

Q → Long

## Strands in Ethical Thinking

Ethics has been studied for many thousand of years and there are written records of what people have thought and argued about for much of this period.

There are some important ideas of ethics that are relevant to the ethical problems facing the software engineering.

### ⇒ Rules & Consequences

One view of morality that has been popular at many times in the past, although it is somewhat of favour at present, is that bad actions can be avoided and good actions ensured simply by following a set of rules.

The problem with the rule-based morality is that, in an ethical difficult situation, there are usually several different possible actions that might be taken and each of them breaks one or more rules or is otherwise undesirable.

The alternative to a rule-base morality is **consequentialism**. Consequentialists



believes that general rules are not specific enough to guide actions and the factors for judging an action must be the action's consequences.

## => Source of moral authority

Some people believe that moral authority lies with the individual, who by reflection and self-analysis develops a set of rules. Others believe that the moral authority must be located in larger units like organization, society or a political body.

If authority lies with a larger unit, it may be collective, in the sense that it reflects a consensus among the members of that unit or authority may be authoritarian that is it may lie with a leader or a small group of leaders.

All these possibilities have weaknesses

If moral authority is collective, there is a risk that it will never progress. In the absence of strong leadership, democratic bodies are notoriously conservative (resist change) and impetus (forces) reforms.

An authoritarian approach is too dependent on the individual exercising the authority.



## ⇒ Absolution & Relativism

~~Absolutists~~ believes that ethic

Absolution means that ethics and moral laws are same at all times, in all places and in all societies.

Relativism means that ethics and moral laws depends on time, place and circumstances. Generally, we accept the absolute validity of certain rules but we also recognize that many other laws and ethics depends on the society in which we live.

## ⇒ The doctrine of double effect

One difficulty that arises with rule-based system is conflict between diff rules

According to the doctrine of double effect, the foreseeable effect of an action can be divided into those that are intended and those that are merely foreseen but not intended.

The doctrine of double effect is intended to overcome problems in rule-based ethics by avoiding people going against system through warnings and if they continues their act, they could be fined and lost their jobs.