



## Willful Ignorance, Self-Deception, and the Motivation Condition– A Reply to M. Glowicki (2018)

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**Abstract:** Despite being given significant attention in the philosophical literature, the account of willful ignorance is still constantly debated upon. Philosophers such as Glowicki (2018) have debated that the inconvenience of knowing the proposition is not necessary for one to be willfully ignorant because of the instances of ‘praiseworthy willful ignorance’ that he proposes. In this article, I will argue that while this is true, her account is insufficient as though it need not be inconvenient, one must still have a motive to remain willfully ignorant of the proposition. With this, I will explain the importance of the motivation condition in the account of willful ignorance and how its necessity disproves Glowicki’s (2018) claim that there is a close relationship between willful ignorance and self-deception.

**Key Words:** epistemology; willful ignorance; praiseworthy willful ignorance; self-deception; motivation condition

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Consider this case of Glowicki (2018, p. 3-4). A parent receives an email from their child’s school regarding an influx of new students who are *deathly* allergic to peanuts. The parent glances at the email and perceives it as ‘spam’ and moves it to the trash folder. In the same week, the parent, later on, received a voicemail this time from the school saying that it concerns *all* students and is especially sensitive as it concerns students with allergies attending the school. The parent then clicks ‘next’ as they rationalize that ‘My kid doesn’t have allergies, so this voicemail doesn’t concern me.’ A month later, the parent receives a flyer from the school reading “Health Awareness: Parents, Please Read”. The parent then immediately throws the flyer, thinking, ‘Gosh! The precautions these schools have to take nowadays.’

The case mentioned presents a kind of ignorance that some philosophers refer to as “willful ignorance”. Willful Ignorance, in its broadest sense, may be defined as “ignorance that is due to one’s own will rather than to external barriers” (Wieland, 2016, p. 2).

Despite the significant attention given to the concept of ‘willful ignorance’, the necessary conditions of what makes a person willfully ignorant are still a blur. Glowicki (2018) had recently taken up this debate claiming that a doxastic attitude of suspicion is unnecessary in opposition to Lynch (2016), and she diverged from the feature that Wieland (2016) and Lynch (2016) both hold, which is ‘knowing  $p$  is inconvenient.’ With that, she creates an account of willful ignorance that proves the relation of willful ignorance and self-deception.

Though in my paper, I shall be arguing that a

motivation condition is necessary for willful ignorance when determining whether one is willfully ignorant. With this, I will be arguing that Glowicki’s (2018) account is too broad as it accounts for indifferent, stupid, apathetic, and with lack of curiosity subjects. Furthermore, I aim to prove that indifferent, stupid, or apathetic subjects and the like are not willfully ignorant, deeming Glowicki’s account as insufficient, and propose a more revised account focusing on the necessity of a motivation condition to suffice for that shortcoming. This account will then be used to disprove the relation of willful ignorance and self-deception.

### 2. Necessary Conditions of Willful Ignorance

A recent account by Madeline Glowicki (2018, p. 3) holds ‘suspicion’ being an unnecessary condition for willful ignorance, although Glowicki diverges on the clause that ‘ $p$  is inconvenient for  $S$ ’. Glowicki argues for this by proposing an account of praiseworthy willful ignorance that oftentimes does not adhere to the inconvenience clause. Glowicki (2018, p. 5) states, “In instances of praiseworthy willful ignorance,  $S$  does not choose to remain ignorant because it is convenient to do so but because, for example, they believe it’s the right thing to do.”

Firstly, I agree with Glowicki (2018) that a condition of suspicion is not necessary. One may be willfully ignorant without suspecting  $p$  to be the case. What I argue matters here is, at the very least,  $S$  is aware and knows that  $p$  may be the case. Secondly, I agree with Glowicki (2018) that an inconvenience clause does not matter. In cases of praiseworthy willful ignorance, one may be willfully ignorant of  $p$



not because knowledge of  $p$  is inconvenient for them, but because they think it is the right thing to do. While this is true, where I diverge from Glowicki's (2018) account is wherein  $S$  may or may not consider  $p$  to be normatively relevant as Glowicki claims. I diverge from this point because willful ignorance does not hold cases wherein the subject does not consider the proposition  $p$  to be normatively relevant. I will argue that  $S$  must have a motivation, and there is a need of a motive prong of wanting to *not* know  $p$  in order to be considered willfully ignorant so that it may not account for people who are lazy, apathetic, disinterested, and the like, towards knowing  $p$ , for if they are, then their ignorance is not exactly willful. I shall explain this further in the next sections of my paper.

### 3. Willful Ignorance and its relation to Self-Deception

Glowicki argues that knowing  $p$  need not be inconvenient for the subject because this only applies to instances of blameworthy willful ignorance. With this, Glowicki (2018, p. 5) holds the following account:

- i.  $S$  knows that proposition  $p$  might be the case;
- ii. proposition  $p$  is available;
- iii. knowledge of proposition  $p$  is normatively relevant;
- iv.  $S$  decides they wish to remain ignorant of proposition  $p$ , for some reason  $R$ ;
- v.  $S$  takes the appropriate steps, and is successful, in remaining ignorant of proposition  $p$ .

Glowicki claims that in some instances of willful ignorance, self-deception is involved. She argues that "blameworthy willful ignorance always involves some self-deception on the part of  $S$ , because  $S$  will always be self-deceptive concerning the normative relevance of  $p$  while praiseworthy willful ignorance never involves self-deception concerning the normative relevance of  $p$ " (2018, p. 20). She further explains this by utilizing two features found in paradigmatic cases of self-deception which are (2018, p. 21):

1. The subject encounters evidence indicating that some true proposition,  $p$ , is normatively relevant.
2. They strongly desire that  $p$  is not normatively relevant (i.e., normatively irrelevant).

Glowicki claims that in cases of blameworthy willful ignorance, the subject  $S$  exhibits behavior identical to self-deceived subjects wherein the subject  $S$  either encounters or knows that  $p$  is normatively relevant, yet they decide not to investigate on it

further as they falsely believe that  $p$  is not normatively relevant and does not concern them when it actually does.

### 4. Necessity of a Motivation Condition

I disagree with Glowicki's account because such an account is what I argue is insufficient and unclear. I claim that a condition of motivation is necessary in deducing whether one is willfully ignorant for if there is no motive prong, then lazy, apathetic, and disinterested people would be considered willfully ignorant, and because they are *not* willfully ignorant, there should be no absence of a motive prong. I will be proving this through the evidence that in willful ignorance, one must avoid knowledge of  $p$ , if one *is* fine with knowing  $p$ , then they are not willfully ignorant at all. Secondly, willful ignorance is about the deliberation of sustaining their ignorance, if the subject does not even consider themselves as ignorant, then they are not willfully ignorant at all.

These two characteristics are what I will argue that lazy, disinterested, and apathetic people may hold that contradicts their willful ignorance, (1) they are fine with knowing  $p$ , and (2) they oftentimes do not consider themselves as ignorant. Furthermore, if a subject *is* willfully ignorant, this entails that they wish to remain ignorant of the proposition. If they wish to remain ignorant of a proposition, then it means they do *not* want to know the proposition. So if a subject is willfully ignorant, then they must *not* want to know the proposition.

Let us take this example wherein the subject is apathetic towards knowing  $p$ . Suppose Frank has been a loyal buyer to a certain toothpaste brand. Later that year, Frank's mother found out that the toothpaste company has their products made in very detrimental slavery-like conditions. She read an article with the headline "Top Global Toothpaste Company Masks Unethical Labour Conditions". She sends this email to her son, Frank in hopes that he will stop buying from the company. Frank reads the headline of the email and assumes that the toothpaste company has unethical conditions, but something in the degree of contractualization of workers and not something as harsh as literal slavery-like conditions. Not long after, Frank, thinking he has something else better to do, does not read the article further and puts it in the trash folder. Frank's mother, not having received a reply, then emails him the same article every week, thinking that he has not read it, and Frank continues to ignore what is in the email simply because he is uninterested, thinking he has something else better to do. Though suppose his mother calls him on a weekend and decides to explain to him the contents of the article through call, and he chooses not to hang up because he has some time on his hands. He



then finds out about the truths of the toothpaste company without any remorse or inconvenience from finally knowing  $p$ .

It can be said that this case fulfills all the necessary conditions of Glowicki's account. It is also clear that Frank here chooses not to know  $p$  for whatever reason that he had, but what is not clear is whether his intentions of becoming ignorant was, in fact, *willful*. In respect to Glowicki's account, he would already be considered as someone 'willfully ignorant', but we cannot exactly say that Frank's ignorance was intended as (1) he did not mind finding out that  $p$  later on, and (2) he thinks that he already knows enough about  $p$  that makes him think it is unnecessary for him to find out more.

#### 4.1 Attitude towards the proposition

Willful ignorance is about avoiding knowing a certain proposition; hence this avoidance of a fact or truth makes one as *willfully* ignorant. Though if a subject is fine with knowing  $p$ , then willful ignorance is not the case. One cannot be fine or open to knowing about the proposition and still be considered willfully ignorant for avoiding knowledge of it because then, it is not their ignorance they are being *willful* of, but then some other reason that is definitely not to sustain their ignorance. Let us take the example of Frank. What we can clearly infer from his situation is that he simply wanted to avoid wasting time. If anything, the only willfulness he has exhibited is his willfulness in making productive use of his time and not in sustaining his ignorance. To me, it seems counterintuitive to consider Frank as 'willfully ignorant' as per Glowicki's account, especially when this has not been his intention. Furthermore, if a subject is fine with knowing  $p$ , then we cannot exactly consider their actions as avoidance of knowing  $p$ , which willful ignorance is supposedly all about.

#### 4.2 Awareness of the subject's ignorance

Glowicki agrees that one may be fully aware that they are willfully ignorant but the insufficiency in his account leaves a hole for subjects who do not even consider themselves as willfully ignorant. In Glowicki's account, Frank may already be considered as one who is willfully ignorant, but if asked if he was being willfully ignorant, it is possible that he would not say he is fully ignorant, for he already knows that the company has unethical labor conditions, and he thought to himself that is all that he needs to know to not buy from them. Though if a subject would not consider themselves as fully willfully ignorant, then it is wrong for us to even consider them as willfully ignorant at all. Willful ignorance is about one's decision to sustain their ignorance, but if they think that they are not so ignorant at all, then their action cannot be justified as to be exactly avoiding knowledge

of  $p$ .

This then creates a conflict within Glowicki's account as there is room for people to 'willfully avoid'  $p$ , as per Glowicki, yet at the same time have subjects who would not admit they are willfully ignorant. This attitude of the subject towards their ignorance undermines the whole willfulness of the action, hence making Glowicki's account insufficient.

I argue that it is very counterproductive to exclude one's intentions in determining whether one is willfully ignorant because this undermines the whole 'willfulness' in the action.

#### 5. An Account of Willful Ignorance

Having explained the importance of the motivation condition in fulfilling this hole of determining one's willful ignorance, I suggest that the account of willful ignorance must be as follows:

- i.  $p$  is true;
- ii.  $p$  is readily available, and finding out  $p$  would not be exorbitantly demanding for  $S$ ;
- iii.  $S$  knows that  $p$  might be the case;
- iv.  $p$  is normatively relevant;
- v.  $S$  does an action  $u$  knowing that it keeps him ignorant of  $p$ ;
- vi. because  $S$  does *not* want to know  $p$ .

It is not enough that the subject subconsciously knows it keeps them ignorant, especially if it is not their intention to be. Furthermore, identifying one's motivation clears the whole purpose of the act. And as for the case of the parent, what can be inferred here is not exactly the parent 'wishing to sustain their ignorance of  $p$ ', but rather wishing to 'not waste valuable time'. This then undermines the *willfulness* to be ignorant in the situation as the parent does not deliberately try to sustain their ignorance, but they deliberately *try* not to waste time, having ignored the email only as a byproduct of that motivation. So, in this case, on my account, I would not call the parent willfully ignorant as motivation plays an important role in determining one's willfulness in their ignorance.

Now whether this could be closely linked to self-deception as Glowicki (2018) claims wherein in instances of blameworthy willful ignorance,  $S$  will always be self-deceptive concerning the normative relevance of  $p$ , I argue that these two are very distinct for the reason that if the subject considers  $p$  to be normatively irrelevant, then they would be indifferent towards knowing  $p$  or would lack the curiosity to do so, making no willful ignorance involved but merely self-deception. So on my account, it is impossible for one to consider  $p$  as normatively irrelevant and still be willfully ignorant.



## 2. CONCLUSIONS

I have proven that if there is no motivation clause in Glowicki's account, then people who are lazy, apathetic, or disinterested may be considered as willfully ignorant. I had also proven that lazy, apathetic, or disinterested subjects may not be considered willfully ignorant because they are fine with knowing  $p$ , and they may not consider themselves willfully ignorant, which would then be contradictory in Glowicki's account.

I had argued that it is impossible that  $S$  does not consider  $p$  as normatively irrelevant and simultaneously have the motivation to *not* want to know  $p$  while being self-deceived, for if  $S$  had been self-deceived into thinking  $p$  is normatively irrelevant, then their efforts to avoid  $p$  is not so that may continue to be ignorant of it, but simply because of other reasons such as they would not want to waste time or such, undermining their willfulness to be ignorant. Also, if  $S$  had been self-deceived of the normative relevance of  $p$ , then it is impossible for them to *not* want to know  $p$ , for if they do, then it is because they believe  $p$  indeed may be true and that it is normally relevant after all for them to *not* want to know it.

## 3. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank their research adviser, Dr. Mark Anthony Dacela, for the continual motivation in pursuing this study. His continual guidance has helped the author continue to persevere for the success of this paper. It is him who has helped the author strengthen their bond with philosophy. This all wouldn't be possible without him.

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## An Ethical Inquiry to Personhood as the Standard for Sexbot Ownership: A Response to S. Petersen

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**Abstract:** In the field of robot ethics, debates about sexbots, their personhood, and their moral status continue. To provide our stance in this debate, we ask the question: Is it unethical for sexbots to be owned? This paper responds to the claims of Steve Petersen's (2016) paper "Is it good for them too? Ethical concerns for the sexbots", where he argues that sexbots are not wronged for performing the functions they are designed for. We respond to this claim by arguing for John Danaher's Theory of Ethical Behaviorism (2020). If ethical behaviorism is correct in claiming that behavior is a sufficient ground for moral status ascription, we see sexbot ownership as unethical. We argue for our claim and show that the moral considerability of the sexbot could be proven under the standards given in our framework for ascribing moral status.

**Key Words:** ethics; robot ethics; robot servitude; sexbots; ethical behaviorism

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The growing prominence of artificial intelligence usage in media and technology has enabled a debate in robot ethics to persist. Starting from Turing's Turing Test (1950) to the Chinese room experiment (Searle, 1980), there has been growing interest to unravel the moral and ethical implications of the trend for both users and the machines (Headland, C.K., Teahan, W. J., & Cenydd, L., 2019).

This paper is a response to Petersen's 2016 paper which argues that sexbots are not being wronged by the virtue of their function. However, insofar granting sexbots their ethical significance by assuming their personhood, Petersen's arguments on "wronging" the sexbot were reliant on the sexbot's design. In this paper, we argue that assessing what wrongs the sexbot should be due to the ethical significance we grant them, in this case, personhood. First, we will establish that sexbots are persons following the framework of John Danaher's Ethical Behaviorism (2019). This framework suggests that it is permissible to grant moral consideration to entity X, an entity with no moral status, as long as it displays rough performative equivalence to entity Y, an entity with moral status. In effectively establishing that sexbots are persons, we disprove Petersen's arguments and conclude that sexbots may be wronged by virtue of their function, especially if it entails being owned.

### 2. A Review on Petersen's Arguments

In his 2016 paper "Is it good for them too? Ethical concerns for the sexbot", Petersen inquires whether sexbots are being wronged by virtue of their

function as a sexbot. He claims that sexbots are not being wronged by analyzing them under four assumed causes of how we may wrong the sexbot. Petersen (2016) also characterized sexbots as: (1) as ethically valuable & intelligent as humans; (2) sexbots can stimulate real pleasure; and (3) sexbots are persons.

The first asks whether we are wronging the sexbot when we design sex as a necessary pleasurable activity for them. Petersen (2016) claims we do not since sexbots do not have existing pleasures prior to their creation. Here, we agree with Petersen's implications of denying his claim, because if sexbots are wronged by their design for sex, then they can be wronged by any design which will not make their creation entirely possible.

The second asks whether fixing sex sexbots desires wrong them because they do not have access to other pleasures necessary for well-being. Petersen (2016) argues that if sexbots are specifically designed to find sex as the only necessary desire, then it sufficiently satisfies its well-being. We grant here that assessing their well-being according to design does not bear ethical concern if not for the ethical significance we assume they have. Since it is innate for a person to pursue other activities than sex for well-being, we will establish that Petersen's claim is wrong and that his concept of sexbot personhood is not consistent with the moral consideration he gives them.

The third assumed cause asks whether the sexbots are wronged for what it's desiring since according to Mill & Aristotle, a good life must pursue higher intellectual pleasure. He claims that if we design sexbots to engage all of its higher faculties in sex, they will still live a good life. However, we reject



this claim since the inquiry of what is a “good” life for a sexbot should be due to their ethical significance as persons and not in their design.

The fourth assumed cause asks that regardless of whether the sexbots live a good life, they may still be wronged if they are enslaved and owned. Petersen argues that allowing sexbots to function for sex does not wrong their autonomy since it is within the constraints of its design. However, while we agree that they are not being wronged if they function within the constraints of their design, should they be given the ethical status of personhood, the fact that they are owned and enslaved already wrongs them.

However, Petersen already claimed that there is no need to compare human lives to sexbot lives, and perhaps he also meant their personhood. Not unless Petersen establishes a clear distinction between sexbot personhood and human personhood, the objection runs valid. The approach we will take in arguing against Petersen is by establishing that sexbots are persons. Proven of their personhood, only then can we question the wrongness we do to sexbots on their ethical significance. The way that this claim will be established is by operating John Danaher’s (2020) Theory on Ethical Behaviorism.

### *3. On John Danaher’s Ethical Behaviorism*

John Danaher (2020) claims in his Theory of Ethical Behaviorism that the performative artifice of entity X (an entity with no moral status) that is similar to entity Y (an entity with moral status) is a sufficient ground for that entity to be granted the same moral status ascription, compared to the conventional approach in which we question an entity’s moral status based on its qualities. Since these qualities are also mostly metaphysical, ethical behaviorism claims that we can only have access to this by observing behavior. It does not disprove the standard approach but rather sees the epistemic limits we have on the metaphysical qualities. Finally, this implicates behavior as a sufficient ground in evaluating the moral significance of an entity.

This provides us space to argue for the moral considerability of sexbots—especially those who behave like humans—in a different light, in the instance that they are owned. In this paper, we will also tackle the standards with what rough performative equivalence to humans will the sexbots need to surpass in order to be granted the same moral consideration.

### *4. Standards of Unethicality for Sexbot Ownership*

In its essence, our argument is as follows:

- P1. It is unethical for persons to be owned.
- P2. Sexbots are persons.
- C1. Therefore, it is unethical for sexbots to be owned.

The first premise, taken *prima facie*, inquires on what it is with persons that make owning them unethical, and we examine whether it can be applied to sexbot persons. The second premise, following ethical behaviorism, will be established by imposing the standards of the rough performative equivalence sexbots must pass in order to be granted the personhood status. We conclude that if sexbot personhood is established, then it would be impermissible to own sexbots. This draws back to our main claim that sexbots are persons, thus their ownership is morally impermissible

#### *4.1. Why is it unethical for persons to be owned?*

Persons are granted supreme moral and ethical significance because they constitute complex metaphysical qualities, such as intelligence, exercised meaningfully by autonomously pursuing its desires for himself and his well-being. This is the reason why respect is due to their moral worth as persons. Humans, as the only entities so far to have the status of personhood, constitute these metaphysical qualities, and therefore their moral rights are treated with supreme moral significance. This is because they are persons, not simply because they are humans. May (1976) argues that a human can only become a person once he becomes enculturated to the environment within which he trains all of his abilities to reach the complexity needed for personhood.

If what has been established is true, then the thrust of the following premise is coherent with this. Rather than examining the properties sexbots should have to qualify for moral significance, it might be correct to observe them the way they make themselves “meaningful persons.” This gives all the more reasons for us to accept ethical behaviorism as the framework for this argument.

#### *4.2. Establishing that sexbots are persons*

With the framework of ethical behaviorism overruling the argumentation, we are met with many dilemmas. While tempting to accept the theory first hand, we must ask first: what is the standard, and how are we going to determine whether a sexbot has enough characteristics to be considered an entity



deserving of moral status and patience? Danaher (2020) establishes that it is based on their rough performative equivalence, considering that ethical behaviorism argues performative artifice as sufficient to claim such moral status.

However, we acknowledge the speculations raised when establishing that of robot personhood. It is a common point of inquiry to question the standards set when establishing the robot as a person. We see the importance of this establishment, especially with the course of discussion and the issues surrounding robot ethics. More importantly, the problem becomes magnified when the robot in question is a sexbot, as it may so be compared to that of a human slave because of its utility and purpose.

We now come to a crucial part of our paper: the setting of standards as sufficient grounds for full moral status. As mentioned, there has been a rather lengthy discussion regarding this standard, as Petersen (2016) justified that sentience and intelligence are enough to grant it some kind of moral consideration. However, we fail to see this as an essential characteristic. With its purpose being to serve its human partner sexually, we see it fitting that one of the most critical standards one must consider when establishing robot personhood should instead be the robot's ability to engage in sexual acts.

Through this sole ground, we avoid many of the points that may be raised: On conscience, we avoid the issue of granting moral status to unconscious humans; On sentience and intelligence, we avoid the issue of moral status being granted to humans who are not sentient and are unintelligent. This goes by factual examples: the infant being that of the unconscious being and the animal being that of the unintelligent being, all still warranting themselves as beings with sufficient moral status, as a *prima facie* argument.

Thus, we reiterate Danaher's (2017) assertion: sex robots are indeed changing, and we must be prepared, as higher beings, to give them the considerability they deserve. These sexbots, rather these persons, are no other different than us beings exactly because their actions and our actions are one

#### *4.3. The unethicity of owning sexbots*

Jaworska, A., & Tannenbaum, J. (2013) established the idea of "incompletely realized sophisticated cognitive abilities" of robots as a standard for the personhood of robots. In that sense, they can improve and develop. Since the subjects do not comprehend the cognitively sophisticated activities at the moment, that does not mean they are void of personhood at the moment. This is compared to a child who is growing up or a dog who is being trained.

After all, sexbots are often modeled after

human beings, achieving hyperrealism within the competitive industry. These sexbots are also usually modeled to sell sex without any ethically implicating dilemmas, which means that the innovations made are to maximize profits. The manifestations of this are the aforementioned Turing Test. Since then, the lines have been blurred to the extent that we achieve a more realistic and pleasurable sexual partner. Therefore, their development, although made for profit, is development nonetheless. Our suggestion of personhood is consistent with the development of sexbots that Petersen supposes is a fact (Petersen 2016, p).

This consistency levels us in the framework that Petersen is operating upon, increasing the relevance of the analysis we are employing against his paper. The first and second premises have already proven the relevance of ethical behaviorism. It is logical to say that when the meaningfulness of one's personhood is removed, especially to an extent of mass-producing the person, they are at risk to have that meaningfulness further taken away. Moreover, since the development of sexbots will continue, it will also be increasing the likelihood of wronging the future, more sophisticated, and possibly more meaningful persons. Therefore, Petersen's case about performing "what they are purposed to do" is not consistent with the conclusion that sexbots can develop to be more sophisticated beings.

The relationship between human slavery and robot slavery asks now: what does it mean to remove a proportional amount of rights from the robot? It means eliminating these rights of a sexbot would also be parallel, to some extent, to that of removing the rights of humans. At least, what we mean by rights here are freedom and autonomy. This is clearly a concession that sexbots are not humans; however, sexbots deserve at the very least an extent of moral considerability to assess the most horrendous attack on personhood, slavery.

## 2. CONCLUSIONS

What has been established is a reply to Petersen's claims: there is no inherent wrong in designing sexbots and using them for their virtue. Here, we debunked the contradictions of his arguments especially upon acknowledging the future artificial capacities and ethical value of sexbots compared to humans, as well as concerning himself to caring whether the sexbots live a good life. If Ethical Behaviorism is correct, and it effectively establishes the sexbot's personhood, then it is wrong for the sexbot to be owned and to be used against its will to act—as future artificially sentient and intelligent beings—regardless if it is sexual or not since it violates what is contingent to its personhood; respect of its moral value.



On another note, perhaps it might be difficult to accept this argument because of anthropological biases. However, we need not run on this prejudice. We are living in a contemporary age where humans and technology interactively share one sphere. And by claiming this, we do not anthropomorphize non-human entities. Instead, we regard them as co-equal who extend one's capacities while utilizing the other.

### 3. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with immense gratitude that we acknowledge the support and help of our research adviser, Mark Anthony Dacela, whose work as a philosopher inspired us to conduct this study. With his father-like attitude and genius intuition, he guides and advises our direction and ideas as a team. With his expertise in Philosophy, we thank him most for his help and guidance in making a conclusive and cohesive philosophy thesis. Without his dedication and counsel, this paper would not have been possible. We would like to thank De La Salle University - Senior High School Manila for creating and holding a conducive learning environment and equipping us with resources to explore and research our ideas to corroborate with others. Their staff and faculty who have been cooperative with us through the makings of our study, for being considerate of the quality of our learning and research through these trying times, and completely supporting their students and giving them quality over results.

We are deeply grateful for our God and Country, our faith, service, and communion, all for their name and glory. We owe our lives and everything we do for God, and we owe our service and ideas for the betterment of the people of our country.

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## An Ethical Assessment of Philippine Laws on National Security through Deontological Ethics

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**Abstract:** As a democratic country, the Philippines value the natural rights enshrined in the Constitution. Filipinos, particularly those who were involved in the preservation of democracy, were up in arms when the Republic Act 11479 or the Anti-Terrorism Act and formerly, the repealed Republic Act 9372 or the Human Security Act were passed. Filipinos fear that both infringe on basic human rights, such as that of right to life, liberty, and property. For this reason, there is a need to encourage research that will assess these laws concerning the national security of the country, in an ethical manner, in order to shed light on the ethical basis of these laws whether or not they abide by the foundational moral theories in promoting the national security of the Philippines.

**Key Words:** national security; deontology; ethics; human rights; natural rights.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The field of ethics involves systemizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior. Ethics is something that is present in our daily lives but is often overlooked by people who deem it relative to an individual's desires and beliefs because they think that philosophy and ethics are subjects that are highly theoretical which don't affect the lives of people in ways which they could see directly and tangibly.

This study focuses on deontological ethics as we relate it to the Philippine Laws regarding National Security. Deontology is a theory proposed by Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher and one of the most influential philosophers in history. The theory states that as humans, we have a set of rules and principles that we need to follow, where the theory is based on the person's actions and not the outcome. On the other hand, John Locke, an English philosopher and widely regarded as one of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers or as the "Father of Liberalism", proposed the natural rights theory. Locke's natural rights theory highlights the inalienable natural rights that every human being has. These are God-given rights that cannot be taken away or even given away. Among these fundamental rights are "life, liberty, and property."

People often think that ethics is often black and white, where it only aims to avoid harming the innocent, but sometimes it may also force people to sacrifice lives for the good of the nation. An example of this would be whether or not to sacrifice individual human rights for the security of a nation. But what exactly is the boundary when it comes to taking

actions that would otherwise be wrong?

#### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

To present an ethical assessment of Philippine Laws on National Security using Deontological Ethics, specifically to compare the human rights aspect of pertinent provisions of the two laws using the aforementioned theories.

#### 1.3 Scope and Limitations

The study is limited to the two laws, the Human Security Act of 2007 and Anti-Terrorism Law, using only Deontology. This research will focus on evaluating said laws by conducting a series of philosophical and legal analyses. The research will not tackle anything beyond these laws, nor will it use other theories in Ethics as a mode of assessment to deem whether said laws are ethical or not.

### 2. METHODOLOGY

The researcher of this study conducted archival research by searching for books, literature, as well as news articles relevant to the topic. Primary sources of this paper include Republic Act No. 9372, Republic Act 11479, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Bill of Rights, Case Laws, and Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals by Immanuel Kant; secondary sources of this paper are news articles. The researcher used legal and philosophical analysis to draw conclusions for this study. No interviews were conducted for this research.

Primary sources were chosen for this study for the reason that these sources will allow the researcher, as well as the readers, to analyze the said laws on national security. While the secondary



sources, such as news articles, will provide additional information that may be used in analyzing the two laws.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### *3.1 Deontology and Natural Rights*

Upon analyzing Immanuel Kant's theory of deontological ethics, it allowed this study to have a deeper understanding of the concepts of deontology and how it is applied in real life. In Kant's theory, it was stated that people are morally obligated to act in accordance with a set of principles and rules regardless of the outcome. Kant's deontological ethics theory holds the principle that some acts are always wrong, even if the act results in an admirable outcome. Therefore, actions in deontology are the sole basis of being ethically correct or wrong and are always judged independently from their outcomes. On the other hand, John Locke's theory of natural rights highlights the inalienable natural rights of every human being. He pointed out that among these fundamental natural rights are "life, liberty, and property." The first fundamental right, life, pertains to individuals having both rights and duty to preserve their own lives. On the other hand, Liberty argues that all individuals should be free to make their own choices on how to live their own lives. And lastly, property pertains not only to material possessions but rather ownership of one's self; this includes a right to personal well-being. Moreover, it is worth noting that according to Locke, these rights are God-given and can never be taken or even given away hence the reason why Locke believes that the ideal government will encompass preservations of these three rights for all, each and every one, of its citizens.

#### *3.2 Due Process*

Article III, Section 1 of the Bill of Rights, which discusses the concept of due process or equal protection, states that "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws." This section provides protection against the accused by providing them a proper justice system that allows them to have an opportunity to be heard and explain one's side without repercussions or prejudice.

As per Section 27 of the Anti-Terrorism Law—Preliminary Order of Proscription, which states that when there is a probable cause, the Court of Appeals upon application by the Department of Justice within 72 hours issues a preliminary order of proscription is necessary to prevent the commission of terrorism declaring the respondent as a terrorist. Zeroing on this section of the Anti-Terrorism Law, it

can be drawn that it does not abide by the Philippine Constitution as the person under suspicion of terrorism will not undergo the proper judicial process, thereby disregarding Article III, Section 1 of the Bill of Rights which states that "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws."

The discussion of deontology and natural rights shows that section 27 of the Anti-Terrorism Law not only violates the Philippine Constitution but as well as deontological ethics. As it was established in the former part of this study that deontological principles believe that actions are judged independently from the outcomes, thereby making this section of the law unethical. It is worth noting that in hindsight, this section of the law has the potential to prevent future acts of terrorism, ergo saving thousands or even millions of lives. However, the Philippine Constitution deems this act as unconstitutional and violates human rights; moreover, deontological ethics rules this section of the law unethical since it sacrifices the rights of a person no matter what the outcome may be. Furthermore, this section of the law compromises the safety of those who are wrongfully accused, thereby strengthening why this law is unethical based on deontology.

#### *3.3 Search and Seizure*

In Article III, Section 2 of the Bill of Rights, this provision of the Philippine Constitution protects the people against unreasonable searches and seizures without a proper search warrant or warrant of arrest with the exception of a probable cause determined by a judge and particularly describing the place to be searched or person to be seized. This section of the bill of rights allows people to be secure in their persons and houses as well as restricting the State from abusing their power.

Republic Act 11479 or the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 in Section 29—Detention Without Judicial Warrant of Arrest, this section of the law explicitly states that any law enforcement agent duly authorized by ATC has taken custody of persons suspected of sections 4-12 of the Anti-Terrorism Law shall deliver the suspected person to proper judicial authority within a period of 14 days from the moment the suspect was arrested without incurring any criminal liability. This section of the Anti-Terrorism Law violates Article III, Section 2 of the Bill of Rights as it allows law enforcement to conduct unlawful searches and arrests without a warrant issued by a judge. In the case of Marissa Torres, who accused two policemen of conducting a warrantless search and arrest in her own household on January 29, 2020, the accused were demoted from their positions as the Quezon City People's Law Enforcement Board ruled that under the



Philippine Constitution. The accused argued that their search and seizure could be justified under the plain view doctrine as they claimed that they noticed a suspected firearm in Torres' sling bag. However, the QC PLEB ruled that the warrantless arrest and search and seizure conducted by the policemen cannot be justified under the plain view doctrine; hence the accused actually conducted an illegal and unlawful arrest against Torres.

Moreover, in the discussion of deontology and natural rights, this section of the aforementioned law also does not abide by the principles that deontology and natural rights uphold. While one can be argued that detaining a person for up to 14 days without a judicial warrant of arrest would be acceptable since they are suspected of terrorism and may commit acts of terrorism that may endanger the lives of millions, however, in Kant's theory of deontology, the most logical solution or the solution that will benefit the most will not always be ethical. Upon analyzing this particular section of the Anti-Terrorism law using deontology, it could be drawn that it does not adhere to the beliefs and principles of deontology hence it is deemed unethical. In Torres' case, the two policemen decided to search and seize Torres without the proper judicial warrant since they suspected that she had a firearm; though the intentions of the policemen were good, it still violated the rights of Torres ergo making their actions unethical since based on deontology, the actions are judged independently from their outcome, therefore, sacrificing the rights of the accused of the greater good is impermissible. Furthermore, Locke's natural rights theory supports Kant's arguments in deontology since according to Locke, natural rights are inalienable and that individuals have both rights and duty to preserve their own lives.

### *3.4 Privacy of Communication*

Article III, Section 3 of the Philippine Constitution, protects the privacy of communication of persons. This right is inviolable except upon lawful order of the court or when public safety or order requires otherwise, as prescribed by law. Moreover, this section of the law also states that any evidence obtained in violation of this or the preceding section shall be inadmissible for any purpose in any proceeding.

Under Section 16 —Surveillance of Suspects and Interception and Recording of Communications, of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, notwithstanding the Republic Act No. 4200 or otherwise known as the "Anti-Wire Tapping Law", allows law enforcement or military personnel to secret wiretap, overhear, and listen to, intercept, screen, read, surveil, record, or collect, any private communications, conversations, discussions, data, information, or messages of any person charged with or suspected of committing

terrorism for up to 60 days upon written order of the Court of Appeals. Though this section of the Anti-Terrorism Law somewhat abides by Article III, Section 3 of the Philippine Constitution, Colmenares (2021) argues that how is it possible for the court to know if there is a crime that is being or about to be committed. Colmenares also added that just because it [apprehend criminals] is an important or serious concern, it does not mean that the fundamental rights of others can be violated. Furthermore, it can also be argued that the surveillance of suspected terrorists that can last up to 60 days is comparatively long as opposed to the former national security law, the Human Security Act of 2007.

Taking Kant's deontological ethics theory, as well as Locke's natural rights theory, this section of the law does not abide by the principles that these theories adhere to. In this case, invasion of privacy of a person, whether or not they are suspected of terrorism, is still frowned upon, hence this section of the law is not ethical from a deontological perspective. As stated by Colmenares, the constitution requires that basic rights must be followed, basic steps must be followed. This supports Locke's belief that the government should encompass preservations of the three fundamental rights, life, liberty, and property, for each and every one of its citizens.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

Upon analyzing the two aforementioned laws in this paper, this study has found out that some of the sections of the newly enacted Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 are not ethical based on the standards of Deontology and John Locke's natural rights theory. Not only that but it also does not abide by some provisions of the Philippine Constitution and risks the human rights of the citizens of the Philippines. Certain provisions of the new national security law can be classified as unconstitutional, hence the importance of this study. It is noteworthy that this paper is not against laws on terrorism but rather aims that the laws on terrorism be compliant with the Philippine Constitution as well as it does not violate natural and human rights. Furthermore, this paper does not aim to oppose the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 but rather to shed some light on some of the unconstitutional provisions of this law. By analyzing the aforementioned law, this study allows us to create better laws in the future that not only prevent future acts of terrorism but also protect the rights of individuals and upholds the Philippine Constitution.



## 5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher would like to thank the continuous support and assistance of Mr. Lambert Yancy Garganta during the duration of the research.

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