

Governance and ethics - Introduction

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NHS Governance

(i) the way in which complex interactions between various constituencies (members of the public etc.), the government, the NHS and other social forms are produced, patterned and regulated; (ii) the implications of these interactions for the provision of healthcare; (iii) the relationship between (i) and (ii) (Morrell 2006).

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Governance Modes 1

Hierarchies, markets, networks; two others can be added: *community governance*, common interest / location and *relational governance*, firms interact in the exchange of goods and services.

These are ideal-typic models for describing prevailing patterns of organising work and the allocation of resources, and the relationship between service users and suppliers. Formal hierarchies are typically complemented by informal ones (hence are partly networks), markets rely to some extent on state sanction (hence incorporate hierarchical aspects), networks and communities circumscribe relations of power dependence (hence are hierarchical).

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Governance Modes 2

1. *Hierarchical* modes -- Bevan's comment that a bedpan dropped on the floor of a hospital should reverberate throughout Whitehall.
2. Thatcherite reforms, hierarchical forms challenged by introduction of (CCT) and attempt to create an internal *market* for the NHS.
3. Trends to 'new localism' and legislation encourage emphasis on formation of *networks* between organisations at sub-regional level.
4. *Communitarian* modes in voluntary sector, e.g. hospices also recent reforms FTs include community reps on board of directors.
5. *Relational* forms, contemporary governance mechanisms such as the statutory duty placed on Foundation Trusts and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to co-operate with other NHS bodies.

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Over to you... c10 minutes

Working in pairs or small groups

Find one benefit, and one problem for each of these modes in terms of organising a healthcare system.

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Ethics

Utilitarianism Mill > principle-centred, moral decisions taken on basis of a single criterion, securing the greatest utility for the greatest number; consequentialist account. What are some problems with Utilitarianism?

Kantianism Immanuel Kant > principle-centred, basis for moral decisions should be the 'categorical imperative'; deontological. What are some problems with Kantianism?

Ethics of Care feminist critique > recognise importance of wider web of relationships (not cold, abstract principles and dispassionate calculation). What are some problems with Ethics of 'Care'?

Virtue ethics Aristotle > different tradition to U'n or K'n, more emphasis on individual as moral agent in given context; ethics-as-narrative, prioritises cultivation of virtue, and pursuit of the good; ultimate moral standing teleological account. What are some problems with Virtue Ethics?

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Governance and Ethics

Virtue / Mechanism		Kantianism	Utilitarianism	Care	
Hierarchy	Order	compatible √	compatible √	incompatible *	}
Markets	Competition	incompatible *	compatible √	incompatible *	
Network	Collaboration	incompatible *	incompatible *	compatible √	
Community	Local identity	incompatible *	incompatible *	compatible √	
Relational	Trust	contingent ?	contingent ?	compatible √	

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Levels in a Healthcare System

Virtue	Kantianism	Utilitarianism	Care
Trusts A potential guide for action based on the notion of the public	Possible confusion with priority of principles, or clash (public interest, v commercial imperative)	good and desired characteristics. Could form the basis for resolving conflicts between	Comparatively low priority, given abstract level of decision making, though quasi-democratic reforms may foreground this
Hospitals alternative systems ie ordering of Kantian, Utilitarian principles	Prioritisation of Kantian principles, but potentially these are subordinated given the importance of situated judgment	Teams	Comparatively high priority given proximity to the patient
Individuals			

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