

Memorandum

To: Professor Gen
From: Mirthala Santizo
Date: 12/4/2007
Re: Ethical Policy Analysis on Four Topics

1. **Education: Forced Integration in SF Schools**

- a) **Brief Summary:** The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) uses a controversial “diversity index” to determine the school that students should be placed. While some believe that the ethnicity profiling is the only criteria they use (AP 1999), the SFUSD uses six: academic achievement status (test scores), mother's educational background, socioeconomic status, number of languages spoken, language spoken at home, API ranking of the school a non-kindergarten student comes from (SFUSD, n.d.). There are seven steps taken in order to determine a student’s assigned school. They are (1) defining diversity statistically; (2) identifying diversity characteristics of student and family background; (3) creating a student profile; (4) identifying each school’s applicant pool; (5) calculating a diversity score for each school and grade level; (6) assess the student’s profile and school’s diversity score for lottery and (7) give applicants their school (SFUSD, n.d). The “diversity index” is a way to promote integration of ethnicities, income and academic levels in the different public schools. The diversity index will continue to be used until June 30, 2007 (Knight, 2005). Opposing groups feel that the students should be able to attend a schools in their own neighborhoods and be able attend school with their own ethnicity. Proponents feel that it is the best way to be fair in a city that is diverse at ethnic and socioeconomic levels.
- b) **Popular Argument in Favor:** Keeping the “diversity index” in San Francisco public schools will give academic opportunities to disadvantaged students.
Popular Argument Against: The “diversity index” in San Francisco public schools is detrimental because it prevents parents from choosing a school that is in their community.
- c) **In Favor value system:** The value system for the argument in favor is Deontic because it wants to achieve fairness although it obviously decreases the general happiness of the parents in San Francisco.
Against value system: The value system for the argument against is Egoistic Hedonism because the parents in San Francisco want to gain what is best for their children and their family. Their only intrinsic value is their own personal happiness.
- d) **Recommendation:** Although it is understandable why the federal mandate was necessary in a time of segregation, San Francisco is now a city that has a diverse community and the “diversity index” seems unnecessary. The “diversity index” seems to be having the opposite effect where parents are unhappy and therefore, removing their children from the public school system all together. If the San Francisco Public School District wants to improve the scores of schools, they should concentrate on improving

curricula and increasing tutoring programs for children that are behind instead of moving them to a different school.

2. **Criminal Justice: Legalization of Recreational Marijuana**

- a) **Brief Summary:** The legalization of recreational marijuana has been a controversial topic that has the nation divided. Some states have allowed marijuana to be legally used for medical uses, but many states have banned the usage completely. Advocates for legalizing the usage of recreational marijuana argues that it is not dangerous drug, can be regulated and can be taxed. Advocates against the legalizing the usage of recreational marijuana argues that it is a dangerous and addictive drug, it sends a wrong message to youth and cannot be regulated. To this day, usage of marijuana for recreation is illegal.
- b) **Popular Argument in Favor:** Legalizing marijuana for recreational usage can bring the government revenues by imposing a high tax.
Popular Argument Against: Legalizing marijuana for recreational usage will tell the youth that drugs are not dangerous and will increase usage.
- c) **In Favor value system:** The value system for the argument in favor is Utilitarian because it is stating that the greatest good for the people is to increase the nation's revenues through taxes.
Against value system: The value system for the argument against is Utilitarian because it is stating that the greatest good for the people is to protect the wellbeing of the youth.
- d) **Recommendation:** Legalizing marijuana for recreational usage should not be legalized at this time because the government does not have the resources to regulate the usage and potency of the drug. The well-being of the youth should be considered over the increase revenues. Because of the lack and expenses of resources, (administrative, policing, etc.) the well-being of the youth will be compromised.

3. **Civil Rights: Whaling Rights to Native Americans**

- a) **Brief Summary:** The tradition of hunting whales has been part of the Native American lifestyle for many generations. Due to the decrease of the grey whale population, there are regulations on the number of whales that Native Americans can hunt per year. Native Americans have proof that their ancestors hunted whales and use them entirely for survival. Also, the whales are integrated into their prayers, songs, dances and art. Environmental and animal rights groups are against Native Americans hunting whales. They feel that by letting Native American hunt whales, they are risking extinction of the species. Also, they feel that the killing of whales is inhumane. Native Americans just want to continue to do what their ancestors have done in the past. Whaling rights has touched on a controversial issue of culture (NCSE 1998).
- b) **Popular Argument in Favor:** Giving whaling rights to Native Americans will allow for them to maintain a culture that they have had for many generations.

Popular Argument Against: Preventing Native Americans from whaling will prevent form grey whale from becoming extinct.

- c) **In Favor value system:** The value system for the argument in favor is Egoistic Hedonism because the Native Americans want to continue to follow their culture. Their only intrinsic value is their own personal happiness.
Against value system: The value system for the argument against is Utilitarian because environmental and animal rights groups want what they believe is the best for the general public and animals.
 - d) **Recommendation:** Although, allowing the harm of animals is a very controversial topic, it is only fair to allow the Native American to hunt whales as they have in the past. Regulations on the number of whales that can be killed are currently implemented and the Native Americans are abiding. The current regulations allowed for both sides to reach a suitable compromise. The whales are not being killed at a number that will cause their extinction and Native Americans can continue to do what they have been doing for many centuries.
4. **Health Care: Proposed Legislation to Cut Medical Treatment Funding for those over 80 in Half**
- a) **Brief Summary:** The cost for health care has increased dramatically in the last few years causing businesses to cut benefits or ask their employees to contribute more. The government has also felt the affect of rising health care costs, especially regarding the community that need it the most – the elderly. People over 80 have health problems and need to see a doctor on a regular basis. Some of these people rely on government assistance to help pay for their costs. If passed, a proposed legislation will cut public expenditure in half on medical treatment for those over 80. People in favor of the proposed legislation feel that the government should not be responsible for others' well being and taxes should be used on other expenses. People against the proposed legislation feel that the government should be helping the elderly with medical costs. They feel that the elderly has worked their entire life and are entitled to services that they have paid taxes for in the past years.
 - b) **Popular Argument in Favor:** Cutting in half public expenditures on medical treatment for those over 80 will allow for the government to use taxes on expenses that benefits the entire country.
 - c) **Popular Argument Against:** Not passing the proposed legislation of cutting in half public expenditures on medical treatment for those over 80 will give a disadvantaged community the ability to survive.
 - d) **In Favor value system:** The value system for the argument in favor is Utilitarian because proponents want what they think is best for the general public – cutting costs that does not benefit their wellbeing.

Against value system: The value system for the argument in favor is Deontic because it wants to achieve fairness for the elderly although it decreases the general happiness of the nation.

- e) **Recommendation:** Cutting a benefit for a community that is disadvantaged and possibly disabled is unfair. Many of the recipients do not have family that could help them or may have family that does not want to help them. The proposed legislation should not pass. The rising costs of health care is a problem, however, trying to fix the problem by cutting a program that helps a certain group is unacceptable. The government should think of ways to shift funds in their budgets or work with the health care companies to limit the costs.

References

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Sacramento Bee

Knight, H. (2005) "Schools' diversity lottery extended: Court-ordered plan for desegregation now expires in 2007." San Francisco Chronicle

National Center for Science Education. (1998). "The Makah Indian Tribe and Whaling: A Fact Sheet Issued by the Makah Whaling Commission."

San Francisco Unified School District (n.d) "The Enrollment Process: Diversity Index Lottery Explained."