



FROM MISUNDERSTANDING TO BLAME: COGNITIVE RIGIDITY, RESPONSIBILITY AVOIDANCE, AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MISJUDGMENT

Dr.V.Ravi Kumar

Associate Professor and Head, Department of Public Administration, Babu Jagjivan Ram Government Degree College (Autonomous), Hyderabad.

Abstract

Why do organizations sometimes preserve an erroneous interpretation even after credible counterevidence becomes available and why does that interpretation so often culminate in personalized blame? A particularly revealing form of this problem arises when conduct intended by an actor as honest, transparent, or procedurally compliant is interpreted by an observer as suspicious, deceptive, or responsible for failure. This article conceptualizes that divergence as the Integrity-Suspicion Paradox: a condition in which substantially the same conduct is understood by one party as an expression of integrity but judged by another as evidence of dishonesty or wrong doing. Scholarship on attribution, cognitive closure, cognitive dissonance, threat rigidity, employee voice, accountability and blame avoidance offers partial explanations, but these literatures remain weakly integrated. Using an integrative, problem-centered review, the article develops a cognitive-institutional explanation of the progression from ambiguity to misunderstanding, misjudgment, responsibility attribution and blame. The proposed Misjudgment-to-Blame Model argues that bounded rationality generates provisional interpretations; attribution bias, need for closure and cognitive rigidity convert some interpretations into resistant commitments; perceived threat narrows attention and centralizes control; and defensive reasoning creates incentives to externalize or diffuse responsibility. Within this process, the Integrity-Suspicion Paradox explains how conscientious conduct may be recorded as suspicious when actors rely on different informational frames, assumptions about motive or standards of procedural legitimacy. Hierarchy, reputational exposure, time pressure and identity-threatening accountability amplify the progression, whereas psychological safety, employee voice, informational justice, structured dissent and independent review preserve interpretive revisability. Eight propositions specify the model's mechanisms, moderators and feedback loop. The article contributes to behavioral public administration by connecting micro-level interpretive divergence with meso-level organizational structures and macro-level blame dynamics, while distinguishing evidence-based accountability from defensive blame avoidance.

Keywords: *Misunderstanding; Misjudgment; Integrity-Suspicion Paradox; Cognitive Rigidity; Attribution; Responsibility Avoidance; Accountability; Blame; Behavioral Public Administration.*

Introduction

Administrative and organizational life depends on interpretation. Rules, reports, explanations and recorded facts do not speak entirely for themselves; they acquire meaning through assumptions about motive, role, context and consequence. Two people may therefore examine substantially the same event and reach sharply different conclusions about what another person intended and whether the conduct was proper. One observer may see transparency, caution or compliance. Another may see concealment, manipulation or an attempt to escape responsibility. The disagreement becomes more consequential when one interpretation hardens into an official judgment and the person whose conduct is being judged has less authority to define the situation.

The important analytical question is not simply who was right and who was wrong. It is how reasonable actors can construct incompatible meanings from overlapping facts, why an initial



interpretation can resist correction and how interpretive disagreement becomes personalized blame. Attribution research shows that observers often explain conduct by inferring stable dispositions while discounting situational constraints (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1973; Ross, 1977). Research on cognitive closure and confirmation processes explains why people may prefer a definite conclusion and then search selectively for information consistent with it (Kruglanski, 2004; Nickerson, 1998; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). Organizational research further shows that threaten arrows information processing, hierarchy hinders voice and public commitment makes reversal psychologically and institutionally costly (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Staw et al., 1981).

These insights are valuable but usually studied separately. Attribution research often stops at judgment; organizational silence research concentrates on whether concerns are voiced; accountability scholarship focuses on answerability and consequences; and blame-avoidance research examines how actors protect themselves from negative attribution. What remains underdeveloped is an integrated explanation of how ambiguous conduct moves through interpretation, threat and defensive reasoning until a provisional suspicion is institutionalized as blame.

This article addresses that gap through two connected concepts. First, it introduces the Integrity-Suspicion Paradox, defined as a condition of interpretive divergence in which conduct intended and understood by an actor as honest, transparent, responsible or procedurally compliant is interpreted by an observer as suspicious, deceptive, self-serving or blameworthy. Second, it embeds this paradox within a broader Misjudgment-to-Blame Model. The paradox explains how conscientious conduct can be recoded as suspicious; the model explains how that recoding can become resistant, amplified and translated into responsibility attribution and blame.

The article contributes in four ways. It separates misunderstanding from misjudgment and blame; treats integrity and suspicion as competing interpretations rather than self-validating facts; connects individual cognition with hierarchy, accountability and reputation; and identifies corrective capacity as an organizational property that preserves the revisability of judgments. The resulting framework is relevant to public agencies, universities, regulatory bodies, professional organizations and private firms, wherever ambiguous conduct must be evaluated under unequal authority and reputational pressure.

Method: An Integrative, Problem-Centred Review

The article uses an integrative, problem-centered review to build theory across disciplinary boundaries. An integrative review is appropriate when the problem is not contained within one mature literature and when the objective is conceptual synthesis rather than calculation of a pooled effect. The review draws on social psychology, organizational behaviour, public administration, and governance. It concentrates on seven bodies of work: bounded rationality and sense making; attribution and motivated cognition; cognitive closure and dissonance; threat rigidity and defensive routines; employee voice and psychological safety; organizational justice and accountability; and blame avoidance.

The view proceeded through four analytical stages. First, the focal concepts were differentiated to prevent the common collapse of misunderstanding, error, responsibility and blame into a single category. Second, recurrent mechanisms were identified across literatures. Third, the mechanisms were arranged as a temporal process from ambiguous event to interpretive commitment and blame. Fourth, moderators, corrective conditions and empirically testable propositions were derived. The article does not claim that every contested judgment is mistaken or that an actor's stated intention is



necessarily accurate. Its narrower claim is that organizations require procedures capable of testing rival interpretations before attaching blame.

Conceptual Distinctions

Conceptual precision is necessary because accountability can be weakened both by premature blame and by the refusal to assign responsibility where evidence warrants it. Table 1 therefore distinguishes five related but analytically non-equivalent concepts through definitions and diagnostic criteria.

Concept	Meaning	Analytical test
Mis understanding	A discrepancy in how actors interpret The meaning, motive or context of conduct.	Do the parties attach different Meanings to substantially the same event?
Mis judgment	An evaluation that is insufficiently warranted because relevant evidence, alternatives or context were In adequately considered.	Was the conclusion proportionate to the evidence and open to correction?
Responsibility attribution	A causal and normative judgment that an actor contributed to an outcome Andhad relevant obligation.	What did the actor cause, control, know or have a duty to prevent?
Accountability	An institutional relationship requiring an actor to explain conduct before a forum that can question and impose Consequences (Bovens, 2007).	Was there fairans we ability, reason-giving and review?
Blame	A negative judgment combining agency, causality, normviolation and Avoid ability.	Is condemnation supported by evidence of controllable and avoidable wrongdoing?

Table1.Distinguishing the principal concepts.

A misunderstanding may be innocent and symmetrical: each party lacks information about the other's perspective. A misjudgment is more demanding because it concerns the adequacy of the evaluative process. Responsibility attribution may be accurate and necessary even without moral condemnation. Accountability is a structured relationship of answer ability rather than a synonym for punishment. Blame adds a negative moral evaluation and therefore requires stronger evidentiary and procedural safeguards.

The Integrity-Suspicion Paradox

Definition and boundaries

The Integrity-Suspicion Paradox occurs when conduct experienced by the actor as an expression of integrity is interpreted by an observer as evidence of suspicion. The paradox rests on an intention-interpretation divergence, but it is not resolved merely by accepting the actor's self-description. People can misrepresent their motives, and sincere intentions do not make every action appropriate. The construct therefore does not establish innocence. It identifies a condition in which the meaning of the conduct is contested and should be tested through evidence, context and fair procedure.

Four elements define the paradox. First, the conduct must be capable of more than one plausible interpretation. Second, the actor understands the conduct as serving honesty, transparency, responsibility or compliance. Third, an observer attributes a suspicious or blame worthy motive to the



same conduct. Fourth, the disagreement matters because it affects trust, reputation, authority or responsibility. Routine disagreement without such consequences is not the focal phenomenon.

Why Conscientious Conduct Can Appear Suspicious

Many integrity-related actions are behaviorally ambiguous. A person who documents a transaction may be protecting the record or constructing a defence. A person who voluntarily discloses an irregularity may be demonstrating candour or attempting to control the narrative. An employee who insists on written authorization may be complying with procedure or avoiding ownership. A detailed explanation may be informative or appear rehearsed. The observable act underdetermines motive; observers fill the gap with prior beliefs, role expectations and contextual cues.

Attribution theory explains part of this divergence. Observers often give dispositional explanations for another person's conduct while actors emphasize situational demands (Jones & Nisbett, 1972; Ross, 1977). Suspicion can also be self-reinforcing: once an observer expects deception, ordinary signs of anxiety, caution or self-protection may be interpreted as confirmation. Confirmation bias privileges compatible evidence, whereas ambiguous counterevidence is discounted (Nickerson, 1998).

Competing Standards of Integrity

Integrity is not expressed through one universally obvious behaviour. One actor may understand integrity substantively, as telling the truth and preventing harm. Another may understand it procedurally, as following the authorized chain of command. A third may define it relationally, as loyalty and protection of colleagues. These standards can collide. Direct disclosure may appear morally necessary under a substantive standard but disloyal under a relational one; strict compliance may appear responsible under a procedural standard but evasive to someone emphasizing outcomes. The paradox is therefore not only psychological but institutional: organizations authorize some meanings of integrity more readily than others.

From Interpersonal Divergence to Administrative Consequence

In interpersonal life, the paradox may damage trust. In organizations, hierarchy converts interpretation into consequence. Supervisors can enter an interpretation into an official record, initiate an inquiry, control access to evidence or define which explanation appears credible. Administrative structures may thus stabilize one account before alternatives receive equal examination. Once the interpretation becomes public, reversal threatens the judgment of decision-makers and the legitimacy of prior action. What began as a difference in meaning can become an institutional fact.

Cognitive Mechanisms of Misjudgment

Bounded Rationality and Sensemaking

Organizational actors rarely possess complete information, unlimited time or neutral attention. Bounded rationality means that they satisfy under cognitive and institutional constraints rather than optimize with full knowledge (March & Simon, 1958; Simon, 1947). Sense making involves selecting cues and constructing a plausible account that permits action (Weick, 1995). Initial interpretations are therefore unavoidable. The problem begins when plausible accounts are treated as established facts before rival explanations are tested.

Attributional bias

Responsibility judgments require causal inference. Observers ask whether conduct reflects character, intention, role obligation or circumstance. The fundamental attribution error describes the tendency to overemphasize dispositional causes while underestimating situational constraints (Ross, 1977). In



organizations, this can transform “the procedure was unclear” into “the employee was deceptive,” or “several units failed to communicate” into “one person caused the problem.” Attribution becomes especially consequential when the selected target has less status or fewer opportunities to contest the interpretation.

Need For Closure and Cognitive Rigidity

Need for cognitive closure is the desire for a firm answer and an aversion to ambiguity (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). Time pressure, fatigue, uncertainty and threat can intensify this need. Closure is not itself irrational; organizations must act. Yet premature closure encourages “seizing” on an early explanation and “freezing” it against subsequent revision (Kruglanski, 2004). Cognitive rigidity refers here to the reduced willingness or capacity to update an interpretation when credible, relevant counterevidence becomes available.

Dissonance, Commitment and Self-Justification

When decision-makers publicly endorse an interpretation, contradictory information creates cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Revising the judgment may imply that the original inquiry was careless or unfair. Escalation-of-commitment research shows how prior decisions can generate further investment in a chosen course (Staw, 1976). Public commitment therefore changes the cost of correction. Defending the initial judgment may become easier than acknowledging uncertainty, particularly when authority or reputation is at stake.

Defensive Reasoning

Defensive routines protect individuals and organizations from embarrassment or threat while making the underlying problem difficult to discuss (Argyris, 1990). Evidence may be filtered, questions reframed as disloyalty and demands for review treated as resistance. The integrity claim itself can then become suspicious: the more the accused actor explains, the more the explanation is interpreted as self-protection. This recursive pattern is central to the paradox because conduct aimed at correcting the record may be assimilated into the original accusation.

Organizational Amplifiers

Threat Rigidity: Threat narrows attention, reduces information processing and increases reliance on familiar routines and centralized control (Staw et al., 1981). Under reputational, legal or performance threat, leaders may seek a rapid, coherent explanation. Ambiguity becomes uncomfortable and a personalized account can appear administratively convenient.

Hierarchy and Power Asymmetry

Hierarchy affects whose interpretation becomes authoritative. Higher-status actors often control meetings, records, investigative scope and access to review. Lower-status members may anticipate that disagreement will be interpreted as insubordination. Power asymmetry therefore shapes both attribution and the evidence that becomes visible. Silence by subordinates can be mistaken for agreement, further reinforcing the dominant interpretation.

Organizational silence and in habited voice

Organizational silence arises when employees collectively withhold information about potential problems (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Voice is risky when leaders are defensive, sanctions are possible or speaking seems futile (Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Morrison, 2014). In a misjudgment episode, witnesses may possess contextual information but remain silent. Their silence removes corrective evidence and produces a false appearance of consensus.



Accountability Pressure and Reputation

Accountability can improve judgment when decision-makers expect to justify their reasoning before an informed and legitimate audience (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999; Tetlock, 1985). It can also become identity-threatening when evaluation is outcome-focused, punitive or politically exposed. Under such conditions, actors may shift responsibility, narrow the agenda or identify a defensible target. Public accountability and blame avoidance must therefore be distinguished: the former seeks reasons and evidence; the latter seeks protection from negative attribution (Bovens, 2007; Hood, 2011; Weaver, 1986).

Informational in justice

Organizational justice concerns distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational dimensions (Colquitt, 2001; Greenberg, 1993). Informational justice requires adequate, truthful and timely explanations. Misjudgment is more likely when information is selectively disclosed, reasons are vague or the affected person cannot access the evidence used against them. A procedurally formal process may still be unjust if its informational foundations are asymmetric.

The Misjudgment-to-Blame Model

The model describes a sequence rather than an inevitable law. It begins with an ambiguous event. Bounded actors form an initial interpretation. Where conduct is integrity-coded by the actor but suspicion-coded by the observer, the Integrity-Suspicion Paradox emerges. Attributional bias and need for closure can harden the suspicious account. Perceived threat activates narrower attention and centralized control. Defensive reasoning then protects the emerging judgment, while hierarchy and silence limit corrective information. Responsibility is externalized, accountability becomes personalized and blame is assigned. Public commitment and institutional self-justification feed back into the process, increasing resistance to correction.

Stage	Primary Mechanism	Risk of Distortion
1. Ambiguity	Incomplete facts, competing Norms and unclear causality	Provisional inference treated as fact
2. Interpretation	Cue selection and sense making	Situational context excluded
3. Paradox	Integrity-coded action becomes suspicion-coded	Motive inferred from ambiguous conduct
4. Commitment	Closure, confirmation and Dissonance reduction	Counterevidence discounted
5. Threat	Attention narrowing and Centralized control	Speed replaces deliberation
6. Defence	Self-justification and in habited Voice	Alternative accounts framed as resistance
7. Responsibility	Externalization, diffusion or Concentration	Causal complexity collapsed on to a target
8. Blame	Negative judgment and sanction	Condemnation exceeds evidentiary warrant

Table2. Stages in the Misjudgment-to-Blame Model.

Amplifiers include ambiguity, time pressure, hierarchy, accountability threat and reputational exposure. Corrective capacity consists of voice, psychological safety, informational justice, structured dissent and independent review. The model predicts that mis judgment is not explained by cognition



alone: the same initial bias may be corrected in an open system and institutionalized in a defensive one.

Propositions

Proposition 1: The likelihood of the Integrity-Suspicion Paradox increases when conduct is motivationally ambiguous and actors apply different standards of integrity, role obligation or procedural legitimacy.

Proposition 2: Observers are more likely to interpret integrity-intended conduct as suspicious when prior distrust and dispositional attribution outweigh situational information.

Proposition 3: Need for cognitive closure strengthens the relationship between an initial suspicious interpretation and resistance to credible counterevidence.

Proposition 4: Perceived threat strengthens cognitive rigidity by narrowing attention, centralizing control and increasing reliance on familiar causal accounts.

Proposition 5: Hierarchical power asymmetry increases the probability that one interpretation becomes institutionalized before rival interpretations receive equivalent examination.

Proposition 6: Identity-threatening accountability increases responsibility avoidance and the externalization or concentration of blame, whereas deliberative accountability improves evidence integration.

Proposition 7: Psychological safety, employee voice, informational justice and independent review weaken the transition from misunderstanding to misjudgment by preserving interpretive revisability.

Proposition 8: Public commitment to an initial judgment creates a feedback loop in which institutional self-justification increases resistance to correction and intensifies subsequent blame.

Corrective Capacity: Interrupting the Progression

Psychological Safety and Voice

Psychological safety is a shared belief that interpersonal risk-taking is permissible (Edmondson, 1999). It does not require agreement or immunity from accountability. It enables questions, admissions and dissent to be evaluated without automatic relational punishment. In the present model, psychological safety increases the probability that witnesses provide context and that decision-makers hear rival interpretations before commitment hardens.

Informational justice

Informational justice requires more than providing a conclusion. Affected persons should understand the allegations, evidence, standards and reasons used in judgment. They should have a meaningful opportunity to respond and should receive an explanation of how counterevidence was evaluated. These practices make accountability more accurate and legitimate while reducing the likelihood that procedural opacity will be interpreted as predetermined blame.

Structured Dissent and Independent Review

Organizations should not depend solely on individual courage. Structured dissent assigns a person or group to test the leading interpretation, search for disconfirming evidence and articulate plausible alternatives. Independent review is especially important when those who made the original judgment control the reconsideration. Separation between initial decision and appellate review lowers the reputational cost of correction and protects institutional learning.

Calibrated Accountability

Evidence-based accountability asks what happened, what each actor controlled, which obligations applied and how preventable the outcome was. It distinguishes causal contribution from moral fault



and individual error from system design. Calibrated accountability can impose proportionate consequences while preserving uncertainty where evidence remains incomplete. This is neither leniency nor blame avoidance; it is disciplined judgment.

Contributions to Behavioral Public Administration

Behavioral public administration examines how cognitive and social processes shape administrative behaviour and citizen-state interactions. The present framework advances this agenda by locating misjudgment across levels. At the micro level, attribution, closure, dissonance and defensive reasoning influence interpretation. At the me so level, hierarchy, silence, procedural design and reputation determine which account becomes authoritative. At the macro level, accountability regimes and blame dynamics influence how organizations explain failure to political principals and publics.

The Integrity-Suspicion Paradox adds conceptual value because it captures a form of administrative conflict not reducible to simple dishonesty or error. It explains why an actor's effort to be transparent can increase suspicion, why procedural caution can be recorded as evasion and why self-defence may be treated as confirmation. The construct also discourages premature moral polarization: it neither assumes that the actor is innocent nor that the observer is irrational. It directs attention to how meaning is constructed and tested.

The model also preserves a crucial normative boundary. Accountability is necessary to democratic administration. The argument is not that blame should disappear, but that blame should follow adequate inquiry rather than substitute for it. Organizations fail both when they scapegoat individuals and when they use complexity to avoid warranted responsibility. The appropriate standard is evidence-based, procedurally fair and proportionate attribution.

Empirical Research Programme

Construct Development and Validation: The first task is to validate the Integrity-Suspicion Paradox as a construct. Qualitative interviews and critical-incident analysis can identify recurring situations in which transparency, compliance or caution was interpreted as suspicious. Item development should distinguish perceived actor intention, observer interpretation, motivational ambiguity and consequence. Expert review, cognitive interviewing, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis can establish content, Discriminant and construct validity. The measure should remain distinct from general interpersonal distrust, paranoia, organizational cynicism and perceived injustice.

Vignette Experiments: Vignette experiments can manipulate the same administrative conduct while varying contextual information. A disclosure might be described as voluntary or compelled; documentation as routine or unusually detailed; the actor as high or low status; the organization as threatened or stable; and counterevidence as strong or weak. Outcomes could include perceived honesty, suspicion, causal responsibility, blame and preferred sanction. Factorial designs would test when an integrity-coded act becomes suspicion-coded and whether closure or threat moderates updating.

Multilevel surveys

Employee surveys can measure need for closure, attribution style, psychological safety, voice climate, accountability orientation, informational justice and exposure to blame. Multi level modeling can distinguish individual tendencies from unit-level climates. The model predicts that personal rigidity will have stronger effects in units characterized by punitive accountability, centralized authority and low psychological safety.



Process Tracing and Comparative Cases

Process tracing can reconstruct the movement from event to official judgment. Data may include contemporaneous records, meeting minutes, email sequences, interview accounts and review decisions. Comparison between cases corrected early and cases that escalated to blame can identify causal turning points. Particular attention should be paid to when alternative interpretations became available, who controlled the record, whether dissent was voiced and how public commitment altered later reasoning.

Ethical Safeguards

Research on accusation and blame can expose participants to reputational risk. Studies should anonymize organizations and individuals, avoid adjudicating unresolved allegations and distinguish perceived integrity from verified conduct. Experimental materials should not imply that suspicion is always mistaken. The object of inquiry is the quality and dynamics of interpretation, not the vindication of a predetermined party.

Practical Implications

Organizations can translate the framework into decision practices. Investigators should separate observed conduct from inferred motive; record at least one plausible alternative account; specify what evidence would change the preliminary judgment; distinguish causal contribution from norm violation; and disclose the reasoning used to accept or reject counterevidence. High-stakes decisions should include an independent review by persons who did not authorize the initial conclusion.

Leaders should also monitor the language through which judgments harden. Phrases such as “obviously,” “only someone guilty would,” or “the explanation itself proves deception” may signal that falsifiability has been lost. Conversely, repeated appeals to good intention cannot replace evidence of compliance or reasonable care. The central discipline is symmetric scrutiny: both the accusation and the integrity claim must remain open to examination.

Public agencies can strengthen fairness through reasoned orders, transparent evidentiary standards, protected reporting channels and accessible appeal. Training should focus not only on bias awareness but on procedural debasing: slowing high-stakes inference, eliciting dissent, considering base rates, documenting uncertainty and separating fact-finding from action. These practices protect individuals while improving organizational accuracy and legitimacy.

Discussion

Misunderstanding becomes socially dangerous when an interpretation acquires authority without acquiring adequate warrant. The Integrity-Suspicion Paradox identifies the initial fault line: the same conduct can carry opposite moral meanings. The broader model explains the escalation. Bounded rationality makes provisional interpretation necessary; attribution and closure can turn plausibility into certainty; threat and hierarchy restrict the informational field; defensive reasoning protects commitment; and blame avoidance supplies an incentive to locate responsibility elsewhere. The model also clarifies why counterevidence may fail. Evidence does not enter a neutral cognitive space. Once a judgment supports identity, authority or public reputation, new information can be treated as a threat to the decision-maker rather than a resource for inquiry.

The institutional question is therefore not simply whether evidence exists, but whether the organization possesses enough corrective capacity to hear and use it. At the same time, the framework should not romanticize self-proclaimed integrity. Actors can strategically present self-protective



behaviour as transparency, and organizations must investigate such claims. The paradox is useful precisely because it suspends premature certainty. It requires examination of conduct, motive, context and procedure without allowing either accusation or self-description to decide the case in advance.

Limitations

This is a conceptual article and its propositions require empirical testing. The process may not unfold linearly, and several mechanisms can operate simultaneously. Integrity and suspicion are culturally and institutionally situated; behaviours regarded as transparent in one setting may violate expectations in another. The model also concentrates on erroneous or insufficiently warranted blame, although accurate blame remains possible and sometimes necessary. Finally, the proposed paradox must demonstrate discriminant validity from related constructs such as distrust, attribution error, defensive attribution and perceived organizational injustice.

Conclusion

The deepest question in contested conduct is not merely who was right and who was wrong. It is how substantially similar facts can produce incompatible moral interpretations, how one interpretation becomes resistant to revision and how organizational structures convert suspicion into blame. The Integrity-Suspicion Paradox provides a name for the moment when conduct intended as honest, transparent or compliant is interpreted as deceptive or blameworthy. The Misjudgment-to-Blame Model situates that moment within a wider cognitive and institutional process. Organizations cannot eliminate ambiguity, disagreement or accountability. They can, however, prevent provisional interpretation from becoming unquestionable judgment. Psychological safety, voice, informational justice, structured dissent and independent review preserve the possibility of correction. In this sense, responsible administration requires more than deciding quickly. It requires the institutional humility to keep judgment proportionate to evidence and the moral courage to revise a conclusion when truth demands it.

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