

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Sciences**

**Professional Ethics (HU 222)**

**ASSIGNMENT # 1**

**Title of the assignment: ………………………………………………………………………**

**SUBMITTED TO:**

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**SUBMITTED BY: Group Leader: Hassan Javed**

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Analysis of the Situation

In the scenario assigned, Mark with few other persons is in the upper chamber of a submarine which is running out of oxygen, has to decide whether to save himself and his fellows by pulling a latch which will kill an another otherwise safe but unconscious crew member in the lower chamber.

One aspect of this scenario is that whether the people in the upper chamber know about the hatch which could save their lives. It seems like only Mark knows about the hatch and must deal with the whole dilemma on his own. Is there a way to include other people views because collective wisdom is always better?

Another point to note is that what are the chances that the crew member in the lower chamber would survive because he is already unconscious.

**Analysis of the Options:**

Here Mark has two options. Stated below, both cause disaster.

* Pull the latch to save himself and his fellows in the upper chamber, killing the one unconscious crew member in the lower chamber.
* Do nothing and let himself and others die.

**How is this situation a dilemma?**

In this scenario Mark has two options either to kill the crew member in the lower chamber and save others or do nothing and die. Here both options are causing disaster, which makes the situation a dilemma. The situation also includes values and responsibility having no clear answer makes the dilemma an ethical one.

**Ethical Responsibility and Blame:**

Mark is in a situation where he has a social responsibility to save his fellows if he is able to and the only solution, he has is to pull the latch and bear the blame of killing a person. Hence Mark either does not fulfill his responsibility by doing nothing or pull the latch and put the blame of a murder on his shoulders.

**Ethical & Moral standards involved:**

* Right of life
* Social responsibility to help fellows in need when one is capable of.
* Self-centered vs Selfless.

Bellow are the tests to help us decide what Mark should do. First we will apply the test in the current scenario and then write every possible conclusion and point of view.

1. Harms & Utility Test: Do the benefits outweigh the harms, both short-term and long-term?

*In t*his case, we would s*ay that* there are more benefits than harms. Because in this situation if Mark pulls the hatch than, more lives would be saved as compared to the one who would be killed. And secondly, that person is already unconscious so even if the hatch is not pulled, there is no certainty that that person would make it.

We first need to figure out the exact chances of survival for Mark and the rest of the crew if they release the emergency switch. If the chances are more significant than the chances of a person who is already unconscious, then we would try to save as many lives as we can

In our opinion if we look at the situation regarding the harms and utility test then of course there are perks that overweigh the harms in the long run. For instance if we do not pull the latch for the oxygen to flow on the upper floor then there will be only one person alive whereas the others will die, in the second scenario if we pull the latch then there will be a majority of people who will be alive and only one person will die who is not even conscious. In short-term this might be a harmful situation.

No personal views in this test. Fact based.

1. Reversibility Test: Would I think this was a good choice if I changed places?

Reversibility test in this case has two possibilities. In the first one we analyze the situation from the perspective of the unconscious crew member while in the second one we analyze the situation from the perspective of the crew members in the upper chamber.

In the first case the person is unconscious, so he is unaware. We will test what we will feel in the afterlife after being killed to save many.

In second case however we can clearly see from the perspective of the people in upper chamber who probably unaware of the hatch which can save their lives. This

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| Name | Conclusion of this particular test |
| Hassan Javed | If I was the sole earner of the family and was killed, then I would have a guilt over myself that I left my family without any support. But as I have saved many lives by sacrificing myself, it would be a hero’s death and I would have that honour above all else. |
| Ali Ahmed | Since i was unconscious when the decision was made, i would be honored to have died a martyr without having felt pain during death. |
| Noor Abid | I would rather let the others survive |
| Arifullah Jan | I would not feel bad (in the afterlife) about being killed to save many. |
| Wajahat Zia | Killing a person for whatsoever reason is too big of a guilt on my conscious |
| Rimsha Sajid | There is a case where I can risk my life to save the life of the unconscious person. This would be a good case in the sense that he would be alive and safe but a bad case in the sense that my family would have to lose a family member. |

1. Legality Test: Would my choice violate a law, or a policy of my employer?

**Homicide vs Murder:**

Homicide is whenever one person kills another person while murder is a homicide which is unlawful. In other words, all homicides are not crimes; sometimes they can be ethically and legally justified. Examples include giving punishment, killing in defense or to prevent another crime (Valid in only certain cases.).

But again, law cannot cover everything and in such cases the decision is taken on the basics of the existing law somehow relatable and reasoning. In the current scenario we could not find any resource about similar scenarios, but we can find examples which can applied on only to perspective of the incident (if we pull the lever)

A relatively close legislation or conventions accepted worldwide is regards a justifiable killing as a death caused by defending himself/herself, or others from a crime. But here the person in the lower chamber means no harm to the people on the chamber above. Hence the killing will be a crime. This is what law says but that does not mean Mark should stop there because law is not complete. He should now raise the following questions:

* What are the chances that the relatives of the person in the lower chamber will sue Mark and what are the chances of the Mark to defend himself?
* Does Mark have enough resources to fight a case?
* Is Mark capable of bearing the punishments if any? In certain cases, a person has the willpower to care more about his personal moral values regardless of what the local legal system says.

**Why is there no legislation for this?**

Excusable killing adds confusion and causes loopholes in the law. If there were a law which allowed to kill one person, meaning no harm to others, to save others, it would be so easy for criminals to dodge the legal system. Apart from that it is even impossible to convert these types of scenarios to law. For example, we law cannot decide which person’s life has more worth. (Everyone is equal).

No individual views. Fact based.

1. Colleague Test: What would my professional colleague say?

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| Name | Conclusion of this particular test |
| Hassan Javed | He would have understood my decision and if he were in my shoes at that time, he would probably had done the same thing. |
| Ali Ahmed | He will understand it was overall the lesser of the two evils. |
| Arifullah Jan | He will trust and understand my decision. |
| Wajahat Zia | In my own eyes, I would’ve let the whole team down. Every soul is worth saving even in situations where there are certain we may die for his sake |

1. Publicity Test:

In publicity test we test what will Mark feel about the opinions of people when hs action appears in the news. It is quite clear that both of the options will face criticism. Hence Mark cannot get answer to his dilemma from this test.

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| Name | Conclusion of this particular test |
| Hassan Javed | There would be mixed opinions. On one side he would be getting praise for what he did and on the other side, there would be some people blaming him for his decision. Now either he can live his life in praise knowing that he saved many lives or live in guilt, knowing that he killed someone for that to happen. |
| Ali Ahmed | I would be praised since i tried to minimize the loss to our society as in the **theory of utilitarianism**. |
| Arifullah Jan | I think I will get mixed opinions and there’s no way out. |
| Wajahat Zia | Mixed opinions. However, people may understand the situation when explained thoroughly though, he would be blamed for taking the risk |

1. Common Practice Test (Universalizability):

This test verifies an action with society and analyze would society still function well if everyone starts doing something. For the current scenario which is very rare in daily life, will have no effect on the society. Hence the test is relatively not very helpful in this case.

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| Name | Conclusion of this particular test |
| Hassan Javed | It is for us to decide then and there if it is the right thing to do. This is not true for every situation as this situation is very rare. |
| Ali Ahmed | We cannot say it would be right as it depends on the case and our relation to the unconscious person, i can kill the entire crew to save my child as we are biologically protective of our relatives. |
| Noor Abid | There is no right decision to this. It's all based on cost to benefit analysis. |
| Arifullah Jan | There is no harm in any decision because these types of dilemmas are rare as compared to others (e.g. to steal or to stay hungry) |
| Wajahat Zia | After all considerations and options are taken into account can we determine the right course of action |
| Rimsha Sajid | There can be a case where I become that sheep which follows a herd. I can just save my life by pulling the latch and do not care about the person which is downstairs who is probably going to die |

1. Wise Relative Test:

**Wisdom comes with experience,** so it’s always better to consider elderly opinions. But in this case Mark has to decide on his own so he can imagine what his intellectual ideal would say about his decision.

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| Name | Conclusion of this test |
| Hassan Javed | I would have to decide then and there what to do. That would all depend on the situation and the morals that I have. I think that a wise elder would support my decision, as would anyone else if put in a similar situation. |
| Ali Ahmed | She would understand the fact that ultimately, I was right, I can’t let all of us die when there is a way to save us all. |

1. Hiding Test:

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| Name | Conclusion of this particular test |
| Hassan Javed | I would not hide what I did that time. It was a matter of spontaneous decision and I think the family of deceased would be proud that their member died to save other lives. |
| Ali Ahmed | Even though i would be satisfied i do not want others to know what i did since it would be very hard to face the family of the deceased, with them knowing i killed their relative/child in cold blood. |
| Noor Abid | I would want people to know my decision since it may or may not save lives. |
| Arifullah Jan | I would not feel ashamed of any of the two decisions and will let my spontaneous reaction decide. |

1. Self-respect Test: How will I feel about myself after I make this choice?

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| Name | Conclusion of this particular test |
| Hassan Javed | From a general point of view, I would feel relieved that I was able to save many lives but from a personal point of view I would feel guilt that I was so helpless to save someone despite of the many lives I saved. |
| Ali Ahmed | I would be happy to have saved myself firstly, secondly i would be content since his death was painless compared to if we all died in a state of consciousness. |
| Noor Abid | I would regret killing the other people by not pulling the hatch, knowing it would have saved them |
| Arifullah Jan | In the case of killing the one and saving many, I will feel better because I believe that the person will get the reward even if he does not have any option (unconscious). |

1. Bias Test: Is your action or decision biased towards or prejudiced against anyone or anything? Biases and prejudices work sub-consciously and need more careful analysis.

In the stated situation there is no clue that anyone is related to us in anyway or any other conditions that need consideration thus for us each life is individually equal.

Apart from the Mark’s own self. An easy way to solve an ethical dilemma including yourself as a party is sacrifice your own interests. This way the decision is mostly ethical.

No individual views. Fact based.

Conclusion

After the keeping in mind all the tests Mark’s spontaneous reaction will be justifiable. Most of the test suggests that Mark should get the blame of murder of one to save many. Hence Mark can pull the latch and save himself and his fellows and kill the crew member in the lower chamber. Mark is going to be punished for killing the crew member because Mark cannot justify his murder, but Mark will be most probably be happy because he did what thought was better without caring about the punishment.