such as discrimination). Public service ethics demands a framework that respects diversity while upholding fundamental democratic values.

Real-World Scenario: Balancing Efficiency and Fairness

A state unemployment office faces a surge of applications after a major economic downturn. Leaders decide to implement a new automated system to quickly process claims. The system is efficient, reducing wait times from months to weeks. However, advocacy groups discover that the system disproportionately denies claims from applicants with incomplete records, many of whom come from vulnerable populations with limited access to technology.

Here, public officials must weigh **efficiency (extrinsic value)** against **fairness and equity (intrinsic values)**

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In this case, which values appear to be intrinsic, and which are extrinsic?
2. Can efficiency ever justify sacrificing fairness? Why or why not?
3. How should public servants balance incommensurable values when making decisions?

This page titled [2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?

Ethics is often divided into three areas of study: metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. While normative ethics develops standards for what counts as right or wrong and applied ethics examines how those standards apply to particular cases, metaethics operates at a deeper level. It asks where moral values come from, what they mean, and whether they are objective or subjective. These questions may sound abstract, but in the context of public service, they are essential because the authority of government depends not only on rules and efficiency but also on values that citizens recognize as legitimate.

One of the central debates in metaethics is between realism and anti-realism. Moral realists argue that some values are objective and apply universally, regardless of culture or circumstance. A realist would claim, for instance, that corruption is always wrong, whether it occurs in a small municipal office or within a federal agency. By contrast, moral anti-realists contend that values are relative, shaped by cultural traditions, organizational norms, or community standards. From this perspective, ideas such as fairness or justice may look different depending on the setting, and there may not be one universal truth that binds them together.

For public administrators, this debate is not merely theoretical. If values are entirely relative, then standards of fairness or accountability may shift from one agency to another, weakening consistency in governance. On the other hand, recognizing at least some values as objective—such as honesty, transparency, and respect for the rule of law—creates a common ethical foundation that can guide decision-making even under political or organizational pressure. This is why metaethics matters for public service: it forces us to think carefully about the source of the values that make policies legitimate, ensure fair treatment across populations, and foster public trust in institutions.

Disagreement about values does not mean morality is subjective. Just as scientific debates can improve our understanding of the natural world, ethical debates within government can refine standards and make institutions more accountable. Consider, for example, the case of whistleblowing in a city agency. An employee who discovers misuse of public funds must weigh the value of honesty and accountability against the organizational culture that may discourage “disloyal” reporting. The decision depends on whether honesty is seen as an objective obligation for all public servants or as a value relative to agency norms. Questions like these reveal how metaethical inquiry provides critical tools for evaluating dilemmas that arise in everyday public administration.

Ultimately, metaethics challenges students and practitioners to ask why integrity, fairness, and justice matter and how we know these values are worth defending. Without clear foundations, ethics in public service risks becoming arbitrary, shifting with each political season. By grappling with the questions raised in metaethics, future public administrators can better understand both the philosophical roots of morality and the practical importance of ethical consistency in sustaining public trust.

Connection to Practice: Whistleblower Protections and Public Trust

In 2019, a federal employee raised concerns about how aid funds were being distributed after a natural disaster. The agency’s leadership insisted the process was fair, but the employee believed critical resources were being diverted away from the communities most in need. By reporting the issue, the employee acted as a whistleblower—risking retaliation to uphold the values of fairness, accountability, and transparency.

From a metaethical perspective, this case highlights the tension between realism and anti-realism. If values such as honesty and justice are objective, then the whistleblower’s actions were not only justified but morally required, regardless of the agency’s culture or leadership priorities. If values are relative, however, then the whistleblower could be accused of undermining organizational loyalty by privileging one set of values over another.

Whistleblower protections in U.S. law, such as the Whistleblower Protection Act (1989), demonstrate a commitment to the realist view: some values are so fundamental to public service that they must be safeguarded even against organizational resistance. These protections affirm that ethical duties like honesty and accountability are not optional or culturally relative but are essential to maintaining public trust.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How does whistleblower legislation illustrate the importance of objective moral values in public service?
2. If values are seen as relative, how might that affect whether employees feel safe to report wrongdoing?
3. What does this case suggest about the role of metaethics in shaping laws, policies, and protections for public servants?

This page titled [2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy

In public service, one of the most important measures of whether a decision is ethical is how it affects the well-being of individuals and communities. Well-being can be thought of as the overall flourishing of society: people's safety, health, trust in government, and sense of justice. When public agencies make choices—such as how to distribute resources, design policies, or enforce laws—the guiding question should be whether those actions promote the well-being of the public they serve.

A common approach in ethics is **utilitarianism**, which emphasizes maximizing benefits and minimizing harms. In public service, this often translates to policies that attempt to achieve “the greatest good for the greatest number.” For example, decisions about how to allocate a limited city budget—whether to fund more police patrols, increase social services, or invest in public infrastructure—are utilitarian in nature because they weigh how each option will affect the well-being of the community as a whole.

At the same time, public service ethics cannot rely on utility alone. Certain **objective goods** form the foundation of ethical decision-making regardless of individual preferences. Justice, fairness, and accountability are examples of such goods. These values guide agencies to act with integrity and to ensure that policies do not just serve the majority but also protect vulnerable groups, respect individual rights, and maintain public trust.

Taken together, well-being in public service is not only about individual happiness or satisfaction; it is about sustaining the health of civic institutions and creating conditions where communities can thrive. Ethical decision-making requires balancing outcomes (utilitarianism) with core values (justice and

This page titled [2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

2.5: Aesthetics and the Public Good

missing?

This page titled [2.5: Aesthetics and the Public Good](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

2.6: Chapter 2 Summary

Values are at the heart of ethical decision-making in public service. They shape how individuals, organizations, and societies decide what is right, just, and worthwhile. By exploring the fact–value distinction, we saw how facts describe the world as it is, while values guide how the world ought to be. We also examined the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic values, learning that some things—like justice or fairness—are valuable in themselves, while others—like resources or policies—gain their worth by promoting higher goals. These ideas remind us that public service is never just about procedures or efficiency; it is about choices grounded in values that affect real people’s lives.

The study of metaethics further deepens this understanding by asking whether values are objective truths or subjective preferences. In practice, public service ethics must balance these perspectives by grounding decisions in shared values such as honesty, equity, and accountability while remaining sensitive to cultural and social contexts. Finally, the concept of well-being highlights the ultimate aim of ethical public administration: to create conditions where individuals and communities can flourish. Ethical governance requires public servants to weigh outcomes carefully while staying anchored to core principles that build trust and legitimacy.

Together, these perspectives on values provide a framework for evaluating decisions and policies in public service. They remind us that ethics is not abstract philosophy alone, but a daily practice of aligning actions with the deeper values of democracy, justice, and the common good.

Key Terms

Value – A principle or standard that guides judgments about what is good, just, important, or worthwhile in decision-making.

Fact–Value Distinction – The difference between statements about what *is* (descriptive claims) and what *ought to be* (evaluative claims).

Descriptive Claim – A statement that describes the world as it is without judgment (e.g., “The policy was implemented in 2023”).

Evaluative Claim – A statement that makes a judgment about how the world should be or what is good, just, or fair (e.g., “The policy should protect vulnerable groups”).

Intrinsic Value – Something valued for its own sake (e.g., justice, honesty, or fairness).

Extrinsic Value – Something valued as a means to achieve another end (e.g., funding is valuable because it supports public programs).

Monism – The belief that there is one ultimate intrinsic value (e.g., happiness or justice) that guides all others.

Pluralism – The belief that there are multiple intrinsic values (e.g., equality, freedom, and well-being), none of which can be reduced to another.

Incommensurability – A situation where two values cannot be compared or measured by a common standard (e.g., comparing fairness with efficiency in public policy).

Moral Relativism – The view that moral values are determined by cultural or individual perspectives, with no universal standard of right or wrong.

Metaethics – The branch of ethics that studies the origins, meaning, and objectivity of moral values and judgments.

Moral Realism – The view that moral values have an objective basis in reality and can be true or false, independent of personal opinion.

Anti-Realism – The view that moral values are subjective, dependent on individuals or cultural perspectives rather than objective truths.

Well-Being (Flourishing) – The overall condition of living a good life, often associated with health, happiness, justice, and meaningful relationships.

Utilitarianism – An ethical framework that evaluates actions based on their outcomes, seeking to maximize well-being for the greatest number of people.

Virtue – A moral quality or excellence (e.g., honesty, courage, fairness) that contributes to a person's character and the flourishing of a community.

Check for Learning: Values in Public Service

Instructions: Complete each sentence with the correct term from this chapter. Answers are provided at the end so you can check your understanding.

Questions

1. The _____ distinction separates statements about what *is* from statements about what *ought to be*.
2. A _____ claim describes the world as it actually is, without adding judgment.
3. A _____ claim makes a judgment about how the world should be, often using terms like good, fair, or just.
4. _____ value is something valued for its own sake, while _____ value is something valued as a means to achieve another end.
5. The belief that only one ultimate intrinsic value exists, which guides all others, is called _____.
6. The belief that multiple intrinsic values exist and cannot be reduced to one another is called _____.
7. When two values cannot be compared by a single standard (such as fairness vs. efficiency), this is called _____.
8. _____ argues that moral values have an objective basis in reality and can be true or false, independent of opinion.
9. _____ argues that moral values are subjective, based on individuals or cultural perspectives.
10. The term _____ (or flourishing) refers to the overall condition of living a good life, often tied to happiness, health, justice, and relationships.

Answer Key

1. Fact–Value
2. Descriptive
3. Evaluative
4. Intrinsic; Extrinsic
5. Monism
6. Pluralism
7. Incommensurability
8. Moral Realism
9. Anti-Realism
10. Well-Being (or Flourishing)

This page titled [2.6: Chapter 2 Summary](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Identify and distinguish between micro-, meso-, and macro-level considerations with respect to the ethical conduct in public service.

[3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics](#)

[3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service](#)

[3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams](#)

[3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies](#)

[3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels](#)

[3.5: Chapter 3 Summary](#)

This page titled [3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics

One useful way to think about ethical questions that might arise out of public service is to think about potential issues from the perspective of different analytical levels. In Chapter 1, you learned about the value and importance of ethics in public service. Here in Chapter 3, we'll apply this framework to a discussion of ethics. Within most ethical dilemma, there are specific questions that arise for those in public service at each of these three levels: Macro, Meso and Micro. To understand how to properly apply these terms, we must understand the ethical dilemma that are often present in public service careers.

Ethical dilemmas in public service arise when individuals working in government or public roles must choose between competing values, duties, or interests—often where no option is entirely right or wrong. These dilemmas are especially complex because public servants are expected to act in the public interest, uphold laws and policies, and maintain professional integrity, even when those responsibilities conflict. Understanding these terms, macro, meso, and micro, allow us to better understand how to formulate suitable responses when faced with ethical dilemmas.

This page titled [3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service

At the micro-level, public service workers must consider their own conduct and the rights of individuals or society. For example, let us look at the following scenario: Jordan is a city building inspector. During a routine inspection, he discovers that a local business owner—who is well-liked in the community and has supported several city programs—has made unauthorized structural changes that violate safety codes.

Jordan must decide whether to report the violation, which would likely result in a hefty fine or even closure of the business. However, he knows this would hurt the business owner and upset many people in the community. Jordan fears backlash from neighbors and city leaders who see the business as a community staple. What should Jordan do?

At the micro level, we analyze Jordan’s personal ethical decision-making:

- **Values in conflict:**
 - Integrity and duty to uphold safety regulations
 - Compassion and loyalty to the community
- **Ethical questions:**
 - Should I follow the law even if it harms someone I know and respect?
 - Am I being fair and consistent if I ignore this violation?
 - What would I expect others to do if they were in my position?
- **Personal risks:**
 - Social backlash
 - Damaged relationships
 - Feelings of guilt or regret, depending on the choice

This example demonstrates the difficulties and dilemmas present in many public service jobs. The micro-level perspective on ethics focuses on the individual—their values, character, conscience, and personal responsibility when faced with ethical decisions. It asks: “What does *this person* believe is the right thing to do?” and “How do they act on those beliefs, especially under pressure?”

This page titled [3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams

Evaluating **public service responsibility at the meso level perspective** means focusing on how **organizations, departments, and teams** shape ethical behavior. It's the "in-between" layer—**not just the individual (micro), not the whole society (macro), but the workplace culture and systems** where public servants operate day-to-day.

Let's examine an ethical dilemma in public service viewed through the meso-level perspective, which focuses on the organization, department, or team culture and systems. Maria works in a city health department that received a federal grant to run a youth mental health outreach program. The program struggled to meet its outreach goals, but the department head encourages staff to "adjust" the numbers on the final report so the program appears more successful than it was—hoping to secure future funding. Maria knows the numbers are being inflated and feels uncomfortable with the dishonesty. However, the practice seems normalized in the department, and speaking up could damage her relationships or even her job security. Other team members are going along with it and believe it's "just how the system works."

At the meso level, the focus is on the organizational culture, norms, and leadership influence—not just Maria's personal decision.

Ethical Tensions:

- Organizational pressure vs. ethical transparency
- Team loyalty vs. professional accountability
- Short-term gains (funding) vs. long-term credibility

Organizational Factors:

- A culture that prioritizes results over integrity
- Lack of internal accountability or whistleblower protections
- Leadership setting a tone that blurs ethical boundaries

Public Service Responsibility at the Meso Level:

- Supervisors and managers should model ethical behavior.
- Internal systems (e.g., ethics training, reporting channels) should support employees like Maria.
- The organization should foster a culture of honesty—even if it means acknowledging failure.

This page titled [3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies

Finally, let's examine the macro level perspective in public service ethics. Like a macro camera lens, macro perspective looks at the big picture in ethical dilemmas. This perspective focuses on the **laws, social systems, institutions, cultural norms, and power structures** that influence ethical behavior across society. It's about how **society shapes** what is considered ethical or unethical in public service and how public institutions either support or harm the public good.

Let us look at final example: In a large metropolitan area, data reveals that certain racial and ethnic groups are disproportionately stopped, searched, and arrested by law enforcement. Although individual officers and departments may argue they are following policy, the larger system—including laws, policies, training, and historic practices—reflects systemic bias.

At the macro level perspective, we view the dilemma (systemic bias) from a broader lens:

- **Focus:** Society-wide issues, such as:
 - Structural racism
 - Discriminatory laws or enforcement patterns
 - Inequities in resource allocation (e.g., policing in low-income communities)
- **Public service responsibility:**
 - Agencies must evaluate how societal systems create or reinforce ethical problems.
 - Reform may require policy changes, legislative action, and cultural shifts—not just new training or individual accountability.

Why This Is a Macro-Level Issue:

- **Goes beyond individual behavior:** Even officers with good intentions may be operating within a flawed system.
- **Involves laws and policies:** The rules that govern policing may need to be reformed to prevent unequal treatment.
- **Requires systemic change:** Ethical public service at the macro level means challenging and changing unjust societal structures.

This page titled [3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels

Understanding ethics in public service requires evaluating dilemmas from multiple perspectives, because each level of analysis highlights different challenges and responsibilities. At the **micro level**, the focus is on the individual public servant—their personal values, integrity, and willingness to act with honesty even when it is difficult. This level often involves ethical dilemmas, such as whether to report misconduct or how to demonstrate moral courage in the face of pressure.

The **meso level** shifts attention to the organizational setting, where the culture, leadership, and group norms shape how employees behave. Here, ethical challenges may arise from peer pressure, agency expectations, or normalized practices that conflict with professional standards, requiring strong leadership and ethical workplace systems to support accountability.

At the **macro level**, the lens expands to laws, institutions, and cultural systems that influence fairness and justice in society. This level addresses systemic issues like discrimination, inequitable policies, or corruption that require reform and policy changes rather than individual action alone. Comparing across these levels is vital because ethical issues in public service rarely occur in isolation—they are shaped simultaneously by personal choices, organizational pressures, and societal structures. By learning to evaluate problems through all three perspectives, public servants are better equipped to identify root causes of ethical dilemmas and take actions that promote integrity, justice, and the public good.

Level	Focus	Common Ethical Dilemmas	Key Responsibilities
Micro	Personal Values, integrity, & accountability	Reporting misconduct, moral courage, conflict of interest	Act honestly, demonstrate integrity, take personal accountability
Meso	Team/agency ethics, culture, leadership	Peer pressure, unethical group norms, leadership failures	Build ethical workplaces, support ethical leadership
Macro	Laws, institutions, and culture norms	Systemic injustice, inequitable policies, corruption.	Promote equity, justice and policy reform.

Focus at Each Level

• **Micro (Individual):**

- Focuses on personal values and integrity
- Ethical dilemmas: Reporting misconduct, moral courage
- Responsibility: Act with honesty and take personal accountability

• **Meso (Organizational):**

- Focuses on team/agency ethics and culture
- Ethical dilemmas: Unethical group norms, peer pressure
- Responsibility: Build ethical workplace systems and support ethical leadership

• **Macro (Societal/Systemic):**

- Focuses on laws, systems, and cultural norms
- Ethical dilemmas: Systemic injustice, inequitable policies
- Responsibility: Promote equity, justice, and policy reform

Case Study: The LAPD Rampart Scandal Through Micro, Meso, and Macro Ethics

The Rampart Division of the Los Angeles Police Department became the center of one of the largest police corruption scandals in U.S. history. In the late 1990s, more than 70 officers were implicated in misconduct ranging from unprovoked shootings and beatings to planting evidence, perjury, and theft. The scandal shook public trust in the LAPD, led to overturned convictions, and revealed systemic ethical failures at every level of public service. Examining Rampart through the lenses of micro, meso, and macro ethics helps us understand how integrity failures spread and why ethical frameworks are essential in public service.

Micro-Level (Individual Responsibility):

At the individual level, officers engaged in unethical and illegal actions, violating their oath to serve and protect. Instead of acting

with honesty and integrity, some officers falsified reports, framed suspects, and used excessive force. Micro-level ethical failure shows what happens when individuals abandon personal responsibility for integrity and justice.

Meso-Level (Organizational Culture):

The culture within the Rampart Division normalized unethical behavior. Supervisors ignored misconduct or, in some cases, actively encouraged it by rewarding aggressive tactics. A lack of internal accountability systems meant that officers who broke rules often went unpunished, while peer loyalty and the “blue wall of silence” reinforced unethical practices. At the meso level, Rampart demonstrates how an organization’s culture and leadership can either uphold or erode ethical standards.

Macro-Level (Systemic and Societal Structures):

At the systemic level, the Rampart scandal reflected larger issues in policing and governance. Policies and oversight structures failed to detect or prevent widespread corruption. Courts and communities, particularly in marginalized neighborhoods, bore the consequences of systemic injustice as wrongful convictions multiplied. Ultimately, the scandal revealed how institutional failures at the macro level can perpetuate inequality, weaken democracy, and erode public trust in law enforcement.

The Rampart scandal underscores the importance of examining ethical dilemmas at every level. Focusing only on “bad apples” at the micro level overlooks the powerful influence of meso-level organizational culture and macro-level systemic structures. Ethics in public service must therefore be reinforced at all levels: through individual moral courage, strong organizational accountability, and systemic reforms that promote transparency, fairness, and justice.

Critical Thinking Questions for Students:

1. At the micro level, how could individual officers have resisted pressure to participate in or ignore misconduct?
2. At the meso level, what changes in leadership or organizational culture might have prevented the normalization of corruption at Rampart?
3. At the macro level, what kinds of systemic reforms (laws, oversight boards, community accountability) could help prevent scandals like this in the future?
4. What lessons does the Rampart case offer for ensuring integrity in public service today?

Moving Forward:

The Growing Use of Body-Worn Cameras

Across the United States, many public service agencies, particularly in law enforcement, have begun using **body-worn cameras (BWCs)** more frequently. These devices are intended to record interactions between public servants and the communities they serve.

Your task is to evaluate the ethical implications of body-worn cameras across the **micro, meso, and macro levels of public service ethics**.

1. At the **micro level**, how might body-worn cameras influence the behavior, values, and decision-making of individual public servants?
2. At the **meso level**, what impact might BWCs have on the culture, policies, and practices of an organization or department?
3. At the **macro level**, how could the widespread adoption of BWCs affect broader systems of governance, public trust, and democratic accountability?
4. Do you believe body-worn cameras improve ethics in public service? Why or why not?

This page titled [3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

3.5: Chapter 3 Summary

Understanding ethics in public service requires more than knowing what is right or wrong—it requires the ability to analyze complex situations from multiple perspectives. In this chapter, we explored how ethical dilemmas can be viewed through three levels: micro (individual), meso (organizational), and macro (societal). Each level provides a unique lens for understanding the competing values and pressures that public servants face.

At the micro level, individuals must rely on their personal integrity and moral judgment when navigating difficult choices. At the meso level, the culture and expectations of an organization can either support ethical behavior or create environments where wrongdoing becomes normalized. At the macro level, broad systems, laws, and social norms shape what is considered ethical and determine whether public policies promote justice or reinforce inequality.

By learning to distinguish and evaluate ethical dilemmas through all three levels, public service professionals are better equipped to act responsibly, challenge unethical practices, and contribute to meaningful, ethical leadership in their organizations and communities. Ethics is not just about individual actions—it's about creating and sustaining systems that serve the public good.

Key Terms – Chapter Three

1. **Ethical Dilemma** – A situation in which a public servant must choose between competing values, duties, or interests, often where no option is entirely right or wrong.
2. **Micro-Level Ethics** – The individual perspective of ethics, focusing on personal integrity, conscience, and responsibility in decision-making.
3. **Personal Accountability** – The obligation of an individual public servant to act honestly, follow laws, and take responsibility for their choices.
4. **Moral Courage** – The willingness of an individual to act ethically, even when facing social backlash, pressure, or personal risk.
5. **Meso-Level Ethics** – The organizational perspective of ethics, emphasizing how workplace culture, policies, and leadership shape ethical behavior.
6. **Organizational Culture** – Shared values, norms, and practices within a department or agency that influence employees' ethical decision-making.
7. **Ethical Leadership** – Leadership that models integrity, promotes transparency, and creates systems that support ethical decision-making.
8. **Whistleblower Protections** – Safeguards for employees who report misconduct, ensuring they are not retaliated against for exposing unethical practices.
9. **Macro-Level Ethics** – The societal and systemic perspective of ethics, focusing on laws, cultural norms, and policies that affect justice, fairness, and equity.
10. **Systemic Bias** – Inequities embedded in laws, policies, or institutional practices that disadvantage certain groups, even without intentional misconduct.
11. **Rule of Law** – The principle that laws must be applied fairly and consistently to all citizens, without bias or favoritism.
12. **Policy Reform** – Changes to laws, regulations, or institutional practices aimed at addressing systemic ethical issues and promoting justice.
13. **Public Trust** – The confidence citizens place in government institutions and officials, built through ethical conduct and integrity at all three levels.

Chapter Three – Fill in the Blank Questions

1. An _____ arises when public servants must choose between competing values, duties, or interests, often where no option is entirely right or wrong.

2. At the _____ **level**, ethics focuses on the individual's values, conscience, and personal responsibility in decision-making.
 3. The willingness to act ethically even in the face of backlash, risk, or pressure is called _____.
 4. _____ **accountability** means that public servants must accept responsibility for their choices and actions.
 5. At the _____ **level**, ethics emphasizes how workplace culture, team dynamics, and leadership influence behavior.
 6. A department's shared values, norms, and practices are described as its _____ **culture**.
 7. Leaders who model integrity and promote transparency demonstrate _____ **leadership**.
 8. _____ **protections** are safeguards for employees who report unethical practices without fear of retaliation.
 9. At the _____ **level**, ethics looks at the broader laws, policies, and cultural norms that shape fairness and justice in society.
 10. Inequities that are embedded within laws, policies, or institutional practices are called _____ **bias**.
-

Answer Key

1. **Ethical dilemma**
 2. **Micro**
 3. **Moral courage**
 4. **Personal**
 5. **Meso**
 6. **Organizational**
 7. **Ethical**
 8. **Whistleblower**
 9. **Macro**
 10. **Systemic**
-

This page titled [3.5: Chapter 3 Summary](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

SECTION OVERVIEW

Part II – Theories of Ethical Reasoning

4: Theories of Individual Ethics

- 4.0: Introduction
- 4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches
- 4.2: Utilitarian Ethics (Outcome-Based)
- 4.3: Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based)
- 4.4: Virtue Ethics (Character-Based)
- 4.5: Communitarian Ethics (Community-Based)
- 4.6: Chapter 4 Summary

5: Theories of Organizational Ethics

- 5.0: Introduction
- 5.1: Ethics in Public Administration (Organizational Ethics)
- 5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability
- 5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics
- 5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service
- 5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership
- 5.6: Chapter 5 Summary

6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics

- 6.0: Introduction
- 6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice
- 6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care
- 6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service
- 6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration
- 6.5: Chapter 6 Summary

This page titled [Part II – Theories of Ethical Reasoning](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Theories of Individual Ethics

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Explain the four major approaches to individual ethics—utilitarian (outcome-based), deontological (duty-based), virtue (character-based), and communitarian (community-based)—and the core “rules of the ethics game” (impartiality, rationality, consistency, reversibility).
2. Differentiate each approach by its central question, decision rule, and view of rights, duties, character, and community in a public-service context.
3. Analyze the strengths and limitations of each framework for common government dilemmas (e.g., resource allocation, transparency vs. safety, public health trade-offs).
4. Apply at least two ethical frameworks to a real or provided case and defend a recommended action using clear reasoning and evidence.
5. Evaluate how different frameworks affect stakeholders (including vulnerable groups) and justify how to balance competing values (efficiency, fairness, rights, community well-being).
6. Reflect on personal values and professional duties to articulate an ethical decision-making toolkit you will use in public service.

[4.0: Introduction](#)

[4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches](#)

[4.2: Utilitarian Ethics \(Outcome-Based\)](#)

[4.3: Deontological Ethics \(Duty-Based\)](#)

[4.4: Virtue Ethics \(Character-Based\)](#)

[4.5: Communitarian Ethics \(Community-Based\)](#)

[4.6: Chapter 4 Summary](#)

This page titled [4: Theories of Individual Ethics](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

4.0: Introduction

Ethics, at its core, is the study of right and wrong in human behavior. In philosophy, this branch is sometimes called **theoretical ethics** or **normative ethics**, and it focuses on the principles and rules that help us decide what actions are just, fair, good, or harmful. While these theories can feel abstract, they provide the intellectual foundation for practical decision-making in real-world contexts, including government and public administration.

In public service, ethics takes on a particularly applied form. Rather than remaining a purely theoretical exercise, ethical reasoning guides how public officials, employees, and administrators act when faced with difficult decisions. This field is often described as **applied ethics**, meaning the application of moral principles to specific professional settings. Just as “business ethics” evaluates the conduct of corporations and executives, **public service ethics** applies ethical reasoning to the responsibilities of those who hold positions of public trust.

Like business, public service can be examined through different lenses—individual, organizational, and systemic. This chapter focuses on the **individual**, the public servant making choices in complex situations. Public employees are first and foremost human beings, and like all people, they seek meaning in their work, relationships, and contributions to society. But because their decisions affect not only themselves but also the communities they serve, the ethical stakes are higher. Citizens expect public servants to balance personal values with professional duties, and to do so in ways that uphold fairness, justice, and the common good.

To help frame these decisions, philosophy offers several enduring theories of individual ethics. Four approaches, in particular, have stood the test of time and continue to shape ethical reasoning today: **utilitarian ethics** (focused on outcomes), **deontological ethics** (focused on duty), **virtue ethics** (focused on character), and **communitarian ethics** (focused on community and relationships). Each of these frameworks offers a distinct perspective on what makes an action right or wrong. By examining them, public servants can develop a stronger foundation for navigating the moral challenges they face in their daily work

This page titled [4.0: Introduction](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches

From the earliest days of human thought, people have wrestled with questions of right and wrong, fairness and justice, and the meaning of a good life. Out of these reflections, philosophers have identified four major approaches to ethical decision-making that continue to guide us today: utilitarian ethics (outcome-based), deontological ethics (duty-based), virtue ethics (character-based), and communitarian ethics (community-based). Each of these frameworks starts from a different perspective and emphasizes a different way of determining what makes an action ethical.

Although distinct, these approaches share several common principles that function as the “rules of the ethics game.” First, they require impartiality, the idea that the interests of all people should be considered equally. Second, they emphasize rationality, meaning that ethical reasoning should be supported by reasons a reasonable person would accept. Third, they rely on consistency, applying standards in the same way across similar cases. Finally, they uphold reversibility, the idea that ethical rules should apply no matter who is in the position of power or making the decision.

For public servants, these approaches provide practical tools for navigating the complex challenges of their work. Whether deciding how to allocate limited resources, enforce a regulation, or balance individual rights with community needs, understanding these four frameworks helps ensure decisions are not only effective but also grounded in fairness and accountability.

? Critical Thinking Warm-Up

Before learning about different ethical theories, take a moment to think through this real-world dilemma faced in public service.

The Scenario

You are the city budget director, and the city is facing a severe financial shortfall. To balance the budget, you must choose between two difficult options:

1. **Close a local community health clinic** that primarily serves low-income families. This would save enough money to keep other city services running, but hundreds of residents would lose access to affordable healthcare.
2. **Lay off 25 city employees** across several departments. This would keep the clinic open, but reduce services such as parks, libraries, and public works, while leaving employees and their families without a stable income.

Pre-Thinking Questions

- What factors would you consider most important in making this decision?
- Who should benefit, and who should bear the burden?
- How do you determine whether an action is “right” or “wrong” in this kind of situation?
- Do you think the focus should be on **outcomes, duties, personal character, or community responsibilities**? Why?

This page titled [4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

4.2: Utilitarian Ethics (Outcome-Based)

Utilitarian ethics is perhaps the most familiar and straightforward approach to ethical decision-making. At its core, it asks one key question: “**How will my actions affect others?**” Utilitarians, also called *consequentialists*, argue that the ethical choice is the one that produces the best overall outcome. Their motto is “the greatest good for the greatest number.”

This approach often requires quantifying benefits and harms. For example, when legislators decide on tax policy, they weigh how many people will benefit against how many may be disadvantaged. Similarly, in public service, officials may conduct a cost–benefit analysis when deciding how to allocate limited resources—whether it be funding for public safety, health services, or education.

However, utilitarian ethics also has challenges. Determining what counts as “good” can be subjective. One person’s gain might be another’s loss. Moreover, some issues—such as protecting basic rights—cannot ethically be reduced to simple math. The U.S. founders recognized this by embedding “certain unalienable rights” that cannot be voted away, even if doing so would benefit the majority.

Utilitarian Ethics: Strengths and Weaknesses in Public Service

In public service, Utilitarian Ethics is often appealing because decisions in government, criminal justice, healthcare, and education frequently require balancing limited resources while trying to maximize overall well-being.

Strengths of Utilitarian Ethics in Public Service

- **Practical decision-making:** Utilitarianism provides a clear framework for weighing options by evaluating their consequences. For example, when a city decides how to allocate a limited budget, a utilitarian approach would seek the distribution that benefits the largest portion of the community.
- **Promotes fairness at scale:** It emphasizes collective well-being, which can align with the mission of public service to act in the interest of society rather than favoring individuals or small groups.
- **Adaptable:** Utilitarian reasoning can be applied to a wide range of ethical challenges, from setting sentencing policies to prioritizing emergency responses.

Weaknesses of Utilitarian Ethics in Public Service

- **Risk of ignoring minority rights:** By focusing on the majority, utilitarianism can justify outcomes that harm or neglect vulnerable populations if it improves the overall balance of happiness. For instance, denying costly medical treatment to a small group could be defended if resources could serve a larger population more cheaply.
- **Difficulty measuring “good”:** What counts as happiness, well-being, or benefit is often subjective and hard to quantify, making decisions potentially inconsistent or biased.
- **Ends justify the means:** In practice, utilitarianism can excuse harmful or unjust actions if they lead to a better overall result. This tension can conflict with legal protections, professional codes, or the duty to treat individuals with dignity.

Applying Utilitarian Ethics to the Starting Dilemma

The Dilemma: *Should a city department reassign staff from an after-school youth program to expand police patrols in response to rising property crime?*

A utilitarian would approach this by asking: *Which option produces the greatest net benefit for the community as a whole?* They might argue that reducing crime improves safety and well-being for the majority of residents, even if it comes at the expense of youth losing access to the after-school program. If, however, evidence showed that the youth program prevents crime in the long term by keeping young people engaged and supported, a utilitarian might instead argue that maintaining the program creates greater overall good by reducing future harm.

In either case, the utilitarian lens emphasizes **measuring and comparing the consequences** of each option, always with the goal of maximizing the community’s overall happiness, safety, and well-being.

This page titled [4.2: Utilitarian Ethics \(Outcome-Based\)](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

4.3: Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based)

Deontological ethics, associated most closely with the philosopher Immanuel Kant, emphasizes **duty over consequences**. Kant argued that humans cannot predict outcomes with certainty, but they can reason their way to moral duties. For him, some values are universal and inviolable, regardless of whether following them leads to better or worse consequences.

The foundation of this approach is the **Categorical Imperative**, which requires that people be treated as ends in themselves, never merely as means to achieve another goal. In public service, this means respecting individuals—even when efficiency or political goals might tempt leaders to cut corners or use people as tools. For instance, a public administrator might be pressured to “do whatever it takes” to meet a deadline. Deontological ethics insists that employees, constituents, and partners be respected as persons with dignity, not just as obstacles or assets.

Duty-based ethics is particularly relevant to public service professions because public trust depends on consistent adherence to principles such as fairness, honesty, and accountability. Teams and organizations often falter when individuals feel used rather than respected. Kant’s framework reminds leaders that ethical integrity cannot be sacrificed for convenience or expediency.

Deontological Ethics: Strengths and Weaknesses in Public Service

Deontological ethics emphasizes **duty and principles** rather than outcomes. It holds that certain actions are right or wrong in themselves, regardless of the consequences. In public service, this framework stresses fairness, rules, and respect for individuals as ends in themselves.

Strengths of Deontological Ethics in Public Service

- **Protects individual rights:** It ensures that people are not treated as mere means to an end, safeguarding civil liberties and due process.
- **Consistency and fairness:** Rules and duties apply universally, helping public servants avoid favoritism or arbitrary decision-making.
- **Moral clarity:** Provides clear boundaries—some actions (e.g., lying, discriminating) are simply wrong, even if they appear beneficial in the short term.

Weaknesses of Deontological Ethics in Public Service

- **Rigidity:** Strict adherence to rules can ignore context, making it difficult to adapt to complex or urgent situations.
- **Potential conflict of duties:** Different obligations (e.g., transparency vs. confidentiality) can clash, leaving no clear resolution.
- **Disregard for outcomes:** Focusing on principle over consequence may lead to results that are harmful to the community overall.

Application to the Dilemma

A deontologist would reason that **public servants have a duty** to provide youth with supportive programs and to protect community safety. They might conclude that cutting the after-school program violates a duty to the children, regardless of potential benefits in crime reduction. Alternatively, they could argue that the duty to protect residents from crime outweighs other concerns. Ultimately, they would base their answer not on outcomes, but on which duty is most binding in this context.

This page titled [4.3: Deontological Ethics \(Duty-Based\)](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

4.4: Virtue Ethics (Character-Based)

Virtue ethics, first systematized by Aristotle, focuses less on rules or outcomes and more on the **character of the individual**. Aristotle argued that true human flourishing—what he called *eudaimonia*—is achieved by practicing virtues until they become part of one's character. Virtues are qualities such as courage, honesty, and justice, which lie in the balance between extremes.

For example, courage is the mean between cowardice (too little) and recklessness (too much). In public service, integrity might be the balance between rigid self-righteousness and careless compromise. The key insight of virtue ethics is that ethical behavior arises not from a single decision, but from the cultivation of habits over time.

This approach also emphasizes practice. Just as athletes train their bodies, public servants must continually practice ethical reasoning and action until virtues become second nature. An official who consistently demonstrates fairness in small, everyday decisions is more likely to act ethically in moments of crisis. Virtue ethics highlights that being ethical is not only about “following rules” but about **becoming the kind of person who naturally seeks the good**.

Virtue Ethics: Strengths and Weaknesses in Public Service

Virtue ethics, focuses on the **character and virtues** of individuals rather than on rules or outcomes. Instead of asking “What should I do?” virtue ethics asks “What kind of person should I be?” For public servants, this emphasizes integrity, courage, fairness, and wisdom in decision-making.

Strengths of Virtue Ethics in Public Service

- **Focuses on character development:** Encourages public servants to cultivate honesty, courage, and compassion, which guide ethical choices beyond written rules.
- **Flexibility:** Allows consideration of context, encouraging balance and practical wisdom rather than rigid adherence to rules or calculations.
- **Promotes trust:** Citizens are more likely to trust public institutions when they perceive officials as virtuous and consistent in their actions.

Weaknesses of Virtue Ethics in Public Service

- **Lack of clear guidance:** Unlike rule-based or outcome-based systems, virtue ethics can be vague in complex dilemmas, leading to subjective interpretations of “virtue.”
- **Cultural variability:** What counts as a “virtue” can differ across societies, making universal application challenging.
- **Risk of inconsistency:** Two virtuous people may reach different conclusions about the same issue.

Application to the Dilemma

A virtue ethicist would ask: *What decision reflects the character of a good public servant?* They might argue that a virtuous leader should demonstrate both prudence (practical wisdom) and justice. Redirecting staff to policing might show responsibility for community safety, but maintaining the youth program might demonstrate compassion and foresight. The decision would hinge on what choice best embodies the balanced virtues of a public servant acting for the common good.

This page titled [4.4: Virtue Ethics \(Character-Based\)](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

4.5: Communitarian Ethics (Community-Based)

Communitarian ethics shifts the focus outward—from the individual to the community. This approach emphasizes that people do not exist in isolation; they are part of families, neighborhoods, workplaces, governments, and societies that shape their duties and responsibilities. Philosopher W. D. Ross argued that our ethical obligations emerge from the relationships we hold with others.

In public service, communitarian ethics is especially powerful. Officials must balance individual rights with community responsibilities. For example, public health policies such as vaccination campaigns or mask mandates during a pandemic reflect communitarian reasoning: the duties owed to society as a whole may require some individual sacrifice.

Modern communitarian thinkers, such as Amitai Etzioni, stress the importance of balancing rights and responsibilities. Strong rights, they argue, presume strong responsibilities. For public servants, this means recognizing that decisions are not just about individual freedoms but also about maintaining the well-being of the larger community.

Communitarian Ethics: Strengths and Weaknesses in Public Service

Communitarian ethics emphasizes the role of **community, relationships, and social responsibilities** in shaping ethical decisions. Rather than focusing solely on individuals or abstract duties, it asks how actions affect the community and what obligations arise from shared membership in society.

Strengths of Communitarian Ethics in Public Service

- **Community-centered:** Prioritizes the well-being and cohesion of the community, aligning directly with the mission of public service.
- **Relational awareness:** Recognizes that duties arise from relationships—between citizens, government, and institutions.
- **Responsive to shared values:** Encourages public servants to honor cultural traditions, civic responsibilities, and the social fabric of their communities.

Weaknesses of Communitarian Ethics in Public Service

- **Potential suppression of individual rights:** Emphasizing community over the individual can marginalize minority voices or justify conformity.
- **Risk of groupthink:** May pressure public servants to follow prevailing norms rather than challenge unjust practices.
- **Varied definitions of “community”:** Different groups may define community interests in conflicting ways, complicating decision-making.

Application to the Dilemma

A communitarian would ask: *What best serves the shared values and long-term health of this community?* They might conclude that preserving the youth program strengthens relationships, prevents crime, and invests in future community stability. Alternatively, if rising crime is threatening the community’s trust and cohesion, they might support shifting staff to patrols to restore safety. The communitarian focus is less on abstract rules or calculations, and more on the needs, values, and responsibilities of the community.

This page titled [4.5: Communitarian Ethics \(Community-Based\)](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

4.6: Chapter 4 Summary

Key Terms for Chapter Four: Theories of Individual Ethics

Ethics – The study of right and wrong in human behavior; in public service, ethics provides guidance for making decisions that impact communities fairly and responsibly.

Normative Ethics (Theoretical Ethics) – A branch of philosophy focused on identifying principles and rules to determine what actions are right, wrong, just, or unjust.

Applied Ethics – The practice of applying ethical theories and principles to real-world professional settings, such as business, law, healthcare, or public service.

Individual Ethics – Ethical reasoning focused on personal decision-making and moral responsibility; in public service, this refers to how employees act in their roles of public trust.

Utilitarian Ethics (Outcome-Based) – An approach that evaluates actions by their consequences, aiming to achieve “the greatest good for the greatest number.”

Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based) – An approach emphasizing duties and principles over consequences, requiring people to be treated as ends in themselves, never merely as means.

Categorical Imperative – Immanuel Kant’s principle that moral rules should be universal and that individuals must always be respected as ends in themselves.

Virtue Ethics (Character-Based) – An approach emphasizing personal character and the cultivation of virtues such as honesty, courage, and justice to achieve human flourishing (eudaimonia).

Eudaimonia – A Greek term often translated as “flourishing” or “fulfillment,” representing the highest goal of human life in virtue ethics.

Golden Mean – Aristotle’s concept that virtues lie between extremes (e.g., courage is the mean between cowardice and recklessness).

Communitarian Ethics (Community-Based) – An approach emphasizing duties and responsibilities that arise from relationships and membership in a community.

Rights and Responsibilities Balance – The communitarian idea that individual freedoms are tied to social duties, and strong rights require strong responsibilities.

Ethical Decision-Making Frameworks – The structured approaches (utilitarian, deontological, virtue, communitarian) that help public servants evaluate moral dilemmas.

Impartiality – Treating all interests equally in ethical reasoning.

Rationality – Supporting ethical decisions with logical reasons that reasonable people would accept.

Consistency – Applying ethical standards in the same way across similar cases.

Reversibility – The principle that ethical rules should apply equally, no matter who is in the position of decision-making or power.

Chapter Four – Fill in the Blank Questions

Instructions: Fill in the blanks with the correct term or concept from this chapter.

1. The branch of philosophy that studies right and wrong in human behavior is called _____.
2. When ethical principles are applied to specific professional fields, such as government or healthcare, this is called _____ ethics.
3. Utilitarian ethics is also known as _____ ethics because it evaluates actions based on their results.
4. The guiding principle of utilitarian ethics is often summarized as “the greatest good for the _____.”
5. Immanuel Kant’s duty-based approach to ethics is known as _____ ethics.

6. Kant's principle that people should always be treated as ends in themselves, not merely as means to an end, is called the _____.
 7. Aristotle's ethics emphasized developing personal character through the cultivation of _____ such as honesty, courage, and fairness.
 8. The Greek word _____ describes human flourishing or fulfillment, the ultimate goal of virtue ethics.
 9. Communitarian ethics emphasizes the balance between individual rights and social _____.
 10. The four common principles that underlie all ethical approaches include impartiality, rationality, consistency, and _____.
-

Answer Key (Instructor Use)

1. Ethics
 2. Applied
 3. Consequentialist (or outcome-based)
 4. greatest number
 5. Deontological
 6. Categorical Imperative
 7. Virtues
 8. Eudaimonia
 9. Responsibilities
 10. Reversibility
-

This page titled [4.6: Chapter 4 Summary](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Theories of Organizational Ethics

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Differentiate individual, organizational, and societal levels of ethics and explain why the meso (organizational) level shapes day-to-day behavior in public agencies.
2. Describe core organizational values—integrity, transparency, accountability, impartiality, rule of law, public interest, competence, and stewardship—and link each to concrete practices in government settings.
3. Analyze how structures, policies, and culture (e.g., incentives, norms, reporting lines) can enable or erode ethical conduct, using real or provided cases.
4. Compare and contrast compliance-based controls (laws, audits, oversight bodies, procurement rules, whistleblower protections) with integrity-based approaches (culture, leadership, shared values), and justify a balanced strategy for a given agency.
5. Apply organizational ethics frameworks to common dilemmas—such as transparency vs. public safety, resource allocation, conflicts of interest, and political pressure—and defend a recommended course of action.
6. Evaluate the role of ethical leadership in setting tone, building accountability systems, and responding to ethical lapses; propose leadership actions that strengthen an agency's ethical climate.

[5.0: Introduction](#)

[5.1: Ethics in Public Administration \(Organizational Ethics\)](#)

[5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability](#)

[5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics](#)

[5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service](#)

[5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership](#)

[5.6: Chapter 5 Summary](#)

This page titled [5: Theories of Organizational Ethics](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

5.0: Introduction

Ethics in public service is never just about the individual. Personal integrity (ethics) provides the foundation, and public servants operate within complex organizations that shape, reinforce, and sometimes constrain their decisions. Police departments, city councils, correctional institutions, schools, and social service agencies all develop cultures, norms, and practices that influence how ethical decisions are made. These collective influences form the study of **organizational ethics**.

Organizational ethics considers how structures, leadership, and culture impact behavior. At this **meso level** of analysis, we move beyond the moral reasoning of a single individual (micro level) to examine how groups, agencies, and institutions create ethical—or unethical—environments. For example, a district attorney may personally value honesty and fairness, but if the office culture tolerates the use of evidence that may not be accurate or valid, that culture can erode their individual commitment to integrity. Over time, pressure to secure convictions can normalize practices that compromise justice. Conversely, when an office builds a strong ethical culture—reinforced by clear standards for evidence, accountability systems, and transparent leadership—attorneys are supported in making decisions that uphold due process and the public’s trust.

Theories of organizational ethics help explain why some agencies build trust while others fall into scandal or dysfunction. They highlight how leadership styles, management theories, systems of accountability, and organizational design shape behavior. By studying these frameworks, we can better understand how to strengthen organizations so that they support—not undermine—the ethical commitments of individual public servants.

This chapter will examine the evolution of organizational ethics, drawing from early management theories, classical public administration, and contemporary approaches to ethical leadership and accountability. We will also explore how organizations can foster ethical climates that align with the broader values of justice, fairness, and service to the common good.

In short, if Chapter Four asked, **“How should I act as an ethical individual?”**, Chapter Five asks **“How can organizations be structured and led so that individuals act ethically together?”** This shift from the micro to the meso level is crucial for understanding the full picture of ethics in public service.

This page titled [5.0: Introduction](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

5.1: Ethics in Public Administration (Organizational Ethics)

Public administration is the implementation of public policies by the government. Public administrators are entrusted with managing the public resources and making decisions that affect the lives of citizens. As such, they have a duty to uphold ethical principles to ensure that they act in the public interest. Ethics in public administration refers to the principles and values that guide the behavior of public administrators in carrying out their duties.

Ethics and accountability constitute the backbone of effective and responsible public service, playing a pivotal role in maintaining the trust and legitimacy that citizens place in governmental institutions. Ethical conduct ensures that public servants uphold the values of integrity, transparency, and fairness while making decisions that impact the well-being of the society they serve. Upholding a strong ethical framework not only safeguards against misuse of power and corruption but also fosters an environment where the public can confidently rely on the actions and decisions of their government. Without a commitment to ethical behavior, public service risks erosion of public trust, leading to skepticism and disengagement that can hinder effective governance.

Accountability, on the other hand, acts as a crucial check and balance in the public sector, ensuring that public servants and institutions are answerable for their actions and decisions. When public officials are held accountable for their performance and adherence to ethical standards, it enhances the efficiency of service delivery, minimizes the risk of abuse of authority, and strengthens the credibility of governmental actions. Effective accountability mechanisms, such as transparent reporting, audits, and oversight, not only promote responsible decision-making but also deter corruption and mismanagement. By publicly demonstrating their commitment to accountability, public service organizations demonstrate their dedication to serving the public interest, reinforcing the bond between citizens and their government. In essence, the synergy between ethics and accountability forms the cornerstone of trustworthy and effective public service that serves as a beacon of responsible governance for the betterment of society as a whole.

In public administration, there is a hierarchy of ethics, each carrying its own distinct array of expectations and responsibilities. First is personal morality. This is the fundamental sense of distinguishing right from wrong. It arises from an individual's history and is contingent upon factors such as parental influences, religious convictions, cultural norms, social mores, and one's life experiences.

Next is professional ethics. Public administrators increasingly acknowledge a set of professional norms and regulations that compel them to uphold specific standards. These principles are formally codified by professional bodies like the American Society for Public Administration and the International City Management Association, similar to how other professions, such as law and medicine, have their own professional codes of standards and ethics.

The third ethical area pertains to organizational ethics. Every organization fosters an ethos or culture that is made of both explicit and implicit ethical behavioral norms. Public institutions often establish numerous such norms. Formal organizational ethical standards can be derived from public laws, executive decrees, and the regulations set forth by agencies.

Finally, there is social ethics. (We will discuss the Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics in greater detail in Chapter Six). The demands of social ethics compel members of a given society to engage in actions that safeguard individuals while simultaneously advancing the collective well-being. Social ethics can take on formal aspects when integrated into the legal fabric of a society, or they can be informal manifestations, intertwined with an individual's innate moral compass.

This page titled [5.1: Ethics in Public Administration \(Organizational Ethics\)](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability

Ethical principles in public administration serve as guiding values that shape the behavior, decisions, and actions of individuals working within government and public service. These principles provide a moral framework that ensures public servants uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability. While there are variations in how these principles are formulated and expressed, several key principles are commonly recognized in the field of public administration ethics:

- **Integrity:** Integrity is at the core of ethical behavior in public administration. Public servants are expected to be honest, truthful, and transparent in their actions. They should avoid conflicts of interest and uphold the public's trust by acting in ways that align with the best interests of the citizens they serve.
- **Accountability:** Public administrators are accountable for their decisions and actions. They should take responsibility for their conduct, acknowledge mistakes, and learn from them. Accountability ensures that public servants are answerable to the public and hold themselves to high standards of performance and ethical behavior.
- **Impartiality and Fairness:** Public administrators must treat all individuals fairly and without bias. They should make decisions based on merit, equality, and without favoritism or discrimination. Upholding impartiality fosters public trust and ensures that decisions are made in the interest of the greater good rather than personal preferences.
- **Transparency:** Transparency involves openness in decision-making processes, allowing citizens to understand how and why certain choices are made. Public administrators should provide clear explanations, disclose relevant information, and engage in open communication to enhance accountability and public confidence.
- **Respect for Rule of Law:** Public administrators are bound by the rule of law and should act in accordance with legal regulations and standards. Adhering to the law ensures that decisions are consistent, just, and equitable, and it prevents abuse of power.
- **Public Interest:** The primary objective of public administration is to serve the public interest. Public servants should prioritize the well-being of citizens over personal gain or private interests, making decisions that promote the greater good and societal welfare.
- **Competence:** Public administrators are expected to possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and expertise to fulfill their roles effectively. Competence ensures that decisions are well-informed, evidence-based, and contribute positively to the delivery of public services.
- **Stewardship:** Public administrators are stewards of public resources, entrusted with managing these resources responsibly and efficiently. They should exercise prudence in resource allocation and management to maximize societal benefits.

These ethical principles collectively guide public administrators in their roles as stewards of public trust and facilitators of effective governance. By adhering to these principles, public administrators help maintain the legitimacy, transparency, and integrity of government actions, fostering a culture of ethical behavior within public service.

Ethical values and principles play a foundational and intricate role in the process of decision-making across various domains of life. In essence, they serve as the compass guiding individuals, organizations, and societies toward choices that align with notions of rightness, fairness, and integrity. In the context of decision-making, ethical values provide a framework that helps individuals evaluate options by considering the consequences, potential harm, and benefits associated with each choice. This framework allows decision-makers to assess the ethical implications of their actions, ensuring that their choices are not only legally compliant but also morally sound.

The integration of ethical values and principles into decision-making is particularly vital in the realm of public administration and governance. Public officials are entrusted with making choices that impact the well-being of citizens, and these decisions can have far-reaching consequences. Ethical considerations ensure that public administrators prioritize the collective welfare over personal interests or gains. This approach safeguards against misuse of power, corruption, and favoritism, reinforcing the public's trust in governmental actions. Ethical decision-making in the public sector upholds principles of transparency, accountability, and justice, thereby contributing to the legitimacy and effectiveness of governmental policies and programs.

Ethical values and principles also guide decision-makers through complex dilemmas where choices may conflict with one another. In such instances, ethical frameworks provide a systematic approach to navigating competing interests and finding solutions that align with the broader good. By considering factors like the well-being of stakeholders, fairness, and the long-term impact of decisions, ethical values help individuals weigh their options and make choices that resonate with their moral compass.

Incorporating ethics into decision-making fosters a culture of responsible leadership, enhances reputation, and cultivates an environment where individuals are empowered to make choices that contribute positively to the greater good.

Applied Learning: Balancing Transparency and Public Safety

Public agencies often face dilemmas where ethical principles conflict with one another. A common example arises when an agency must decide how much information to release to the public in the name of transparency, while also protecting sensitive information for the sake of public safety or national security.

Imagine a city government that discovers vulnerabilities in its water supply infrastructure. On one hand, transparency requires that leaders inform the public about potential risks so citizens can take precautions. On the other hand, releasing too much detailed information could expose the system to exploitation by bad actors, putting the community at greater risk.

This situation forces the organization to weigh competing ethical principles:

- Transparency, which builds trust and accountability.
- Stewardship and public interest prioritize safety, resource protection, and the well-being of citizens.
- Rule of law and accountability, ensuring the agency follows regulations for disclosure while also being prepared to justify its decisions.

The challenge for the organization is not simply choosing one principle over another but finding a balance that protects both public trust and public safety.

This page titled [5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics

Compliance models in organizational ethics are the systems organizations use to ensure that employees and leaders follow the law, uphold policies, and maintain ethical standards. These models are primarily **rule-based**, relying on oversight mechanisms, regulations, and enforcement to prevent misconduct. In public service, compliance models are vital for safeguarding the public trust by ensuring that no individual or agency is above accountability.

Accountability serves as the cornerstone of these models and of good governance overall. Governments and public institutions employ compliance mechanisms such as:

- **Transparency and Information Access:** Governments can enhance accountability by ensuring transparency in their operations. This involves making information, data, and decision-making processes accessible to the public. Open data initiatives, freedom of information laws, and public records help citizens and civil society organizations hold the government accountable for its actions and expenditures. The availability of information enables informed public discourse and scrutiny.
- **Independent Oversight Bodies:** Governments establish independent oversight bodies, such as ombudsman offices, audit institutions, and anti corruption commissions, to monitor and investigate government activities. These bodies act as watchdogs to ensure that public officials and institutions operate ethically and in compliance with the law. Their findings and recommendations contribute to greater accountability.
- **Whistleblower Protection:** Protecting whistleblowers who expose wrongdoing within government agencies is essential for accountability. Whistleblower protection laws shield individuals from retaliation and provide avenues for reporting misconduct. This encourages public servants to come forward with information about corruption, fraud, or unethical behavior without fear of retribution.
- **Accountability Mechanisms:** Governments can establish mechanisms for citizens to hold officials accountable, such as elections, public hearings, and participatory budgeting. Elections enable citizens to choose their representatives and government leaders based on their performance and policy promises. Public hearings provide a platform for citizens to voice concerns and provide input on government decisions, while participatory budgeting allows citizens to influence how public funds are allocated.
- **Ethical Codes and Standards:** Governments often implement codes of conduct and ethical standards for public officials. These codes outline expected behavior, including principles of integrity, honesty, and impartiality. Violations can result in disciplinary action or legal consequences, reinforcing the importance of ethical behavior in public service.
- **Accountability in Public Procurement:** Ensuring transparency and fairness in public procurement processes is crucial to prevent corruption and promote accountability. Governments can establish robust procurement regulations and oversight mechanisms to monitor contract awards and expenditures, reducing opportunities for fraud and favoritism.
- **Collaboration with Civil Society:** Engaging civil society organizations and the media as partners in promoting accountability can be highly effective. Governments can collaborate with these stakeholders to conduct investigations, share information, and advocate for ethical governance practices.
- **Performance Metrics and Evaluation:** Governments often employ performance metrics and evaluation systems to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of public programs and services. These metrics hold government agencies accountable for achieving desired outcomes and provide a basis for continuous improvement.

In essence, accountability ensures that ethical principles are upheld and provides a mechanism for addressing ethical lapses when they occur. Ethical behavior reinforces accountability by fostering a culture of responsibility, integrity, and transparency that contributes to the overall effectiveness and credibility of individuals, organizations, and institutions in the public and private sectors alike.

This page titled [5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service

In 1958 the National Election Study started polling Americans about the extent to which they trusted the federal government to “do the right thing.” Back then around 75% responded that they did trust the government to do the right thing almost always or most of the time. These numbers have fallen drastically since then. In a 2022 poll they found that just 29% of Democrats and 9% of Republicans report feeling that way. Many cite lying and corruption as the biggest problems with government, and few people characterize government officials as honest. Eight in ten Americans believe members of Congress behave unethically at least some of the time. Two-thirds feel the same way about local elected officials.

Ethical challenges in public service stem from a complex interplay of factors. Public service involves dealing with multifaceted issues that often lack straightforward solutions. Public officials must balance competing interests, make difficult decisions, and allocate limited resources, all of which can lead to ethical dilemmas.

One of the fundamental challenges in public administration is the allocation of public resources, such as budgets and personnel, to address a multitude of public needs. Deciding how to allocate these resources fairly and efficiently can be ethically complex as it involves making choices that impact the well-being of individuals and communities. To make things more complicated, public service often involves balancing the diverse and sometimes conflicting interests of various stakeholders. Policymakers and administrators must consider the needs and desires of constituents, interest groups, businesses, and the broader community. These competing interests can create ethical dilemmas, particularly when one group's gain may come at the expense of others.

The public sector is often tasked with addressing emerging issues and adapting to rapid changes in society and technology. Ethical challenges can arise when policymakers and public servants grapple with novel dilemmas that existing rules and regulations do not cover. Plus, public employees may not always receive adequate training and support in ethics and ethical decision-making. The absence of ethical education can leave individuals ill-equipped to navigate ethical challenges effectively. Further, ethical standards can vary across different organizations and contexts, leading to ambiguity in what constitutes ethical behavior. This lack of clarity can make it challenging for public servants to discern the right course of action.

Additionally, public officials operate within a political framework and are often beholden to executive branch officials for administration and the legislative branch for funding. As such, they may face political pressures to prioritize the interests of a political party, donors, or special interest groups over the broader public good. These pressures can lead to ethical compromises and conflicts of interest.

Ethical Lapses

Ethical lapses in public service can have significant accountability repercussions, often leading to legal actions, disciplinary measures, and public mistrust. The following are some examples of ethical lapses and their corresponding accountability repercussions.

1. Misuse of Public Funds

Ethical issue: Public officials or employees using public funds for personal expenses or embezzlement.

Former NFL quarterback Brett Favre is among the 47 defendants named in a complex civil lawsuit that is ongoing in Mississippi at the time of this writing, regarding the misappropriation of welfare funds. The scandal revolves around John Davis, the director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), who funneled tens of millions of dollars in block-granted Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to a nonprofit called Mississippi Community Education Center, falsely claiming it was engaging in TANF-allowable activities. However, the nonprofit was not actually fulfilling its intended goals. Instead, Nancy New, the head of the Mississippi Community Education Center, redirected funds to Davis, his associates, and his family members, while also enriching herself and her family. Davis and New have both pleaded guilty to federal and state charges.

Some notable instances of the misallocation include Davis's nephew allegedly receiving \$400,000 for creating "coding academies" despite lacking any relevant experience, Davis's brother-in-law being paid over \$600,000 for a fictitious job and a non-existent building lease, and former college football star Marcus Dupree receiving \$371,000 to purchase a lavish house under the pretense of hosting equestrian activities for underprivileged children. Additionally, the lawsuit uncovered the diversion of TANF funds to benefit sports celebrities like the DiBiase wrestling family (The Million Dollar Man), who received millions for dubious purposes, and Brett Favre, who allegedly received over \$1 million for appearances and speeches at events he did not attend. Altogether, the

state auditor's findings indicate the misappropriation of at least \$77 million from 2017 to 2020, a staggering sum compared to Mississippi's yearly TANF budget, which typically ranges from \$55 million to \$104 million in federal TANF funds.

Accountability: Legal actions, such as civil charges and fines, dismissal from public service, and damaged reputation.

2. Bribery and Corruption

Ethical issue: Accepting or offering bribes, kickbacks, or other forms of corruption in exchange for favors or influence.

In 2022 the former Directors of Public Works for the municipalities of Guayama and Cataño in Puerto Rico were sentenced to prison time for separate bribery cases. Ramon Conde-Melendez, who previously held the position of Guayama Director, was sentenced to a two-year prison term for receiving cash payments in exchange for approving invoice payments related to an asphalt company. In a parallel case, Pedro Marrero-Miranda, the former Cataño Director, was given a two-year-and-six-month prison sentence for similar misconduct. He was found guilty of accepting cash payments from individuals in return for granting asphalt removal contracts and approving bad invoices. Conde-Melendez accumulated kickback payments exceeding \$15,000, while Marrero-Miranda received sums exceeding \$40,000. They had previously admitted guilt to charges of conspiring to commit federal program bribery in May and June of 2022, respectively as well.

Accountability: Loss of public office, fines, imprisonment, damaged reputation.

3. Conflict of Interest

Ethical issue: Public officials or employees engaging in activities or decisions that benefit themselves, family members, or close associates.

In June of 2023, Boston City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo agreed to pay a \$3,000 fine as a result of his breach of Massachusetts conflict of interest laws. Arroyo acknowledged that he provided legal representation to his brother, Felix Arroyo, in a lawsuit against both his brother and the city of Boston, even after being elected as a Boston City Councilor. According to the state Ethics Commission's ruling, Arroyo assumed the role of an attorney on behalf of his brother in the civil suit prior to his assumption of office in January 2020. Subsequently, even after taking his oath of office, Arroyo continued to actively engage in the case as legal counsel, including participating in the deposition of a city of Boston employee. However, the law explicitly mandated that Arroyo cease representing his brother once he assumed his councilor role.

Accountability: Fines, possible loss of public office, damaged reputation

4. Whistleblower Retaliation

Ethical issue: Retaliating against people who are trying to uphold ethical actions.

On August 23, 2023, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) unveiled the findings of an investigation conducted by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The investigation exposed the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for unjustly penalizing an environmental scientist who had raised concerns regarding the public water system. These concerns were brought up both internally within the DEQ and with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The scientist, a dedicated employee of the DEQ for seven years, voiced these concerns over a span of six months, including the reporting of inaccuracies, flaws in data collection, and significant sanitary breaches.

5. Nepotism and Favoritism

Ethical issue: Appointing or promoting family members or friends without merit or through unfair processes.

East Lansing Michigan's City Council passed an "anti-nepotism" law during its meeting on January 25, 2022. This law's aim is to prohibit the employment of relatives of Council members and the City Manager within the City government during their respective terms. The law aligns with the city's Charter, approved by voters in 1997, which states that no relatives of the City Manager or any Council member should be hired by the City for any purpose. Mayor Pro Tem Jessy Gregg successfully introduced an amendment to the proposal, expanding the definition of "relatives" to include "domestic partners" among those prohibited from City employment under this new law.

Accountability: Investigations, job loss, public scrutiny

6. Data Privacy Violations

Ethical issue: Mishandling or unauthorized access to sensitive personal or secure data.

In June 2023 former president Donald Trump was indicted over allegations connected to the mishandling of classified documents at his Florida residence. Prosecutors contend that Trump transported roughly 300 classified documents to Mar-a-Lago following his departure from the White House. Until this happened, no former president had ever been charged by the Justice Department, much less accused of mishandling top-secret information. The indictment charges Trump with 37 felony counts — many under the Espionage Act — that accuse him of illegally storing classified documents in his bedroom, bathroom, shower and other locations at his Florida home, Mar-a-Lago, and trying to hide them from the Justice Department as investigators demanded them back. At the time of this writing the case has not been tried and Trump has pleaded not guilty.

7. Abuse of Power

Ethical issue: Using one's position or authority to intimidate, harass, or discriminate against others or to offer favors.

In 2008, Rod Blagojevich, the former governor of Illinois, was arrested by federal agents on charges of political corruption, including attempting to sell the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Barack Obama, who had been elected President of the United States. These charges were a culmination of a lengthy investigation into Blagojevich's administration, which had been under scrutiny for alleged pay-to-play politics and other illicit activities.

Blagojevich's impeachment by the Illinois House of Representatives in January 2009 was a historic event, marking the first time in Illinois's history that a sitting governor was impeached. The Illinois Senate subsequently conducted a trial, during which they found Blagojevich guilty of abuse of power and misconduct. As a result, he was removed from office on January 29, 2009, and barred from holding public office in Illinois in the future. In December 2011, Blagojevich was sentenced to 14 years in federal prison for corruption charges, including the attempt to sell the Senate seat. His conviction and prison sentence served as a significant chapter in the ongoing effort to combat political corruption in the United States.

Accountability Repercussions: Loss of office, fines, prison time, damaged reputation

8. Misrepresentation and False Statements

Ethical issue: Public officials making false statements, misleading the public, or providing inaccurate information.

Rep. George Santos, a Republican from New York, was already facing a string of allegations, starting with revelations that he falsified his resume, inventing work and education credentials. The accusations against him escalated to include a wide range of fraud-related charges, from campaign finance violations to issuing bad checks to Amish dog breeders. These allegations unfolded rapidly over several weeks. In May of 2023, Santos entered a not guilty plea to federal charges of wire fraud and money laundering in a New York federal court and was released on a \$500,000 bond.

Federal prosecutors leveled several accusations against Santos, including defrauding campaign donors by using their contributions for personal expenses such as designer clothing and paying off credit card debt. He also faces allegations of unemployment fraud for allegedly receiving \$24,000 in unemployment benefits during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, while holding a full-time job at an investment firm. Furthermore, Santos is accused of falsifying his income on documents submitted to the clerk of the House of Representatives. The case is ongoing as of the time of this writing, and the legal proceedings will determine the outcome of these serious allegations. Members of Congress have been forced to resign and jailed before, most recently Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) and Jim Traficant (D-OH).

Accountability: Public condemnation, investigations, fines, prison time

This page titled [5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership

Leadership plays a pivotal and influential role in shaping and promoting an ethical organizational culture. Leaders serve as role models, setting the tone for the behavior and values that permeate throughout an organization. Their actions, decisions, and communication directly impact how ethical considerations are perceived and practiced by employees. Here are key ways in which leadership fosters an ethical organizational culture:

1. **Setting the Example:** Leaders serve as living examples of the values and behaviors they expect from their employees. When leaders consistently demonstrate ethical behavior in their own actions and decisions, it establishes a standard that others strive to emulate. Conversely, if leaders deviate from ethical standards, it sends a message that such behavior is tolerated, undermining the organization's ethical culture.
2. **Articulating Clear Values:** Ethical leadership involves defining and articulating the organization's core values and ethical principles. Communicating these values ensures that employees are aware of what is expected of them and provides a framework for decision-making. When values are well-defined and consistently reinforced, they become an integral part of the organization's culture.
3. **Prioritizing Accountability:** Ethical leaders hold themselves accountable for their decisions and actions, promoting a culture of responsibility. When leaders take ownership of both successes and failures, it encourages employees to do the same. This accountability enhances transparency and demonstrates that ethical conduct is valued at all levels of the organization.
4. **Encouraging Open Communication:** Ethical leadership encourages open dialogue about ethical challenges and dilemmas. Leaders create an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing concerns without fear of retaliation. Such communication helps in identifying and addressing ethical issues before they escalate.
5. **Rewarding Ethical Behavior:** Ethical leaders recognize and reward employees who consistently exhibit ethical behavior. By acknowledging and celebrating ethical conduct, leaders reinforce the importance of ethical behavior as a core organizational value.
6. **Addressing Ethical Lapses:** When ethical lapses occur, ethical leaders address them promptly and fairly. They take corrective actions that are consistent with the organization's values, demonstrating that unethical behavior will not be tolerated.
7. **Providing Training and Development:** Ethical leadership supports ongoing training and development initiatives that enhance employees' understanding of ethical principles and their application in day-to-day operations. This empowers employees to make ethical decisions even in complex situations.
8. **Creating a Supportive Environment:** Ethical leaders create an environment where employees are encouraged to do the right thing, even when faced with challenges. This includes providing the necessary resources, guidance, and empowerment to navigate ethical dilemmas.

In essence, ethical leadership is instrumental in cultivating an organizational culture where ethical behavior is ingrained in every facet of operations. Through their actions and attitudes, leaders shape the moral compass of the organization, fostering an environment where employees are inspired to uphold ethical standards and contribute to the overall success and reputation of the organization.

Ethical leaders in public service possess a distinct set of characteristics that enable them to navigate complex challenges, uphold integrity, and inspire a culture of ethical behavior within their organizations. These leaders serve as exemplars of moral conduct, promoting the public interest and fostering trust in governmental actions. Here are key characteristics of ethical leaders in the realm of public service:

Ethical leadership plays a crucial role in fostering accountability at all levels of an organization. It establishes a foundation of trust, responsibility, and transparency that encourages individuals to take ownership of their actions and decisions. Here's how ethical leadership promotes accountability:

Ethical leadership encompasses a set of vital qualities that collectively define individuals who prioritize integrity, responsibility, and ethical behavior in their roles, particularly within public service. These ethical leaders consistently adhere to principles of honesty, transparency, and accountability, fostering trust among stakeholders. They prioritize the public interest over personal gain, make decisions with the greater good in mind, and promote inclusiveness and open communication.

Moreover, ethical leaders treat all individuals equitably and impartially, and they exhibit courage in standing up for ethical principles, regardless of challenges. They create a respectful and empathetic environment, where diverse perspectives are valued, and ethical decision-making is the norm. Ethical leaders lead by example, continuously seek to enhance their understanding of ethics, and empower their teams to make ethical choices, even in complex situations. They are adaptable, forward-thinking, and committed to long-term, sustainable outcomes that benefit society.

In the context of public service, ethical leadership plays a pivotal role in promoting accountability. Ethical leaders achieve this by setting clear expectations, serving as role models, encouraging open communication, facilitating self-reflection, and providing feedback and recognition based on ethical behavior. They promote transparency in decision-making, consistency in consequences, and support personal growth. Ethical leaders also offer guidance on ethical decision-making, address ethical lapses promptly, and guide their teams through challenges with resilience and ethical integrity, inspiring others to uphold accountability, even in challenging situations.

By embodying ethical values, promoting open communication, providing guidance, and consistently modeling responsible behavior, ethical leaders create an organizational culture where accountability is not imposed but rather embraced as a core value. This culture of accountability extends to all levels, empowering individuals to take responsibility for their actions and contribute to the overall success and ethical reputation of the organization.

This page titled [5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

5.6: Chapter 5 Summary

In public service, ethics is not only about the choices of individuals but also about the structures, cultures, and leadership of the organizations they work within. While personal integrity provides the foundation, organizational ethics shapes how those values are supported—or challenged—by collective norms, policies, and systems. Agencies such as police departments, schools, and city councils create environments that can either reinforce ethical behavior or erode it, depending on the culture and leadership in place.

Organizational ethics operates at the meso level of analysis, bridging the gap between individual morality (micro level) and broader societal expectations (macro level). Theories of organizational ethics explain why some organizations build public trust through integrity, transparency, and accountability, while others fall into scandal, corruption, or dysfunction. By examining management theories, compliance mechanisms, and ethical leadership practices, we see how organizations influence decision-making, resource allocation, and the treatment of both employees and citizens.

Central to organizational ethics are principles such as integrity, accountability, impartiality, transparency, respect for the rule of law, public interest, competence, and stewardship. Together, these values serve as the moral compass guiding agencies to act responsibly, fairly, and in service to the public good. Compliance models—through oversight bodies, whistleblower protections, performance evaluations, and legal codes—help ensure adherence to ethical standards. At the same time, integrity-based approaches emphasize the role of culture, values, and leadership in creating environments where ethical choices are supported, not just enforced.

Organizational ethics also requires navigating complex challenges, such as balancing transparency with public safety, distributing limited resources fairly, and managing political pressures without sacrificing integrity. When ethical lapses occur—such as corruption, misuse of funds, or abuse of power—they undermine public trust and legitimacy, often leading to serious consequences for both individuals and institutions.

Finally, ethical leadership emerges as the cornerstone of strong organizational ethics. Leaders set the tone, model behavior, and build systems of accountability that empower employees to act ethically even under pressure. By fostering open communication, rewarding integrity, and addressing misconduct swiftly, leaders ensure that ethical principles are not just abstract ideals but practical guides for everyday decision-making in public service.

In short, this chapter highlights that ethics in public service must be understood not only as an individual responsibility but also as an organizational commitment. When structures, leadership, and culture align with ethical principles, public service organizations can fulfill their duty to act in the public interest and maintain the trust of the communities they serve.

Key Terms – Chapter Five: Theories of Organizational Ethics

Organizational Ethics - The study of how organizations, institutions, and agencies influence ethical behavior and decision-making through their culture, leadership, and structures.

Meso Level Ethics - The middle level of ethical analysis, focusing on groups, agencies, and organizations rather than solely individuals (micro) or societies (macro).

Organizational Culture - The set of shared beliefs, values, and informal rules that shape how members of an organization behave and make decisions.

Ethical Climate - The general perception of “how things are done” ethically in an organization, including whether honesty, accountability, and fairness are prioritized.

Integrity in Public Administration - A principle requiring public servants and organizations to act honestly, avoid conflicts of interest, and remain consistent in upholding the public’s trust.

Transparency - Openness in communication, decision-making, and access to information that enables citizens to evaluate and hold organizations accountable.

Accountability - The duty of individuals and organizations to be answerable for their decisions, accept consequences, and correct errors.

Impartiality and Fairness - The obligation to make decisions without bias, favoritism, or discrimination, ensuring equal treatment for all.

Rule of Law - The requirement that government agencies and employees operate according to established laws, policies, and regulations, preventing arbitrary or abusive actions.

Public Interest - The standard of making decisions that prioritize the well-being of the community as a whole over private or political interests.

Professional Ethics - Formal codes and standards established by professional associations (such as ASPA or ICMA) that guide the behavior of public administrators.

Organizational Ethics Hierarchy - The framework that considers personal morality, professional ethics, organizational ethics, and societal ethics as interrelated levels of responsibility.

Stewardship - The ethical responsibility to manage public resources prudently, ensuring efficiency, equity, and sustainability.

Compliance Models - Rule-based systems of oversight, monitoring, and enforcement used by organizations to ensure legal and ethical standards are followed.

Integrity-Based Models - Approaches that emphasize cultivating values, training, and leadership practices to foster ethical behavior beyond rule compliance.

Whistleblower Protection - Policies that safeguard employees who report wrongdoing from retaliation, thereby promoting transparency and integrity.

Independent Oversight Bodies - External or semi-autonomous organizations, such as auditors, ombudsman offices, or ethics commissions, tasked with monitoring government integrity.

Ethical Lapse - An instance where individuals or organizations fail to uphold ethical standards, resulting in misconduct or breaches of trust.

Ethical Leadership - The practice of leaders setting the tone for ethical culture by modeling integrity, articulating values, promoting accountability, and addressing misconduct.

Tone at the Top - The influence of leadership behavior and attitudes on the ethical climate of an organization.

Ethical Decision-Making Frameworks - Structured approaches used by organizations to navigate dilemmas, balancing principles such as transparency, fairness, and public interest.

Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

1. Organizational ethics focuses on the _____ level of analysis, examining how agencies, groups, and institutions influence ethical behavior.
2. The set of shared values, beliefs, and norms that shape behavior within an organization is called organizational _____.
3. An organization's overall perception of "how things are done" ethically is known as its ethical _____.
4. The principle that public officials must act openly and allow citizens access to information is called _____.
5. _____ requires public servants and organizations to be answerable for their decisions and accept the consequences of their actions.
6. The ethical responsibility to manage public resources wisely and efficiently is referred to as _____.
7. Rule-based systems that ensure employees follow laws, policies, and ethical standards are known as _____ models.
8. Protection for employees who report corruption or misconduct is known as _____ protection.
9. External organizations, such as auditors or ombudsman offices, that monitor ethical behavior in government are called independent _____ bodies.
10. Leaders who model integrity, set clear values, and foster accountability practice _____ leadership.

11. The influence of leadership's behavior on the ethical tone of the entire organization is often described as the "tone at the _____."
12. In public service, decisions should always prioritize the _____ interest over private or political gain.
-

Answer Key

1. meso
 2. culture
 3. climate
 4. transparency
 5. accountability
 6. stewardship
 7. compliance
 8. whistleblower
 9. oversight
 10. ethical
 11. top
 12. public
-

This page titled [5.6: Chapter 5 Summary](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Differentiate micro, meso, and macro ethics and explain why macro ethics guides laws and policy.
2. Summarize Kohlberg's justice model and Gilligan's care model, and apply them to a public policy dilemma.
3. Weigh justice (rights/fairness) vs. care (responsibility/need) to propose a balanced recommendation.
4. Identify core societal values (e.g., accountability, equity, stewardship) and show how they are embedded in institutions.
5. Recommend one capacity-building reform (e.g., ethics training, audits, citizen engagement) and argue how it strengthens public trust and democratic legitimacy.

[6.0: Introduction](#)

[6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice](#)

[6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care](#)

[6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service](#)

[6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration](#)

[6.5: Chapter 6 Summary](#)

This page titled [6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

6.0: Introduction

In Chapter Five, we examined how organizational culture, leadership, and accountability systems shape the ethical choices of public servants. But ethics does not stop at the agency door. Public service operates within a broader societal framework, where entire communities, nations, and even global systems define what is considered right, just, or fair. This macro level—societal ethics—addresses the shared values, norms, and principles that guide collective life and governance.

Morality, in this context, can be understood as the system of beliefs societies hold about what is right and good versus what is wrong or harmful. Just as individuals and organizations develop their moral compass, societies also experience **moral development**, refining collective standards of justice, fairness, and responsibility over time. Importantly, knowing what is morally right does not always guarantee that people—or institutions—will act accordingly. A government may recognize citizens' rights to equal protection under the law, for instance, but still fail to enforce those rights consistently in practice.

It is also essential to distinguish between **moral principles** and **social conventions**. Social conventions are the rules that help society function smoothly—like driving on the right side of the road in the United States or the left in Great Britain. At first glance, these conventions seem purely practical, but they often carry moral weight. When someone violates traffic conventions, they do more than disrupt order; they risk causing injury or death. In this sense, conventions and morality intersect: following the rule is both practical and ethical, because it protects human life.

Public administrators confront similar intersections every day. Consider a city's public records policy. On one hand, the "convention" of open records promotes transparency and efficiency in governance. On the other hand, withholding critical information from the public could erode trust, harm democratic accountability, and violate the moral obligation of transparency. Thus, what begins as a procedural convention often carries deeper ethical implications.

At the societal level, ethical dilemmas are rarely isolated incidents. They are woven into the daily functions of governance, policy, and service delivery. For example, a city council debating how to allocate limited housing funds faces a question of **fairness**: Should resources go to the largest number of families, or to the most vulnerable populations with the highest needs? At the same time, the issue raises questions of **care and responsibility**: How can the city ensure that decisions account for human dignity, compassion, and long-term community well-being?

Together, these examples illustrate the two central themes of macro-level ethics:

- A **morality of justice**, which emphasizes fairness, impartiality, rights, and equality.
- A **morality of care**, which emphasizes responsibilities, compassion, and the interdependence of individuals within the community.

Public service requires attention to both. Ethical governance must balance the universal principles of justice with the practical and relational responsibilities of care. Just as organizations shape the ethics of their employees, societies shape the ethics of their institutions—and the health of democracy depends on how well those values are upheld at the macro level.

This page titled [6.0: Introduction](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice

One of the best-known explanations of how morality of justice develops was developed by Lawrence Kohlberg and his associates (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1991). Using a stage model similar to Piaget's, Kohlberg proposed six stages of moral development, grouped into three levels. Individuals experience the stages universally and in sequence as they form beliefs about justice. He named the levels simply preconventional, conventional, and (you guessed it) postconventional.

Table 1: Moral Stages according to Kohlberg

Level	Stage	Definition of What Is "Good"
Preconventional Level	Stage 1: Obedience and Punishment	Actions are good if they are rewarded and not punished.
	Stage 2: Market Exchange	Actions are good if they serve mutual benefit between the child and another person.
Conventional Level	Stage 3: Peer Opinion	Actions are good if they win approval from friends or peers.
	Stage 4: Law and Order	Actions are good if they conform to community customs or laws.
Postconventional Level	Stage 5: Social Contract	Actions are good if they follow socially accepted ways of making fair and democratic decisions.
	Stage 6: Universal Principles	Actions are good if they align with self-chosen, universal moral principles (e.g., justice, human rights).

6.1.1 Preconventional Justice: Obedience and Mutual Advantage

The *preconventional* level of moral development coincides approximately with the preschool period of life and with Piaget's preoperational period of thinking. At this age the child is still relatively self-centered and insensitive to the moral effects of actions on others. The result is a somewhat short-sighted orientation to morality. Initially (Kohlberg's Stage 1), the child adopts an **ethics of obedience and punishment**—a sort of "morality of keeping out of trouble." The rightness and wrongness of actions is determined by whether actions are rewarded or punished by authorities such as parents or teachers. If helping yourself to a cookie brings affectionate smiles from adults, then taking the cookie is considered morally "good." If it brings scolding instead, then it is morally "bad." The child does not think about why an action might be praised or scolded; in fact, says Kohlberg, he would be incapable at Stage 1 of considering the reasons even if adults offered them.

Eventually, the child learns not only to respond to positive consequences but also learns how to *produce* them by exchanging favors with others. The new ability creates Stage 2, an **ethics of market exchange**. At this stage, the morally "good" action favors not only the child but also another person directly involved. A "bad" action lacks this reciprocity. If trading the sandwich from your lunch for the cookies in your friend's lunch is mutually agreeable, then the trade is morally good; otherwise, it is not. This perspective introduces a type of fairness into the child's thinking for the first time. But it still ignores the larger context of actions—the effects on people not present or directly involved. In Stage 2, for example, it would also be considered morally "good" to pay a classmate to do another student's homework, provided that both parties regard the arrangement as being fair.

6.1.2 Conventional Justice: Conformity to Peers and Society

As children move into the school years, their lives expand to include a larger number and range of peers and (eventually) of the community as a whole. The change leads to *conventional morality*, which are beliefs based on what this larger array of people agrees on—hence Kohlberg's use of the term "conventional." At first, in Stage 3, the child's reference group are immediate peers,

so Stage 3 is sometimes called the **ethics of peer opinion**. If peers believe, for example, that it is morally good to behave politely with as many people as possible, then the child is likely to agree with the group and to regard politeness as not merely an arbitrary social convention, but a moral “good.” This approach to moral belief is a bit more stable than the approach in Stage 2, because the child is taking into account the reactions not just of one other person, but of many. But it can still lead astray if the group settles on beliefs that adults consider morally wrong, like “Shop lifting for candy bars is fun and desirable.”

Eventually, as the child becomes a youth and the social world expands even more, he or she acquires even larger numbers of peers and friends. He or she is therefore more likely to encounter disagreements about ethical issues and beliefs. Resolving the complexities lead to Stage 4, the **ethics of law and order**, in which the young person increasingly frames moral beliefs in terms of what the majority of society believes. Now, an action is morally good if it is legal or at least customarily approved by most people, including people whom the youth does not know personally. This attitude leads to an even more stable set of principles than in the previous stage, though it is still not immune from ethical mistakes. A community or society may agree, for example, that people of a certain race should be treated with deliberate disrespect, or that a factory owner is entitled to dump wastewater into a commonly shared lake or river. Developing ethical principles that reliably avoid mistakes like these requires further stages of moral development.

6.1.3 Postconventional Justice: Social Contract and Universal Principles

As a person becomes able to think abstractly (or “formally,” in Piaget’s sense), ethical beliefs shift from acceptance of what the community *does* believe to the *process* by which community beliefs are formed. The new focus constitutes Stage 5, the **ethics of the social contract**. Now, an action, belief, or practice is morally good if it has been created through fair, democratic processes that respect the rights of the people affected. Consider, for example, the laws in some areas that require motorcyclists to wear helmets. In what sense are the laws about this behavior ethical? Was it created by consulting with and gaining the consent of the relevant people? Were cyclists consulted and did they give consent? Or how about doctors or the cyclists’ families?

Reasonable, thoughtful individuals disagree about how thoroughly and fairly these *consultation* processes should be. In focusing on the processes by which the law was created, however, individuals are thinking according to Stage 5, the ethics of the social contract, regardless of the position they take about wearing helmets. In this sense, beliefs on both sides of a debate about an issue can sometimes be morally sound even if they contradict each other.

Paying attention to due process certainly seems like it should help to avoid mindless conformity to conventional moral beliefs. As an ethical strategy, though, it too can sometimes fail. The problem is that an ethics of social contract places more faith in democratic process than the process sometimes deserves, and does not pay enough attention to the content of what gets decided. In principle (and occasionally in practice), a society could decide democratically to kill off every member of a racial minority, for example, but would deciding this by due process make it ethical? The realization that ethical means can sometimes serve unethical ends leads some individuals toward Stage 6, the **ethics of self-chosen, universal principles**. At this final stage, the morally good action is based on personally held principles that apply both to the person’s immediate life as well as to the larger community and society. The universal principles may include a belief in democratic due process (Stage 5 ethics), but also other principles, such as a belief in the dignity of all human life or the sacredness of the natural environment. At Stage 6, the universal principles will guide a person’s beliefs even if the principles mean disagreeing occasionally with what is customary (Stage 4) or even with what is legal (Stage 5).

This page titled [6.1: Kohlberg’s Morality of Justice](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care

As logical as they sound, Kohlberg's stages of moral justice are not sufficient for understanding the development of moral beliefs. To see why, suppose that you have a student who asks for an extension of the deadline for an assignment. The justice orientation of Kohlberg's theory would prompt you to consider issues of whether granting the request is fair. Would the late student be able to put more effort into the assignment than other students? Would the extension place a difficult demand on you, since you would have less time to mark the assignments? These are important considerations related to the rights of students and the teacher. In addition to these, however, are considerations having to do with the responsibilities that you and the requesting student have for each other and for others. Does the student have a valid personal reason (illness, death in the family, etc.) for the assignment being late? Will the assignment lose its educational value if the student has to turn it in prematurely? These latter questions have less to do with fairness and rights, and more to do with taking care of and responsibility for students. They require a framework different from Kohlberg's to be understood fully.

One such framework has been developed by Carol Gilligan, whose ideas center on a **morality of care**, or a system of beliefs about human responsibilities, care, and consideration for others. Gilligan proposed three moral positions that represent different extents or breadth of ethical care. Unlike Kohlberg, Piaget, or Erikson, she does not claim that the positions form a strictly developmental sequence, but only that they can be ranked hierarchically according to their depth or subtlety. In this respect, her theory is "semi-developmental" in a way similar to Maslow's theory of motivation (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995).

Table 2: Positions of Moral Development according to Gilligan

Moral Position	Definition of What Is Morally Good
Position 1: Survival Orientation	Actions that focus only on meeting one's own personal needs.
Position 2: Conventional Care	Actions that prioritize the needs or preferences of others, often at the expense of one's own.
Position 3: Integrated Care	Actions that balance and coordinate one's own needs with the needs of others.

6.2.1 Position 1: Caring as Survival

The most basic kind of caring is a **survival orientation**, in which a person is concerned primarily with his or her own welfare. If a teenage girl with this ethical position is wondering whether to get an abortion, for example, she will be concerned entirely with the effects of the abortion on herself. The morally good choice will be whatever creates the least stress for herself and that disrupts her own life the least. Responsibilities to others (the baby, the father, or her family) play little or no part in her thinking.

As a moral position, a survival orientation is obviously not satisfactory for classrooms on a widespread scale. If every student only looked out for himself or herself, classroom life might become rather unpleasant! Nonetheless, there are situations in which focusing primarily on yourself is both a sign of good mental health and relevant to teachers. For a child who has been bullied at school or sexually abused at home, for example, it is both healthy and morally desirable to speak out about how bullying or abuse has affected the victim. Doing so means essentially looking out for the victim's own needs at the expense of others' needs, including the bully's or abuser's. Speaking out, in this case, requires a survival orientation and is healthy because the child is taking caring of herself.

6.2.2 Position 2: Conventional Caring

A more subtle moral position is **caring for others**, in which a person is concerned about others' happiness and welfare, and about reconciling or integrating others' needs where they conflict with each other. In considering an abortion, for example, the teenager at this position would think primarily about what other people prefer. Do the father, her parents, and/or her doctor want her to keep the child? The morally good choice becomes whatever will please others the best. This position is more demanding than Position 1, ethically and intellectually, because it requires coordinating several persons' needs and values. But it is often morally insufficient because it ignores one crucial person: the self.

6.2.3 Position 3: Integrated Caring

The most developed form of moral caring in Gilligan's model is **integrated caring**, the coordination of personal needs and values with those of others. Now the morally good choice takes account of everyone *including* yourself, not everyone *except* yourself. In considering an abortion, a woman at Position 3 would think not only about the consequences for the father, the unborn child, and her family, but also about the consequences for herself. How would bearing a child affect her own needs, values, and plans? This perspective leads to moral beliefs that are more comprehensive but ironically are also more prone to dilemmas because the widest possible range of individuals are being considered.

This page titled [6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service

The theories of moral development described earlier—such as those of Maslow, Kohlberg, and Gilligan—provide important insights into how individuals form a sense of right and wrong. However, when applied to the realm of public administration, these frameworks reveal both strengths and limitations. They emphasize how people reason about ethics, but they often overlook how emotions, organizational culture, and systemic structures shape ethical behavior in practice. Equally important, they give less attention to the question of how societies and institutions can actively foster ethical development among public servants and leaders.

For public administrators, the challenge is not only knowing what is ethical but also ensuring that decisions and actions consistently reflect those principles under real-world pressures. Ethical development in public service requires more than abstract knowledge; it requires integrating **ethical understanding, care, and action** into everyday governance. This means that administrators must be prepared to analyze ethical dilemmas rationally, respond to the needs of diverse stakeholders with compassion, and take concrete actions that uphold integrity and the public interest.

Governments and agencies, much like educational institutions, can adopt structured programs and policies that promote ethical behavior. These include **codes of conduct, training programs, ethics officers, and regular ethical audits**—mechanisms designed to move beyond simple rule-following to cultivating deeper reflection about fairness, justice, and accountability. Just as “always follow the rules” is insufficient guidance for students in a classroom, rigid adherence to procedure can fall short in public administration. For example, strict compliance with disclosure rules may technically meet transparency requirements but fail to meet the broader ethical obligation of communicating honestly with the public. True ethical governance asks administrators to reflect not only on “what the rule says” but also on “what serves the public good.”

The heart of this approach is encouraging public servants to think about broad, guiding questions such as:

- *What kind of administrator should I strive to be?*
- *How can I balance efficiency with fairness, or transparency with public safety?*
- *What responsibilities do I carry not only to my agency but also to society at large?*

These guiding questions filter down into everyday decisions—whether to disclose sensitive information, allocate limited funds, or enforce regulations equitably. Often, there is little time for prolonged deliberation, meaning responses must become **intuitive and practiced**, rooted in both rational analysis and a cultivated sense of ethical responsibility.

In this sense, ethical capacity within public organizations is comparable to “character education” in schools, but on a societal scale. Strong ethical cultures in agencies emphasize cooperation, fairness, transparency, and respect—values reinforced not just by leadership but by accountability systems and peer expectations. Instead of focusing on punishment or compliance alone, effective organizations resolve ethical conflicts through dialogue, shared responsibility, and a commitment to the public interest.

By embedding these practices across institutions—through training, leadership modeling, transparent processes, and citizen engagement—public administration can cultivate an environment where ethical understanding, care, and action are not exceptional but expected. This integration is what transforms individual moral reasoning into collective ethical governance, ensuring that public servants are not just rule-followers but trusted stewards of the public good.

Applied Public Service Example: Allocating Disaster Relief Resources

After a major hurricane devastates a coastal region, federal and state agencies must decide how to allocate disaster relief funds. The needs are overwhelming: rebuilding infrastructure, restoring clean water, providing temporary housing, and assisting small businesses. But the budget is limited, and choices will inevitably leave some groups with less support than others.

- A **morality of justice** approach emphasizes fairness, equality, and adherence to formal rules. Officials might prioritize distributing funds evenly across all counties, ensuring that each community gets a proportional share regardless of differences in damage.
- A **morality of care** approach focuses on relationships, interdependence, and human needs. Officials might instead prioritize the hardest-hit neighborhoods, especially low-income or marginalized communities that lack resources to recover on their own.

This real-world dilemma shows how societal ethics requires more than just technical expertise—it requires navigating competing moral frameworks at the systemic level. Leaders must ask not only “*What is fair according to the rules?*” but also “*Who most needs our care and support in order to recover?*” The decision will shape public trust, perceptions of justice, and the long-term resilience of the community.

This page titled [6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration

At the macro level, ethical behavior is foundational to the health of society and the legitimacy of democratic governance. Public administration does not operate in isolation—it functions as part of a broader social contract between citizens and their government. When government institutions consistently act with integrity, accountability, and fairness, they reinforce the stability of that contract and foster public trust in the system itself. Conversely, widespread corruption, favoritism, or neglect of ethical principles erodes confidence not only in specific agencies but in government as a whole, threatening democratic stability and social cohesion.

Ethical behavior in public administration at the societal level matters because it:

- **Protects the social fabric.** Macro-ethics ensures that public policies and institutions reflect shared values such as justice, equity, and human dignity. Without this grounding, laws and programs may serve narrow interests rather than the collective good, undermining social solidarity.
- **Sustains democracy.** Citizens grant power to public institutions with the expectation that it will be exercised ethically. When government upholds the principles of transparency, fairness, and rule of law, democratic legitimacy is preserved. Ethical lapses, however, can foster disillusionment, voter apathy, and even authoritarian backsliding.
- **Promotes global credibility.** Ethical governance affects how societies are perceived internationally. Nations known for corruption or human rights violations may lose economic opportunities, diplomatic influence, and global trust. Ethical public administration, by contrast, strengthens international partnerships and enhances a society's reputation.
- **Guides policy for the common good.** Macro-ethics pushes decision-makers to ask not just, “What is efficient for the agency?” but “What is just for society?” Issues like healthcare access, environmental protection, and economic equity require public servants to balance competing societal values and design policies that advance collective well-being.

As LaFollette (2007) observes, ethics is not simply about abstract reasoning but about improving how we live. At the macro level, this means creating institutions and policies that embed fairness, accountability, and inclusivity into the fabric of governance. A society that integrates ethical reasoning into its decision-making processes is more likely to protect vulnerable populations, distribute resources equitably, and respond responsibly to crises.

Ultimately, macro-ethics reminds us that public administration is not merely about managing programs or enforcing laws—it is about safeguarding the moral legitimacy of governance itself. When societies uphold ethical principles through their institutions, they create the conditions for justice, resilience, and collective flourishing.

6.4.1 Moral Values in Public Life: A Societal Lens

At the macro level, ethics is not just about the behavior of individual public servants or the policies of specific agencies—it is about how entire societies define and uphold their shared moral commitments. Societal ethics establishes the foundation upon which laws are written, policies are implemented, and public trust is built. These values function as a collective “moral compass,” guiding communities, governments, and nations as they navigate complex challenges such as justice, equity, security, and the distribution of resources.

The **Ethics & Compliance Initiative's Resource Center (2020)** identifies a wide range of values that appear across codes of ethics. For public service and governance, these values represent more than personal virtues—they are systemic commitments that reinforce legitimacy and accountability in democratic societies. When public institutions embody these values, they promote fairness, strengthen public trust, and ensure that ethical principles remain central to civic life.

Selected Moral Values and Their Definitions

The following terms provide a framework for understanding the breadth of moral values that influence public life. While not exhaustive, these concepts illustrate the kinds of commitments that guide ethical decision-making at the societal level:

- **Accountability** – Obligation or willingness to accept responsibility.
- **Adaptability** – The ability to modify behavior to fit changing situations.
- **Altruism** – Unselfish concern for the welfare of others.
- **Authenticity** – The quality or condition of being trustworthy or genuine.
- **Benevolence** – An inclination to perform kind, charitable acts.

- **Citizenship** – Exercising the duties, rights, and privileges of being a citizen.
- **Compassion** – Deep awareness of the suffering of others coupled with the wish to relieve it.
- **Equality** – The right of different groups of people to receive the same treatment.
- **Equity** – The state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair.
- **Fairness** – Consistent with rules, logic, or ethics.
- **Integrity** – Strict adherence to moral values and principles.
- **Justice** – Conformity to moral rightness in action or attitude.
- **Liberty** – The right and power to act, believe, or express oneself freely.
- **Respect** – Polite attitude shown toward someone or something considered important.
- **Responsibility** – That for which someone is answerable or accountable.
- **Stewardship** – The careful managing of resources, responsibilities, or public trust.
- **Trustworthiness** – The trait of deserving confidence.
- **Wisdom** – The ability to make good judgments based on knowledge and experience.

Wrapping Up: From Individual to Societal Ethics

Taken together, these values highlight how macro-level ethics differs from micro- and meso-level perspectives. At the individual level, ethics may guide personal decision-making. At the organizational level, ethics informs agency rules and practices. But at the **societal level**, ethics defines the character of communities and nations.

When citizens and public institutions alike uphold values such as justice, accountability, and stewardship, society becomes more equitable, sustainable, and trustworthy. These shared moral commitments shape democratic governance, influence global perceptions of legitimacy, and create the foundation for collective action in addressing today's most pressing challenges.

Societal ethics reminds us that morality is not only personal—it is public. The values we uphold together shape the kind of society we live in and pass on to future generations.

This page titled [6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

6.5: Chapter 6 Summary

In this chapter, we explored **societal or systemic ethics (macro ethics)**—the broadest level of ethical reflection in public service. Unlike micro-level ethics, which focuses on individual decision-making, or meso-level ethics, which examines organizational culture and practices, macro ethics asks how entire societies establish, refine, and uphold shared moral values. These values shape the legitimacy of governance, the health of democracy, and the trust between citizens and their institutions.

We examined how **morality functions as a societal compass**, distinguishing between moral principles (such as fairness, justice, and care) and social conventions (rules that ensure social order but may also carry moral weight, such as traffic laws). Public administrators often encounter dilemmas where conventions intersect with deeper ethical obligations, such as balancing transparency with security or distributing resources fairly during crises.

Two important frameworks guided our discussion: **Kohlberg's morality of justice** and **Gilligan's morality of care**. Kohlberg's stage model highlights the progression from rule-based morality to principles grounded in universal justice and human rights. Gilligan complements this perspective by emphasizing the role of care, compassion, and interdependence in moral reasoning. Together, they show that ethical governance requires balancing rights and fairness with responsibility and empathy.

We also considered the importance of **building ethical capacity in public institutions**. Just as individuals must practice ethical reasoning, societies must embed values of accountability, transparency, and stewardship into their policies, laws, and administrative structures. This integration ensures that public servants act not only in compliance with rules but also in service of the greater public good.

Finally, we examined a set of **shared moral values**—including integrity, justice, equity, stewardship, and trustworthiness—that act as a societal moral compass. When embedded in institutions and upheld by citizens, these values strengthen democratic governance, sustain social cohesion, and enhance global credibility.

Macro ethics reminds us that **ethics is not only personal or organizational—it is public and systemic**. The values societies choose to embrace shape laws, policies, and collective behavior, ultimately defining the character of the communities and nations we live in. By understanding and practicing societal ethics, public administrators and citizens alike contribute to a more just, resilient, and trustworthy society.

Key Terms and Concepts:

Macro Ethics (Societal Ethics) – The study of ethical principles and values at the level of communities, nations, and global systems. It examines how societies define and uphold justice, fairness, accountability, and collective responsibility.

Moral Development – The process by which individuals and societies refine their understanding of right and wrong, moving from self-centered perspectives to universal principles of justice and care.

Moral Principles – Core ethical standards such as fairness, justice, and equality that guide decision-making and behavior at the societal level.

Social Conventions – Rules and customs that regulate daily life (e.g., driving laws). While often practical, they can carry moral weight when tied to safety, order, or fairness.

Morality of Justice (Kohlberg) – An ethical perspective that emphasizes fairness, impartiality, rights, and equality, developed through progressive stages of moral reasoning.

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development – A six-stage framework for understanding how individuals develop moral reasoning, grouped into preconventional, conventional, and postconventional levels.

Morality of Care (Gilligan) – An ethical perspective that emphasizes compassion, responsibility, and the interdependence of individuals within a community.

Gilligan's Moral Positions – A framework identifying three levels of care ethics: survival orientation (self-focused), conventional care (others-focused), and integrated care (balancing self and others).

Ethical Capacity – The ability of societies and institutions to embed ethical reasoning into decision-making through training, policies, accountability systems, and cultural reinforcement.

Moral Compass – The internalized set of societal values and principles that guide public servants and institutions in making decisions that serve the public good.

Public Trust – The confidence citizens place in government institutions to act with fairness, integrity, and accountability in serving the common good.

Shared Moral Values – Societal commitments (such as integrity, equity, stewardship, justice, accountability, and respect) that act as guiding standards for public policy and governance.

Democratic Legitimacy – The perception that government actions and institutions are rightful and just because they are grounded in fairness, transparency, and the consent of the governed.

Rule of Law – The principle that all members of society, including government officials, are bound by law applied equally and fairly.

Social Contract – The implicit agreement between citizens and government that grants institutions authority in exchange for the protection of rights, fairness, and public welfare.

Universal Principles – Ethical standards, such as human dignity or human rights, that apply across cultures and societies regardless of local customs or laws.

Justice (Distributive) – The ethical principle concerned with how resources, rights, and opportunities are fairly allocated across society.

Equity vs. Equality – Equality is treating everyone the same; equity ensures individuals and groups receive resources and opportunities tailored to their circumstances to achieve fair outcomes.

Collective Responsibility – The idea that societies as a whole bear responsibility for addressing systemic issues such as poverty, discrimination, or climate change.

Global Ethics – The extension of societal ethics to the international level, emphasizing issues like human rights, environmental sustainability, and fair trade.

Character of Institutions – The ethical culture and identity of public institutions, shaped by their values, policies, and actions in serving society.

Public Interest – The overarching good of the community or society, often used as the guiding principle for policy and administrative decisions.

Civic Virtue – The habits and behaviors of citizens and public officials that support the health of democracy and the ethical functioning of society.

Systemic Ethical Dilemmas – Ethical challenges that emerge not from individual actions but from broad institutional or societal structures (e.g., racial inequality in criminal justice, access to healthcare).

Fill-in-the-Blank Questions – Chapter Six: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics

1. The _____ level of ethics focuses on entire societies, nations, and global systems rather than just individuals or organizations.
2. _____ legitimacy refers to the perception that government actions are rightful and just because they are based on fairness, transparency, and the consent of the governed.
3. The principle that all members of society, including public officials, are bound by the same laws applied fairly is called the _____.
4. A _____ is the implicit agreement between citizens and their government that grants authority in exchange for protection of rights and the promotion of public welfare.
5. According to Kohlberg's model, Stage 5 of moral development is based on _____, while Stage 6 emphasizes _____ principles.
6. The ethical principle concerned with how resources, rights, and opportunities are fairly distributed across society is called _____ justice.

7. _____ means treating everyone the same, while _____ focuses on tailoring support so that outcomes are fair for all.
 8. _____ responsibility emphasizes that entire societies share accountability for systemic issues such as poverty, inequality, or climate change.
 9. Values such as accountability, transparency, and stewardship help establish the ethical _____ of public institutions.
 10. The overarching good of the community or society, which guides policy and administrative decisions, is referred to as the _____.
-

Answer Key

- 1. Macro**
 - 2. Democratic**
 - 3. Rule of Law**
 - 4. Social Contract**
 - 5. Social Contract; Universal**
 - 6. Distributive**
 - 7. Equality; Equity**
 - 8. Collective**
 - 9. Character**
 - 10. Public Interest**
-

This page titled [6.5: Chapter 6 Summary](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

SECTION OVERVIEW

Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice

7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service

- 7.0: Introduction
- 7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct
- 7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know
- 7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing
- 7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture
- 7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice
- 7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector
- 7.7: Chapter Summary

8: Principles of Fighting Corruption

- 8.0: Introduction
- 8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy
- 8.2: Rule of Law
- 8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention
- 8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control
- 8.5: Summary

9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics

- 9.0: Introduction
- 9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability
- 9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience
- 9.3: Transparency in Government
- 9.4: Active Community Engagement
- 9.5: Summary

10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View

- 10.0: Introduction
- 10.1: Introduction to Policy Making
- 10.2: Policy Making and Development
- 10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development
- 10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development
- 10.5: Conclusion

This page titled Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Define ethics and accountability in public administration and explain how they sustain public trust.
2. Differentiate the hierarchy of ethics—personal, professional, organizational, societal—and apply it to real administrative decisions.
3. Use core public-service principles and agency codes of ethics to analyze common dilemmas (e.g., conflicts of interest, procurement, use of resources).
4. Explain how transparency tools (e.g., open meetings/records, Government in the Sunshine Act) deter misconduct and strengthen legitimacy.
5. Identify frequent ethical risks and match them to appropriate accountability/oversight responses (recusal, reporting, audits, whistleblower protections).

[7.0: Introduction](#)

[7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct](#)

[7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know](#)

[7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing](#)

[7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture](#)

[7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice](#)

[7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector](#)

[7.7: Chapter Summary](#)

This page titled [7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

7.0: Introduction

In the last unit, we explored *why* people and institutions should act ethically—tracing reasoning from individual duties and virtues (micro) to organizational culture and compliance (meso), to the societal values that anchor democratic legitimacy (macro). This chapter turns from theory to practice. What happens when those levels collide in a real case, under real pressure, with real consequences?

This page titled 7.0: Introduction is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct

In the mid-1990s, Richard Nuccio—a Latin America scholar serving as a special adviser to President Bill Clinton—faced exactly that collision. While at the State Department, Nuccio worked on efforts to help Guatemala end its civil war. During congressional inquiries into the murders of U.S. citizen Michael DeVine and the Guatemalan husband of U.S. citizen Jennifer Harbury, Nuccio initially told House Intelligence Committee members that the U.S. government had little knowledge of the killings. Later, he discovered a highly classified document indicating that a CIA asset in Guatemala was implicated.

Nuccio now had an ethical dilemma that spanned all three levels: personally (truthfulness and duty), organizationally (reporting lines, procedures, and loyalty), and societally (accountability to Congress and the public). He chose to inform Rep. Robert Torricelli, a member of the House Intelligence Committee. The disclosure prompted an investigation; two CIA employees were dismissed, and a pattern of concealment came to light. Yet the administration deemed Nuccio's action a breach of protocol for bypassing superiors. His security clearance was revoked, his White House role ended, and his public service career effectively closed.

The Nuccio case is our entry point into **Applied Ethics in Public Service**: how to navigate conflicts among rules, roles, and the public interest when there is no frictionless choice. In the pages that follow, we use cases like this to examine codes of ethics, reporting channels, whistleblower protections, and decision frameworks that help public servants act with integrity when the “right” path is murky.

This page titled 7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know

Public administration is the implementation of public policies by the government. Public administrators are entrusted with managing public resources and making decisions that affect the lives of citizens. As such, they have a duty to uphold ethical principles to ensure that they act in the public interest. **Ethics in public administration** refers to the principles and values that guide the behavior of public administrators in carrying out their duties.

Ethics and accountability constitute the backbone of effective and responsible public service, playing a pivotal role in maintaining the trust and legitimacy that citizens place in governmental institutions. Ethical conduct ensures that public servants uphold the values of **integrity, transparency, and fairness** while making decisions that impact the well-being of the society they serve. Upholding a strong ethical framework not only safeguards against misuse of power and corruption but also fosters an environment where the public can confidently rely on the actions and decisions of their government. Without a commitment to ethical behavior, public service risks erosion of public trust, leading to skepticism and disengagement that can hinder effective governance.

Accountability, in turn, acts as a crucial check and balance in the public sector, ensuring that public servants and institutions are answerable for their actions and decisions. When public officials are held accountable for their performance and adherence to ethical standards, it enhances the efficiency of service delivery, minimizes the risk of abuse of authority, and strengthens the credibility of governmental actions. Effective accountability mechanisms—such as **transparent reporting, audits, oversight, and open records**—not only promote responsible decision-making but also deter corruption and mismanagement. By publicly demonstrating their commitment to accountability, public service organizations show their dedication to serving the public interest, reinforcing the bond between citizens and their government. In essence, the synergy between **ethics and accountability** forms the cornerstone of trustworthy and effective public service that supports responsible governance for the betterment of society as a whole.

In public administration, there is a **hierarchy of ethics**, each carrying its own distinct array of expectations and responsibilities. This aligns with the levels introduced in earlier chapters:

- **Personal morality (micro).** This is the fundamental sense of distinguishing right from wrong. It arises from an individual's history and is contingent upon factors such as parental influences, religious convictions, cultural norms, social mores, and one's life experiences.
- **Professional ethics.** Public administrators increasingly acknowledge a set of professional norms and regulations that compel them to uphold specific standards. These principles are formally codified by public-service bodies such as the **American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)** and the **International City/County Management Association (ICMA)**—similar to how law and medicine have their own professional codes. (These codes commonly include commitments to serve the public interest, uphold the law, avoid conflicts of interest, and promote transparency and equity.)
- **Organizational ethics (meso).** Every organization fosters an ethos or culture that comprises both explicit and implicit behavioral norms. Public institutions establish formal standards through **laws, executive directives, administrative rules, and internal policies**, while leadership, incentives, training, and peer expectations shape day-to-day ethical climate.
- **Social (societal) ethics (macro).** The demands of social ethics compel members of a society to engage in actions that safeguard individuals while advancing the collective well-being. Societal ethics may be formalized in **constitutions, statutes, and civil rights protections**, and they also appear informally in shared civic values and expectations that define legitimate public power.

Ethical principles in public administration serve as guiding values that shape the behavior, decisions, and actions of individuals working within government and public service. These principles provide a moral framework that ensures public servants uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability. While there are variations in how these principles are formulated and expressed, several key principles are commonly recognized:

- **Integrity:** Integrity is at the core of ethical behavior in public administration. Public servants are expected to be honest, truthful, and transparent in their actions. They should avoid conflicts of interest and uphold the public's trust by acting in ways that align with the best interests of the citizens they serve.
- **Accountability:** Public administrators are accountable for their decisions and actions. They should take responsibility for their conduct, acknowledge mistakes, and learn from them. Accountability ensures that public servants are answerable to the public and hold themselves to high standards of performance and ethical behavior.

- **Impartiality and Fairness:** Public administrators must treat all individuals fairly and without bias. They should make decisions based on merit and equality, without favoritism or discrimination. Upholding impartiality fosters public trust and ensures that decisions serve the greater good.
- **Transparency:** Transparency involves openness in decision-making processes, allowing citizens to understand how and why choices are made. Public administrators should provide clear explanations, disclose relevant information, and engage in open communication to enhance accountability and confidence.
- **Respect for Rule of Law:** Public administrators are bound by the rule of law and should act in accordance with legal regulations and standards. Adhering to the law ensures decisions are consistent, just, and equitable, and it prevents abuse of power.
- **Public Interest:** The primary objective of public administration is to serve the public interest. Public servants should prioritize the well-being of citizens over personal or private interests, making decisions that promote the greater good and societal welfare.
- **Competence:** Public administrators are expected to possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and expertise to fulfill their roles effectively. Competence ensures decisions are **evidence-based** and contribute positively to public services.
- **Stewardship:** Public administrators are stewards of public resources, entrusted with managing them responsibly and efficiently. They should exercise prudence in allocation and management to **maximize societal benefit**.

These ethical principles collectively guide public administrators in their roles as **stewards of public trust** and facilitators of effective governance. By adhering to these principles, public administrators help maintain the legitimacy, transparency, and integrity of government actions, fostering a culture of ethical behavior within public service.

Ethical values and principles play a foundational role in decision-making across public administration. They serve as a **compass** guiding individuals, organizations, and societies toward choices that align with rightness, fairness, and integrity. In practice, ethical values help decision-makers evaluate options by considering **consequences, potential harms, long-term impacts, equity, and rights**—ensuring choices are not only legally compliant but also morally sound.

Integrating ethics into public decisions is especially vital because public officials are entrusted with choices that affect community well-being and democratic legitimacy. Ethical considerations help prioritize the **collective welfare** over personal or partisan interests; they safeguard against misuse of power, corruption, and favoritism; and they reinforce **transparency, accountability, and justice** in policy design and service delivery.

Ethical values and principles also guide decision-makers through **hard trade-offs** where legitimate values conflict—e.g., transparency vs. privacy, equity vs. uniformity, speed vs. due process. Ethical frameworks support systematic analysis of **stakeholders, fairness, rights, and long-term effects**, helping leaders articulate reasons, document rationales, and accept accountability. Embedding ethics in routine practice fosters a culture of **responsible leadership**, builds public trust, and empowers officials to make choices that advance the **greater good**.

This page titled 7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing

Building on the chapter's focus on ethics and accountability in practice, **transparency** is the way those principles become visible to the public. As Justice Louis Brandeis famously observed, “sunlight is the best of disinfectants”—openness, accessibility, and public scrutiny deter corruption, abuse of power, and unnecessary secrecy.

The **Government in the Sunshine Act** is a U.S. federal law (1976) that requires meetings of **multi-member federal agencies, boards, and commissions** to be conducted openly and for records of those meetings to be accessible to the public. The Act is designed to uphold democratic principles by allowing citizens to witness government decision-making. By keeping deliberations out of closed rooms and providing notice, public access, and minutes or transcripts, the Act bolsters trust and confidence in government actions.

Brandeis first articulated the “sunlight” idea in a 1913 *Harper's Weekly* article (“What Publicity Can Do”), arguing that if “the broad light of day” shines on officials' actions, wrongdoing is less likely to thrive. Transparency functions as a deterrent precisely because actors know their choices are open to scrutiny.

Transparency also strengthens **accountability**. When citizens can see how decisions are made—and later review the records—they can identify and challenge corruption, mismanagement, or unethical behavior. Access to information enables informed public discourse and improves the quality of both civic participation and policy choices.

It's important to distinguish **open meetings** from **public records**. The Sunshine Act governs federal open meetings; access to federal documents is provided primarily through the **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**, while states and localities have their own open-meeting and public-records laws that mirror these commitments. Together, these tools make government processes observable and its information reviewable.

Transparency is robust but not absolute. Most open-meeting and records laws include **narrow exemptions**—for example, matters involving national security, active law-enforcement investigations, personnel issues, or litigation strategy. Ethically, administrators should apply exemptions sparingly, record the rationale, and disclose the maximum information permitted by law.

In sum, the Sunshine framework translates the ethical commitments discussed earlier—integrity, fairness, accountability—into day-to-day practice. By making meetings open and records accessible, governments invite scrutiny, foster trust, and ensure that public business is conducted in public.

7.3 Ethical Challenges in Public Service

Public trust frames the environment in which public servants operate. In 1958, the National Election Study began asking Americans whether they trusted the federal government to “do the right thing.” Back then, about 75% said they trusted the government almost always or most of the time. Those numbers have fallen drastically. In a 2022 poll, just 29% of Democrats and 9% of Republicans reported feeling that way. Many cite lying and corruption as the biggest problems in government, and few people characterize government officials as honest. Eight in ten Americans believe members of Congress behave unethically at least some of the time; two-thirds feel the same about local elected officials.

Ethical challenges in public service stem from a complex interplay of factors. Public service routinely involves multifaceted issues without straightforward solutions. Officials must balance competing interests, make difficult decisions, and allocate limited resources—conditions that can generate ethical dilemmas.

One fundamental challenge is the allocation of public resources (budgets, personnel, time) to address a multitude of needs. Deciding how to allocate these resources fairly and efficiently is ethically complex because choices directly affect the well-being of individuals and communities. To make matters more complicated, public service often requires balancing the diverse—and sometimes conflicting—interests of constituents, interest groups, businesses, and the broader community. These competing interests can create ethical dilemmas, particularly when one group's gain may come at the expense of others.

The public sector must also address emerging issues and adapt to rapid changes in society and technology. Ethical challenges arise when policymakers and public servants confront novel dilemmas that existing rules or regulations do not cover. Public employees may not always receive adequate training and support in ethics and ethical decision-making; the absence of robust ethics education

can leave individuals ill-equipped to navigate complex situations. Ethical standards can also vary across organizations and contexts, leading to ambiguity about what constitutes ethical behavior and making “the right course of action” less clear.

Additionally, public officials operate within political frameworks—dependent on the executive branch for administration and the legislative branch for funding. They may face political pressures to prioritize party interests, donors, or special interest groups over the broader public good. These pressures can lead to ethical compromises and conflicts of interest.

Ethical lapses in public service can have significant accountability repercussions, including legal actions, disciplinary measures, and public mistrust. The following examples illustrate the range of issues and typical consequences.

1) Misuse of Public Funds

Ethical issue: Public officials or employees using public funds for personal expenses or embezzlement.

Former NFL quarterback Brett Favre is among the 47 defendants named in a complex civil lawsuit that is ongoing in Mississippi at the time of this writing, regarding the misappropriation of welfare funds. The scandal revolves around John Davis, the director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), who funneled tens of millions of dollars in block-granted Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to a nonprofit called Mississippi Community Education Center, falsely claiming it was engaging in TANF-allowable activities. However, the nonprofit was not actually fulfilling its intended goals. Instead, Nancy New, the head of the Mississippi Community Education Center, redirected funds to Davis, his associates, and his family members, while also enriching herself and her family. Davis and New have both pleaded guilty to federal and state charges.

Some notable instances of the misallocation include Davis’s nephew allegedly receiving \$400,000 for creating “coding academies” despite lacking any relevant experience; Davis’s brother-in-law being paid over \$600,000 for a fictitious job and a non-existent building lease; and former college football star Marcus Dupree receiving \$371,000 to purchase a lavish house under the pretense of hosting equestrian activities for underprivileged children. Additionally, the lawsuit uncovered the diversion of TANF funds to benefit sports celebrities like the DiBiase wrestling family (“The Million Dollar Man”), who received millions for dubious purposes, and Brett Favre, who allegedly received over \$1 million for appearances and speeches at events he did not attend. Altogether, the state auditor’s findings indicate the misappropriation of at least \$77 million from 2017 to 2020, a staggering sum compared to Mississippi’s yearly TANF budget, which typically ranges from \$55 million to \$104 million in federal TANF funds.

Accountability: Legal actions (civil charges, criminal charges where applicable), restitution, dismissal from public service, and reputational damage.

2) Bribery and Corruption

Ethical issue: Accepting or offering bribes, kickbacks, or other forms of corruption in exchange for favors or influence.

In 2022, the former Directors of Public Works for the municipalities of Guayama and Cataño in Puerto Rico were sentenced to prison time for separate bribery cases. Ramón Conde-Meléndez, formerly Guayama’s Director, received a two-year prison term for cash payments in exchange for approving invoice payments related to an asphalt company. In a parallel case, Pedro Marrero-Miranda, the former Cataño Director, was sentenced to two years and six months for accepting cash payments in return for granting asphalt removal contracts and approving bad invoices. Conde-Meléndez accumulated kickbacks exceeding \$15,000, while Marrero-Miranda received sums exceeding \$40,000. Both previously admitted guilt to conspiring to commit federal program bribery.

Accountability: Loss of office, fines, imprisonment, and reputational harm.

3) Conflict of Interest

Ethical issue: Public officials or employees engaging in activities or decisions that benefit themselves, family members, or close associates.

In June 2023, Boston City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo agreed to pay a \$3,000 fine for violating Massachusetts conflict-of-interest laws. Arroyo acknowledged that he provided legal representation to his brother, Felix Arroyo, in a lawsuit against both his brother and the City of Boston—even after assuming office as a councilor. According to the state Ethics Commission, he participated in the case as counsel (including a deposition of a city employee) after taking office, despite a legal requirement to cease representation upon assuming the council seat.

Accountability: Fines, potential loss of public office, and reputational damage.

4) Whistleblower Retaliation

Ethical issue: Retaliating against people who are trying to uphold ethical actions.

On August 23, 2023, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) released findings from an OSHA investigation that determined a state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) unjustly penalized an environmental scientist who raised concerns about the public water system, both internally and with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Over six months, the scientist reported inaccuracies, flaws in data collection, and serious sanitary breaches. After the scientist contacted the EPA, the DEQ instructed the employee to stop communicating and issued a written reprimand. OSHA ordered removal of the reprimand from the employee's record. (Both parties have 30 days from receipt of the order to object or request a hearing with the Office of Administrative Law Judges.)

Accountability: Legal protections for whistleblowers, reversal of adverse actions, discipline for retaliators, and potential damages.

5) Nepotism and Favoritism

Ethical issue: Appointing or promoting family members or friends without merit or through unfair processes.

On January 25, 2022, East Lansing, Michigan's City Council passed an "anti-nepotism" law prohibiting employment of relatives of council members and the city manager during their terms. The policy aligns with the city charter and—by amendment—expands "relative" to include domestic partners.

Accountability: Investigations, job loss, and public scrutiny; policy reform to prevent recurrence.

6) Data Privacy Violations

Ethical issue: Mishandling or unauthorized access to sensitive personal or secure data.

In June 2023, former President Donald Trump was indicted over allegations connected to the mishandling of classified documents at his Florida residence. Prosecutors contend that approximately 300 classified documents were taken to Mar-a-Lago after he left office and that investigators were misled when requesting their return. The indictment charges include counts under the Espionage Act. At the time of this writing, the case has not been tried and the former president has pleaded not guilty.

Accountability: If proven, potential criminal penalties (fines, imprisonment); regardless, intense public and institutional scrutiny.

7) Abuse of Power

Ethical issue: Using one's position to intimidate, harass, discriminate, or secure personal gain; or to trade official acts.

In 2008, former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich was arrested on federal corruption charges, including attempting to sell the U.S. Senate seat vacated by President-elect Barack Obama. Following impeachment by the Illinois House and conviction by the Illinois Senate for abuse of power and misconduct, Blagojevich was removed from office and barred from future state office. In 2011, he was sentenced to 14 years in federal prison.

Accountability repercussions: Loss of office, fines, imprisonment, and lasting reputational damage.

8) Misrepresentation and False Statements

Ethical issue: Public officials making false statements, misleading the public, or providing inaccurate information.

Representative George Santos (NY) faced multiple federal charges in 2023, including wire fraud and money laundering, after earlier revelations that he misrepresented parts of his résumé. Prosecutors allege he diverted donor funds to personal expenses, claimed unemployment benefits while employed, and falsified income on House filings. Santos pleaded not guilty; the case was ongoing at the time of this writing. (Members of Congress have previously resigned or faced prison in unrelated cases, e.g., Jeff Fortenberry and Jim Traficant.)

Accountability: Public condemnation, investigations, fines, and potential prison time if convicted.

This page titled 7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture

Leadership plays a pivotal and influential role in shaping and promoting an ethical organizational culture. Leaders serve as role models, setting the tone for the behavior and values that permeate throughout an organization. Their actions, decisions, and communication directly impact how ethical considerations are perceived and practiced by employees. Here are key ways in which leadership fosters an ethical organizational culture:

1. **Setting the Example:** Leaders serve as living examples of the values and behaviors they expect from their employees. When leaders consistently demonstrate ethical behavior in their own actions and decisions, it establishes a standard that others strive to emulate. Conversely, if leaders deviate from ethical standards, it sends a message that such behavior is tolerated, undermining the organization's ethical culture.
2. **Articulating Clear Values:** Ethical leadership involves defining and articulating the organization's core values and ethical principles. Communicating these values ensures that employees are aware of what is expected of them and provides a framework for decision-making. When values are well-defined and consistently reinforced, they become an integral part of the organization's culture.
3. **Prioritizing Accountability:** Ethical leaders hold themselves accountable for their decisions and actions, promoting a culture of responsibility. When leaders take ownership of both successes and failures, it encourages employees to do the same. This accountability enhances transparency and demonstrates that ethical conduct is valued at all levels of the organization.
4. **Encouraging Open Communication:** Ethical leadership encourages open dialogue about ethical challenges and dilemmas. Leaders create an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing concerns without fear of retaliation. Such communication helps in identifying and addressing ethical issues before they escalate.
5. **Rewarding Ethical Behavior:** Ethical leaders recognize and reward employees who consistently exhibit ethical behavior. By acknowledging and celebrating ethical conduct, leaders reinforce the importance of ethical behavior as a core organizational value.
6. **Addressing Ethical Lapses:** When ethical lapses occur, ethical leaders address them promptly and fairly. They take corrective actions that are consistent with the organization's values, demonstrating that unethical behavior will not be tolerated.
7. **Providing Training and Development:** Ethical leadership supports ongoing training and development initiatives that enhance employees' understanding of ethical principles and their application in day-to-day operations. This empowers employees to make ethical decisions even in complex situations.
8. **Creating a Supportive Environment:** Ethical leaders create an environment where employees are encouraged to do the right thing, even when faced with challenges. This includes providing the necessary resources, guidance, and empowerment to navigate ethical dilemmas.

In essence, ethical leadership is instrumental in cultivating an organizational culture where ethical behavior is ingrained in every facet of operations. Through their actions and attitudes, leaders shape the moral compass of the organization, fostering an environment where employees are inspired to uphold ethical standards and contribute to the overall success and reputation of the organization.

Ethical leaders in public service possess a distinct set of characteristics that enable them to navigate complex challenges, uphold integrity, and inspire a culture of ethical behavior within their organizations. These leaders serve as exemplars of moral conduct, promoting the public interest and fostering trust in governmental actions. Here are key characteristics of ethical leaders in the realm of public service:

Ethical leadership plays a crucial role in fostering accountability at all levels of an organization. It establishes a foundation of trust, responsibility, and transparency that encourages individuals to take ownership of their actions and decisions. Here's how ethical leadership promotes accountability:

Ethical leadership encompasses a set of vital qualities that collectively define individuals who prioritize integrity, responsibility, and ethical behavior in their roles, particularly within public service. These ethical leaders consistently adhere to principles of honesty, transparency, and accountability, fostering trust among stakeholders. They prioritize the public interest over personal gain, make decisions with the greater good in mind, and promote inclusiveness and open communication.

Moreover, ethical leaders treat all individuals equitably and impartially, and they exhibit courage in standing up for ethical principles, regardless of challenges. They create a respectful and empathetic environment, where diverse perspectives are valued, and ethical decision-making is the norm. Ethical leaders lead by example, continuously seek to enhance their understanding of ethics, and empower their teams to make ethical choices, even in complex situations. They are adaptable, forward-thinking, and committed to long-term, sustainable outcomes that benefit society.

In the context of public service, ethical leadership plays a pivotal role in promoting accountability. Ethical leaders achieve this by setting clear expectations, serving as role models, encouraging open communication, facilitating self-reflection, and providing feedback and recognition based on ethical behavior. They promote transparency in decision-making, consistency in consequences, and support personal growth. Ethical leaders also offer guidance on ethical decision-making, address ethical lapses promptly, and guide their teams through challenges with resilience and ethical integrity, inspiring others to uphold accountability, even in challenging situations.

By embodying ethical values, promoting open communication, providing guidance, and consistently modeling responsible behavior, ethical leaders create an organizational culture where accountability is not imposed but rather embraced as a core value. This culture of accountability extends to all levels, empowering individuals to take responsibility for their actions and contribute to the overall success and ethical reputation of the organization.

This page titled 7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice

Formalized ethical codes and standards in public administration hold significant importance in promoting integrity, accountability, and responsible governance within governmental organizations. These codes serve as guiding principles that outline the expected behavior, values, and conduct of public servants. Here's why they are significant:

- **Clarifying Expectations:** Ethical codes and standards provide clear guidelines on how public servants are expected to behave and make decisions. They help define what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable conduct, leaving no room for ambiguity. This clarity ensures that individuals understand the ethical expectations placed upon them.
- **Upholding Integrity:** Codes and standards reinforce the importance of integrity in public service. They establish a strong ethical foundation, ensuring that public servants prioritize honesty, fairness, and transparency in their actions and decisions.
- **Building Public Trust:** Formal ethical codes enhance the public's confidence in government institutions. When citizens know that public servants are held to high ethical standards, they are more likely to trust in the integrity of government actions and decisions.
- **Preventing Corruption and Misconduct:** Ethical codes act as a preventive measure against corruption, fraud, and other forms of misconduct. They set clear boundaries and deter individuals from engaging in unethical behavior by outlining the potential consequences.
- **Guiding Decision-Making:** Ethical codes serve as decision-making tools. When faced with complex choices, public servants can refer to these codes to ensure that their decisions align with ethical principles and the best interests of the public.
- **Encouraging Accountability:** Ethical codes promote accountability by providing a framework against which the actions of public servants can be measured. When individuals know that their behavior will be evaluated based on established standards, they are more likely to take responsibility for their actions.
- **Providing Consistency:** Ethical codes ensure consistency in ethical behavior across different departments and levels of government. This uniformity helps establish a shared ethical culture and prevents variations in ethical standards.
- **Supporting Ethical Decision-Making:** Ethical codes offer guidance in navigating ethical dilemmas. They help public servants analyze complex situations and make choices that reflect ethical principles, even in challenging circumstances.
- **Educating and Training:** Ethical codes provide a foundation for educating and training public servants about ethical behavior. Workshops, training sessions, and discussions on the codes help individuals understand their roles in upholding ethical standards.
- **Enhancing Reputation:** Adhering to formalized ethical codes enhances the reputation of public service organizations. Demonstrating a commitment to ethical conduct reinforces the image of responsible governance and attracts individuals who value ethical principles to join the workforce.

Formalized ethical codes and standards play a vital role in public administration by providing a clear framework for ethical behavior, preventing misconduct, guiding decision-making, and promoting transparency and accountability. By upholding these standards, public servants contribute to an ethical and trustworthy governance environment that serves the public interest.

Enforcing ethical codes of conduct can be a complex and challenging endeavor, especially in dynamic and diverse environments such as public administration. One of the challenges is subjectivity. Ethical codes often involve general principles that can be interpreted differently based on individual perspectives. What one person considers ethical, another might view differently, leading to challenges in defining a universal interpretation. Further, ethical dilemmas often present gray areas where it's unclear whether a specific action is ethical or not. Enforcing codes in these situations can be difficult as there may not be a clear-cut answer.

The effective implementation and adherence to ethical codes within public administration face several challenges rooted in cultural diversity, awareness, external pressures, power dynamics, and resource limitations. One significant hurdle lies in the recognition that cultural differences can lead to varying ethical standards, potentially causing conflicts between a universal code of conduct and cultural norms. Additionally, a lack of awareness among employees regarding ethical codes and their existence can unintentionally result in violations. External pressures, such as performance targets or incentives, may sometimes push individuals to prioritize outcomes over ethical considerations, creating ethical dilemmas.

Power dynamics within organizations can deter individuals from reporting ethical violations, as fear of retaliation or career consequences can inhibit whistleblowing. Inadequate resources allocated for training, communication, monitoring, and addressing violations can hinder the effective implementation of ethical codes. Moreover, changing environments marked by technological

advancements, economic shifts, or societal changes can introduce new ethical challenges that existing codes may not explicitly address. Ensuring consistent enforcement across all organizational levels can be challenging and may lead to perceptions of favoritism or unequal treatment.

Ethical complexity further emerges as ethical issues intersect with legal considerations, requiring careful navigation of the intricate relationship between ethics and legality. Resistance to change, especially from employees accustomed to older norms or practices, can pose obstacles when implementing new or revised ethical codes. Moreover, organizations may lack mechanisms to hold individuals accountable for ethical violations, thereby weakening the overall enforcement of ethical standards. Protecting whistleblowers who report ethical breaches is critical, and inadequate protection measures can discourage individuals from coming forward with their concerns. Lastly, evolving ethical norms and societal expectations necessitate periodic updates to ethical codes to remain relevant, with the challenge lying in ensuring that all stakeholders are informed of these changes.

To address these challenges, organizations need a comprehensive strategy that includes regular training, clear communication of codes, mechanisms for reporting violations, consistent enforcement, and a commitment from leadership to lead by example. Flexibility in responding to unique situations is also important to ensure that ethical codes remain effective in guiding behavior and promoting a culture of integrity.

Fourteen Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees

(Executive Order 12674)

1. Public service is a public trust; employees must place loyalty to the Constitution, the laws, and ethical principles above private gain.
2. Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty.
3. Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using nonpublic Government information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.
4. Employee shall not, except as permitted by the Standards of Ethical Conduct, solicit or accept any gift or other item of monetary value from any person or entity seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by the employee's agency, or whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's duties.
5. Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.
6. Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.
7. Employees shall not use public office for private gain.
8. Employees shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.
9. Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.
10. Employees shall not engage in outside employment or activities - including seeking or negotiating for employment - that conflict with official Government duties and responsibilities.
11. Employees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities.
12. Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all financial obligations, especially those imposed by law, such as Federal, state, or local taxes.
13. Employees shall adhere to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.
14. Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or the ethical standards set forth in the Standards of Ethical Conduct. Whether particular circumstances create an appearance that the law or these standards have been violated shall be determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts.

These principles form the basis for the standards of ethical conduct regulation (5 C.F.R. part 2635). A violation of these rules could result in disciplinary action or, for certain offenses, prosecution under related criminal statutes on conflicts of interest.

This page titled 7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector

Public reporting and audits are vital components in promoting transparency and accountability within organizations. Public reporting involves the timely and accessible disclosure of information about an organization's activities, finances, performance, and decision-making processes. This transparency is essential for building trust among stakeholders, including citizens, investors, policymakers, and oversight bodies. Public reports provide readily available information, enabling individuals to assess organizational performance and hold them accountable for meeting objectives while adhering to ethical and legal standards. Moreover, public reporting acts as a deterrent to unethical behavior by creating a culture of accountability.

Audits, on the other hand, offer an objective assessment of an organization's financial health, operational efficiency, and compliance with laws and regulations. These systematic and independent reviews serve as powerful tools for detecting fraud, embezzlement, and financial misconduct, providing a safeguard against unethical behavior. Auditors also play a crucial role in ensuring legal compliance, which is essential for an organization's reputation and avoiding legal consequences.

The synergy between public reporting and audits is evident in their verification of information accuracy and their combined impact on credibility. Stakeholders are more likely to trust information that has been both disclosed and independently verified. Additionally, the knowledge that financial statements and operations will undergo audits encourages organizations to maintain accuracy and truthfulness in their public reporting.

Furthermore, audits often lead to recommendations for improvement, which can enhance an organization's public reporting practices. This continuous improvement process ensures that ethical standards are upheld, and operations are conducted transparently and accountably.

In the modern era of public service, technology and data-driven accountability tools offer both opportunities and challenges. These tools leverage data and digital technologies to enhance transparency, improve efficiency, and strengthen accountability mechanisms. However, they also raise concerns about data security, privacy, and the need for effective governance to ensure responsible use.

Overall, the combination of public reporting and audits creates a robust framework for organizations to maintain ethical standards, fulfill their obligations, and maintain the confidence of the public and stakeholders.

7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

7.7: Chapter Summary

The rule of law depends on public officials acting ethically. Because knowledge is the foundation of democracy, an informed public is essential for democratic governance. Therefore, citizens inherently deserve to be informed about the truth regarding public matters, except for in extraordinary matters of security and safety.

In public administration, there exists a hierarchy of ethical standards: personal morality, professional ethics, organizational ethics, and social ethics. The highest level, social ethics, compels members of a society to act in ways that protect individuals and promote the collective progress of the group.

Codes of ethics stem from ancient principles governing how individuals should behave in the face of danger, when confronted with temptations, or when dealing with authority figures. Many government agencies have adopted similar standards of conduct, formal ethical guidelines aimed at preventing employees from using their official positions for personal gain.

Administrative accountability involves officials being held responsible for upholding democratic and moral principles, as well as adhering to specific legal mandates. In democratic societies, administrators must navigate a complex system of checks and balances and endure scrutiny from official auditors, the media, community watchdogs, and potential whistleblowers. Public administration has substantially expanded the rights and protections for whistleblowers, particularly in the federal government.

While a government's constitutional and legal structures provide passive oversight of public administrators' discretion, nothing can replace the active control exercised by elected representatives. This oversight, known as legislative oversight, takes various forms. One prominent example is the annual congressional hearings on agency budget requests, during which agencies must justify their activities to Congress's satisfaction.

Chapter 7 Key Terms & Concepts:

Ethics (Public Administration) – Principles and values that guide public officials' conduct in serving the public interest.

Accountability – Being answerable for decisions and actions; subject to oversight, justification, and potential sanctions.

Public Trust – Citizens' confidence that government acts fairly, lawfully, and in the public interest.

Integrity – Consistent adherence to moral principles (honesty, candor, reliability) in public duties.

Transparency – Openness of processes, data, and decisions so the public can observe, understand, and evaluate government actions.

Government in the Sunshine Act – U.S. federal law requiring multi-member agency meetings to be open to the public with notice and accessible records.

Sunshine Laws (Open Meetings/Open Records) – State and local laws ensuring public access to meetings and government documents.

Freedom of Information (FOI/FOIA) – Legal right to access government records, subject to limited exemptions (e.g., privacy, security).

Rule of Law – Governance bound by law; decisions are made and constrained by legal standards applied equally.

Public Interest – The common good; outcomes that promote community well-being over private advantage.

Impartiality/Fairness – Decision-making without favoritism or bias; like cases treated alike.

Equity vs. Equality – Equity tailors support to need to achieve fairness; equality treats everyone the same.

Stewardship – Responsible, prudent management of public resources and authority.

Competence – Possession and use of the skills, knowledge, and judgment required for public duties.

Code of Ethics – Formal standards of conduct for a profession or agency (e.g., ASPA, ICMA), including duties and prohibited behaviors.

Professional Ethics – Norms and obligations tied to a role or profession (e.g., managers, prosecutors, planners).

Organizational Ethics – The culture, policies, and practices that shape ethical behavior within an agency.

Tone at the Top – Leadership’s visible commitment to ethics that sets expectations across the organization.

Ethical Climate – Shared perceptions of “how we do things here” regarding integrity and accountability.

Conflict of Interest – A situation where personal, financial, or relational interests could improperly influence official duties.

Recusal – Withdrawing from a decision or case due to a real or perceived conflict of interest.

Bribery/Corruption – Offering or accepting something of value to influence official action; misuse of public office for private gain.

Nepotism/Favoritism – Preferential treatment of relatives or associates in hiring, promotion, or contracting.

Misuse of Public Funds – Spending or diverting public money for unauthorized or personal purposes.

Procurement Integrity – Fair, transparent, competitive acquisition of goods/services with strong safeguards against fraud and favoritism.

Data Privacy & Confidentiality – Protecting sensitive information while balancing legal and ethical transparency duties.

Abuse of Power – Using official authority to intimidate, discriminate, retaliate, or obtain improper benefits.

Misrepresentation/False Statements – Providing deceptive or inaccurate information in public duties.

Whistleblowing – Reporting suspected wrongdoing, waste, fraud, or abuse within or outside the organization.

Whistleblower Protections – Legal and policy safeguards against retaliation for good-faith reporting.

Oversight Bodies – Independent entities (e.g., inspectors general, auditors, ombuds, ethics commissions) that investigate and report on government conduct.

Accountability Mechanisms – Tools that enable answerability (audits, performance metrics, public hearings, participatory budgeting, reporting requirements).

Ethics Training & Guidance – Structured learning, advice, and decision tools that build capacity for ethical judgment and action.

Transparency Tools – Practices that operationalize openness (open data portals, meeting notices, minutes, public dashboards).

Ethical Dilemma – A situation where values or obligations conflict and any option has significant ethical trade-offs.

Applied Ethical Reasoning – Using ethical principles and codes to analyze real cases and choose defensible actions in context.

Check for Learning:

1. _____ in public administration refers to the principles and values that guide officials’ conduct in serving the public interest.
2. Being answerable for one’s decisions and subject to oversight, justification, and potential sanctions is called _____.
3. The U.S. federal law requiring multi-member agency meetings to be open to the public is the Government in the _____ Act.
4. Making processes, data, and decisions open so the public can observe and evaluate government actions is called _____.
5. Managing public resources prudently and responsibly is known as _____.
6. A situation in which personal, financial, or relational interests could improperly influence official duties is a _____ of _____.
7. Reporting suspected waste, fraud, abuse, or violations in good faith is called _____, and laws prohibiting retaliation are _____ protections.
8. The principle that government decisions are bound by and applied equally under legal standards is the _____ of _____.
9. Formal standards of conduct for a profession or agency (e.g., ASPA, ICMA) are called a _____ of _____.

10. Treating like cases alike without favoritism is _____, while tailoring support to achieve fair outcomes is _____.

Answer Key

1. Ethics (in public administration)
2. Accountability
3. Sunshine
4. Transparency
5. Stewardship
6. Conflict; interest
7. Whistleblowing; whistleblower
8. Rule; Law
9. Code; Ethics
10. Impartiality/Fairness; Equity

7.7: Chapter Summary is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Principles of Fighting Corruption

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Define corruption as a governance risk and distinguish preventive, deterrent, and detective/corrective approaches.
2. Design core elements of an anti-corruption system (policies, training, reporting channels, investigations, sanctions, and public reporting) appropriate to a public agency context.
3. Apply measurement discipline by proposing qualitative and quantitative indicators to baseline and evaluate corruption exposure, program performance, and outcomes.
4. Explain the role of legal architecture—certainty of punishment, statutes of limitation choices, due process, and debarment—in strengthening deterrence while protecting rights.
5. Evaluate whistleblower frameworks (protections, rewards where lawful, and anti-retaliation mechanisms) and recommend improvements that increase trust and case substantiation.

[8.0: Introduction](#)

[8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy](#)

[8.2: Rule of Law](#)

[8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention](#)

[8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control](#)

[8.5: Summary](#)

This page titled 8: Principles of Fighting Corruption is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

8.0: Introduction

In the last chapter, we shifted from ethical theory to practice—how agencies build ethical capacity through culture, transparency, and accountability. This chapter takes that applied lens to a high-stakes domain: corruption control. Here we treat corruption not only as a moral failing but as a governance risk that can be prevented, detected, measured, and sanctioned. You'll move from principles to the playbook: how public organizations design controls, protect whistleblowers, quantify exposure and harm, and align incentives so that integrity is the rational, expected choice across the system.

This page titled 8.0: Introduction is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy

Corruption is not only a legal problem; it is an ethical breach that erodes the social contract. When public resources are diverted, favoritism skews access, or decisions are sold, citizens lose trust in government's capacity to act for the common good. The macro lens (Chapter 6) reminds us that rule of law, equal treatment, and due process are pillars of a just society. The meso lens (Chapter 5) shows how organizational culture, controls, and leadership either deter or enable misconduct. The micro lens (Chapter 4) highlights the courage, integrity, and judgment of individual public servants. Effective corruption control binds these three levels together so that ethical intent becomes ethical results.

Ethics Link

- *Justice (macro)*: equal protection and non-arbitrary government action.
- *Duty (micro/meso)*: impartiality, honesty, and respect for persons as ends.
- *Care (macro/meso)*: stewardship of shared resources and protection of the vulnerable.

Public corruption spans federal, state, tribal, and local jurisdictions with overlapping authorities (e.g., Inspectors General, state auditors, local ethics commissions, attorneys general, and federal prosecutors). Systems must clarify roles to avoid gaps and turf conflicts.

This page titled 8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

8.2: Rule of Law

Definition

The rule of law means that both government and citizens are bound by—and abide by—the law. This is the simplest and most widely used definition. In public service, it signals that authority is exercised according to publicly articulated rules rather than personal discretion or power.

Core Preconditions

This definition presumes several conditions. First, there must be a coherent system of laws that includes rules and regulations articulated in advance and stated in general terms. Second, those laws must be broadly known and understandable to officials and the public. Third, legal requirements must be realistic—within the capacity of people to meet. Fourth, laws must be applied equally to everyone according to their terms. Finally, there must be mechanisms or institutions—courts, oversight bodies, auditors, ethics commissions, inspectors general—that enforce legal rules when they are breached. When these attributes are present, the rule of law enhances predictability, certainty, and security; a growing body of evidence also links strong rule-of-law institutions with economic development.

Democracy, Human Rights, and the UN Perspective

Notably, the spare definition above does not by itself include democracy or human rights: it does not specify how laws are designed, who makes them, or how public officials attain office. By contrast, the United Nations adopts a broader conception that integrates these values, defining the rule of law as a principle of governance in which all persons and institutions, including the state, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced, independently adjudicated, and consistent with international human rights norms and standards. This view emphasizes supremacy of law, equality before the law, accountability, fairness in application, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness, and procedural and legal transparency. In short, the UN framework treats the rule of law as foundational to peace, security, development, and rights—and as a bulwark against corruption, abuse of power, and the erosion of the social contract.

Benefits

Where other factors are reasonably constant, robust rule-of-law systems tend to prevent and deter fraud and corruption; strengthen citizenship and national security; reduce poverty by stabilizing expectations and protecting rights; attract foreign and local investment through legal certainty; improve the quality of public services by clarifying duties and redress; and support long-run, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. These benefits flow not just from having statutes on the books but from credible, even-handed enforcement and accessible remedies.

Common Misconceptions

It is tempting to attribute every positive social outcome to “the rule of law,” but that claim overreaches. Societies can have formal rule-of-law structures and still experience medicine shortages, insecurity, or high poverty. The rule of law is necessary for good governance, yet it is not sufficient on its own; capacity, resources, policy design, and political will also matter. Treating the rule of law as a cure-all obscures the complementary reforms required to deliver results.

Pervasiveness and Culture

Ultimately, the rule of law becomes pervasive only when people believe they must abide by it—when compliance is not merely coerced but internalized as a civic norm. Well-written laws and elegant institutional charts are not enough. Public commitment grows when the law is experienced as fair, impartial, and effective; it withers where law has historically served colonial or authoritarian control, where legal officials are viewed as corrupt or inept, where legal professionals are distrusted, or where legal content or application appears biased toward particular groups or elites. Building a culture of legality, therefore, requires ethical leadership, trustworthy institutions, and repeated experiences of equal treatment—linking this topic directly to the integrity systems and accountability practices developed elsewhere in this textbook.

This page titled 8.2: Rule of Law is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/@go/page/363060).

8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention

Corruption control is best understood as a systems approach to integrity. It is a continuous, results-oriented effort carried out by those charged with governance, managers, employees, contractors, citizens, and other stakeholders to provide reasonable assurance that public power is not abused for private gain. Effective systems are holistic (spanning policy, people, processes, and technology), multidisciplinary (law, finance, HR, procurement, IT, auditing), and sector-wide (public, private, and nonprofit partners who receive or manage public funds).

Practically, anti-corruption work falls into three complementary streams: preventive, deterrent, and detective/corrective measures. Prevention lowers the likelihood of wrongdoing; deterrence raises the costs and risks for would-be offenders; detection and correction identify breaches, remediate harm, and strengthen controls to avoid recurrence. Mature integrity programs weave all three together.

Preventive Measures

Prevention builds cultures, capacities, and controls that make misconduct harder to initiate.

- **Public and workforce awareness.** Ongoing outreach to residents, vendors, grantees, and employees clarifies expectations, red flags, and reporting options. Plain-language ethics portals, onboarding modules, and annual refreshers reduce ambiguity.
- **Clear standards and policies.** Codes of ethics, conflict-of-interest rules, gift limits, outside-employment disclosures, and procurement/grant rules set bright lines. Policies should be simple, searchable, and tied to real scenarios.
- **Culture and leadership.** Leaders model transparency (e.g., publishing calendars, recusal statements), reward ethical behavior, and integrate integrity into performance evaluations.
- **Risk-based controls.** Segregation of duties, pre-award vetting of vendors and grantees, open data for contracts and spending, and automated maker-checker workflows reduce opportunity.
- **Training and certification.** Role-specific training (procurement, inspections, permitting, grants, cash handling, law enforcement) builds practical competence; certification signals accountability.
- **Protected channels.** A well-designed whistleblowing system (see below) is preventive because potential offenders know credible tips are likely.

Deterrent Measures

Deterrence communicates that violations will be discovered and sanctioned proportionately.

- **Sanction regimes.** Graduated and predictable consequences—discipline, restitution, debarment/blacklisting, referral for prosecution—reduce perceived impunity.
- **Independent oversight.** Inspectors general, auditors, ethics commissions, ombuds, and external review boards provide arm’s-length scrutiny.
- **Transparency.** Open contracting, beneficial-ownership disclosure, and publish-what-you-pay style reporting increase perceived certainty of exposure.

Detective & Corrective Measures

Detection surfaces issues early; correction restores integrity and learns from failure.

- **Multiple intake channels.** Hotlines (phone/web), anonymous webforms, union/HR routes, inspector general offices, and external ombuds ensure accessibility.
- **Data analytics.** Anomaly detection in payroll, travel, P-card use, procurement, grants, inspections, and licensing highlights outliers for review.
- **Targeted audits and inspections.** Surprise spot checks and risk-based audits validate controls where temptation and discretion are highest.
- **Case management and remediation.** Documented triage, timely investigation, feedback to reporters, restitution, control redesign, and public reporting of aggregated outcomes (e.g., number of tips, substantiation rate, actions taken).

Integrity as Investment

Spending on prevention is not a sunk cost; it is an investment with measurable returns: lower loss events, reduced investigation and litigation costs, faster service cycles, better vendor competition, and higher public trust. To avoid “check-the-box” programs, tie investments to performance metrics, such as: cycle-time reductions with maintained compliance; percent of staff completing role-specific training; conflict-of-interest disclosure rates; substantiation and closure times for allegations; audit finding recurrence rates; vendor/grantee debarments avoided through pre-award screening. Because culture and capacity change gradually, expect medium- to long-term payoffs. For instance, one executive seminar will not reset incentives in a permitting office; sustained training, leadership modeling, and control redesign over several budget cycles are usually required.

Whistleblowing in Public Service

Whistleblowing is the disclosure by current or former organizational members of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under their employer’s control to people or bodies capable of taking action. Research consistently shows that employees often observe wrongdoing but do not report it—frequently because they fear retaliation, doubt that anything will happen, or are unsure where to go. A credible whistleblowing system therefore prevents and deters misconduct by increasing the perceived certainty of discovery and by surfacing issues early, before harm escalates.

An effective public-sector whistleblowing program includes:

- **Multiple, well-advertised channels:** internal (supervisor, HR, compliance, inspector general) and external (ethics commission, auditor, ombuds). Allow anonymous and confidential reporting.
- **Strong anti-retaliation protections:** clear policy, swift investigation of alleged retaliation, remedies for harmed reporters, and consequences for retaliators. (In the U.S., federal and most state frameworks provide protections for many public employees; agencies should summarize the applicable protections in plain language.)
- **Due-process and fairness:** protect the rights of subjects of allegations; use trained investigators; maintain confidentiality consistent with law.
- **Timely triage and feedback:** acknowledge reports, communicate status when possible, and close the loop to build trust in the system.
- **Data and transparency:** publish aggregate statistics (number of reports, categories, substantiation rates, corrective actions) to demonstrate responsiveness without compromising privacy.
- **Integration with controls:** route substantiated findings to management to fix root causes—policy gaps, weak segregation of duties, or perverse incentives.

By embedding whistleblowing within a broader integrity system—prevention, deterrence, detection, and correction—public organizations align micro-level courage, meso-level organizational design, and macro-level legal protections. The result is not merely compliance, but durable public trust.

This page titled 8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control

Quantifying Corruption Exposure

In a public organization, corruption is a governance risk—and like any risk, it can be measured. Measurement may be qualitative (expert judgments, control self-assessments, heat maps) or quantitative (loss estimates, anomaly rates, trend lines); most mature programs use both.

Two baselines make claims of “results” meaningful:

1. **Ex-ante measurement.** At the start of a period, identify corruption risk scenarios (e.g., bid-rigging in public works, misuse of purchase cards, conflicts in licensing), map inherent risk (likelihood × impact), and estimate expected loss ranges. Document control strength and residual risk.
2. **Ex-post measurement.** At the end of the period, report observed incidents, substantiation rates, financial recovery, disciplinary actions, cycle-time improvements with maintained controls, and changes in residual risk after remediation.

Without both, success statements are—at best—imprecise.

Helpful, concrete indicators include: percentage of high-risk awards subject to open competition; share of spending with beneficial ownership verified; number and value of debarments; time-to-close for hotline cases; recurrence rate of audit findings; proportion of staff with role-specific ethics training; percent of senior officials filing and being reviewed for conflict-of-interest disclosures.

Note on perception data

Public perception indices can be useful to track trust and deterrence effects, but they are not valid stand-alone estimates of exposure or damage. Treat them as complementary to incident and control data.

Certainty of Punishment (with Due Process)

Deterrence rests less on severity than on the certainty and swiftness of proportionate punishment under the rule of law. Where favoritism or political interference lowers certainty, corruption flourishes; where rules are applied consistently and transparently, risks and losses decline.

For public agencies, this translates to:

- **Clear sanction regimes** that link specific violations to predictable consequences (discipline, restitution, debarment, referral).
- **Independent, competent investigations** (inspectors general, auditors, ethics commissions) to avoid conflicts of interest.
- **Timely case handling** and public reporting of aggregate outcomes to demonstrate follow-through.
- **Protection of rights** for all parties—deterrence must coexist with fairness, due process, and non-retaliation.

Statutes of Limitation: Design Choices

Eliminating statutes of limitation for corruption can strengthen deterrence and asset recovery by signaling that illicit enrichment cannot be “waited out.” However, legal systems (including the U.S.) balance this aim with concerns about stale evidence and due process. Many jurisdictions adopt middle paths:

- **Extended or offense-specific limits** (longer windows for public-corruption, fraud, or money-laundering offenses).
- **Discovery-based tolling** (the clock starts when the offense is discovered, not when it occurred) or **tolling while a suspect is concealed/abroad**.
- **Civil asset recovery** tools (e.g., unjust enrichment, forfeiture) with different limitation rules than criminal cases.

When drafting policy guidance for students, emphasize the design principle: maximize accountability while preserving fairness and evidentiary integrity.

Rewarding Corruption Fighters (Whistleblowers and Allies)

“Corruption fighters” include employees, vendors, civil-society groups, journalists, and members of the public who expose wrongdoing. They assume reputational and, at times, personal risk. Systems should protect and, where lawful, reward them.

Program elements:

- **Protections.** Anti-retaliation policies, rapid inquiry into alleged retaliation, remedies for harmed reporters, and discipline for retaliators. (In the U.S., protections vary across federal, state, and local laws; agencies should publish a plain-language summary.)
- **Accessible channels.** Multiple, well-advertised, anonymous/ confidential options (hotline, webform, IG/ethics office, external ombuds).
- **Recognition and rewards.** Where permitted, **monetary awards** tied to recoveries (e.g., False Claims Act *qui tam*, SEC and IRS whistleblower programs) and **non-monetary recognition** (commendations, career protections, restorative transfers).
- **Feedback and transparency.** Acknowledge receipt, communicate status when possible, and publish **aggregate statistics** (intakes, categories, substantiation, actions taken). Visibility builds trust and prevention.

The policy signal is simple: if you speak up, the system will act—and protect you. If you cheat, the system will find you—and correct the harm.

This page titled 8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

8.5: Summary

This chapter reframed corruption from a purely moral lapse into a governance risk that can be managed with the same rigor used for safety, finance, or cybersecurity. You learned that effective integrity systems braid together three complementary tracks: prevention (culture, codes, training, open data, clear conflicts rules), deterrence (credible oversight, certainty and proportionality of sanctions, debarment, and—where policy supports it—no unduly short statutes of limitation), and detection/correction (hotlines, protected reporting, forensic audits, independent investigations, restitution, and public reporting). We emphasized the rule of law as the enabling environment: laws must be known, practicable, applied equally, and enforced by independent institutions.

Because “what gets measured gets managed,” the chapter introduced quantification of corruption exposure and harm—using qualitative and quantitative indicators to baseline risk, track cases, estimate losses, and evaluate program performance over time. We treated whistleblowing as a pillar of detection and organizational learning, highlighting the need for trusted channels, anti-retaliation protections, and (where lawful) incentives that align personal risk with public benefit. Finally, we stressed that spending on anti-corruption is an investment: resources dedicated to prevention and credible enforcement pay dividends in service quality, fiscal stewardship, and public trust.

Key takeaways

- Corruption control requires an integrated system, not isolated rules.
- Prevention, deterrence, and detection/correction work best in combination.
- Measurement and transparent reporting convert ideals into accountability.
- Legal architecture (due process + certainty of punishment) strengthens deterrence while protecting rights.
- Safe, responsive whistleblower frameworks are indispensable to uncovering and correcting wrongdoing.

Key Terms & Concepts:

Corruption – Abuse of entrusted public power for private gain (financial or non-financial), including bribery, embezzlement, kickbacks, favoritism, and fraud.

Governance Risk – The likelihood that weak rules, oversight, or culture will allow misconduct (like corruption) to harm public objectives.

Rule of Law – A system in which laws are public, practicable, applied equally, adjudicated independently, and enforced predictably.

Prevention Controls – Policies, training, culture, and process designs intended to reduce opportunities and incentives for corruption before it occurs.

Deterrence Controls – Measures that raise the expected cost of wrongdoing (credible detection, sanctions, debarment) so misconduct is less attractive.

Detection/Corrective Controls – Mechanisms (hotlines, audits, investigations, restitution) that surface, verify, and remediate corruption after it occurs.

Internal Control System – Integrated policies and procedures (e.g., segregation of duties, approvals, reconciliations) that safeguard public resources.

Compliance Program – An organization’s structured approach to meeting legal/ethical obligations, including risk assessment, training, monitoring, and reporting.

Code of Ethics/Conduct – Written standards defining expected behavior, conflicts rules, gifts/hospitality limits, and reporting duties.

Conflict of Interest – A situation where a public servant’s private interests could improperly influence official decisions.

Conflict of Commitment – When outside duties or relationships interfere with a public employee’s time and loyalty to the agency’s mission.

Transparency – Openness of government data, decisions, and spending to public scrutiny (e.g., open meetings, open budgets).

- Accountability** – Clear assignment of responsibility plus the obligation to explain and face consequences for actions and results.
- Oversight Body** – Independent entity (inspector general, auditor, ethics commission, ombuds) that monitors, investigates, and reports on integrity.
- Tone at the Top** – The ethical message leaders send through words and actions; a major driver of organizational culture.
- Speak-Up Culture** – A workplace where employees can raise concerns safely and expect a timely, fair response.
- Whistleblowing** – Good-faith disclosure of suspected illegality, fraud, or abuse to entities able to act (inside or outside the organization).
- Whistleblower Protection** – Legal and policy safeguards (confidentiality, anti-retaliation, remedies) that enable safe reporting.
- Retaliation** – Any adverse action taken against someone for reporting or cooperating in an investigation (prohibited).
- Reporting Channels** – Secure avenues to report concerns, such as hotlines, web portals, ombuds offices, or external authorities.
- Investigation** – A structured, impartial fact-finding process to determine what happened, who was involved, and applicable rules.
- Forensic Audit** – Evidence-oriented examination designed to detect fraud/corruption and support legal or disciplinary action.
- Chain of Custody** – Documentation that preserves the integrity and admissibility of evidence from collection through disposition.
- Risk Assessment** – Systematic identification and rating of corruption risks by likelihood and impact to guide controls.
- Risk Appetite** – The level and types of risk an organization is willing to accept in pursuit of its mission.
- Baseline & KPIs** – Initial measurements and ongoing indicators used to track corruption exposure, program activity, and outcomes.
- Quantification of Corruption Exposure** – Estimating the scale of risk and loss (qualitative and quantitative) to manage and evaluate controls.
- Loss Estimation/Recovery** – Calculating damages from corruption and pursuing restitution, fines, or asset recovery.
- Beneficial Ownership Transparency** – Disclosure of the real persons who ultimately own/control vendors or entities, reducing shell-company abuse.
- Public Procurement Integrity** – Rules and practices (competition, disclosure, bid protests) that keep purchasing fair and corruption-resistant.
- Vendor Due Diligence** – Screening suppliers (ownership, sanctions, past misconduct) to mitigate third-party corruption risk.
- Segregation of Duties (SoD)** – Splitting critical tasks among different people to prevent a single person from both initiating and concealing fraud.
- Gifts & Hospitality Policy** – Limits and disclosure requirements to prevent undue influence or the appearance of impropriety.
- Debarment/Sanctions Registry** – Official list barring entities or individuals from public contracts due to misconduct.
- Certainty of Punishment** – The credible likelihood that violations will be detected and sanctioned—key to deterrence.
- Proportionality** – Sanctions that match the severity and intent of the misconduct while respecting due process.
- Statute of Limitations** – Legal time limits for bringing actions; policy choices here affect deterrence and recovery.
- Due Process** – Fair procedures (notice, impartial review, rights to respond/appeal) that protect individuals during enforcement.
- Open Data/Transparency Portals** – Public platforms that publish spending, contracts, and performance, enabling citizen oversight.
- Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)** – Continuous review of control effectiveness, with adjustments based on evidence.

Check for Learning

1. _____ is the abuse of entrusted public power for private gain.
2. The three pillars of an anti-corruption control system are _____, _____, and _____ (in that order of intent).

3. A written set of standards that defines expected behavior, conflicts rules, and gifts limits is called a _____.
 4. Separating initiation, approval, and reconciliation of a transaction is known as _____.
 5. A good-faith disclosure of suspected illegality, fraud, or abuse to someone who can act is called _____.
 6. Laws that credibly apply and are enforced predictably reflect the principle of the _____.
 7. Making agency spending, contracts, and decisions open to public scrutiny is called _____.
 8. Estimating the scale of risk and loss from corruption—using qualitative and quantitative indicators—is called _____.
 9. The credible likelihood that violations will be detected and sanctioned—key to deterrence—is the _____.
 10. An evidence-oriented examination designed to detect fraud/corruption and support legal action is a _____.
-

Answer Key

- 1. Corruption**
 - 2. Prevention, deterrence, and detection/correction**
 - 3. Code of ethics (or code of conduct)**
 - 4. Segregation of duties**
 - 5. Whistleblowing**
 - 6. Rule of law**
 - 7. Transparency**
 - 8. Quantification of corruption exposure**
 - 9. Certainty of punishment**
 - 10. Forensic audit**
-

8.5: Summary is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Explain why AI and algorithmic accountability matter in government; define AI as a governance risk/opportunity and identify traits of trustworthy AI using the NIST AI RMF.
2. Design an AI governance function (GOVERN): policies, roles, documentation, human oversight, and contestability aligned to law and public values.
3. Map an AI use case (MAP): analyze mission fit, stakeholders (including vulnerable groups), data sources, and potential benefits/harms to support a go/no-go decision.
4. Measure and manage AI risk (MEASURE/MANAGE): choose impact and bias metrics, plan testing/validation and monitoring, and prepare incident response and improvement loops.
5. Differentiate privacy from cybersecurity and apply the NIST Privacy Framework to create current/target profiles, choose proportional controls, and integrate privacy/security into enterprise risk.
6. Implement transparency-by-design: specify standards for timely, complete, searchable, and durably accessible public information, and justify when limits are lawful and necessary.
7. Plan meaningful community engagement: select levels on the IAP2 spectrum and apply the principles of recognition, respect, and equitable partnership to co-shape policies and services.

[9.0: Introduction](#)

[9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability](#)

[9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience](#)

[9.3: Transparency in Government](#)

[9.4: Active Community Engagement](#)

[9.5: Summary](#)

This page titled 9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

9.0: Introduction

We've moved from ethical theories (micro) to organizational systems (meso), to societal commitments (macro). In Chapter Nine, we bring the whole stack together and look forward: how do public servants govern fast-moving technologies and long-horizon risks in ways that are lawful, fair, and trusted? We frame “innovation” as a stewardship challenge—aligning new tools and partnerships with enduring public values of accountability, transparency, equity, and the rule of law.

This page titled 9.0: Introduction is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability

In the last chapter, we turned future-facing: how public organizations can anticipate and govern emerging risks. This chapter brings that lens to artificial intelligence (AI) and automated decision-making—tools already shaping benefits eligibility, fraud detection, hiring, policing, permitting, transportation, and more. AI can strengthen service delivery and expand access to information; it can also concentrate harm, encode bias at scale, and erode due process if deployed without guardrails. In public administration terms, AI is both an opportunity for mission impact and a governance risk that must be managed across the micro (individual), meso (organizational), and macro (societal) levels you’ve studied throughout this book.

For our purposes, we’ll use a practical definition drawn from widely adopted standards: an AI system is an engineered or machine-based system that, for a given objective, generates outputs—predictions, recommendations, or decisions—that influence real or virtual environments, and can operate with varying levels of autonomy. What makes AI different from traditional software is not just complexity; it’s that these systems learn from data that change over time, interact with people and other systems, and perform in contexts that are socially and legally consequential. That socio-technical character is why familiar risks—privacy breaches, security failures, model errors—are entangled with civic risks—discrimination, lack of transparency, weakened accountability, and unequal access to remedies.

Because of this, “responsible AI” in the public sector cannot be an after-the-fact compliance check. It is a continuous risk management practice that aligns AI design, development, procurement, deployment, and oversight with public values: human centrality, social responsibility, equity, sustainability, and the rule of law. In the U.S., the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) offers a non-regulatory, public-domain AI Risk Management Framework (AI RMF) that many governments and partners use as a baseline. It names characteristics of trustworthy AI—valid and reliable, safe, secure and resilient, accountable and transparent, explainable and interpretable, privacy-enhanced, and fair with harmful bias managed—and organizes the work of achieving them into four functions: GOVERN (build organizational policies, roles, and culture for AI risk), MAP (understand the context and intended use), MEASURE (assess risks and trustworthiness with qualitative and quantitative evidence), and MANAGE (prioritize, mitigate, monitor, and improve over time).

For administrators, the practical implication is clear: every AI use case should be treated like any other high-impact program intervention. That means defining the public purpose and legal authority; assessing stakeholders and potential disparate impacts; documenting data, models, and decisions; building in human oversight and contestability; protecting privacy and security; and measuring performance and harm over the full lifecycle—not just at launch. Done well, AI can help reduce backlogs, target resources, and make services more accessible. Done poorly, it can automate inequity, obscure accountability, and undermine trust.

This chapter translates those ideas into public-service practice. We will show how to stand up an AI governance function, apply risk framing to real programs, choose and interpret impact and bias metrics, design meaningful transparency and explanation for affected people, and build monitoring and incident-response processes that keep systems trustworthy as conditions change. In short: you will learn how to make algorithmic accountability part of everyday public management—so innovation advances your mission and the public interest, together.

9.1.1 GOVERN — Build the Culture and Structures for AI Risk

The GOVERN function is the foundation for everything that follows. Its purpose is to cultivate a durable, organization-wide culture of AI risk management and to put in place the processes, documentation, and roles that anticipate, identify, and manage risks to users, communities, and society. GOVERN aligns AI work with mission, law, and public values by connecting technical decisions to organizational principles and strategic priorities. It embeds impact assessment into routine practice; clarifies authority, accountability, and risk tolerance; and covers the full product lifecycle—including use of third-party software, hardware, and data. Senior leadership sets the tone; management operationalizes policy; and systematic documentation enhances transparency, human review, and accountability. Because governance is cross-cutting, its compliance and evaluation practices infuse the other functions throughout an AI system’s lifespan.

9.1.2 MAP — Understand Context, Stakeholders, and Potential Impacts

The MAP function establishes the context for AI risk. AI lifecycles involve many interdependent activities and actors, often with partial visibility across the chain. Early choices about objectives, data, and deployment settings can shape behavior and impacts in

ways that are hard to foresee. Mapping reduces this uncertainty by gathering diverse internal and external perspectives—developers, operators, end users, impacted communities—to check assumptions, clarify intended use, surface constraints and limitations, and anticipate both benefits and harms, including misuse beyond the intended context. The outcome of MAP is actionable situational awareness that supports an initial go/no-go decision on whether an AI solution is appropriate and, if proceeding, provides the contextual grounding needed for measuring and managing risk over time.

9.1.3 MEASURE — Test, Validate, and Monitor What Matters

The MEASURE function brings disciplined evaluation to AI systems using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods to assess risk and track trustworthiness. Drawing on MAP's context, MEASURE establishes repeatable test, evaluation, verification, and validation processes before deployment and at regular intervals in operation. It documents functionality, uncertainty, and performance against benchmarks; assesses human–AI configurations and social impacts; and uses independent review where feasible to reduce bias and conflicts of interest. When trade-offs among trustworthy characteristics arise (e.g., accuracy vs. explainability), measurement provides a transparent basis for management decisions—whether recalibration, mitigation, compensating controls, or withdrawal. Methods should meet scientific, legal, and ethical norms and evolve as knowledge and risks change.

9.1.4 MANAGE — Prioritize, Mitigate, and Improve Continuously

The MANAGE function allocates resources to the mapped and measured risks on an ongoing cadence defined by governance policy. It operationalizes risk treatment with clear plans to respond to incidents, recover services, communicate with stakeholders, and incorporate lessons learned. MANAGE leverages the contextual insight from GOVERN and MAP and the evidence base from MEASURE to reduce the likelihood and impact of failures, while establishing processes to detect emergent risks and drive continual improvement. After MANAGE is in place, the organization can prioritize risks, monitor deployed systems, adjust controls, and re-allocate attention as contexts, methods, and stakeholder expectations evolve—keeping AI systems aligned with public values and operational needs over their full lifecycle.

This page titled 9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience

Why Cybersecurity Is an Ethics Issue—Not Just an IT Issue

Public service runs on data: benefits eligibility, licensing, criminal justice, health, mobility, education, taxation. Every time a resident applies for a service or a city deploys a sensor, information about people moves through a web of systems, vendors, and agencies. Managing that information securely is not only a technical challenge—it is a question of public trust, fairness, and harm prevention. When cybersecurity or privacy fails, people can be stigmatized, discriminated against, defrauded, or put at physical risk. Communities can lose confidence in institutions. Ethical public administration means building services that protect autonomy and dignity while delivering value.

9.2.1 Privacy and Cybersecurity: Overlapping, Not Identical

You will hear both terms used together, but they are not the same:

- Cybersecurity protects the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of systems and data against threats like hacking, malware, and insider misuse.
- Privacy protects people from harms that can arise even when no breach occurs—for example, when a system collects more data than necessary, draws intrusive inferences, or nudges behavior without consent.

In practice, they overlap (a breach is both a security and a privacy event), but ethical governance requires you to watch for problematic data actions during normal operations as well as classic security incidents.

A Practical Scaffold: The NIST Privacy Framework (Public-Sector Lens)

To make privacy actionable, we borrow a widely used, open framework from NIST and translate it for public administration. Think of it as a common language that lets executives, program managers, attorneys, procurement, and IT coordinate.

- Core: a catalog of privacy outcomes that turns mission goals into concrete activities—from minimizing data collection to providing meaningful notice and choice.
- Profiles: a snapshot of your “current” vs. “target” privacy posture for a program or system (e.g., unemployment claims portal), used for planning and communicating gaps.
- Implementation Tiers: a maturity marker for how proactively you manage privacy risk—from ad hoc and reactive to agile, integrated, and risk-informed.

9.2.2 GOVERN: Set the Ethical Guardrails

Ethical cybersecurity starts with governance, not gadgets. Agencies establish policies, roles, training, procurement clauses, documentation practices, and oversight that align data practices with public values (lawfulness, necessity, proportionality, equity, and transparency). Leadership sets risk tolerance, ensures independent review, and integrates privacy and cybersecurity into enterprise risk management—so trade-offs are explicit, not accidental.

MAP: Understand Context Before You Build

Before collecting a single field of data, clarify why it’s needed, who could be affected (including vulnerable groups), how information flows across agencies and vendors, and what foreseeable uses might emerge later. This includes engaging communities who will live with the system, testing assumptions, and identifying where “business as intended” could still feel like surveillance or lead to inequitable outcomes.

MEASURE: Test What Matters, Not Just What’s Easy

Trustworthy systems are tested—before launch and while running. Measurement mixes qualitative and quantitative methods: security testing, privacy impact assessments, usability testing of notices and choices, fairness checks on algorithms, and audits of third-party processors. Results are documented and repeatable so decisions and trade-offs can be explained and improved.

MANAGE: Treat, Monitor, and Improve

With risks mapped and measured, agencies choose proportional responses: mitigate (minimize data, encrypt, restrict access, de-identify), share/transfer (contractual controls with vendors), avoid (don’t collect if benefits don’t justify risks), or accept

(documented, low-impact with monitoring). Incident response plans cover both security and privacy events. Continuous improvement is the norm as missions, threats, and technologies evolve.

This page titled 9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

9.3: Transparency in Government

In Chapter 9 we've emphasized two pillars of trustworthy, future-ready public service: **accountable AI** and **privacy/cyber resilience**. The third pillar is **open government**—not only publishing what the government knows and does but also **inviting people into the process** in ways that shape outcomes. Transparency without participation is a one-way mirror; participation without transparency is theater. Ethical public service requires both.

Public oversight, civic participation and electoral engagement—the stuff of democratic accountability—all depend on a transparent, open government. Indeed, transparency and openness are the very foundations for public trust; without the former the latter cannot survive.

The Internet is making increased transparency cheaper, more effective, and in more demand every day as Americans come to expect instantaneous and constant access to all kinds of information. Given the rapid technological advances in how information can be captured, stored, analyzed, and shared, the Sunlight Foundation believes it is time to update and expand the government's transparency mandate:

Transparency is the Government's Responsibility

Transparency must first and foremost be understood as the government's responsibility, since public demand and private/non-profit responses can reach only so far. Accordingly, both Congress and the Executive Branch must make broad changes in our federal information and technology policies to establish online public access as a priority for virtually all the operations of the federal government.

Public Means Online

Whatever information the government has or commits to making public, the standard for “public” should include “freely accessible online.” Information cannot be considered public if it is available only inside a government building, during limited hours or for a fee. In the 21st century, information is considered public only if it is free, available online at all times, and in a format that can be easily analyzed. Almost all of our public sphere is now online, and our public information should be there, too.

Data Quality and Presentation Matter

The Internet has redefined effective communications and publishing. It is a 24/7 open medium, in which now standard practices include continuous, contemporaneous dissemination, permanent searchability and reusability, among other key features.

The government must adopt the principles that all information and data that the government has decided or hereafter decides should be public, must be

- i. posted online promptly
- ii. complete and accurate
- iii. searchable and manipulable and
- iv. permanently preserved and accessible.

Among these four, timeliness is particularly vital for information concerning any ongoing decision-making process, such as legislation or regulation. Disclosure should move at the same pace as influence over such decisions; thus, arbitrary periodic filing requirements (e.g., annual, quarterly or monthly) violate this standard and render postings less useful to facilitate trust and participation.

Fortunately, the Internet enables inexpensive real-time publishing, such as real-time updates we have come to expect for news and stock market transactions. These standards of contemporaneous disclosure are particularly important when it comes to disclosure of lobbying contacts, consideration of legislation, promulgation of regulations or awarding of grants and contracts.

Our government's role as an information provider has evolved along with our ability to communicate. Today, our newly networked citizenry has rising expectations of greatly expanded access to governmental information, so that it may play a fuller role in understanding, evaluating and participating in the workings of its government.

More open and transparent government can foster more competent and trustworthy behavior by public officials along with a more engaged public.

This page titled 9.3: Transparency in Government is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

9.4: Active Community Engagement

In the previous section, we discussed how transparency makes government **understandable, accessible and open to challenge**. To **have meaningful community engagement**, people need to see what's being decided, by whom, using which evidence. But seeing is only half of democratic accountability. The ethical next step is **shared agency**: creating structured ways for residents, community organizations, and frontline staff to **shape** priorities, policies, and services. In short, transparency is the window; **engagement is the door**.

It is important to begin by gaining clarity on what we mean by “community” and “engagement.” Defining these terms is complex and often dependent on the context and the people involved.

Definition: Community

Merriam Webster defines **community** as:

- a. unified body of individuals such as:
- b. the people with common characteristics or intentions
- c. the people living together in a particular area or within a larger society
- d. a body of persons or nations having a common history, or common social, economic, and political interests
- e. a group linked by a common policy

Definition: Engagement

Engagement is defined as:

broad term and can mean different things to different people:

- a. to provide occupation for: involve
- b. To pledge oneself: promise
- c. to make a guarantee
- d. to begin and carry on an enterprise or activity
- e. to do or take part in something
- f. to give attention to something

From this, we may say that to community engagement is to involve, interact, or work actively with a group of people with a set of common characteristics, interests, or history, and/or people living together in a particular area. However, similar to the concept of a sustainable community, the term 'engagement' can have different definitions depending on the sector/discipline, service, or communities with whom you are engaging.

Examples:

Community engagement according to the Centre for Disease Control

For example, the Center for Disease Control's public health agencies focus on promoting health and well-being. They define community engagement as...

“the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people. It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 1997, p. 9).

Community engagement according to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, a philanthropic organization devoted educational initiatives, defines “community engagement” through the lens of higher education with an emphasis on exchanging knowledge and developing

educated, engaged citizens. They define community engagement as...

“collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (2020, p. 1).

Spectrum of Participation in Community Engagement

Community engagement can take many different forms and is often depicted as a continuum. This ranges from low-level engagement strategies, such as consultation, to high-level strategies such as community empowerment.

The [IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum](#), developed in the late 1990s, with updates by IAP2 Australasia in 2014, is one of the most utilized and applied of international public participation models to describe the level of citizens' involvement in decision-making processes. It explains the different levels of engagement that organizations can engage their communities, with the furthest right of the spectrum highlighting the greater community influence on decision making. It is important to note that each level of participation in community engagement serves a purpose. It is not always 'better' or appropriate to have more participation in community engagement, as this is dependent on the overall goals and resources a project may have available.

Regardless of the type of community engagement, there are some overarching principles which guide community engagement. These principles were developed by the University of Michigan to be broad and expansive enough to cover a wide range of engagement activities and practice. The principle of recognition is related to the expertise and knowledge existing within a community. The principle of respect values individuals, communities, and their resources. Finally, the principle of equitable partnership focuses on reciprocal relationships, transparency, and accountability.

This page titled 9.4: Active Community Engagement is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

9.5: Summary

Key Principles:

- **Recognition:** Working with communities begins with acknowledgement of the expertise and knowledge that already exists within any community in which we engage. Our own beliefs and understandings of the opportunities and capacities in that community must be balanced with the real, lived experience of those with whom we would partner.
- **Equitable Partnership:** Effective engagement requires true partnership, which must be founded on relationships and mutual benefit. All members of a partnership must see and understand the evolving benefits to themselves, their organizations and their communities, that will emerge from the engagement, and have effective recourse in case of concerns. They must have full visibility to the motives, needs, and concerns of others, and must be mutually accountable to meet these needs and address these concerns.
- **Respect:** Communities comprise many individuals, who collectively and individually have unique opportunities and capacities. Community members must be recognized as having agency in their own decisions in their own community. Their resources, not the least of which is time, must be recognized as having value. U-M scholars must be aware of power structures, both hidden and explicit, that might influence community members and U-M scholars.

Transparency tells residents what is happening; meaningful engagement lets them shape what happens next. From an ethics standpoint, this shift is the move from mere disclosure (accountability after the fact) to shared stewardship (accountability with the public). When agencies make decisions understandable, timely, and accessible—and then invite communities to co-define problems, weigh trade-offs, and monitor results—they operationalize the values we’ve emphasized throughout this book: justice (fair voice and impact), care (attention to lived experience), and integrity (keeping process and outcomes aligned with the public interest). In practice, transparency is the floor; ethically grounded engagement is the standard.

Key Terms:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) — Engineered systems that produce predictions, recommendations, or decisions that influence real or virtual environments, with varying autonomy.

Algorithmic Accountability — Practices that make automated decisions traceable, reviewable, and correctable by people affected and by oversight bodies.

Trustworthy AI — AI that is valid/reliable, safe, secure and resilient, accountable and transparent, explainable/interpretable, privacy-enhanced, and fair with harmful bias managed.

Bias (Algorithmic) — Systematic error that produces unfair outcomes for certain groups due to data, model, or deployment choices.

Disparate Impact — When a neutral rule or model disproportionately harms a protected group, even without intent.

Human Oversight — Deliberate roles for people to supervise, approve, or override AI outputs.

Contestability — Clear processes that let individuals question, appeal, and correct automated decisions.

Explainability / Interpretability — The extent to which a system’s logic and outputs can be understood by non-experts (interpretability often refers to model-level clarity; explainability to case-level reasons).

Lifecycle (of AI) — End-to-end phases: problem framing, data sourcing, development, testing, deployment, monitoring, retirement.

NIST AI Risk Management Framework (AI RMF) — A public-domain guide that organizes AI risk work into four functions: **GOVERN, MAP, MEASURE, MANAGE**.

GOVERN — Policies, roles, documentation, culture, and risk tolerance for AI across the organization.

MAP — Understanding the context: mission fit, stakeholders, data, constraints, and potential benefits/harms.

MEASURE — Testing and validating performance, uncertainty, safety, bias, and social impact with evidence.

MANAGE — Prioritizing risks, mitigating, monitoring, responding to incidents, and improving over time.

Cybersecurity — Protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and availability (CIA) of systems and data against threats like hacking or insider misuse.

Privacy — Protecting people from harms arising from data collection and use (even without a breach), including excessive collection or intrusive inferences.

NIST Privacy Framework — A structured approach to managing privacy risk using a **Core** (outcomes), **Profiles** (current vs. target posture), and **Implementation Tiers** (maturity levels).

Profiles — Snapshots comparing where a program is today vs. desired privacy posture.

Implementation Tiers — Indicators of how proactively privacy risk is managed (from ad hoc to integrated).

Data Minimization — Collecting, retaining, and sharing only the data strictly necessary for a stated purpose.

De-identification — Techniques that reduce the likelihood that data can be linked to an identifiable person.

Incident Response — Planned steps to detect, contain, eradicate, recover from, and communicate about security/privacy events.

Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) — Organization-wide coordination of risks (operational, legal, privacy, cyber, AI) to align with mission and risk tolerance.

Transparency-by-Design — Building systems and policies so information is timely, complete, searchable, machine-readable, and durably accessible by default.

Open Data — Public information released online in reusable, machine-readable formats without unnecessary barriers (fees, restrictive licenses).

Public Means Online — The standard that information is only truly “public” when it is freely accessible on the internet, not just in a building or for a fee.

Community (Public Administration) — Groups linked by place, shared characteristics, interests, or history who are affected by public decisions.

Meaningful Engagement — Structured, two-way processes that let communities help define problems, weigh trade-offs, and shape outcomes.

IAP2 Spectrum of Participation — A continuum of engagement levels (Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower) indicating increasing public influence on decisions.

Recognition — A principle of acknowledging community expertise and lived experience.

Respect — Valuing community agency, time, and diversity; being mindful of power dynamics.

Equitable Partnership — Transparent, reciprocal relationships with shared benefits, responsibilities, and accountability.

Check for Learning:

1. An AI system should be treated like any high-impact program and governed across its full _____, from design to retirement.
2. The NIST AI Risk Management Framework organizes work into four functions: GOVERN, MAP, MEASURE, and _____.
3. The practice of making automated decisions traceable, reviewable, and correctable is called algorithmic _____.
4. In public service, **privacy** protects people from harmful data uses even without a breach, while **cybersecurity** protects the _____, integrity, and availability of systems and data.
5. Collecting only the information strictly needed for a stated purpose is called data _____.
6. A public record is only truly “public” when it is freely accessible _____, not just inside a building or for a fee.
7. Releasing information in reusable, machine-readable formats without unnecessary barriers is called _____ data.
8. The IAP2 Spectrum describes levels of public participation from Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, to _____ (the highest level of influence).

9. Three core principles for meaningful engagement are Recognition, Respect, and _____ Partnership.
10. In the AI RMF, the _____ function establishes the context—mission fit, stakeholders, data, constraints, and potential impacts—before building.
-

Answer Key

1. **lifecycle**
 2. **MANAGE**
 3. **accountability**
 4. **confidentiality**
 5. **minimization**
 6. **online**
 7. **open**
 8. **Empower**
 9. **Equitable**
 10. **MAP**
-

9.5: Summary is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Define sustainability for public institutions and explain how it links micro/meso/macro ethics (duty, outcomes, stewardship).
2. Apply an ethics checklist (Rule of Law, Transparency, Accountability, Equity, Stewardship) across the policy cycle from agenda setting to evaluation.
3. Evaluate development options using both utilitarian (outcomes) and Kantian (duty/rights) lenses and recommend a “win–win” design.
4. Map stakeholders and assess distributional impacts and engagement needs (who benefits, who bears risks, how input shapes decisions).
5. Design ethics-aligned policy and procurement levers (e.g., CBAs, living-wage/anti-displacement clauses, climate targets, buy-recycled/right-to-repair).
6. Select People/Planet/Prosperity metrics and document decisions to ensure transparency, accountability, and long-term public value.

[10.0: Introduction](#)

[10.1: Introduction to Policy Making](#)

[10.2: Policy Making and Development](#)

[10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development](#)

[10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development](#)

[10.5: Conclusion](#)

This page titled [10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View](#) is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

10.0: Introduction

This final chapter brings the textbook full circle—from core concepts of integrity and levels of ethics (micro, meso, macro) to a capstone focus on ethical and sustainable economic development. Communities today demand cleaner air and water, fairer growth, and stewardship of shared resources. Sometimes those demands surface as collaboration; other times as protest when residents feel excluded from decisions that shape livelihoods, neighborhoods, and local ecosystems. For public administrators, these are not just political signals—they are ethical claims about dignity, equity, and intergenerational responsibility.

Our closing question is practical and forward-looking: What role should public policy play in advancing ethical, sustainable economic development—and how should public servants design and implement it? We treat sustainability as a public value, not merely a technical goal. That means evaluating policies by more than legality or short-term fiscal impact. Ethical public service requires examining whether decisions are just, transparent, accountable, and inclusive, and whether they protect the conditions that allow future generations to thrive.

Scholars increasingly link sustainability consciousness (awareness of environmental and social impacts coupled with willingness to act) to moral development. In public service, that link often shows up as intrinsic motivation: people choose government and nonprofit work to serve communities, protect the vulnerable, and steward public assets. Turning that motivation into policy means embedding ethics in how we set priorities, allocate resources, regulate markets, and partner across sectors.

Working definition for this chapter:

Sustainability is the capacity of public institutions—working with residents and stakeholders—to meet present needs while maximizing long-term public value, respecting ecological limits, and acting transparently and accountably to all affected communities.

This definition centers on three enduring duties of ethical governance:

1. deliver equitable economic opportunity today;
2. avoid shifting environmental and social costs to future generations;
3. make decisions in ways the public can understand, scrutinize, and influence.

The encouraging trend we end on: many policy makers now ask not only *Is this legal?* but also *Is it fair? Is it sustainable? Who benefits, who bears the risks, and how will we know?* In this capstone, we apply the frameworks you’ve learned—justice, care, rule of law, stewardship, accountability—to real choices in economic development. The aim is to equip you, as future public servants, to design policies that grow local economies and uphold the public’s trust.

This page titled 10.0: Introduction is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

10.1: Introduction to Policy Making

Public policy is the vehicle through which ethical commitments become real for communities. Classic policy theories help us see patterns in a messy world, but no single model captures the personalities, chance events, and shifting contexts that shape decisions. For public servants, the takeaway isn't to memorize one "right" theory—it's to cultivate systems thinking: look holistically at causes and consequences, map feedback loops, and anticipate how choices ripple across agencies, budgets, and neighborhoods.

A practical, ethics-aligned way to define policy is: a purposeful course of governmental action (and inaction) that selects goals and the means to achieve them, under conditions where decision-makers have authority and resources to act. That definition matters for ethics because it reminds us that:

1. doing nothing is still a decision with distributive effects,
2. ambition is not policy until it's backed by implementation capacity, and
3. commitments must be matched to lawful authority, evidence, and resources.

Stakeholders and Trust

Every policy has multiple stakeholders—intended beneficiaries, intermediaries, “winners,” “losers,” and those historically excluded from the process. Ethical policy-making treats these groups as co-producers of evidence and accountability, not passive audiences. Trust grows when agencies are transparent about trade-offs, invite participation early, and show how input changes design. Focusing only on outputs (e.g., dollars spent, permits issued) gives a partial picture; ethical analysis keeps both policy content (what we're doing) and policy process (how we're doing it) in view.

The Policy Cycle—Useful, but Not Enough

The familiar policy cycle—agenda setting → analysis → deliberation/decision → implementation → evaluation → continuation or sunset—is a helpful map, not the territory. Real life is iterative, with feedback at every stage. An ethics-forward approach asks at each stage:

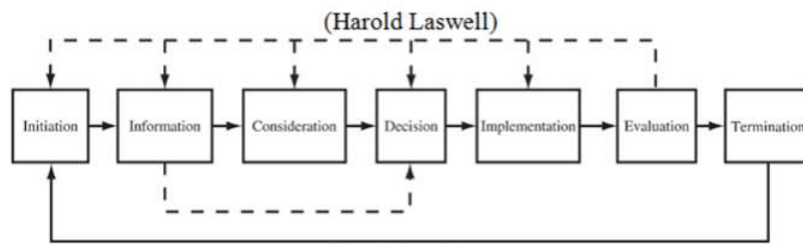
- **Agenda setting:** Whose problem definition counts? Are marginalized communities at the table?
- **Analysis:** What evidence, values, and uncertainties are we weighing (equity impacts, rights, long-term effects)?
- **Decision:** Is the choice transparent, reason-giving, and consistent with law and public values?
- **Implementation:** Do front-line rules and incentives align with the stated purpose, and are there safeguards against misuse?
- **Evaluation:** What outcomes (intended and unintended) are we tracking, disaggregated by group, and how will findings trigger course correction?

An Ethical Standard for Policy Development

To connect theory to practice, apply this simple standard throughout the cycle:

1. **Legality & Rule of Law** – Act within authority; ensure due process and clear rules.
2. **Integrity & Transparency** – Disclose evidence, assumptions, and conflicts; document decisions.
3. **Accountability & Participation** – Build mechanisms for public input, oversight, and redress.
4. **Equity & Care** – Assess distributional impacts; mitigate burdens on vulnerable groups.
5. **Stewardship & Sustainability** – Consider long-term fiscal, social, and ecological effects.

Using systems thinking and these ethical checkpoints, public administrators can translate complex policy theory into decisions that are not only effective, but worthy of the public's trust.



Source: Jenkins (1978)

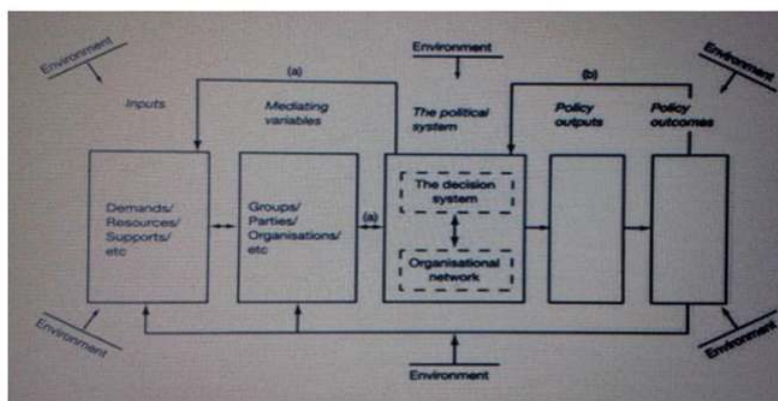
Figure-1. Policy-Making

For an ethics-focused textbook, Easton's input-output view of the policy system is especially helpful because it lets us ask **value questions at every stage**, not just at the end. Reformulated for public service ethics:

- **Policy demands (inputs):** These are calls for action that arise inside and outside government.
- *Ethical questions:* Whose voices are being heard? Who is missing? Are problem definitions inclusive, evidence-based, and respectful of rights and dignity?
- **Policy decisions (throughput/authority):** These are the authoritative choices made by public officials.
- *Ethical questions:* Were decisions made transparently, with reasons given? Were conflicts of interest disclosed? Did the process honor due process and the rule of law?
- **Policy outputs (actions):** These are what agencies actually do—rules issued, dollars spent, services delivered.
- *Ethical questions:* Do outputs match the stated purpose? Are implementation rules fair, consistently applied, and accessible to those affected?
- **Policy outcomes (effects):** These are the real-world consequences of action **and** inaction.

Ethical questions: Who benefits and who bears burdens? Are there disparate impacts across communities? What remedies or course corrections are triggered by harm?

Seeing the policy cycle this way underscores two core truths for practitioners: (1) **there is no single “best” model** for policy-making, and (2) **ethical quality depends on fit-for-purpose methods**. Complex problems will require different analytic tools and participation strategies; what matters is keeping ethics—legality, transparency, accountability, equity, and stewardship—front and center throughout. Use models as **maps**, not dogma: combine systems thinking with ethical checkpoints so policies are not only effective, but also legitimate and just.



Source: Jenkins (1978)

Figure-2. Policy-Making Model (Jenkins, 1978)

This page titled 10.1: Introduction to Policy Making is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

10.2: Policy Making and Development

To move from abstract theory to real practice, it helps to use an extended, systems-oriented model of the policy process. In this textbook, we adapt Jenkins' idea as an ethical heuristic—a map that alerts public servants to places where values, rights, power, and impacts need explicit attention.

Public policy unfolds within an environment of people, groups, and organizations with diverse interests and unequal power. That environment isn't background noise—it shapes every step of agenda setting, analysis, decision, implementation, and evaluation. A linear “feedback loop” rarely captures this complexity. Instead, interactions across and within systems (agencies, vendors, communities, legislatures, courts, media) must be examined for their ethical implications: transparency, inclusion, fairness, and accountability.

Behavior, motivation, and outcomes

Ethical analysis requires more than checking legal boxes. It asks: What motivates actors? Whose incentives dominate? Who bears risk or harm? Understanding behavior and motivation is central to predicting outcomes—not just outputs—and to spotting disparate impacts before they become entrenched. In short, the extended model pushes practitioners to connect process quality (how we decide) with substantive justice (who benefits, who is burdened).

Practice–theory bridging questions

Use the extended model as a bridge between classroom frameworks and field realities. At each stage, ask:

- **Legitimacy:** Were affected communities meaningfully included? Are reasons and data legible and contestable?
- **Equity:** Do design choices avoid foreseeable disparate impacts? Are mitigations funded and monitored?
- **Integrity:** Are conflicts of interest surfaced and managed? Are performance claims auditable?
- **Stewardship:** Do we balance short-term efficiencies with long-term public value and trust?

Two common orientations show up in practice:

- A market orientation (privatization, contracting, competition) can lower costs or improve innovation—but only if procurement ethics, oversight capacity, open data, and debarment tools are strong. Otherwise, incentives can erode equity, quality, or accountability.
- A dialogue orientation (sustained interaction with civic groups, residents, and frontline staff) strengthens civic responsibility and policy legitimacy—when engagement is early, representative, accessible, and linked to decision rights. Performative listening that doesn't change choices undermines trust.

Responsible citizenship and capable public management

Ethical policy-making is a two-way obligation: governments must be transparent, fair, and answerable; citizens and civil society must participate in good faith, stay informed, and hold institutions to account. Public managers need skills to design for responsible participation (clear roles, shared evidence, feedback loops) and to act when participation is irresponsible (mis/disinformation, harassment) while protecting rights.

Imperfect but improvable

No model is all-encompassing. Treat this extended approach as testable and adaptable: refine it with evidence, audits, equity assessments, and lived experience. The ethical bottom line remains constant: focus on how policies actually govern—and why they should—so that public power advances the well-being and rights of all people.

This page titled 10.2: Policy Making and Development is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development

Public leaders today are expected to craft and implement policy that is not only legal and effective, but also ethical. In this textbook we've used ethical theories as practical tools. Here we bring two workhorses—utilitarianism and Kantian (duty-based) ethics—into the arena of economic development policy so you can apply them to budgets, incentives, procurement, and growth strategies.

Utilitarian reasoning (outcomes)

A utilitarian approach asks: *Which option produces the greatest net benefits and least harms for all affected?* In public service, that means mapping all stakeholder groups—residents, small businesses, workers, taxpayers, future generations, and the environment—and predicting plausible consequences (intended and unintended). You then compare options using transparent criteria (e.g., jobs created, displacement risk, tax expenditures, climate impacts, distributional equity). If projected public benefits predominate—and especially if harms are mitigated for those most burdened—the option can be ethically justified on outcome grounds.

Kantian (duty-based) reasoning (means).

A duty-based approach asks: *Are we treating people as ends in themselves and following rules we could justify for everyone, not just when it's convenient?*

Two quick tests help in policy:

- **Respect for persons (“Kingdom of Ends”).** No policy should instrumentalize people—e.g., sacrificing one neighborhood's health or rights for “greater good.”
- **Role-reversal (“Golden Rule” in civic form).** Would this policy still seem fair if you didn't know whether you'd be the well-served beneficiary, the average resident, or the most vulnerable household?

Taken together, these lenses remind us: the ends don't excuse any means (Kant), and good intentions must add up to good outcomes (utilitarianism).

Real leadership in public service is the ability to design “win-win” policies—those that advance community prosperity and uphold rights and dignity. That often requires:

- **Aligning incentives with values.** Tie subsidies, tax abatements, or public-private partnerships to enforceable standards (local hiring, living wages, climate targets, community benefits agreements, anti-displacement safeguards).
- **Surfacing and reducing harm.** Use equity impact assessments, environmental justice screens, and small business/displacement analyses up front; fund mitigations in the program, not as afterthoughts.
- **Modeling integrity.** Guard against conflicts of interest; keep procurement clean; document decisions; publish data and contracts; invite independent audit and public challenge.
- **Building ethical culture.** Equip staff with training, ombuds/ethics hotlines, and protected channels to raise concerns; reward candor and problem-finding, not just ribbon-cuttings.

Leaders also need a keen eye for organizational blind spots—perverse incentives, unrealistic timelines, weak monitoring—that can tempt shortcuts and damage public trust. When pressure mounts, duty requires pushing back on illegal or demeaning practices, even if an option looks “efficient.”

When evaluating an economic development proposal (e.g., a sports facility, innovation district, or logistics hub), apply both lenses:

1. **Stakeholder and impact map (utilitarian):** Who benefits, who bears costs, over what time horizon? What are credible counterfactuals? What safeguards shrink harms?
2. **Respect and rights (Kantian):** Are affected communities treated as partners with real decision rights? Are any groups used as mere means (e.g., displacement, pollution burdens, data exploitation)?
3. **Distribution and equity:** Do benefits and burdens track existing inequalities—or reduce them? Are mitigations funded and enforceable?
4. **Transparency and accountability:** Are assumptions, models, and contracts public and contestable? Are there clear metrics, audits, and exit/debarment clauses?
5. **Stewardship and sustainability:** Does the strategy protect long-term public value (fiscal health, climate resilience, land use, intergenerational equity), not just near-term headlines?

Ethical administration is not naïve idealism; it is risk management and trust building. Programs designed with respect, transparency, and equity are more durable, face fewer legal and political shocks, and deliver more legitimate prosperity. Conversely, when agencies chase visible gains while ignoring means—think of high-profile cases of fraud, emissions cheating, or fake accounts—the result is costly remediation, reputational harm, and public cynicism that undermines future policy capacity.

The upshot for public servants: lead with values, verify with evidence, and govern with humility. Economic development that is outcome-positive and rights-respecting is not only ethically sound—it's the surest path to resilient, shared prosperity.

This page titled 10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development

As we conclude the chapter, we widen the aperture from compliance and controls to the long-term obligations of public service: advancing prosperity without sacrificing people or the planet. In ethics terms, this is where duty (respecting rights and dignity), outcomes (maximizing shared well-being), and **stewardship** (intergenerational responsibility) meet.

What “sustainability” means in public service

We adopt the widely used UN definition: sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” In practice, sustainability is both a means (the choices we make—e.g., energy efficiency, zero-waste operations, equitable land use) and an end (a durable, healthy community and planet). For public agencies, this translates into a broadened “bottom line” often summarized as People, Planet, Prosperity (the public-sector version of the private sector’s “triple bottom line”). Ethical administration asks not only “Is this legal and affordable?” but also “Does this respect rights, reduce harm, and preserve capacity for the next generation?”

Social responsibility as a public duty (beyond bare legality)

Law establishes the floor; ethics raises the ceiling. Communities increasingly expect government to model responsible behavior, not merely enforce it on others. That expectation sits “above and beyond” minimum legal compliance and squarely within our professional obligations: act with integrity, fairness, transparency, and stewardship. In economic development, that means designing programs that create value while minimizing externalities (pollution, displacement, inequitable burdens) and sharing benefits with those historically left out.

Building a sustainability mindset inside government

Ethical leaders cultivate a sustainability mindset across the workforce and with partners. Concretely, that looks like:

- **Policy design tied to public values.** Link incentives, grants, or tax expenditures to enforceable standards (local living-wage jobs, emissions targets, affordable housing set-asides, community benefits agreements).
- **Procurement as a lever.** Specify recycled content, low-carbon materials, right-to-repair, data-privacy safeguards, and workforce standards; prefer vendors with verifiable ESG performance and community partnerships.
- **Operational practices.** Implement waste-reduction, energy-efficiency, and fleet electrification; require agency-wide sustainability and equity training; integrate climate and equity screens into budget requests.
- **Measurement and accountability.** Publish clear, public metrics (e.g., emissions reduced, households lifted out of energy burden, small businesses retained, displacement avoided), audit results, and adjust.

Practical illustrations

- **Micro-changes, macro-impact.** City hall reduces printed materials by default, shifts to e-permitting, and standardizes duplex printing; annual reporting shows tons of paper saved, costs reduced, and emissions avoided—and the policy becomes a regional shared service for smaller jurisdictions.
- **Waste-to-value.** A county corrections program diverts food waste from facilities to a municipal composting partner; the compost supports urban tree planting in heat-vulnerable neighborhoods—linking planet (less landfill methane) and people (cooler streets, better air).
- **Circular procurement.** A school district pilots playground surfacing sourced from recycled shoes through a buy-recycled contract clause; the program expands to include refurbished devices and furniture, cutting costs and waste while supporting local refurbishers.

These examples mirror private-sector stories you may know (paper-use reduction, staple/metal recycling, biodiesel conversion, resale programs), but anchored in public value and public accountability.

Why sustainability is also smart self-interest

Acting socially and environmentally responsibly isn’t in tension with the public mission—it protects it. Agencies that plan with measurable milestones, publish results, and invite oversight generally face fewer legal challenges, build public trust, and deliver more durable economic outcomes. The ethical rationale (respect for persons; fairness in distribution; stewardship for future

residents) aligns with the pragmatic one (lower life-cycle costs, resilience to shocks, investor confidence, and healthier communities).

Bottom line for ethical public servants: Aim for policies and operations that make communities flourish—today and tomorrow. Use your levers (policy, procurement, budgeting, partnerships) to turn sustainability from a slogan into a standard, so that prosperity is shared, growth is responsible, and the benefits we create endure.

This page titled 10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](#).

10.5: Conclusion

Sustainable public leadership means designing and implementing policies that achieve results **and** remain socially and environmentally responsible over time. The chapter ties leadership, ethics, and policy-making to sustainable economic development, emphasizing a **servant-leadership mindset**—higher ethical maturity and “sustainability consciousness” that centers community well-being, future generations, and the planet. Effective public leaders must ensure decisions are not only **legal and impactful** but also **moral, socially responsible, environmentally responsible, and thus sustainable**. Practically, this requires asking—at every stage of the policy cycle—five tests: **Is it effective? Is it moral? Is it socially responsible? Is it sustainable as a means (environmentally responsible)? And is it sustainable as an end (enduring over time)?** When public servants meet these tests, their policies deliver durable benefits to **all stakeholders**—residents, institutions, the broader society, and future generations.

Key Terms

Sustainability (public sector) – Capacity to meet present needs while maximizing long-term public value, respecting ecological limits, and acting transparently and accountably.

Sustainable Economic Development – Growth strategies that create shared prosperity without shifting social or environmental costs to future generations.

Public Value – The net social benefit created by government actions as judged by legality, legitimacy, and outcomes for communities.

Intergenerational Equity – Fairness across time; today’s policies must not degrade options, resources, or rights of future residents.

Stewardship – Ethical duty to manage public resources, ecosystems, and institutional capacity for long-term community benefit.

Sustainability Consciousness – Awareness of environmental/social impacts coupled with willingness to act; linked to moral development and public-service motivation.

Systems Thinking – Holistic analysis of causes, feedback loops, and ripple effects across agencies, budgets, and neighborhoods.

Policy (Ethics-Aligned Definition) – A purposeful governmental course of action/inaction with lawful authority and implementation capacity.

Policy Cycle (Ethics Lens) – Agenda setting → analysis → decision → implementation → evaluation—each tested for rule of law, transparency, accountability, equity, and stewardship.

Easton Input–Output View – Framework that examines policy **inputs** (demands), **decisions** (authority), **outputs** (actions), and **outcomes** (effects)—with value questions at each stage.

Implementation Capacity – The people, processes, authority, and resources needed to turn decisions into equitable, legal results.

Stakeholder Mapping – Identifying beneficiaries, burdened groups, intermediaries, and historically excluded communities to guide design and engagement.

Transparency – Reason-giving, open evidence, and accessible documentation that allow the public to understand and scrutinize choices.

Accountability & Participation – Mechanisms for public input, oversight, redress, and shared decision influence (not just disclosure).

Equity & Care – Assessing and mitigating disparate impacts; centering dignity, inclusion, and community well-being.

Utilitarian Reasoning – Evaluating options by total benefits vs. harms across stakeholders; outcome-focused.

Kantian (Duty-Based) Reasoning – Ensuring means respect rights and treat people as ends; no group used merely as a tool.

People–Planet–Prosperity (Triple Aim) – Public-sector adaptation of the triple bottom line guiding policy and procurement.

Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) – Enforceable commitments (e.g., local hiring, living wages, anti-displacement, climate targets) tied to public subsidies or projects.

Equity/Environmental Justice Impact Assessment – Up-front analysis of who benefits and who bears burdens, with funded mitigations.

Procurement Ethics for Sustainability – Buying standards (buy-recycled, low-carbon, right-to-repair, workforce standards) that align spending with public values.

Conflicts of Interest & Debarment – Safeguards to prevent self-dealing and exclude unethical vendors; core to integrity in development deals.

Outputs vs. Outcomes – Actions taken (rules, dollars spent) versus real-world effects (jobs, emissions, displacement, trust).

Means vs. Ends Test – Five questions applied throughout: effective? moral? socially responsible? environmentally responsible (means)? sustainable as an end (enduring)?

Check for Learning:

1. **Sustainability** in public service means meeting present needs while maximizing long-term _____ value, respecting ecological limits, and acting transparently and accountably.
2. Ethical policy requires five checks at every stage: legality, transparency, accountability, _____, and stewardship.
3. Doing nothing is still a policy choice; _____ has distributive effects.
4. The extended ethics lens applies to Easton's model: inputs → decisions → _____ → outcomes.
5. **Intergenerational** _____ means today's policies must not degrade options or rights for future residents.
6. In economic development, **utilitarian** reasoning focuses on _____ (benefits vs. harms), while **Kantian** reasoning focuses on _____ (treating people as ends).
7. A **Community Benefits** _____ ties public subsidies to enforceable standards like local hiring or anti-displacement.
8. **Systems** _____ asks administrators to map feedback loops and ripple effects across agencies, budgets, and neighborhoods.
9. Measuring results requires distinguishing **outputs** (actions taken) from _____ (real-world effects).
10. The public-sector "triple aim" is often summarized as **People, Planet,** _____.

Answer Key

1. **public** (or **public value**)
 2. **equity** (or **care**)
 3. **inaction**
 4. **outputs**
 5. **equity**
 6. **outcomes; means**
 7. **Agreement**
 8. **thinking**
 9. **outcomes**
 10. **Prosperity**
-

This page titled 10.5: Conclusion is shared under a [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Tabitha Raber](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/@go/page/363071).

Index

A

abuse of power

[7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing](#)

accessible education

[InfoPage](#)

accountability

[1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters](#)

[1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service](#)

[1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies](#)

[1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration](#)

[1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service](#)

[1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service](#)

[1.7: Chapter 1 Summary](#)

[2.0: Introduction](#)

[2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making](#)

[2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?](#)

[2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy](#)

[3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams](#)

[3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels](#)

[3.5: Chapter 3 Summary](#)

[4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches](#)

[4.3: Deontological Ethics \(Duty-Based\)](#)

[5: Theories of Organizational Ethics](#)

[5.0: Introduction](#)

[5.1: Ethics in Public Administration \(Organizational Ethics\)](#)

[5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability](#)

[5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics](#)

[5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service](#)

[5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership](#)

[5.6: Chapter 5 Summary](#)

[6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics](#)

[6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration](#)

[7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service](#)

[7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct](#)

[7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know](#)

[7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing](#)

[7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture](#)

[7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice](#)

[7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector](#)

[7.7: Chapter Summary](#)

[8.0: Introduction](#)

[8.2: Rule of Law](#)

[8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention](#)

[8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control](#)

[8.5: Summary](#)

[9.0: Introduction](#)

[9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability](#)

[9.4: Active Community Engagement](#)

[10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View](#)

[10.0: Introduction](#)

[10.1: Introduction to Policy Making](#)

[10.2: Policy Making and Development](#)

[10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development](#)

[10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development](#)

[10.5: Conclusion](#)

[References/Attributions](#)

accountability systems

[6.0: Introduction](#)

accountable AI

[9.3: Transparency in Government](#)

adaptability

[4.2: Utilitarian Ethics \(Outcome-Based\)](#)

adaptive homework

[InfoPage](#)

administration

[2: Understanding Values and Ethics](#)

agency culture

[8.0: Introduction](#)

AI

[9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics](#)

[9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability](#)

algorithmic accountability

[9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics](#)

[9.5: Summary](#)

applied ethics

[2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?](#)

[4.0: Introduction](#)

[4.6: Chapter 4 Summary](#)

Aristotle

[4.4: Virtue Ethics \(Character-Based\)](#)

artificial intelligence

[9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability](#)

audits

[7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector](#)

B

bias

[9.5: Summary](#)

business ethics

[4.0: Introduction](#)

C

care model

[6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics](#)

categorical imperative

[4.3: Deontological Ethics \(Duty-Based\)](#)

[4.6: Chapter 4 Summary](#)

character

[4.4: Virtue Ethics \(Character-Based\)](#)

CIA

[7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct](#)

citizen participation

[10.2: Policy Making and Development](#)

citizen trust

[1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration](#)

citizens

[5.1: Ethics in Public Administration \(Organizational Ethics\)](#)

citizenship

[8.2: Rule of Law](#)

civic engagement

[1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service](#)

civic involvement

[9.4: Active Community Engagement](#)

civic participation

[7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing](#)

[9.3: Transparency in Government](#)

civic responsibilities

[4.5: Communitarian Ethics \(Community-Based\)](#)

civil war

[7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct](#)

collaboration

[9.4: Active Community Engagement](#)

College

[TitlePage](#)

communication

[7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture](#)

communitarian ethics

[4.5: Communitarian Ethics \(Community-Based\)](#)

community

[2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy](#)

[3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service](#)

[9.4: Active Community Engagement](#)

community benefit

[4.2: Utilitarian Ethics \(Outcome-Based\)](#)

community responsibilities

[4.5: Communitarian Ethics \(Community-Based\)](#)

compassion

[3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service](#)

competing values

[3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics](#)

compliance

[1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies](#)

[7.0: Introduction](#)

[7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector](#)

[8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention](#)

[10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development](#)

compliance models

[5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics](#)

compliance program

[8.5: Summary](#)

conflict of interest

[1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined](#)

[1.7: Chapter 1 Summary](#)

[5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service](#)

[7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing](#)

[7.7: Chapter Summary](#)

conflict resolution

[7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct](#)

conflicts of interest

[7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service](#)

congressional inquiries

[7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct](#)

consequences

[7.0: Introduction](#)

consequentialism

[4.2: Utilitarian Ethics \(Outcome-Based\)](#)

conventional

[6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice](#)

core values

[5: Theories of Organizational Ethics](#)

corruption

- 1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters
- 1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service
- 1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service
- 1.7: Chapter 1 Summary
- 5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service
- 6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration
- 7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing
- 8: Principles of Fighting Corruption
- 8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy
- 8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention
- 8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control
- 8.5: Summary

corruption control

- 8.0: Introduction
- References/Attributions

corruption prevention

- 1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service
- 7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice

courage

- 4.4: Virtue Ethics (Character-Based)

critical thinking

- 4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches

cyber resilience

- 9.3: Transparency in Government

cybersecurity

- 9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics
- 9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience

D

data governance

- 9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics

data management

- 9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience

data protection

- 9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience

decision making

- 4: Theories of Individual Ethics
- 5.0: Introduction
- 9.4: Active Community Engagement

democracy

- 1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service
- 1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service
- 6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration
- 6.5: Chapter 6 Summary
- 8.2: Rule of Law

democratic accountability

- 9.3: Transparency in Government

democratic legitimacy

- 7.0: Introduction

democratic values

- 2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service

deontological

- 4: Theories of Individual Ethics

deontological ethics

- 4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches
- 4.3: Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based)
- 4.6: Chapter 4 Summary

detect corruption

- 8.0: Introduction

dilemmas

- 6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care

disparate impact

- 9.5: Summary

distributive justice

- 6.5: Chapter 6 Summary

due process

- 8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy

duty

- 4.3: Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based)
- 10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View

E

economic development

- 8.2: Rule of Law
- 10.0: Introduction
- 10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development

education

- 2: Understanding Values and Ethics

educational equity

- InfoPage

efficiency

- 2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service

empowerment

- 9.4: Active Community Engagement

energy efficiency

- 10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development

engagement

- 9.4: Active Community Engagement

environmental responsibility

- 10.5: Conclusion

environmental stewardship

- 10.0: Introduction

equal treatment

- 1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service
- 8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy

equitable partnership

- 9.5: Summary

equitable services

- 1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration

equity

- 1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service
- 2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service
- 6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics
- 6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration
- 9.0: Introduction
- 10.0: Introduction
- 10.1: Introduction to Policy Making
- 10.2: Policy Making and Development

Ethical

- TitlePage

ethical action

- 2.0: Introduction

ethical analysis

- 3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels
- 10.2: Policy Making and Development

ethical behavior

- 1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters
- 1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined
- 1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service
- 3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams
- 5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service
- 5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership
- 6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service
- 6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration
- 7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture
- 7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice
- References/Attributions

ethical challenges

- 5: Theories of Organizational Ethics
- 5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service
- 7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing

ethical choices

- 6.0: Introduction

ethical climate

- 5.6: Chapter 5 Summary
- 7.7: Chapter Summary

ethical codes

- 5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics
- 7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice

ethical conduct

- 1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined
- 3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels
- 5.1: Ethics in Public Administration (Organizational Ethics)

ethical culture

- 3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels
- 5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership

ethical dilemma

- 3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams

ethical dilemmas

- 3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics
- 3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service
- 3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies
- 3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels
- 3.5: Chapter 3 Summary
- 6.0: Introduction
- 6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service
- 7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service

ethical expectations

- 2.1: The Fact-Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making

ethical frameworks

- 4: Theories of Individual Ethics

ethical integrity

- 4.3: Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based)

ethical leadership

- 3.5: Chapter 3 Summary
- 5: Theories of Organizational Ethics
- 5.0: Introduction
- 5.6: Chapter 5 Summary
- 7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service
- 7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture

ethical obligations

- 4.5: Communitarian Ethics (Community-Based)

ethical positions

6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care

ethical principles

5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability

5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership

7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know

ethical reasoning

4.0: Introduction

4.4: Virtue Ethics (Character-Based)

6.5: Chapter 6 Summary

ethical standards

1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies

5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics

9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability

ethical theories

9.0: Introduction

ethical theory

8.0: Introduction

10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development

ethics

Part I – Foundations of Ethics in Public Service

1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters

1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies

1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration

1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service

1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service

1.7: Chapter 1 Summary

2.0: Introduction

2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?

2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy

3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics

3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service

3.5: Chapter 3 Summary

4: Theories of Individual Ethics

4.0: Introduction

4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches

4.6: Chapter 4 Summary

5: Theories of Organizational Ethics

5.0: Introduction

5.1: Ethics in Public Administration (Organizational Ethics)

6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice

6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service

7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service

7.0: Introduction

7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct

7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know

7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing

7.7: Chapter Summary

8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy

8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention

9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience

10.0: Introduction

10.1: Introduction to Policy Making

10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development

10.5: Conclusion

References/Attributions

Ethics Challenges

Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice

Ethics in Governance

Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice

eudaimonia

4.4: Virtue Ethics (Character-Based)

evidence

2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making

F

fairness

1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters

1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service

2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making

2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service

2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy

2.6: Chapter 2 Summary

4.0: Introduction

4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches

4.2: Utilitarian Ethics (Outcome-Based)

4.3: Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based)

5.1: Ethics in Public Administration (Organizational Ethics)

5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability

5.6: Chapter 5 Summary

6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care

6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration

7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know

8.2: Rule of Law

10.2: Policy Making and Development

federal employees

1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined

federal information policy

9.3: Transparency in Government

Fighting Corruption

Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice

financial health

7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector

financial transactions

1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined

fraud detection

7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector

G

gifts

1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined

Gilligan

6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care

6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating

Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service

good governance

1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies

governance

1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters

1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service

2: Understanding Values and Ethics

2.0: Introduction

2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service

5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability

5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service

6.5: Chapter 6 Summary

8: Principles of Fighting Corruption

8.2: Rule of Law

8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention

8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control

9.0: Introduction

9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability

9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience

10.0: Introduction

10.1: Introduction to Policy Making

References/Attributions

governance risk

8.0: Introduction

8.5: Summary

Governing

TitlePage

government

5.1: Ethics in Public Administration (Organizational Ethics)

greatest good

4.2: Utilitarian Ethics (Outcome-Based)

Guatemala

7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct

H

harm prevention

9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience

healthcare

2: Understanding Values and Ethics

higher education

InfoPage

honesty

4.3: Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based)

4.4: Virtue Ethics (Character-Based)

human dignity

2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making

human oversight

9.5: Summary

human rights

6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice

8.2: Rule of Law

I

Immanuel Kant

4.3: Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based)

impartiality

5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability

inclusion

10.2: Policy Making and Development

independent oversight bodies

5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics

individual duties

7.0: Introduction

individual ethics

- Part II – Theories of Ethical Reasoning
- 4: Theories of Individual Ethics
- 4.6: Chapter 4 Summary

individual rights

- 4.3: Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based)
- 4.5: Communitarian Ethics (Community-Based)

information access

- 5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics

innovation

- 9.0: Introduction

integrity

- TitlePage
- Part I – Foundations of Ethics in Public Service
- 1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters
- 1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service
- 1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies
- 1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration
- 1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service
- 1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service
- 1.7: Chapter 1 Summary
- 2.0: Introduction
- 2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?
- 3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels
- 3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service
- 3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams
- 3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels
- 4.4: Virtue Ethics (Character-Based)
- 5: Theories of Organizational Ethics
- 5.1: Ethics in Public Administration (Organizational Ethics)
- 5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability
- 5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership
- 6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration
- 7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know
- 7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture
- 7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice
- 7.7: Chapter Summary
- 8.0: Introduction
- 8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy
- 8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention
- 10.0: Introduction
- References/Attributions

interactive learning

- InfoPage

internal control system

- 8.5: Summary

investigations

- 8: Principles of Fighting Corruption

J

justice

- 2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making
- 2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service
- 2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?
- 2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy
- 2.6: Chapter 2 Summary
- 4.0: Introduction
- 4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches
- 4.4: Virtue Ethics (Character-Based)
- 5.0: Introduction
- 6.0: Introduction
- 6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice
- 6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration
- 8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy

justice model

- 6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics

justice systems

- 3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies

K

Kantian ethics

- 10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development

Kohlberg

- 6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice
- 6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care
- 6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service

L

laws

- 1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies
- 3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels

leadership

- 3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams
- 5.0: Introduction
- 5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership
- 6.0: Introduction
- 7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture

learning objectives

- 2: Understanding Values and Ethics

legal enforcement

- 8.2: Rule of Law

legal system

- 8.2: Rule of Law

LibreTexts

- InfoPage

M

macro analysis

- 3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics

macro ethics

- 3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels
- 6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics
- 6.5: Chapter 6 Summary
- 10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View

macro level

- Part I – Foundations of Ethics in Public Service

Maslow

- 6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service

meaningful engagement

- 9.5: Summary

measurement

- 8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control

mental health

- 6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care

meso analysis

- 3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics

meso ethics

- 3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels
- 6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics
- 10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View

meso level

- Part I – Foundations of Ethics in Public Service

metaethics

- 2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?
- 2.6: Chapter 2 Summary

micro analysis

- 3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics

micro ethics

- 3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels
- 6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics
- 10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View

micro level

- Part I – Foundations of Ethics in Public Service

misconduct

- 8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy

moral development

- 6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice
- 6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care
- 6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service

moral issues

- 2.0: Introduction

moral judgment

- 3.5: Chapter 3 Summary

moral principles

- 2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making
- 4.0: Introduction

moral realism

- 2.6: Chapter 2 Summary

moral reasoning

- 6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice

moral relativism

- 2.6: Chapter 2 Summary

moral values

- 2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?
- 6.5: Chapter 6 Summary
- References/Attributions

morality of care

- 6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care

N

NIST AI RMF

- 9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics

NIST Privacy Framework

- 9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics

normative ethics

- 2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?
- 4.0: Introduction
- 4.6: Chapter 4 Summary

Nuccio

- 7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct

O

OER

- InfoPage

online access

- 9.3: Transparency in Government

open communication

- 5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership

open government

- 9.3: Transparency in Government

operational efficiency

- 7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector

organizational culture

- 3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams
- 3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels
- 3.5: Chapter 3 Summary
- 5: Theories of Organizational Ethics
- 5.6: Chapter 5 Summary
- 6.0: Introduction
- 6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service
- 7.0: Introduction
- 7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture

organizational ethics

- Part II – Theories of Ethical Reasoning
- 5: Theories of Organizational Ethics
- 5.0: Introduction
- 5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics
- 5.6: Chapter 5 Summary
- 7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service

organizational performance

- 7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector

organizational values

- 5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership

outcomes

- 10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View

outside employment

- 1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined

oversight body

- 8.5: Summary

oversight mechanisms

- 5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics

P

participation

- 10.1: Introduction to Policy Making

personal integrity

- 3.5: Chapter 3 Summary
- 5.0: Introduction

personal responsibility

- 3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service

personal values

- 3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels

policies

- 3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels
- 8: Principles of Fighting Corruption

policy changes

- 3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies

policy cycle

- 10.1: Introduction to Policy Making

policy design

- 10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development

policy guidance

- 8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control

policy reform

- 3.5: Chapter 3 Summary

postconventional

- 6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice

Practicing Ethics

- Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice

preconventional

- 6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice

prevent corruption

- 8.0: Introduction

prevention

- 8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention

privacy

- 9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics
- 9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience
- 9.3: Transparency in Government

professional ethics

- 5.6: Chapter 5 Summary
- 7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service
- 7.7: Chapter Summary

professional integrity

- 3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics

Public

- TitlePage

public administration

- Part I – Foundations of Ethics in Public Service
- 1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service
- 1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service
- 1.7: Chapter 1 Summary
- 2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service
- 5: Theories of Organizational Ethics
- 5.1: Ethics in Public Administration (Organizational Ethics)
- 5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability
- 5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service
- 6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service
- 6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration
- 7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service
- 7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know
- 7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice
- 9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability References/Attributions

public agency

- 8: Principles of Fighting Corruption

public feedback

- 1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration

public health

- 4: Theories of Individual Ethics

public health policies

- 4.5: Communitarian Ethics (Community-Based)

public institutions

- 10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View

public interest

- 3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics
- 5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability
- 5.6: Chapter 5 Summary
- 6.5: Chapter 6 Summary
- 7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know

public leaders

- 10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development

public participation

- 9.4: Active Community Engagement

public perception

- 8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control

public policy

- 2: Understanding Values and Ethics
- 2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service
- 6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics
- Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice
- 10.0: Introduction
- 10.1: Introduction to Policy Making
- 10.2: Policy Making and Development

public reporting

- 7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector

public safety

- 2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service

Public Sector Ethics

- Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice

public servants

- 6.0: Introduction
- 9.0: Introduction

public service

1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters
1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined
1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration
1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service
2: Understanding Values and Ethics
2.0: Introduction
2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making
2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?
2.6: Chapter 2 Summary
3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels
3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics
3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service
3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams
3.5: Chapter 3 Summary
4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches
4.3: Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based)
4.5: Communitarian Ethics (Community-Based)
5.0: Introduction
5.1: Ethics in Public Administration (Organizational Ethics)
5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service
6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service
Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice
7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct
7.2: Transparency and the Public’s Right to Know
7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing
10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development
10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development
References/Attributions

public service ethics

3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies

public service responsibility

3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies

public trust

1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters
1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined
1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service
1.7: Chapter 1 Summary
2: Understanding Values and Ethics
5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service
6.5: Chapter 6 Summary
7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service
7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing
7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice
7.7: Chapter Summary
8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy
8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention
9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience
9.3: Transparency in Government

public value

10.2: Policy Making and Development
10.5: Conclusion

publicservice

2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy

publictrust

2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy

Q

qualitative

8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control

quantitative

8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control

R

Raber

TitlePage

real case

7.0: Introduction

Reasoning

TitlePage

recognition

9.5: Summary

reform

3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies

regulations

1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies

reporting

8: Principles of Fighting Corruption
8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention

respect

9.5: Summary

responsibilities

3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics
6.2: Gilligan’s Morality of Care

responsible citizenship

10.2: Policy Making and Development

responsible governance

1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration
7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice
rights
6.2: Gilligan’s Morality of Care
rights and responsibilities balance
4.6: Chapter 4 Summary

risk

8: Principles of Fighting Corruption
8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control

risk assessment

8.5: Summary

risk management

9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics
9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability
9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience

rule of law

1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service
1.7: Chapter 1 Summary
5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability
5.6: Chapter 5 Summary
7.7: Chapter Summary
8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy
8.2: Rule of Law
8.5: Summary
9.0: Introduction

S

safety regulations

3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service

sanctions

8: Principles of Fighting Corruption

Service

TitlePage

service delivery

1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration
1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service
1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service
1.7: Chapter 1 Summary

shared values

6.0: Introduction

social equity

1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service

social responsibilities

4.5: Communitarian Ethics (Community-Based)

social responsibility

10.0: Introduction
10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development
10.5: Conclusion

societal ethics

Part II – Theories of Ethical Reasoning
6.0: Introduction
6.5: Chapter 6 Summary

societal systems

3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels

societal values

6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics
7.0: Introduction

stage model

6.1: Kohlberg’s Morality of Justice

stakeholder analysis

10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development

stakeholders

4: Theories of Individual Ethics
7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector
10.1: Introduction to Policy Making

stewardship

6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics
8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy
10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View
10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development

strengths and weaknesses

4.2: Utilitarian Ethics (Outcome-Based)

structural racism

3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies

sustainability

10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View
10.0: Introduction
10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development
10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development

sustainable community

9.4: Active Community Engagement

sustainable economic development

10.5: Conclusion

Sustainable Ethics

Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice

sustainable public leadership

10.5: Conclusion

systemic bias

3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies

3.5: Chapter 3 Summary

systemic ethics

Part II – Theories of Ethical Reasoning

systemic issues

3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels

systems thinking

10.1: Introduction to Policy Making

T

Tabitha

TitlePage

Taft

TitlePage

team dynamics

3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams

technology

9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability

technology integration

InfoPage

theoretical ethics

4.0: Introduction

theories

Part II – Theories of Ethical Reasoning

theory to practice

7.0: Introduction

training

7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice

8: Principles of Fighting Corruption

training and development

5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership

transparency

1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters

1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service

1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies

1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public

Administration

1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service

1.7: Chapter 1 Summary

2.0: Introduction

2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?

3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams

5: Theories of Organizational Ethics

5.0: Introduction

5.1: Ethics in Public Administration (Organizational Ethics)

5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability

5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics

5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service

5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership

5.6: Chapter 5 Summary

6.0: Introduction

6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration

7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service

7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know

7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing

7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture

7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector

7.7: Chapter Summary

8.0: Introduction

8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention

8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control

8.5: Summary

9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics

9.0: Introduction

9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability

9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience

9.3: Transparency in Government

9.4: Active Community Engagement

9.5: Summary

10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy,

People, and the Long View

10.1: Introduction to Policy Making

10.2: Policy Making and Development

10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic

Development

10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and

Ethical Economic Development

10.5: Conclusion

trust

1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies

7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture

trustworthy AI

9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics

9.5: Summary

U

unequal treatment

3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies

universal principles

6.5: Chapter 6 Summary

utilitarian

4: Theories of Individual Ethics

utilitarian ethics

4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches

4.2: Utilitarian Ethics (Outcome-Based)

4.6: Chapter 4 Summary

utilitarianism

2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy

2.6: Chapter 2 Summary

10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development

V

vaccination campaigns

4.5: Communitarian Ethics (Community-Based)

values

Part I – Foundations of Ethics in Public Service

2.0: Introduction

2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making

2.6: Chapter 2 Summary

3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service

7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture

virtue

2.6: Chapter 2 Summary

virtue ethics

4: Theories of Individual Ethics

4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches

4.4: Virtue Ethics (Character-Based)

4.6: Chapter 4 Summary

virtues

4.4: Virtue Ethics (Character-Based)

7.0: Introduction

W

waste fraud abuse

1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined

whistleblower protection

5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics

whistleblower protections

7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct

whistleblowers

8.0: Introduction

whistleblowing

7.7: Chapter Summary

8.5: Summary

workplace ethics

3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams

Glossary

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

References/Attributions

Chapter 1:

This chapter draws on multiple sources. Core concepts were adapted from:

Yadav, B. (2024). *Ethics in Public Administration: Why Integrity Matters?* RESEARCH REVIEW International Journal of Multidisciplinary, 9(1), 282–286. <https://doi.org/10.31305/rrijm.2024.v09.n01.035> (open access)

U.S. Department of the Interior. *Ethics Guidance and Standards for Public Service*. Retrieved from doi.gov (public domain content).

Original instructional content written by **Tabitha Raber**.

Supplemental adaptation, simplification, and expansion were generated with the assistance of AI tools to align with undergraduate teaching needs.

Chapter 2:

APA citation

American Society for Public Administration, Ethics and Standards Implementation Committee. (2015, November 22). *Draft report* (Public domain).

Attribution note for your textbook

This section incorporates public-domain material from the American Society for Public Administration's Ethics and Standards Implementation Committee (Draft, Nov. 22, 2015). Adapted for clarity and alignment to a public service ethics curriculum. No endorsement implied.

Chapter 3:

Mendie, J., & Udofia, S. (2024). Perspective Chapter: The Place of Virtue Ethics in Public Service Delivery. IntechOpen. doi: 10.5772/intechopen.1004095

Chapter 4:

This chapter includes material adapted from Ethics by Manuela A. Gomez, Lumen Learning, licensed under CC BY 4.0. The content has been adapted and expanded by Tabitha Raber, with AI assistance, to align with applications in public service ethics.

Gomez, M. A. (n.d.). *Ethics*. In Lumen Learning: Introduction to Ethics. Lumen Learning. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/ethics/>

Licensed under CC BY 4.0. Adapted and expanded by Tabitha Raber, with AI assistance, to apply to ethics in public service.

Chapter 5:

Source (adapted): Renfro, J. L. *Public Administration: The Essentials*. Used as open educational resource. Text has been **adapted for an ethics-in-public-service lens** (reorganized sections, added public-service examples, updated terms) and **lightly edited with AI assistance** for clarity and style. Any errors or interpretations are the adapter's alone.

For ancillary materials, contact the author: jayme.renfro@uni.edu.

Chapter 6:

Seifert, K., & Sutton, R. (2020). *The role of moral values in everyday life: Moral development*. In *Educational Psychology*. University of Minnesota. <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=153>. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

McCartney, S., & Parent, R. (2020). *Ethical behavior & moral values in everyday life*. In *Ethics in Law Enforcement*. BCcampus. <https://opentextbc.ca/ethicsinlawenforcement/>. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Adapted and expanded by Tabitha Raber, with assistance from AI tools, to apply concepts to the field of public administration and societal ethics.

Chapter 7:

“Chapter 8: Ethics and Accountability in Public Administration,” University of Minnesota Manifold / Open Education Network. *This chapter has been adapted, reorganized, and aligned to a public-administration ethics context. AI tools were used to assist with editing and formatting. No endorsement by the original authors or publisher is implied.*

License: Please insert the exact license displayed on the Manifold chapter landing page (e.g., CC BY 4.0, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0, etc.).

Chapter 8:

Agrast, M. D., Botero, J. C., & Ponce, A. (2011). *The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2011*. The World Justice Project.

Barro, R. J. (1997). *Determinants of economic growth: A cross-country empirical study*. MIT Press.

Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct. (2002). United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). https://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/corruption/judicial_group/Bangalore_principles.pdf

Boyle, D. M., & Gaydon, D. J. (2019). SEC whistleblower program expands. *Strategic Finance*, 101(5), 38–45.

Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO). (n.d.). *Internal Control—Integrated Framework*. <https://www.coso.org>

Financial Times. (2017, August 2). *Why rewarding whistleblowers is essential*. FT.com.

Keltner, D. (2016, October). Don’t let power corrupt you. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2016/10/dont-let-power-corrupt-you>

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). *Authority* [Legal Dictionary]. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/authority#legalDictionary>

Near, J. P., & Miceli, M. P. (1985). Organizational dissidence: The case of whistle-blowing. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 4(1), 1–16.

OECD. (2015). Effectiveness and fairness of judicial systems. In *Government at a Glance 2015*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2015-65-en

Sinclair, A. (1995). The chameleon of accountability: Forms and discourses. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 20(2–3), 219–237.

Tamanaha, B. Z. (2012). The history and elements of the rule of law. *Singapore Journal of Legal Studies*, 232–247.

United Nations. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (arts. 7 & 10). <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

United Nations. (n.d.). *What is the rule of law?* <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/what-is-the-rule-of-law/>

United Nations. (n.d.). *Basic principles on the independence of the judiciary*. <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/blog/document/basic-principles-on-the-independence-of-the-judiciary/>

Whistleblowing policy study. (2013). Companies’ use of whistleblowing to detect fraud: An examination of corporate whistleblowing policies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 114(2), 283–295. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1348-9>
(Author names were not provided in the source you supplied; retain as given.)

Statute of limitations. (n.d.). *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/statute-of-limitations>

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). (n.d.). *Homepage*. <https://www.icij.org/>

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). (n.d.). *Luanda Leaks*. <https://www.icij.org/investigations/luanda-leaks/>

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). (n.d.). *Panama Papers*. <https://www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers/>

Attributions & Permissions

· Principles of Corruption Control — *The American Anti-Corruption Institute, Inc. (AACI)*. Licensed under CC BY. Used and adapted with permission for *Ethical Reasoning in Public Service*. © 2023 AACI.

Permission statement (via email): “‘Principles of Corruption Control’ by The American Anti-Corruption Institute, Inc. is licensed under CC BY. People can reuse/adapt it (even commercially) as long as they give credit to The American Anti-Corruption Institute,

Inc. It may be used and adapted with permission in Ethical Reasoning in Public Service.”

- United Nations materials (Rule of Law page; UDHR; Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary) — cited with links to official UN pages. Content is referenced; any reproduced text should follow UN terms of use.
- OECD material — cited with DOI from *Government at a Glance 2015*. Follow OECD terms for reuse beyond citation.
- Other sources (HBR, Strategic Finance, Britannica, FT.com, WJP, COSO, JBE articles, ICIJ investigations) — cited for reference; any quotations or figures should comply with each publisher’s reuse policies.

Chapter 9:

9.1 Citation: Primary source (public domain):

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). (2020). *NIST Privacy Framework: A Tool for Improving Privacy through Enterprise Risk Management (Version 1.0)*. U.S. Department of Commerce, NIST. Public domain work of the U.S. federal government (17 U.S.C. § 105).

Adaptation note:

This textbook section paraphrases, reorganizes, and contextualizes concepts from the above NIST resources for an *Ethics in Public Service* audience. Any errors or interpretations are the author’s own; NIST does not endorse this adaptation.

AI assistance disclosure:

Drafting and editing support were provided by AI (GPT-5 Thinking) to help structure, paraphrase, and align content with prior chapters. The author reviewed, revised, and approved all text.

9.2 Citation: Primary source (public domain):

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). (2020). *NIST Privacy Framework: A Tool for Improving Privacy through Enterprise Risk Management (Version 1.0)*. U.S. Department of Commerce, NIST. Public domain work of the U.S. federal government (17 U.S.C. § 105).

Adaptation note:

This textbook section paraphrases, reorganizes, and contextualizes concepts from the above NIST resources for an *Ethics in Public Service* audience. Any errors or interpretations are the author’s own; NIST does not endorse this adaptation.

AI assistance disclosure:

Drafting and editing support were provided by AI (GPT-5 Thinking) to help structure, paraphrase, and align content with prior chapters. The author reviewed, revised, and approved all text.

9.3 Primary Section Citation: This work by Sunlight Foundation, unless otherwise noted, is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Adaptation note:

This section paraphrases, reorganizes, and contextualizes concepts from the above Sunlight Foundation resources for an *Ethics in Public Service* audience. Any errors or interpretations are the author’s own; Sunlight Foundation does not endorse this adaptation.

AI assistance disclosure:

Drafting and editing support were provided by AI (GPT-5 Thinking) to help structure, paraphrase, and align content with prior chapters. The author reviewed, revised, and approved all text.

9.4 Citation

This section (9.4, “Meaningful Community Engagement”) adapts material from *Building Sustainable Communities: The Impact of Engagement* by Ryan Plummer, Amanda Smits, Samantha Witkowski, Bridget McGlynn, Derek Armitage, Ella-Kari Muhl, and Jodi Johnston (2022), licensed **CC BY 4.0**. **Adaptations:** reframed concepts for public administration ethics; added definitions, examples, and tying paragraphs; edited for length and flow; minor wording changes. AI tools were used for editing and alignment.

Short caption credit (for tables/figures or sidebars)

Adapted from Plummer et al., *Building Sustainable Communities: The Impact of Engagement* (2022), **CC BY 4.0**.

Chapter 10:

Senathip, T., Mujtaba, B. G., & Cavico, F. J. (2017). *Policy-making considerations for ethical and sustainable economic development*. **HCBE Faculty Articles**, 1021. NSUWorks, Nova Southeastern University. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hcbe_facarticles/1021

Attribution / Adaptation statement:

This chapter adapts and synthesizes material from Senathip, Mujtaba, and Cavico (2017), recontextualized for public administration ethics. Additional framing, examples, and editorial changes were developed by the textbook author with AI assistance. Original authors retain their rights; any reuse beyond citation should consult the NSUWorks record and rights holder.

Detailed Licensing

Overview

Title: [Governing with Integrity: Ethical Reasoning for Public Service \(Raber\)](#)

Webpages: 91

All licenses found:

- [CC BY 4.0](#): 92.3% (84 pages)
- [Undeclared](#): 7.7% (7 pages)

By Page

- [Governing with Integrity: Ethical Reasoning for Public Service \(Raber\)](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [Front Matter](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [TitlePage](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [InfoPage](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [Table of Contents](#) - [Undeclared](#)
 - [Licensing](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [Part I – Foundations of Ethics in Public Service](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [1: Ethics in Public Administration - Why Integrity Matters](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [1.0: Introduction](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [1.1: Ethics and Integrity Defined](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [1.2: Ethics and Integrity as Foundations of Public Service](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [1.3: Integrity in Democratic Societies](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [1.4: Key Functions of Integrity in Public Administration](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [1.5: Consequences of Weak Integrity in Public Service](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [1.6: Why Integrity Matters for the Future of Public Service](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [1.7: Chapter 1 Summary](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [2: Understanding Values and Ethics](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [2.0: Introduction](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [2.1: The Fact–Value Distinction in Public Decision-Making](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [2.2: Basic Questions about Values in Public Service](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [2.3: Metaethics- Where Do Ethical Standards Come From?](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [2.4: Well-Being as a Goal of Public Policy](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [2.5: Aesthetics and the Public Good](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [2.6: Chapter 2 Summary](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [3: Ethics at the Micro, Meso, and Macro Levels](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [3.0: Introduction- Connecting Integrity to Levels of Ethics](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [3.1: Micro-Level Ethics- Individual Responsibility in Public Service](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [3.2: Meso-Level Ethics- Ethical Culture within Organizations and Teams](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [3.3: Macro-Level Ethics- Societal Systems, Laws, and Policies](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [3.4: Key Concepts and Comparisons Across Levels](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [3.5: Chapter 3 Summary](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [Part II – Theories of Ethical Reasoning](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [4: Theories of Individual Ethics](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [4.0: Introduction](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [4.1: Personal Ethics- Four Ethical Approaches](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [4.2: Utilitarian Ethics \(Outcome-Based\)](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [4.3: Deontological Ethics \(Duty-Based\)](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [4.4: Virtue Ethics \(Character-Based\)](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [4.5: Communitarian Ethics \(Community-Based\)](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [4.6: Chapter 4 Summary](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [5: Theories of Organizational Ethics](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [5.0: Introduction](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [5.1: Ethics in Public Administration \(Organizational Ethics\)](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [5.2: Organizational Values – Integrity, Transparency and Accountability](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [5.3: Compliance Models in Organizational Ethics](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)
 - [5.4: Ethical Challenges in Public Service](#) - [CC BY 4.0](#)

- 5.5: The Role and Impact of Ethical Leadership - *CC BY 4.0*
- 5.6: Chapter 5 Summary - *CC BY 4.0*
- 6: Theories of Societal/Systemic Ethics - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 6.0: Introduction - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 6.1: Kohlberg's Morality of Justice - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 6.2: Gilligan's Morality of Care - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 6.3: Building Ethical Capacity- Integrating Understanding, Care, and Action in Public Service - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 6.4: The Importance of Ethical Behavior in Society and Public Administration - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 6.5: Chapter 6 Summary - *CC BY 4.0*
- Part III – Applied Ethics in Practice - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 7: Practicing Ethics in Public Service - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 7.0: Introduction - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 7.1: From Values to Codes of Conduct - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 7.2: Transparency and the Public's Right to Know - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 7.3: Oversight, Reporting, and Whistleblowing - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 7.4: Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 7.5: A Practical Decision Framework for Daily Practice - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 7.6: Promoting Accountability in the Public Sector - *Undeclared*
 - 7.7: Chapter Summary - *Undeclared*
 - 8: Principles of Fighting Corruption - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 8.0: Introduction - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 8.1: Why Corruption Control Matters for Democratic Legitimacy - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 8.2: Rule of Law - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 8.3: Investment in Corruption Prevention - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 8.4: Measuring and Incentivizing Corruption Control - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 8.5: Summary - *Undeclared*
 - 9: Emerging Challenges in Public Service Ethics - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 9.0: Introduction - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 9.1: AI and Algorithmic Accountability - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 9.2: Data Governance, Privacy, and Cyber Resilience - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 9.3: Transparency in Government - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 9.4: Active Community Engagement - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 9.5: Summary - *Undeclared*
 - 10: Sustainable Ethics in Public Service- Policy, People, and the Long View - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 10.0: Introduction - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 10.1: Introduction to Policy Making - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 10.2: Policy Making and Development - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 10.3: Ethics, Policy-Making, and Economic Development - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 10.4: Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Economic Development - *CC BY 4.0*
 - 10.5: Conclusion - *CC BY 4.0*
- Back Matter - *CC BY 4.0*
 - Index - *CC BY 4.0*
 - Glossary - *CC BY 4.0*
 - References/Attributions - *Undeclared*
 - Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*