



The College Admission Scandal

Catharina Anggono
Low Sin Yee Chloe
Jessica Tedja
Rivaldi Kongres
Wellson Archun Harend
Zhou Jing Yi

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A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of several modern skyscrapers with glass facades. The buildings are set against a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. A thin white rectangular frame is superimposed over the center of the image, enclosing the text.

01

Background

The College Admission Scandal




“Side Door” Entrance



Fabricated Sports Performances



Falsifying SAT/ACT Scores



Was it **ethical** for **the**
bribee (i.e., coaches,
proctors, etc.) to
accept bribes to
influence these
students'
admissions?



The Real Question



Ethical Theories Application

02

Assumptions



**Students have no
knowledge of their
parents' bribery**



**Bribees' recommendations
will always be admitted**



**Bribees "admitted"
students to solely
enrich themselves
from the bribes**



**Parents' bribery
money is written off
as "donations"**



Kantian Ethics

Principle of Universality

"Act Only According to the Maxim by which You Can at the Same Time Will That It Should Become a Universal law"

If everyone were to **accept bribes**, would it be acceptable?

Meritocracy to Moneyocracy

This would change the society from **meritocracy to moneyocracy** which is **undesirable**.

UNETHICAL

Principle of Humanity

"Act So That You treat Humanity, Whether in Your Own Person or in That of Another, Always As an End and Never As a Means Only"

Did **bribees** treat **the students** as ends in itself?

Enriching Themselves

As per our assumption, these **bribees** helped **the students** get admitted because of the money which means that **the students** were treated **as a means** to **enrich themselves**.

UNETHICAL

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of two modern skyscrapers with glass facades. The buildings are framed by a white rectangular border. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The word "Utilitarianism" is centered in the lower half of the image in a white serif font.

Utilitarianism

Bentham's Utilitarianism

- To achieve the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people.
- Everyone's happiness are equally important.
- Happiness value can be determined by the intensity, duration, remoteness, repeatability, extent of the pleasure and the certainty to which the pleasure will materialise.

Bentham's Utilitarianism

Happiness

Bribe Takers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enrich themselves through the bribe money they received.
Wealthy Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Guaranteed a spot in an ivy league school and have a better future because of the school's prestige.
Wealthy Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Receive income tax deduction for their supposedly "donation".- Enjoy elevated status in high society through bragging rights.- Parents who never went to college feel the satisfaction from being given second chance through their children to get into a prestigious college.

Harm

Children (who didn't bribe their way in)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Didn't get the spot in college that they actually deserved which might affect their future and mental state.
Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Disrepute meritocracy, further unleveling the playing field for the poor and middle income people.- Less tax for society from "income tax deduction" that the parents unfairly receive
University	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reduces the university's credibility.

Bentham's Utilitarianism

Happiness (Intensity, Duration)

Bribe takers (money) - low intensity and short duration of happiness.

Wealthy children (top college admission) - high intensity and long duration of happiness.

Wealthy parents (tax deduction) - low intensity and short duration of happiness.

Wealthy parents (elevated status, admission satisfaction) - high intensity and long duration of happiness.

The Extent

Much more people experience harm than benefits.

Harm (Intensity, Duration)

Children who don't bribe their way in (failed admission) - high intensity and long duration of harm.

Society (tax, meritocracy system fails) - high intensity and long duration of harm.

University (reduce credibility) - high intensity and long duration of harm.

UNETHICAL

Mill's Utilitarianism

- Pleasures can be classified into higher and lower pleasure.
- Promotes general happiness over individual happiness.

Mill's Utilitarianism

Happiness

Bribe Takers	- Enrich themselves through the bribe money they received. LOWER PLEASURE
Wealthy Children	- Guaranteed a spot in an ivy league school and have a better future because of the school's prestige. HIGHER PLEASURE
Wealthy Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Receive income tax deduction for their supposedly "donation". LOWER PLEASURE- Enjoy elevated status in high society through bragging rights. HIGHER PLEASURE- Parents who never went to college feel satisfaction for being given second chance through their children to get into a prestigious college. HIGHER PLEASURE

Harm

Children (who didn't bribe their way in)	- Didn't get the spot in college that they actually deserved which might affect their future and mental state.
Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Disrepute meritocracy, further unleveling the playing field for the poor and middle income people.- Less tax for society from "income tax deduction" that the parents unfairly receive
University	- Reduces the university's credibility.

UNETHICAL

Rule Utilitarianism

- **An action is right when it complies to a universal rule which, if everyone followed them, would lead to the greatest happiness.**

Rule Utilitarianism

Universal Rule

Everyone adopts the bribing practice to gain admission into top universities.

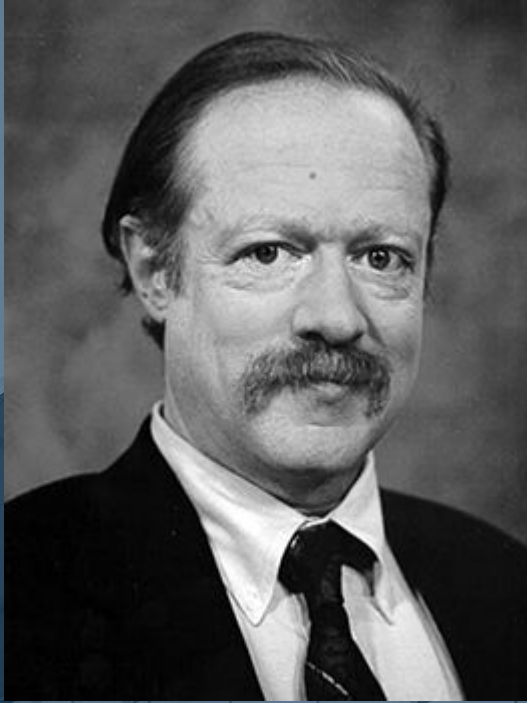
Benefits

Rich Children	No mental stress and pressure to study hard.
Briber Takers	They will be rich from taking the bribe money.

Costs

Less Fortunate Children	Financially poor or middle income families are unable to bribe, which means their kids have less chance to go to top college, even if they are very smart or hard working.
Parents	Pressure falls on the parents to earn more money so they can afford to pay the bribe to gain a spot in a top college for their child.
Society	Inability to go to a top college for better education and connection will cause further increase in disparity between the rich and the poor.

UNETHICAL



Robert Solomon's Virtue Ethics

Robert Solomon's Virtue Ethics

1. Focused on the individual in the corporation

**2. Profits are a means of
building better business and
serving society better**

- Community
- Excellence
- Membership
- Integrity
- Judgement
- Holism

Virtue Ethics Evaluation

Community

The bribing did not show any good will towards the community

Excellence

Bribes only admitted students based on bribing amount instead of merits

Membership

Bribes wasted slots that supposedly belonging to qualified talents

Integrity

The bribery was not a showcase of moral courage

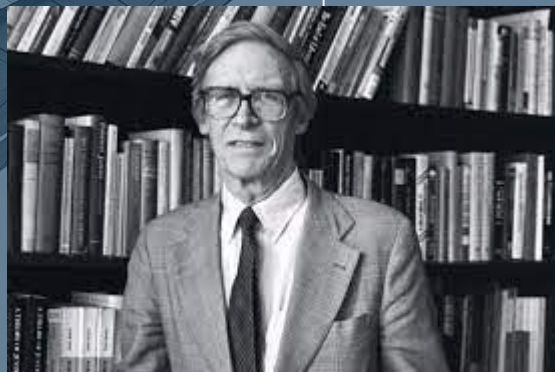
Judgement

The admission were decided on bribing amount instead of merits

Holism

The admitted students were not able to contribute to the CCAs , which would cause loss of stakeholders

UNETHICAL



John Rawls' Justice as Fairness

John Rawls Justice of Fairness

Method: Original Position

Decision has to be made under '**veil of ignorance**'

1. Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all.
2. (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged
(b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity

**Principle of Equal
Liberty**

Difference Principle

**The Fair Equality of
Opportunity Principle**

Principle of Equal Liberty

1. Each person is to have an **equal right** to the most extensive total system of basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all
2. Liberties should **not** be traded for greater socioeconomic advantages



By receiving these bribes, the bribees are giving **unequal rights** towards student by favouring those who would bribe them.

Bribing is **not fair** under the principle of equal liberty



Justice as Fairness

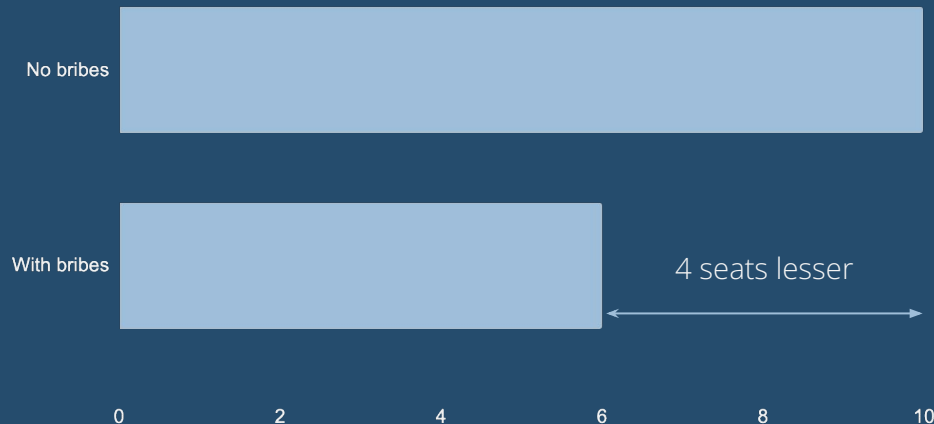
UNETHICAL

Difference Principle

1. **Greatest benefit** accrue to the least advantage representative member of society
2. Maximin Approach

By receiving the bribes, less fortunate students will have lesser spot for them to compete for. This will not give them the maximum benefit.

Number of slots for student



Bribing is **not fair** under the difference principle

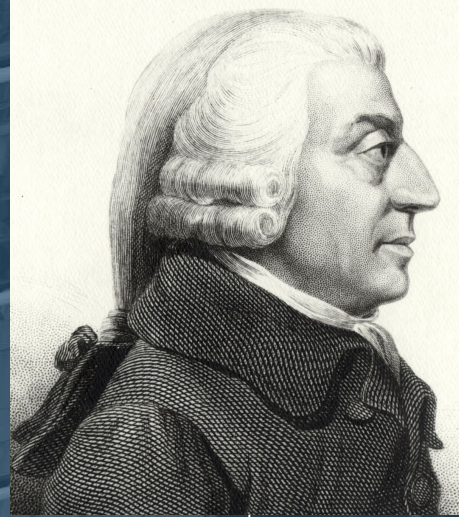
The Fair Equality of Opportunity Principle

1. All offices and positions should be open to all with conditions of **fair** equality of opportunity

By helping student who gave bribes, the equal opportunity for student admission is now **unequal**

Bribing is **not fair** under the The Fair Equality of Opportunity principle

Ethical Egoism



Ethical Egoism

an action is **right** to the extent that it is based on **self-interest**

Problem

The **bribees** were **taking bribes** for the **sole purpose of enriching themselves**, would their actions be considered ethical?

ETHICAL



Conclusion

03

Conclusion

Is it ethical for the bribees to accept bribes to influence the students' admissions?

Kantian
Ethics

Utilitarianism

Robert
Solomon's
Virtue Ethics

John Rawls'
Justice as
Fairness

Ethical
Egoism

UNETHICAL

UNETHICAL

UNETHICAL

UNETHICAL

ETHICAL

Conclusion

Kantian Ethics

Principle of Universality

The society will be
“moneyocracy” instead of
meritocracy

Principle of Humanity

Bribees merely treat
students as a mean to
enrich themselves

UNETHICAL

Utilitarianism

Bentham’s Utilitarianism, Mill’s Utilitarianism, Rule Utilitarianism

The overall harm outweighs the
overall happiness

UNETHICAL

Conclusion

Robert Solomon's Virtue Ethics

It violates all six parameters (community, excellence, membership, integrity, judgement, holism)

UNETHICAL

Ethical Egoism

The moral agent is just pursuing his/her self-interest

ETHICAL

John Rawls' Justice of Fairness

Principle of Equal Liberty

Giving unequal rights to the children by favoring those who would bribe

Difference Principle

With the spots taken by those who bribes, the less fortunate students will not have maximum benefit

The Fair Equality of Opportunity Principle

Due to bribing, the opportunity of students to be admitted is now unequal

UNETHICAL



Evaluation & Recommendation

04

Evaluation

Utilitarianism



Advantage to one party

Where do they spend their money?



Advantage to society

How will this education provided to students benefit the society?



Higher vs Lower Pleasure

Who is competent enough to judge?

Evaluation

Ethical Egoism



Society doesn't benefit

Bribes disrupts meritocracy



Consequences

Doesn't take into consideration
of other people's point of view
(i.e. deserving students)



Consider the ethicality of the action

Applied in the context of
economy or free market

Evaluation

Limitation of Theories

Robert Solomon's Virtue Ethics

Ethicality depends on time and culture of the region
(i.e., What if bribing was a norm in another society?)



Recommendation

University



Standardised and have proper SOP for donations

Conduct investigation for huge amount of donation



Trials should be public and open

A panel of coaches to select students based on their abilities of sport.



Centralised Portal

Going through a centralised portal for all Ivy League colleagues to have a fair and equal selection from school and students that are applying.



Thank You