Week 4 Ethical Dilemma Project – Application of Ethical Theory

Your Name

Course

Instructor

Date

**Ethical Dilemma Project –Application of Ethical Theory**

**The Ethical Dilemma**

The key ethical dilemma of the case is \_\_\_\_\_[fill in the blank] or Should \_\_\_\_\_\_ [fill in the blank]

This ethical dilemma can be analyzed using several ethical systems to bring sensitivity and method to the human task of decision making.

**Three Ethical Theories**

**Theory 1** [Replace this heading “Theory 1” with a descriptive title such as “Kantian Ethics” or “Duty-Oriented Ethics” or “Deontological Theory” or something similar].

Explain briefly Kant’s theory of the categorical imperative and then spend most of the text applying his three elements to the case you chose in Week 3. Here is a brief summary of those elements: (1) universal application, that is, binding to every individual; (2) unconditionality, and (3) demanding an action. The lesson from Week 1 includes those three “maxims” of his categorical imperative, so you should review that, along with our textbook, and possibly quote those sources in this part of the paper. You can also consult the Web and DeVry Library databases. Most importantly, show how Kant would interpret the case you chose in Week 3 and what should or should not be done according to principles or rules or duties. Give a deontological interpretation of the case.

Here’s an example. Remember the Discussion topic from Week 2: the harvesting of organs from prisoners in detainment camps in China? Here’s how you might apply Kantian ethics to that real case:

Kant states his universal law formulation as follows: “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law” (Week 1 Lesson, 2019). Of course, few people would recommend that a universal law should allow pillaging living humans for organs or taking organs without voluntary consent from prisoners, so it is our duty to act in accordance to this principle. Therefore, according to Kant’s categorical imperative, Chinese officials should not harvest organs from prisoners in its detainment camps.

The formula of the end in itself also provides a very practical guide for China’s actions. Kant proposes that rational beings have a value in themselves, so we should treat them as such. In other words, “Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means” (Week 1 Lesson, 2019). Taking a person’s organs without his or her consent is treating that person simply as a means and not as an end, so the action is wrong. As Lesson 1 (2019) stated, “When human beings are treated merely as a means to an end, they have been denied their basic humanity.”

**Theory 2** [Replace this heading “Theory 2” with a descriptive title such as “Utilitarianism” or “Consequentialism” or “John Stuart Mill’s Theory” or “The Approaches of Bentham and Mill.”]

Explain briefly the theory and then apply it to the case you chose in Week 3. Here’s an example:

John Stuart Mill’s ethics view is known for its idea of the “Greatest Happiness Principle”: the greatest good for the greatest number (Week 2 Lesson). Mill would condemn the live organ harvesting in China, but he would arrive at his conclusion along a different route than Kant would. To get there, he would start with his “principle of utility” and go on to his ideas about justice. First, Mill’s fundamental principle is “actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness pain and the privation of pleasure” (Schefczyk, n.d., para.1). The Chinese government cannot just claim that performing the transplant will produce the greatest happiness because yes, the recipients of the organs will be happy, but greater unhappiness will result from everyone who fears the government might come and take their organs without their consent. We must take into account the donor’s happiness, as it matters just as much as anyone’s happiness. We must also consider everyone’s need for security, and the fact that harvesting the organs would deprive people of their sense of security. The combination of these two consequences outweighs any good effects from a transplantation of the prisoners’ organs. What this shows is that the consequences of an action do matter. In summary, the harvesting of organs from prisoners in Chinese detainment camps would be wrong in Mill’s view because it violates the principle of utility.

**Theory 3** [Replace this heading “Theory 3” with a descriptive title such as “Aristotle’s Ethics” or “Virtue-Based Ethics” or “Virtue Ethics” or something similar, depending upon what ethical theory you want to use.]

Explain briefly the theory and then apply it to the case you chose in Week 3. Follow the pattern you used for Theory 1 and Theory 2 in terms of your analysis.

**My Choice**

In this section, explain which of the ethical theories or parts of the ethical theories you would choose to solve the ethical problem and give reasons for your choice. Refer to specific ethical principles from the ethicist and provide detailed support. Show your understanding of the ethical dilemma, the ethical theory, and the application of the theory to the real case. Remember to cite all sources you use with in-text citations and full bibliographic entries on the references page.

**References**

Author’s last name, author’s initials. (year, month day). Title of the article. Publication Name. <https://www>....

Schefczyk, M. (n.d.). John Stuart Mill: Ethics. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://www.iep.utm.edu/mill-eth/>