Middle position

VIRT²UE

Training

Learning objectives

The aim of this exercise is to understand the practical meanings of virtues in research practice

- **Foster moral sensitivity** for basic scientific virtues
- Focus on **challenges researchers experience** in practice and the virtues relevant for these situations
- Acknowledge the **inherent ambiguity** associated with acting to uphold scientific virtues
- Aid reflection about how to act on **scientific virtues in practice**

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Introduction

What does "virtue" mean?

A 'Virtue' is an 'excellence of any kind'. "To be virtuous means to strive towards living in compliance with one's full potential, intellectually as well as morally".

https://www.embassy.science/theme/virtues-in-research-integrity
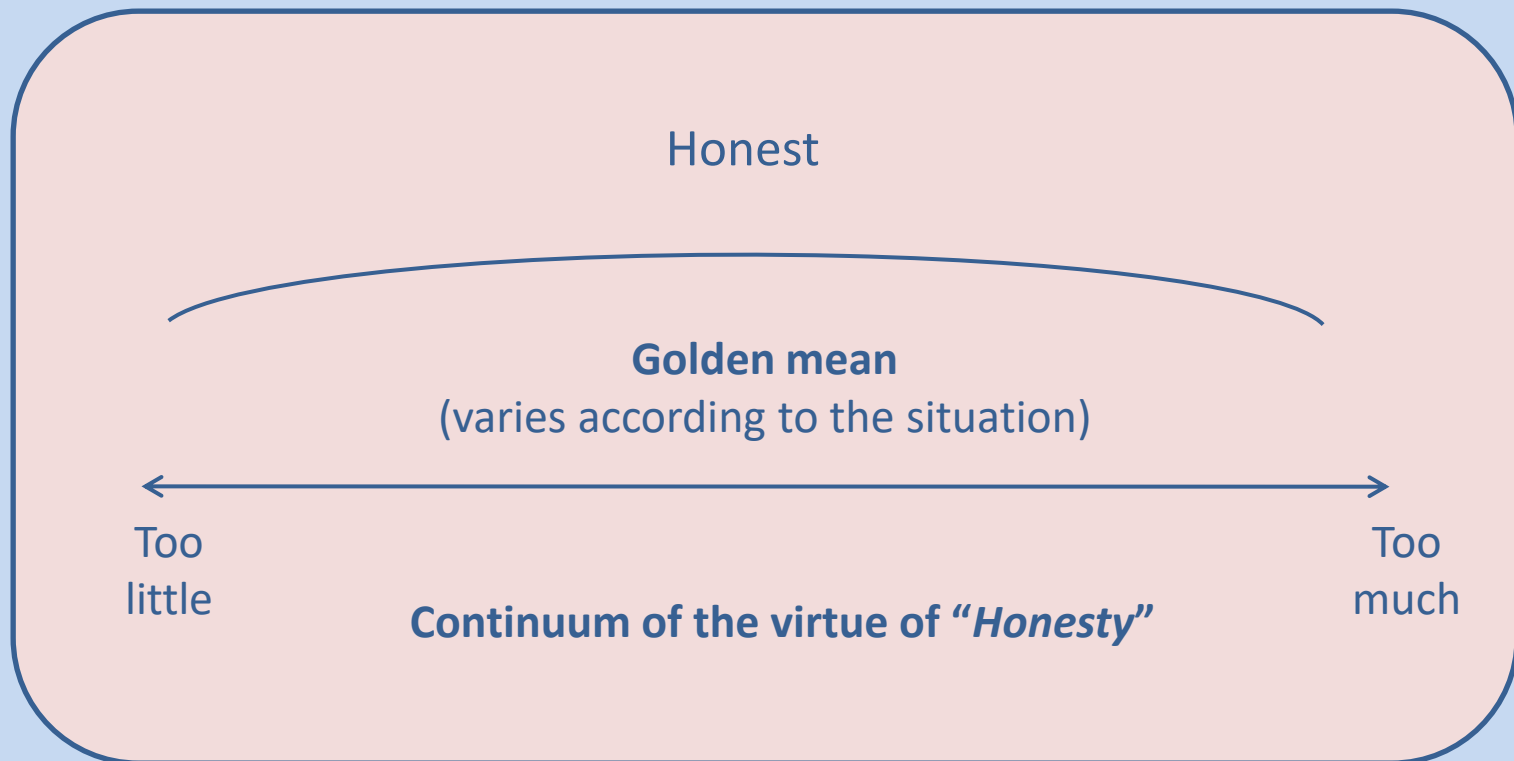
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Introduction

What does "virtue ethics" mean?

Virtue ethics is an ethical theory that emphasizes an individual's character rather that following a set of rules.

What does "middle position" mean?

Honest

Golden mean
(varies according to the situation)

←————————————————————————————→

Too
little

Too
much

Continuum of the virtue of "*Honesty*"

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Privacy and confidentiality

Individual reflection (5-10 min)

Recall a personal case or situation within your work in which you experienced a kind of moral doubt about what happened or about what you could have done/should have done/or did do.
Which specific virtue was/is at stake in your situation?

Write down the 3 kinds of behaviours :

1) What would you do, in that situation, if too little of the behaviour related to the specific virtue characterized your action?

2) What would you do if too much of the behaviour related to the specific virtue characterized your action?

3) What would you do if you demonstrated the right behaviour which perfectly represents your specific virtue in that situation? (Middle position)

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Reflection in subgroups (30 min)

1**. Selecting and presenting a case**

a. Set a rapporteur in each group.
b. All participants present **in 1 min** the situation and the moral uncertainty they experienced, and the relevant virtue, without mentioning the conclusion (middle position or how the situation ended).
c. Participants vote which situation they want to reflect upon as a group.
d. Participants try to place themselves in the selected situation and ask for factual clarification questions.

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Reflection in subgroups (30 min)

e. All participants **choose (individually) which virtue is at stake** in the presented situation.

f. All participants specify the virtue and the spectrum (too weak/ too strong/ middle position)

g. All participants share their notes

h. Group reflection/dialogue about differences/similarities on:

- ✓ What is interesting or surprising?
- ✓ Did you have different virtues in the first place?
- ✓ What did you learn from each other with respect to how the middle position was described and reflected upon?
- ✓ In which way were the virtues (principles) of the ECoC represented in the virtues mentioned by the participants?

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Please go to the Jamboard

https://jamboard.google.com/d/1ppbw_PUv-dE6KeFJ_l7oMreQ09TjDjanZqlzu948If0/edit?usp=sharing

Plenary exchange (20 min)

- Was it easy or difficult to find a personal case and to select a virtue for it?

- Was it easy to select a middle position?

- Did you learn to look at inherent ambiguity of specific virtues in a broader, or in a different way, when these were identified by others?

- Do the case presenters want to describe how they experienced the exercise?

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