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A Quantitative Study of Student Receptivity to Double-Effect Reasoning as an Ethical Framework for Journalism

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A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF STUDENT RECEPTIVITY TO DOUBLE-EFFECT REASONING AS AN ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR JOURNALISM

by

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Abstract

     This thesis examines the receptivity of undergraduate journalism students to the application of an ethical framework, known as double-effect reasoning, to moral issues and dilemmas that they will encounter in their journalism studies and work. The purpose is to see by year (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) and by area of emphasis (news, public relations, advertising) which students are the most receptive to the framework. After exploring different ethical theories used in mass communication, I examine in detail the doctrine of double effect. I also explain my method and my results. Although it is true that students in general held double-effect reasoning in positive regard as a useful moral framework, neither the year nor the area of emphasis of students revealed itself as being correlated with such regard. I speculate as to why this is the case and suggest ways the study could be improved for future scholars possibly interested in pursuing a replication of my project.

Table of Contents

A Quantitative Study of Student Receptivity to Double-Effect Reasoning as an Ethical Framework for Journalism

The doctrine (or principle) of double effect (also simply called double effect) is used to explain the moral permissibility of an action that causes a serious harm (used here instead of "evil") as a side effect of promoting some good end. What makes double effect stand out as an approach to ethical reasoning is its "insistence on the moral importance of the distinction between the intended effects of one's actions and the merely foreseen effects" (Kaufman, 2008, p. 94). In fact, applying this doctrine to difficulties arising in everyday life (particularly as they concern medicine and warfare) "has become increasingly influential . . . and for good reason" (p. 94). While it is true that double-effect reasoning has its roots in Catholic thought, "it is not a religious doctrine any more than the prohibition on homicide is religious because it has roots in the Ten Commandments" (p. 94).

Double effect holds that sometimes it is permissible to cause a harm as a side effect (or "double effect") of bringing about a good result even though it would not be permissible to cause such a harm as a means to bringing about the same good end. This reasoning can be summarized with the idea that sometimes it is permissible to bring about as a merely *foreseen* side effect a harmful event that it would be impermissible to bring about *intentionally*. According to Gillon (1986), "[p]erhaps the most important general reminder" for those applying double effect to a particular field of human endeavor "is that actions cannot be morally judged solely in terms of their consequences. The conditions under which they are carried out, including the intention with which they are carried out, is a vital aspect of their moral assessment" (Gillon, 1986, p. 193).

Ethics

Ethics is generally understood as "rules of conduct" or "principles of morality" that direct

1

human beings toward the "right or best way to act in a situation" (Dominick, 2005, p. 419). But now, perhaps more than at any other point in recorded history, we are living "in a time of rival understandings of the "good," an era defined by competing narrative and virtue structures" (Arnett, Fritz, and Bell, 2009, p. xi). In fact, the spirit of the times challenges more than just ethics. According to Rosenau, "[p]ost-modernism haunts social science today . . . It rejects epistemological assumptions, refutes methodological conventions, resists knowledge claims, obscures all versions of truth, and dismisses policy recommendations" (Rosenau, 1992, p. 3). In the midst of all the disagreement that takes place on a global scale between various individuals and groups, there might be this one shared estimation: that *contention* "is no longer a communicative surprise" (Arnett et al., 2009, p. xi). For Arnett et al., "[w]e live in a moment in which public and private rules for engagement with one another are no longer in place, and common spaces and places of agreement are not the normative background for communicative life" (p. xiii).

Over the centuries philosophers have developed a number of ethical theories and frameworks that "serve as guidelines for evaluating our behavior" (Dominick, 2005, p. 419). Some of the more well-known of these approaches include Kant's categorical imperative, Bentham's greatest happiness principle, and Rawls's veil-of-ignorance view of justice. Kant's approach is based on universalizability; every "proposed action must be such that one can will that it become a universal law of nature" (Crisp, 1995, p. 125). In other words, it is wrong to tell a lie because if everyone told lies then others would lie to us as well. Communication would break down. According to Kant, this would not be morally justifiable. For Bentham, the father of utilitarianism, goodness means "the maximization of pleasure and the minimization of pain" (Harrison, 1995, p. 85). The happiness of the many, measured in terms of pain and pleasure,

should be the goal of society, according to Bentham. Rawls's view concerns the "setting-aside of all information about your distinguishing social characteristics to ensure a fair choice of principles of justice" (Nagel, 1995, p. 897). Different ethical frameworks "often suggest different and conflicting courses of action" and yet they can aid us in "analyz[ing] what is proper in examining choices and justifying our actions" (Dominick, 2005, p. 420).

 Ethics based on the notion of duty, or what is right, is different from ethical systems based on the idea of achieving some good state of affairs (as in utilitarianism) or the qualities of character necessary to live well (as in Aristotle's virtue-centered ethics). The leading deontological system is that of Immanuel Kant. In his seminal work *Wisdom of the West*, twentieth-century British philosopher Bertrand Russell wrote that Kant introduced "somewhat of a revolution" in ethics. "For if hitherto ethics had always assumed that the will was ruled by external influences, Kant supposes that it gives its own law unto itself" (Russell, 1959, p. 242).The individual, thus, is autonomous, in that he or she has a *will* that is autonomous. For Kant, if one is seeking to discover ethical principles for how to live one's life, then one must look within. It is not going to do a moral agent any good to look outside of him- or herself.

For many of us, ethics is situational. We ask, "What should I do in this situation or in this particular case?" Kant held that the moral law (which is within each rational individual) does not "consist of specific injunctions," as Russell phrased it (p. 242). Given our autonomy, it is only right that we do not have to (or should not have to) follow an injunction for this and an injunction for that, *ad infinitum*; these numerous injunctions may in fact lead to conflicting duties.

So what we do have, as Russell puts it, is "a purely formal principle devoid of empirical content" (p. 242). It is this principle that Kant called the *categorical imperative*. What, then, is

this principle? One way to think of the categorical imperative is as the *unconditional ought*. "Always act in such a way that the principles guiding the will could become the basis of a universal law," (p. 242). The contemporary philosopher Roger Scruton, in his book, *Kant: A Very Short Introduction*, paraphrased the great German thinker thus, "[A]ct only on the maxim which I can at the same time will as a universal law" (Scruton, 2001, p. 85). The categorical imperative is similar to the Golden Rule, in that "we should do unto others as we would that they do unto us" (Russell, 1959, p. 242). The categorical imperative is a requirement that binds anybody and everybody, regardless of inclinations, context, or personal preferences. This principle could be represented as, for example: Tell the truth regardless of whether you want to or not, or whether it would place you at a disadvantage (as in, when asked for your honest opinion, telling your boss that his tie is garish or that the new painting in his office is kitschy).

The categorical imperative commands the individual to exercise his or her *will* in a particular way—*not* to perform this action or that action. It is called *categorical* in that it applies to us unconditionally, or simply because we possess both rationality and a will, without reference to any objectives or goals that we wish to achieve. It does not, in other words, apply to us on the condition that we have hitherto assumed some aim for ourselves.

Utilitarianism received its name from an ethical doctrine that holds that the good *is* pleasure and that the bad *is* pain. Therefore, the "best state to be achieved is one in which the balance of pleasure over pain is greatest" (p. Russell, 1959, p. 264). Mill's account of the utilitarian ethic is contained in his short book entitled simply *Utilitarianism* (1863). There is little in Mill's moral thought that goes beyond the father of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham (1748—1832) (p. 267).

Mill was a follower of Bentham, and, through most of his life, greatly admired Bentham's work even though he disagreed with some of Bentham's claims — particularly on the nature of happiness (Russell, 1959, p. 266). Bentham held that there were no qualitative differences between pleasures, only quantitative ones. This brings us to the principle of utility. The principle of utility actually has a very long history, extending back to the Eighteenth Century (with roots going further back to Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and even to the ancient Greek philosopher, Epicurus). Donald Palmer, in his book, *Does the Center Hold? An Introduction to Western Philosophy*, states that utilitarianism is the "moral and social philosophy of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill according to which the value of any action or legislation can be derived from the principle of utility, which advocates the "greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people"' (Palmer, 1991, p. 518). By the term "happiness," Mill meant *pleasure and the absence of pain*; by "unhappiness" he meant *pain and the privation of pleasure*. Bentham held that all human beings are "governed by the desire for pleasure and the aversion to pain" (Palmer, 1991, p. 309). Bentham, however, did not give much thought to the quality or depth of the pleasures that make up human happiness. For Mill, "Utilitarianism would have to be rewritten in such a way as to be able to demonstrate that the reading of Shakespearian sonnets is *better* than some of its alternatives" (Palmer, 1991, p. 312). The principle of utility states that what is morally desirable is human happiness; that happiness itself should be the aim. In Chapter 4 of his key text *Utilitarianism*, Mill wrote that "[h]appiness is not an abstract idea, but a concrete whole" (Mill, 1998, p. 83). The proof of the appropriateness of the principle of utility, for Mill, is that "if human nature is so constituted as to desire nothing which is not either a part of happiness or a means of happiness, we can have no other proof, and we require no other, that these are the only things desirable. If so, happiness is the sole end of human action, and the

promotion of it the test by which to judge all human conduct; from whence it necessarily follows that it must be the criterion of morality, since a part is included in the whole" (p. 85).

So what is the connection, then, between ethics and communication? "Communication," Thomas Bivins (2009) writes, "is basic to being human, and is essential for social interaction. It is impossible to separate ethics from communication itself "because communication plays a significant role in influencing others and because intent is so important as a motivation . . ." (Bivins, 2009, p. 1). For Bivins, what "practically guarantees that issues of right and wrong will arise" in mass communication ethics is that journalists, public relations practitioners, and advertising specialists "consciously choose specific means of communication in order to reach a desired end . . ." (p. 1). It is obvious to Bivins that "the act of communication is inextricably bound up with the potential for ethically questionable practices" (p.1).

Journalism Students and Communication Ethics Literacy

Every day, ethical decisions have to be made about what should or should not be included in media content or what should or should not be done as reporters, editors, broadcasting station managers, advertising campaign managers, and corporate communications coordinators. "Too often, however," writes Joseph Dominick, "these decisions are made haphazardly and without proper analysis of the ethical dimensions involved" (p. 422). Perhaps it is time for a new approach.

Stacy Stevenson and LeeAnn Peck (2011) came to just such a conclusion. Although they write specifically about ethical challenges in social networking, their perspective applies well to all areas of mass communication: "Social media use may require a fresh ethical framework for decision making and/or the evaluating of actions made online" (Stevenson & Peck, 2011, p. 56). Their recommendation of such a framework is double-effect reasoning, particularly as

formulated by University of San Francisco philosophy professor T. A. Cavanaugh. According to Stevenson and Peck (2011), the double-effect approach is helpful in our fast-paced, information society because of its focus on evaluating a moral agent's *intent* and *foresight,* which are particularly conspicuous in the age of YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Vine video clips. Below, the literature review discusses the doctrine of double effect in some detail.

Journalists and other professionals in various mass communication fields often begin to reflect seriously on what is the right and best course of action in a particular media-related case or dilemma during their tenure as journalism majors at a college or university. Reinardy and Moore (2007) report that "moral and ethical development occurs throughout the college years among young adults," citing the work of famous psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (Reinardy & Moore, 2007, p. 162). Kohlberg "specifically examined the ethical decision making of undergraduates and determined that moral development occurred in stages in association with educational and intellectual development. He determined that the third stage, [the] postconventional [stage], does not occur until after the age of 20 and those individuals understand and basically accept society's rules" (p. 163).

According to Arnett et al. (2009), the chief pedagogical goal of "communication ethics literacy" is not achieved in a string of moralistic proclamations, but rather in the protection and promotion of "learning as the first principle of communication ethics in an era of narrative and virtue contention" (Arnett et al., 2009, p. xix). They borrow from Anderson (2003) the metaphor of the "responsible rider" who understands "the joy of riding a horse in unknown terrain, where only increased riding in unfamiliar areas can offer skill for such a task" (p. xix). Only at this juncture is one able to become aware of the "demands" and the "rewards" of news/PR/advertising ethics in "this moment of difference" (p. xix). Responsible riders know that

there is no "perfect journey" (p. xix). Learning is linked to an acknowledgement and understanding of the "good" *protected* and *promoted* by us all and by whomever we encounter (p. xix). An important objective of this thesis is to demonstrate that double-effect reasoning can provide a valuable organizational structure that grounds ethics literacy in mass communication.

Although the focus of my survey is not doctoral students, it is important to point out what Arnett et al. (2009) have to say regarding this group: "Our expectations for Ph.D. students, in contrast to our hopes for undergraduate students, involve more of a maximal understanding of the good, requiring more love of the learning itself, greater commitment to the particular mission and goals of the institution, and unique scholarly contributions to the ongoing story of the disciplinary enterprise" (p. xv). However, the authors recognize that "even with Ph.D. students, there is a multiplicity of goods from different ideas, theories, methodologies, and types of educational commitments" (p. xv).

What do Arnett et al. (2009) mean by maximal learning (as opposed to minimal learning)? We see some of the criteria listed above, of course, but what about context? Sissela Bok (2002) has spoken about providing students the opportunity for talking (or dialoguing) about ethics from a minimalist perspective (Arnett et al., 2009, p. xiv). But what does that mean?

Arnett et al. (2009) give the following example. When it comes to undergraduate students, including the more mature undergraduates (older adults) taught in what they call "a Saturday College degree program," these researchers ask for a *minimal agreement*: "the programs and the classes gather all of us together around one public good: learning. We do not ask for a maximal sense of agreement, [an agreement] which takes us into the "why" of learning" (p. xiv). These communication professors do not ask themselves why their undergraduates want to learn. The students have their reasons, and those reasons are their business; the teachers do not

bother asking—not because they are uncaring, but because they realize that they can only go into so much depth with undergraduates. In addition, they are training Ph.D. students to be the new generation of academic communication scholars.

Arnett et al. (2009) write that "minimal agreement can actually invite productive communication among persons with different understandings of the good and makes learning about the Other an absolute necessity" (p. xv). Each chapter of their text *Communication Ethics Literacy* emphasizes a minimal understanding of the good—working on the macro level of communication ethics, which aims "for a broad discussion of approaches and theories with a focus upon context and application rather than prescriptions for specific situations" (p. xv). Communication ethics literacy then is the model used by the authors; it frames discussions (especially pedagogical discussions) concerning ethics and human communication in the light of "encouraging learning from and about differing understandings and enactments of the good . . . in a time of normative disagreement" (p. xv). It is the hope of this thesis that the method double-effect reasoning can contribute to the worthy goals of communication ethics literacy in higher education.

Literature Review

The question of what should be taught in journalism departments has been a contentious topic among academics and professionals since journalism departments (especially stand-alone journalism departments) came into existence. In 1987, however, a controversy irrupted that, as Conway and Groshek (2008) put it:

> illuminated the often uneasy alliance of different media-related careers taught under the umbrella of journalism and mass communication education in the United States. An underlying concern throughout the decades-long debate involves the mission of journalism education and how best to teach students who have career goals ranging from advertising, public relations, graphic design, to journalism across several platforms. (p. 127)

In teaching an ethics course within the somewhat interdisciplinary parameters of a journalism department, then, a pressing question that comes to mind is this: What are the ethical differences in advertising, public relations, and the press? What role might these differences play in how receptive journalism majors are to double-effect reasoning? And what about area of emphasis? Double-effect reasoning may appeal more to the PR student or the advertising student; or, it may not appeal to that particular student at all. In fact, the doctrine of double effect may hold more of an interest for the student who plans on becoming a roving reporter.

Bivins (2009) explores the moral distinctions between the various fields of mass communication. But Bivins also recognizes how the mass media are alike. "The most common connection," he writes, "is that they are all mass media—that is, they deliver their information to mass audiences and/or seek to inform or influence large audiences through mass distribution of messages" (Bivins, 2009, p. 9). Here, it should be pointed out that today's media are not as "mass" as they were in the not-so-distant past. Social and mobile media, for example, are fragmented and personalized in ways older media are not.

According to Bivins, media are alike in another way: they are obligated to what he terms *moral claimants*, that is "those who have some stake in our decisions" (p. 10). These claimants are the various constituencies or publics affected by journalism, advertising, and public relations. They include employers, clients, readers, and others.

According to Bivins, the media mirror how they are set apart from each other and how they are set apart from society. Central to all media is the obligation to tell the truth. "The ideal of truthful information is at the heart of all communication and is assumed as the normal default in our everyday exchanges with each other" (p. 10). Although telling the truth is the most important value of the media, this particular value is both "constituted" and "honored" in

different ways depending on the medium in question (p. 11).

According to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014), it is "elemental" that media consumers desire truthful information. "Since news is the material that people use to learn and think about the world beyond themselves, the most important quality it can possess is that it be usable and reliable" (p. 50). Significantly, Kovach and Rosenstiel highlight the word "truthfulness" which, in effect, takes the feel of absolutism out of the concept but leaves in the practicality and dependability – what they also refer to as "functional truth" (p.54). They explain that what truthfulness does is to create "the sense of security that grows from awareness and is at the essence of news" (p. 50).

The question of loyalty also comes up in ethical thinking about mass communication professionals. Harcup (2009), for example, writes that "[j]ournalists work in a field of conflicting loyalties, all of which have the potential to influence their work. They may feel a sense of duty toward their audience, editors, advertisers, proprietors, the law, regulatory bodies, contacts, colleagues, fellow citizens, and to themselves and their families" (pp. 17-18). Similarly, Brown et al., (2013) write that PR practitioners "have to think about conflicting loyalties and duties – to yourself, to your employer, to your council, to your organization, to your profession, to your publics, to society" (p. 36).

Many other moral frameworks have been used in applied ethics contexts, but aside from Stevenson's M.A. thesis (2010) and the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* article she co-wrote with Peck (2011), no work has been done on double-effect reasoning and communication/journalism ethics or computer/information ethics. In addition, this thesis, to my knowledge, will be the first to operationalize double-effect reasoning in a social-scientific context. Other explorations of double effect have been philosophical, theological, or otherwise wholly theoretical in nature.

Here it should be pointed out that although Stevenson's research tool in her thesis is the survey, she includes no survey items mentioning double effect. She examines double effect as a potentially useful framework in the body of her thesis, but does not define it in such a way as to make it measureable (and thus empirically understandable).

A Closer Look at Double Effect

According to Woodward (2001), one way a philosopher (or reflective journalist/PR practitioner/advertising specialist, for that matter) may arrive at answers to the thorny questions that arise in our everyday thinking about life "is to identify some feature that one action has but which the other action lacks. Then [we] can look for a moral principle that discriminates in favor of actions that have (or lack) that feature and discriminates against actions that lack (or have) that feature" (Woodward, 2001, p. 2).

The moral principle Woodward has in mind is the one examined here: the doctrine of double effect (DDE). Woodward states that "the DDE exploits the distinction between the intentional production" of harm and the "foreseen but unintentional production" of harm. So what is this doctrine all about exactly? Put simply, double-effect reasoning is concerned with "limiting the application of certain prohibitions" (p. 2). Cutting someone open, for example, is not something one individual should do to another individual (prohibition), unless of course we're talking about a heart surgeon and his or her patient (limiting the prohibition).

Of course, performing heart surgery is not the same as one finding oneself faced with a moral dilemma. Woodward argues that "[a]ll those who accept a moral theory that includes multiple precepts may find themselves in a situation in which they can avoid violating one precept or they can avoid violating another precept, but they cannot avoid violating some precept" (p. 2). A journalist may discover, for instance, some shocking truth about her father's

employer (see related scenario about Trish in the Appendix below). This particular revelation might be of great public interest to the local community, but if published it might also cost the journalist's father his job.

However, if the journalist says nothing, others associated with the employer may either get hurt or never get justice. Here, the journalist is torn between her duty as a newsperson and her duty as a daughter (professional role vs. familial role; these roles may also vary depending on culture and geographic location). In addition, she must consider other people involved in the story, and how their lives will be affected if she does not write and publish the article. And if the employer turns out to be good friends with, or is, say, the brother of the editor of the newspaper at which the journalist works, then the journalist will have to factor in this information as well. The journalist's duty or loyalty to her father seems to prohibit her from writing the story. However, the journalist's duty or loyalty to her profession seems to point her in the other direction. Moreover, her boss's relationship (friend/sibling) with her father's employer further complicates the moral reasoning process of the journalist. Given the complexity of the situation, what should she do?

Ethical thinking is about informal constraints on our behavior. Law, on the other hand, concerns the formal constraints on our behavior. If the journalist in the scenario (again, see Appendix) is legally obligated to write the story, then she would not be obliged to engage in any sort of moral reasoning; she would simply follow the law and avoid running afoul of the authorities. Therefore, there would be no ethical dilemma – in a sense, the legal system (including the various relevant regulations) would "do" the moral reasoning for her.

Dominick (2005) explains that informal controls stem "from within the media themselves or [are] shaped by the workings of external forces such as pressure groups, consumers, and

advertisers . . ." (Dominick, 2005, p. 418). Although Dominick admits that ethical principles "do not contain magic answers to every ethical dilemma" and that these principles "often suggest different and conflicting courses of action," he maintains that they "can provide a framework for analyzing what is proper in examining choices and justifying our actions" (pp. 419-420).

Borrowing from a model developed by Ralph Potter (1972), Dominick argues that journalists and others should carefully consider 4 aspects of any complex ethical situation. First, it is imperative that the situation in question be defined through the establishment of facts. Second, the values involved must be determined and clarified; this step is tricky because—in our postmodern age, especially—one's values often differ with the values of others. Third, decide what ethical principle to apply to the situation; this might involve the germane ideas of Kant, Mill, and Rawls. (For the purpose of this thesis, the principle to be considered is double effect.) Fourth, the journalist/PR practitioner/advertising agent must review where his or her loyalties lie, as well as reflect on the loyalties of others. Loyalties are duties we have to others based typically on either profession or relationship. The question to whom we owe a moral duty or obligation can be a difficult one to answer—particularly when we ponder the significance of the associations weaved into our lives. Dominick writes, "[i]t is possible that we might owe a duty to ourselves, clients, business organizations, the profession, or society in general" (p.422).

According to his entry on double effect for *The Encyclopedia of Ethics* (1992), William David Solomon states that this particular principle "has figured prominently in the discussion of both ethical theory and applied ethics by a broad range of contemporary philosophers" (p. 418). Solomon writes that 4 conditions (or criteria) must be met if some action (with good and bad results) one wishes to take is to be morally permissible: (1) the action contemplated must itself be either morally good or at least morally neutral; (2) the bad (that is, harmful) result or

14

consequence must not be the intended aim of the action; (3) that the harmful result is not the causal catalyst of the good result; (4) that the good result must, at the very least, be proportionate to the bad result. This last condition, according to Solomon, brings "in the notion of proportionality" and that "[d]efenders of [double effect] typically attempt to accommodate the consequentialist character of the forth condition while ensuring that it does not render the more complex features of the principle irrelevant" (Solomon, 1992, p.419). Let's look at an example I created illustrating double effect:

A Non-Journalism Scenario Illustrating Double-Effect Reasoning

A dentist must do dental work on a patient. The patient has some cavities and perhaps more serious issues. For the sake of her dental health she sees the dentist. The dental work may cause pain, but the result will be the end of the dental problems. The actions of the dentist are not bad in and of themselves (first condition of double effect met). The dentist helps people; his actions lead to the end of dental problems and create a path for improved dental health.

While it is true that dental work may cause anxiety, discomfort, and even pain, none of these is the objective of the dentist; health and the well-being of his patients, as well as having a productive livelihood that helps feed/house his family, are the objectives/motivations (second condition met). The actions of the dentist are not in themselves harmful. They are not motivated by destructiveness nor do they lead to destruction and chaos.

The pain he causes the patient is an unfortunate necessity; but each painful procedure brings the patient closer to health and well-being (the third condition is met). Although the patient may have had to endure much pain, the end result is superior to the individual painful procedures because it could mean (potentially) years and years of improved dental health and the

absence of pain caused by dental neglect—which would be more painful in the end than the

visit(s) to the dentist (the fourth and final condition has been met).

In her entry on double effect for the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Web site,

Alison McIntyre (2011) lists 4 conditions for the application of the principle of double effect:

1. The act itself must be morally good or at least indifferent.
2. The agent may not positively will the bad effect but may permit it. If he could attain the good effect without the bad effect he should do so. The bad effect is sometimes said to be indirectly voluntary.
3. The good effect must flow from the action at least as immediately (in the order of causality, though not necessarily in the order of time) as the bad effect. In other words,the good effect must be produced directly by the action, not by the bad effect. Otherwise the agent would be using a bad means to a good end, which is never allowed.
4. The good effect must be sufficiently desirable to compensate for the allowing of the bad effect (p. 1021).

McIntyre additionally states that "[t]he conditions provided by Joseph Mangan include

the explicit requirement that the bad effect not be intended. A person may licitly perform an

action that he foresees will produce a good effect and a bad effect provided that 4 conditions are

verified at one and the same time." These conditions are:

- That the action in itself from its very object be good or at least indifferent;
- That the good effect and not the evil effect be intended;
- That the good effect be not produced by means of the evil effect;
- That there be a proportionately grave reason for permitting the evil effect (Mangan, 1949, p. 43).

Codes of Ethics

Codes of ethics have been widely accepted by journalists and their various professional

bodies for some time now. These codes act as instruments of both personal and organizational

accountability. Every major professional news organization has created/adopted, implemented,

and revised its own version, some almost a century past. Today, individual news organizations

construct their own ethics codes to illuminate ethical expectations and managerial desiderata for

working journalists, as well as to make clear to the reading public what core convictions guide the press.

Whitehouse (2010) pointed out that the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) has placed "great importance on its code and had its code available online, but took even further steps in February 2010 when it announced the organization had redefined criteria for the annual Ethics in Journalism Award" (Whitehouse, 2010, p. 314). According to the SPJ website, the honor recognizes journalists or news organizations that "perform in an outstanding ethical manner demonstrating the ideals of the SPJ Code of Ethics" (Society of Professional Journalists, 2012). Moreover, the award "honors especially notable efforts to educate the public on principles embodied in the code or hold[s] journalists ethically accountable for their behavior" (Society of Professional Journalists, 2012). For Whitehouse, these two congratulatory gestures "indicate a supreme value placed on codes in contemporary media action" (Whitehouse, 2010, p. 314).

Here we are reminded that the organizational nature of the journalism profession dominates the lives (and undoubtedly the inner lives) of journalists. In his *Committed Journalism: An Ethic for the Profession*, Edmund Lambeth argues that journalists live their lives in organizations (Lambeth, 1992, p. 57). He writes that "even the freelancer, working in one of the remaining outposts of individualism, must contend with the conventions, pressures, and objectives of organizations that purchase the product of his or her pen" (p. 57). Sandra Borden (2007), however, holds that professional bodies strengthen the individual journalist's freedom. She writes, "[i]f professional journalists could boost their guild power, they could potentially increase control of their practice by enhancing their autonomy and by distinguishing themselves from others offering informational content in the marketplace" (Bordon, 2007, p. 113).

For Borden (2007) professionalism and autonomy go hand-in-hand. First of all, without professional boundaries, journalists "cannot consolidate control over their work" (p. 114). They also cannot be sure, or be assured, that clients will seek them out because they are properly seen as *the* professionals, as opposed to free-floating amateurs. An example Borden gives to help illustrate her point is that of a medical doctor and a new-age healer. Being outside the medical establishment means that one does not have the formal training to be a professional doctor, nor does one have the connections or the symbolic power associated with being a member of a profession with fierce jurisdictional control. Borden reminds us that some still confuse Jon Stewart of *The Daily Show* with a real journalist, and this should be unacceptable to those genuine journalists seeking to "retain authority" in relationship to the reading public (Borden, 2007, p. 114).

Codes of Ethics and the Professionalization of Journalism

What role do codes of ethics play in the professionalization of journalism? John C. Merrill and S. Jack Odell (1987) do not think journalism is a profession at all. They argue that "[n]o generally accepted code of ethics can be found in journalism" (p. 119). According to Merrill and Odell, journalism lacks rules of admission, and rules of admission are crucial to all professions. These rules make up what they call "the first essential" of any profession (p. 119). Moreover, Merrill and Odell dryly state that "even hairdressers have rules for admission to their line of work" (p. 119). The difficulty is that anyone can practice journalism. This particular field has no "entrance requirements," and lacks "licensing or certification mechanisms." Such mechanisms are the signs of one's status as an official member of any given profession. This last point is controversial, and there are differing views on the "profession question" in the journalism field.

Unlike Borden (2007), Merrill and Odell (1987) are not concerned that journalism is not a profession. For them, journalists have more freedom *outside* of any guild. However, they agreewith Borden that a key reason why journalism could not seem to develop along the strong professional lines she would prefer, is because of a lack of what Merrill and Odell call an "exclusive body of knowledge" (p. 119). For Merrill and Odell, journalism isan eclectic field which borrows from other areas of thought and practice. Here one might consider the stunt journalism of TV shows such as "What Would You Do?" or "To Catch a Predator," both of which are open to ethical criticism and neither of which is subject to institutional review boards. Journalism has no equivalent of the American Medical Association or the American Bar Association. Moreover, it has no "elite body" or "inner circle" that "reigns over the field" (p. 119).

Echoing Merrill and Odell's point about an absence of exclusive knowledge, Borden (2007) states that journalism "lacks an esoteric knowledge base" and that there is "no body of theory that must be mastered to practice journalism" (p. 115). This leaves journalistic work vulnerable to what Borden called "blurred genres" such as comedy programs like Stewart's, infomercials, talk shows, and "candid camera" shows. What journalists do possess is an understanding of what is and what is not news, but even definitions of news are not safe because they can give way to the influence of profit-driven forces and political forces. Moreover, because journalism is public, "everyone feels competent to define, evaluate, and maybe even create, the news" (p. 115).

Merrill and Odell (1987) assert that journalism has no generally accepted code of ethics. They hold that there are "many codes scattered here and there among branches and associations of journalism, but none of them is really binding, even on their own members" (Merrill & Odell,

1987, p. 119). Merrill and Odell are especially critical of the code constructed by the Society of Professional Journalists, which they claimed is "meaningless and illogical" (p. 119). They argue that journalistic codes are really "rhetorical devices" that developed as a result of the "trend toward professionalization" (Merrill & Odell, 1987, p. 137). The root of ethics codes, Merrill and Odell assert, as well as attempts at standardizing and regulating journalistic practice, lie in the wish of elites to order and control journalism and all other communications-related fields (p. 137).

The codes, for Merrill and Odell, are all about persuasion. "Journalists must be persuaded that action A is right and action B is wrong; come let us reason together, say the codes, and let us act in concert according to this reasoning" (p. 137). But the codes do not deliver on what they promise to do. They do not, in other words, create consensus. Journalists are not all on the same page when it comes to thought and action. The language of these codes is vague. Not only is the content "heavy-handed," but it is replete, state Merrill and Odell, with contradictions (p. 137). They state that those journalists who read the codes are many times "perplexed, confused, bewildered, angered, and scared off" (137).

In *From Milton to McLuhan: The Ideas Behind American Journalism*, J. Herbert Altschull brings up former U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's criticism of journalists, which is related to Merrill and Odell's arguments. However, rather than find a the lack of a consensus on ethics and the inability to form domineering "bureaucracies" liberating, Moynihan laments journalism's lack of what he holds is a much-needed "professional tradition of self-correction" (Altschull, 1990, p. 21). Because journalists "have no generally accepted guidelines about what is right and what is wrong, research to identify, discuss, and correct errors makes no sense" (p. 21). The criterion used by each journalist to assess what's right and wrong, good and

bad, is simply his or her "professional news judgment" (p. 21). For Moynihan, this is "a quality that can never be defined with precision" (p. 21). Altschull (1990) writes that since journalists do not have what he terms "a professional ideology," they must rely on the conventional uses and practices of the day (Altschull, 1990, p.22). This is a difficulty the critic Dennis Chase refers to as *aphilosophical,* since, in his view, many journalists passively accepted whatever philosophy is "culturally dominant at any given period" (p. 21).

Codes of Ethics and the Graduating Journalism Student

According to Reinardy and Moore (2007), undergraduate students who are graduating as journalism majors are often torn between "rigid ethical codes and their own developing moral principles" (p. 171). The authors tell us that this doesn't mean that graduating students have diminished ethical standards—only that through being students, interns, working for the school newspaper, doing lab work, etc., students' experiences, observations, and reflections may have helped to create "gray areas in their ethical beliefs" (p. 171). The authors state that "[w]hen journalism practice meets theory the individual journalist no longer has the benefit of speaking in absolutes. What an ethics code firmly establishes as a journalistic wrong can quickly be compromised in light of deadlines, competitive pressures, demanding managers, and newsroom norms" (p. 171). Reinardy and Moore posit that the thinning dependence on codes of ethics may not take decades of the journalist's life, but instead takes place in the professional environment where ethics are anything but abstract ideas. "Introductory students might be introduced to the basic knowledge of ethical codes but have no context in testing that code" (p. 171). Thus, the development of journalists' moral views is "an enduring process" that does not begin an end with an ethics course in college.

Double Effect and Ethics Codes

What about the doctrine of double effect and the codes of ethics adhered to in communications-related organizations? There are, for example, ethics codes from the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), the American Society of News Editors (ASNE), the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA),the National Communication Association (NCA), the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA), the American Advertising Federation (AAF), and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).What is the difference between a framework for moral reasoning and these guidelines for professionals? The major difference, according to Baker and Martinson (and following an important observation made by Clifford Christians (1999)), is that codes of ethics and ethical guidelines are really just attempts to "patch up utilitarianism" (Baker & Martinson, 2001, p.159). Commercial information is, according to a personal communication from Clifford Christians to these authors, "inherently utilitarian consequentialist" thus necessitating the need for *prima facie* duties (p. 158).

Baker and Martinson, in a 2001 article published in the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, devised what they call "the TARES Test," which they maintain is made up of such duties, and that these "operationalize ethical theory, facilitate ethical thinking, [are] useful pedagogically, and engender the ethical practice of persuasion" (p.158). (More on the TARES Test below.) When it comes to double effect, as well a method like the TARES Test, one could argue that a set of suggested codes or guidelines does not a careful, philosophical method make.

This difference between ethics codes and theoretical frameworks for ethical reflection (in our case, double effect and the TARES Test), is similar to the difference between what social psychologists term heuristic (having to do with rules of thumb or mental shortcuts) or peripheral-

route processing and systemic or central-route processing . In dual-process models such as the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) and the heuristic systematic model (HSM) serve to explain, as Booth-Butterfield and Welborne (2002) phrase it, "[the] source, message, receiver, and contexts effects in persuasion . . ." (Booth-Butterfield & Welborne, 2002, p. 155). The central route processing of the ELM "produces attitude change based on careful evaluation of the arguments contained within a message, where as persuasion via the peripheral route is associated with less thoughtful processing, such as the reliance on cues . . . that are unrelated to the actual merits of the message . . ." (p. 156). And "[t]he critical assumption of the HSM" is that "people engage in systematic processing of persuasive information only when they are sufficiently motivated to do so. In a systematic mode, people consider all relevant pieces of information, elaborate [think hard] on these pieces of information, and form a judgment based on these elaborations" (Todorov, Chaiken, & Henderson, 2002, p.196).

While it would certainly be uncharitable to characterize the professional persuader's reliance on codes as tantamount to the heuristic reliance on cues (as in, "we'll let the codes do the thinking for us"), I do maintain that carefully thinking through an ethical dilemma in mass communications by going through the more philosophically-robust criteria of the doctrine of double effect is akin to processing information in a more systematic manner rather than a heuristic one, and engaging in the type of thinking that in the field of social psychology is term *elaboration*.

Models of Moral Reasoning Employed in Mass Communication

In discussing double effect as a possible tool for moral decision-making in mass communication, it may help to discuss such analytical tools already in use. This section of the literature review should also help show the skeletal nature of ethics codes, and how models of

moral reasoning add more meat to thinking about ethical concerns in mass communications. I shall discuss first the one most recently developed: The TARES Test.

The TARES Test

The TARES Test outlines ethical expectations, called *prima facie duties*, for PR and ad people to consider when planning a PR or ad campaign. A PR campaign, for example, is a series or set of activities that are carefully worked out and that pertain to a certain objective. Typically, such a campaign has 3 parts: (1) the objective itself, or the goal/ whole point of the campaign; (2) the message to be communicated; and (3) the most effective way(s) to communicate that message. The TARES Test was devised by Sherry Baker and David L. Martinson, and lengthily explained in their 2001 article published in the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, "The TARES Test: Five Principles for Ethical Persuasion."

According to Paul S. Lieber in his 2005 empirical test of the Test (published in the same journal), Baker and Martinson were attempting to fill an ethical void in public relations (most of all) and advertizing. They argue that a useful foundation of ethical persuasion can be found in a deeper understanding of the difference between ends and means. They maintain "the end must be formulated in a way that places an emphasis on respect for those to whom particular persuasive communication efforts are directed" (p. 158). Although there has been research exploring the ethics of PR messages, there has not been, Lieber maintains, "any discussion on practitioner accountability toward the message receiver" or "answerability to the message audience" (Lieber, 2005, p. 288). What exactly is the problem the TARES Test addresses? Baker and Martinson write:

> Although many practitioners will insist [PR scholar Scott] Cutlip is correct in asserting that practitioners can serve the public interest by helping to make various points of view articulate in the marketplace of ideas, in fact those same practitioners too frequently serve to disrupt that marketplace by serving special interests at the expense of the

24

common good. (as cited in Cutlip, 1994, p. 133, 149)

That is the problem in a nutshell, at any rate. The TARES Test seeks to establish "ethical boundaries that should guide persuasive practices" and to serve "as a set of action-guiding principles directed toward a moral consequence in professional persuasion" (Baker & Martinson, 2001, p.148). The Test is composed of 5 interconnected values: **T**ruthfulness (of the message), **A**uthenticity (of the persuader), **R**espect (for the persuadee), **E**quity (of the persuasive appeal), and **S**ocial Responsibility (for the common good). Each value is elaborated by the authors and connected to persuasive communication.

The Rokeach Value Survey

Values play a prominent role in how we think about and process the various quandaries that arise in mass communication. Plaisance (2007) states that "[t]he way in which we prioritize this set of values will largely determine the type of solution or resolution we embrace" (p. 381). Milton Rokeach created the Rokeach Value Survey which many scholars, including Plaisance (2007), affirm to be useful in their work. This survey is a "sophisticated assessment instrument used in value analysis . . . that has been widely used since the 1970s" (Plaisance, 2007, p. 381). But what exactly is a value? For Rokeach, "[u]nderstading values is a never-ending process—a groping toward an ultimate objective that can be attained only by a method of successive approximation" (Rokeach, 1979, p ix). Rokeach formulated this definition of value: "More formally, to say that a person "has a value" is to say that he has an enduring belief that a particular mode of conduct or that a particular end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end-states of existence" (Plaisance, 2007, p. 381; Rokeach, 1968, p. 550).

Individual values are "socially shared cognitive representations of personal needs and the

means for satisfying them" (Rokeach, 1979, p. 50). Institutional values are "socially shared cognitive representations of institutional goals and demands" (p. 50). Rokeach's Value Survey identifies values and measures "variations in personal value priorities" (p. 50). The Value Survey consists of two alphabetically arranged lists of what Rokeach labels *terminal* values and *instrumental* values. Terminal values have to do with what is most important to an individual's life; instrumental values can be thought of as the tools used to actualize the terminal values. Examples of terminal values include equality, freedom, self-respect, and wisdom. Examples of instrumental values include *being* responsible, polite, honest, and courageous. Respondents are then asked to arrange the lists of values in order of their significance to the individual (p. 50). According to Plaisance (2007), "[m]easuring individuals' value systems and examining how certain values are given more weight than others offer direct insights into the motivation of behavior—including the decision-making process" (Plaisance, 2007, p. 382).

Forsyth's Ethics Position Questionnaire

Donelson Forsyth's moral framework, first developed in the 1980s, was created to study the "moral judgments" of individuals on the assumption that certain business decisions, for example, are "influenced by individual moral philosophies" (Oksuzoglu-Guven, 2013, p. 306). According to Forsyth's typology, there are a total of 4 ethical dispositions: subjectivism, situationism, exceptionism, and absolutism (as sited in Oksuzoglu-Guven, p. 306). He terms these dispositions *ethical ideologies*. Forsyth uses these ideologies to determine the level of idealism and relativism in human subjects. Each ideology more or less parallels a philosophical position in ethics. For example, situationism is parallel with value pluralism; subjectivism is parallel with egoism; absolutism is parallel with deonotology; and exceptionism is parallel with utilitarianism (Oksuzoglu-Guven, 2015, p. 1337). Forsyth argues that "moral judgments may be

parsimoniously described in terms of two factors: relativism and idealism. In the case of the former, some people reject universal moral rules in favor of relativism, while others believe in, and make use of, moral absolutes when making judgments" (Plaisance, 2007, p. 383). Forsyth "developed a measure of ethical ideology, which is based on a multidimensional scale of respondents' . . . worldview[s] and which mirrors . . . the debate over whether one can identify absolute moral principles rooted in . . . [the] notion of duty, or whether the "good" should be defined along more utilitarian notions based primarily on consequences of a given act" (Plaisance, 2007, p. 383). The Ethics Position Questionnaire is used by the researcher to measure the subject's degree of idealism as well as his or her acceptance (or rejection) of moral absolutism in favor of relativism (as applied to ethical matters).

The Potter Box

Developed by Ralph Potter and popularized by Clifford Christians, the Potter Box is one of the most popular "models of moral reasoning" used by scholars working in the field of media research (Black & Roberts, 2011, p. 53). The Potter Box "is a series of logical steps that conscientious people can use as they work through an ethical quandary" (p. 53). According to Black and Roberts, this particular framework for figuring out tricky questions and issues in mass communication, takes a "rational and systematic" approach that should, in 4 steps, guide an individual into (1) defining "the ethical situation or dilemma objectively and in detail" (p. 53); (2) identifying "values that relate to the situation" in question (p. 53); (3) employing "moral philosophy as justification for a decision" (p. 53); and lastly (4) deciding "to whom one "ultimately loyal" (p. 53).

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Journalism Students and Journalism Ethics

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When considering such infamous cases of journalist misconduct as Janet Cooke of the

Washington Post; Stephen Glass of the *New Republic*; Patricia Smith of the *Boston Globe*; Jayson Blair and Rick Bragg of the *New York Times*; Eric Snider of the *Provo Daily Herald*; Jim Van Vliet of the *Sacramento Bee*; and Jack Kelley of *USA Today* (list supplied by Reinardy and Moore (2007)), it seems evident that journalism ethics education is of vital importance. More and more, ethics (or moral reasoning) has found a secure place for itself in the curricula of journalism and communication studies departments. Reinardy and Moore affirm that "[t]he young journalist will learn what his or her organization wants through observation and experience ; the same could be argued for journalism students who have internships and work in laboratory campus newsrooms" (Reinardy & Moore, 2007, p. 164).

According to Plaisance (2007), "[t]he number of free-standing media ethics courses in journalism departments, schools and programs increased 56% between 1984 and 1993" (Plaisance, 2007, p. 378). Despite the increase, scholars "paint a portrait of media ethics as a relatively disorganized field whose educational effectiveness remains largely unexamined" (p. 379). There are several reasons for this laid out by Plaisance: First, there is disagreement among professors and professionals regarding the key objectives of media ethics courses. Should the course be mainly about helping students develop their moral reasoning skills? Should it be an introduction to different theories and perspectives among media ethicists? Or should the course be focused on preparing students for life as a professional in a mass communication field? Secondly, scholars noted a greater need for ethics researchers (who are often professors who teach media ethics courses) to partner with professionals in an effort to amend a widespread perception among, for example, newspaper editors, that graduates of journalism programs do not have a better grasp of mass communication ethics than similar graduates of 5 years ago.

Plaisance reports that "scholars and teachers have offered a steady stream of advice on

effective strategies and emphases for media ethics courses" (p. 379). These include: (1) moral development issues (despite both the complexity of the theories involved and their rival assessments); (2) case studies as classroom tools; (3) the use of journaling assignments; and (4) the fostering of students' moral reasoning skills. Plaisance, citing Surlin (1987) and Black *et al*. (2002), tells us that after taking media ethics courses, "students were more concerned with the welfare of others, more open-minded . . . more independent . . . . [and] placed greater emphasis on intellectual and logical values" (p. 379).

In his own study seeking to address what he terms "the dearth of efforts in mass communications research to address the efficacy of media ethics curriculum [*sic*]," Plaisance examined the "value systems and ethical ideologies of media ethics students" in a survey (p. 378). He reports "significant changes in how students ranked key media-related and journalistic values such as "Fair," "Independent," "Aboveboard," and "Avoiding harm" at the beginning of the course compared" to how they rated these values at the end of the course (p. 378). He also reports that his study "found significant decreases in students' degrees of idealism and relativism after taking the course, though," he goes on to tell us, "degrees of both remained high overall" (p. 378).

In his study, Plaisance found that "a carefully designed media ethics course can affect students' value systems and ideological outlooks" (p. 391). According to Plaisance, course content had the effect of "tempering" the strong idealism and relativism of students. The students "exhibited a high degree of relativism that could be considered to reflect the rugged individualism celebrated in American culture" (p. 391). But Plaisance also found that some of the students' responses suggested that "all actions should be based on an "agape" [essentially altruism] principle outlined in many ethics texts, including the media ethics text used in this

course" (p. 392). So what does the decrease in students' idealism and relativism say in general? It suggests, according to Plaisance, an increased understanding of the complex nature of the world. Conway and Groshek (2008), in contrast to Reinardy and Moore's (2007) findings only a year earlier, found that journalism students are "getting the message, regardless of their area of interest . . . these findings show the journalism school experience can benefit all students, at least in the areas of plagiarism and fabrication" (Conway & Groshek, 2008, p. 138). According to the authors, Reinardy and Moore "discovered in their study of students at the beginning and end of their college careers [that they] have lower levels of ethical concern upon graduation" (p. 138). Conway and Groshek reason that the differences "in these studies could be explained by the fact that [Reinardy and Moore] looked at more nuanced ethical issues such as use of anonymous sources and correcting grammar in direct quotes while [our] study focused on the core areas of plagiarism and fabrication" (p. 138).

Conway and Groshek (2008), in their survey of journalism students, found that students' perceptions of plagiarism and fabrication "indicate an ethics gap in which students interested in journalistic areas . . . are more concerned about journalistic ethics than [journalism] students interested in nonjournalistic areas" (p. 127). The authors discovered that the former group of students "suggested harsher penalties for plagiarism and fabrication. Further analyses, however, found that the ethics gain among [the latter group of students] increased to a nearly equivalent amount as [the former group] over the course of their respective university educations and training experiences, including student media work and internships" (p. 127).

The authors further found that although this ethics gap does in fact exist, "we do not lose sight of other important findings here: ethics *gains* . . . [both groups of students] over their time in school showed significantly increased concern for those ethical violations and expected

harsher penalties . . . Even more interesting is that students in the two areas increased their concern at roughly the same rate" (Conway & Groshek, 2008, p. 139). What, then, was the main difference in concern for these ethical violations? It can "be traced to how these students viewed plagiarism and fabrication when they first entered the program and short of manipulating admission standards, mass communication educators cannot control how students view these issues when they arrive" (p. 139).

In her study of journalism students' views of cheating in the classroom and on the job, Shipley (2009) informs us that cheating among college students is on the rise. And this is not a very recent phenomenon. She reports that in the 1960s, William J. Bowers, a Columbia University sociologist, "surveyed more than 5,000 students on 99 campuses and reported that at least half of the students reported engaging in some form of academic dishonesty since coming to college, and he indicated that he thought that finding was conservative. He also indicated that students' college peers probably had the most powerful effect on their attitude toward cheating" (Shipley, 2009, p. 40). Shipley reports that in a 1993 follow-up study, "McCabe and Trevino surveyed students on nine campuses included in the earlier Bowers study" (p. 40). McCabe and Trevino found that there was an increase when it came to cheating on tests and exams. "In 2002, McCabe and his colleagues at Rutgers studied 4,500 high school students and discovered that 75% of them had engaged in serious cheating and more than half reported plagiarizing work they found on the Internet" (p. 40).

How exactly did interest in developing university and college-level programs in journalism education evolve? They evolved from "public concern about the honesty of the profession" (Shipley, 2009, p.40). Education in journalism in higher learning was first "seriously attempted" in the late 19th century. The reason for this is the same as it is now: enhancing

respectability (p.40). "Both old and new versions of the accrediting standards emphasize the need for ethics to be part of the journalism and mass communication curriculum" (p. 42). Cheating among students can be seen as a "gateway drug" when it comes to immoral or unprofessional behavior. "Personal factors found to encourage cheating are [a] general attitude that condones cheating, lack of self-control, lack of awareness, incompetence, and a view that knowledge is irrelevant to future goals" (p. 42). Other factors include academic standing and one's chosen area of study, the twin pressures of time and competition, penalties that are too lenient, and assignments that are too vague (p. 42). Shipley's (2009) own study of cheating investigated "college viewpoints and behavior related to journalism-related academic and professional dishonesty and choices of appropriate penalties" (p. 42). Her literature review examined cheating in general, but focused on cheating in higher education in particular.

In the results of her study—using the survey as her research instrument—she found "many similarities in how students view cheating, both in class and on the job. However, students differ in how they view the frequency and seriousness of various types of academic dishonesty" (Shipley, 2009, p. 50). She also discovered—though she writes that more research would need to be conducted to confirm this—that her findings suggest that these differences are often related to the length of time they have been university students . . . some might speculate that the time students have spent in journalism-related classes helped them to realize that cheating is a problem, especially for professional journalists" (p. 50). Additionally, Shipley's findings indicate that students "who consider academic cheating a serious offense and recommend stiffer penalties carry over those views to professional situations" (p. 51). It should be noted that, alas, half of the students Shipley surveyed reported that they themselves had cheated in class while attending their university (p. 51). Shipley, however, now has "a better

understanding of how and why they cheat" (p. 51).   According to Shipley, once professors grasp the problem, it is their "responsibility to work to eliminate some of the situations that provide an opportunity, or a reason, to cheat" (p. 52). Here is Shipley's key recommendation: Students "could be asked to complete a form indicating the level of seriousness of certain types of cheating . . . and then they could be asked to meet in small groups to discuss their responses" (p. 51). Each student group would be asked by the professor to attend to, for example,an case of cheating using an anonymous source "and then report back to the entire group" (p. 51). The professor "would respond to the group reports providing explanation or guidance where appropriate" (p. 51).Toward the end of the journalism classroom discussion, "students could be asked to respond again to similar, but not exactly the same, types of situations and their responses could be compared to see if clarification of the use of unnamed sources (and use of other sources) was reflected in the post-test responses" (p. 51). Evaluation of these student responses "based on the level of agreement or disagreement among the students" might then be employed "to make adaptations in the situations listed the next time the exercise was used in that course" (p. 51).

In addition to this group exercise, Shipley (2009) suggests using honor codes on college campuses to frustrate any efforts to cheat. Drawing on the work of McCabe and Trevino (2002), she informs us that the most successful honor codes achieve two important aims: (1) "[T]hey communicate to students that academic integrity is a basic campus priority, and (2) they place the primary responsibility for cheating on students" (p. 51). McCabe and Trevino maintain that the critical step in making honor codes work is "student participation in campus judicial bodies that review alleged infringements . . ." (p. 51). Student involvement is key; it strengthens the 'ethics muscles' of the students, one might say. "According to McCabe, students should also have a

voice on the task forces or committees charged with informing other students about the purposes and philosophy of the code so they play a major role in its development and implementation" (p. 51). The problem identified is that when there is mass cheating on campus there is then a culture of cheating on campus. To counteract this, honor codes and student involvement might foster a different campus culture—one that helps to offset "the acceptance-of-cheating environment that is currently on many college campuses" (p. 51).

Why Use Surveys for This Study?

Salant and Dillman (1994) maintain that the "rapidly changing society in which we live produces a demand for survey information that cannot easily be ignored" (p. xv). (If this were true in 1994, think how true it is for the age of social media.) According to Wimmer and Dominick (2003) there are two major types of survey: descriptive and analytical. A descriptive survey "attempts to describe or document current conditions or attitudes—that is, to explain what exists at the moment" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003, p. 167). The key question descriptive surveys seek to address is: What is the "current situation" in the topic under examination? An analytical survey "attempts to describe and explain *why* situations exist" (p. 167). This approach looks at two variables (sometimes more) for the purposes of exploring research questions or testing hypotheses. The results of this second type of survey "allow researchers to examine the interrelationships among variables and to develop explanatory inferences" (p. 167). Given these two categories, my thesis will build around a descriptive survey. The objective is not to explain why undergraduate students believe or act as they do, but to describe what it is they believe and do.

According to Wimmer and Dominick the survey research tool has a number of advantages: (1) Surveys can be "used to investigate problems in realistic settings" (p. 167). There

is no need for a laboratory, screening room, or any other artificial conditions. (2) "The cost of surveys is reasonable when one considers the amount of information gathered" (p. 167). (3) A considerable quantity of data can be "collected with relative ease from a variety of people" (p.168). (4) Surveys can be conducted by researchers almost anywhere because they "are not constrained by geographic boundaries" (p. 168). However, surveys also have certain disadvantages. For example: (1) Independent variables can be manipulated in a laboratory, but not when it comes to survey research (p. 168). (2) The way survey items are worded or phrased, as well as where items are placed on a questionnaire, can "bias results" (p. 168). (3) "The wrong respondents may be included in survey research" (p. 168). Someone being interviewed by telephone, for example, may claim to be 18 years old when he is really 28 year old. A mail survey may be completed by someone's house guest, child, or dog-sitter than by the actual owner of the house. (4) It is also the case that "[s]ome survey research is becoming difficult to conduct" due to "answering machines, call blocking, caller IDs, various state and local regulations against calling people at home, and respondents unwilling to participate . . ." (p. 168).

According to Salant and Dillman (1994), in order for any survey to be successful, it must meet 10 criteria: (1) The survey must avoid the 4 kinds of error, identified by Salant and Dillman as the coverage error, sampling error, measurement error, and non-response error. (2) The researcher must be specific about what information he or she needs and why. (3)There should be a good fit between the survey method and the researcher. (4) The research must decide whether or not to sample and how to sample. (5) "Write good questions that will provide useful, accurate information" (Salant & Dillman, 1994, p. 11). (6) Design and test a survey first, particularly one what is interesting (that is, not too dull) to answer. (7) "Put together the necessary mix of people, equipment, and supplies to carry out your survey in the necessary time

frame" (p. 11). (8) "Code, computerize, and analyze the data from your questionnaires" (p. 11). "Present your results in a way that informs your audience, either verbally or in writing" (p. 11). Lastly, when putting your research plans into action, it is important always to keep things in perspective.

Testing for Reliability

An important requirement in doing research of either a quantitative or qualitative nature is *reliability*. But what is reliability in this sense? First and foremost, reliability helps researchers to determine the quality of their research instrument. Daniel Mujis puts it this way: "If you were on a diet and wanted to measure your weight to see whether [or not] it was having any effect, you would want to be certain that the scales you were using were measuring your weight accurately, and would not decide to add a few pounds on one day, and take a few off next day in a random way. The same is true," Muijs goes on to say, "if we are measuring concepts such as academic achievement of teacher behaviors in education research" (Muijs, 2011, p. 61). Reliability is about the internal consistency of the measure of the research tool (specifically the tool's concept); it means that the researchers' results are trustworthy and that the research findings are clear (Muijs, 2011). In terms of surveys as research instruments, Babbie notes that while reliability does not ensure accuracy, it should ensure that an instrument or particular technique "applied repeatedly to the same object, yields the same result each time" (Babbie, 2007, p.143).

Seven graduate student respondents at a large public university in the Mid-South were shown a draft of the thesis questionnaire via e-mail. Three of them were journalism students; 4 were communication students. The overall impression and reception was positive. The main concerns they did express (all in e-mails to the researcher) can be enumerated thus: (1)

Undergraduate students who are, say, first-semester journalism majors, may not be sufficiently versed in the differences between the 3 major mass communication fields: News, PR, and advertizing. (2) Journalism majors may not be sufficiently versed in conflicts of interest and/or loyalty when it comes to stakeholders and mass communication professional. (3) The scenario may be too long. (3) The scenario should come at the beginning rather than the end. (4) Ethical questions may intimate undergraduate students and discourage them from a mass communication career (possibly because they demand well-developed moral-reasoning and critical-thinking skills—skills which may seem like too much work to cultivate). (5) One scenario may not be enough to illustrate double-effect reasoning in mass communication.

My response to this set of concerns is as follows: (1) I believe it is reasonable to assume that a young (or not-so-young) man or women entering a university with an interest in mass communication knows *something* about the differences between the 3 major mass communication fields. The details of these differences will become clearer to the student as he or she progresses in his or her journalism education. But this is natural. (2) Loyalty is not a mystery; it is a common and sometimes complex moral feeling experienced by all people who juggle multiple roles and relationships (parents, teachers, coaches, employers, co-workers, religious figures, boyfriends/girlfriends, etc.). It is reasonable to assume that depending on the student's year (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) he or she will know more about conflicts of interest than other students. (3) It was suggested by one respondent that the scenario be cut into segments. This is a good idea. In addition, I have shortened the scenario as much as I could without watering it down or making it incoherent. Because double-effect reasoning is a principle foreign to most students, the length of the scenario and the prompt accompanying it is useful (whereas it might seem gratuitous with a moral concept commonly known and discussed). (4)

37

Ethical questions and issues come up in every job, career, and field of endeavor. It is cynical to take for granted that undergraduate students will be discouraged from entering any field if they are required to think morally and critically (in other words use their minds). It does not reflect my experience as a student among other students. As a researcher and former university instructor, I have a difficult time taking this concern seriously. (5) It is true that the more examples that are offered, the better students will understand double-effect reasoning. However, this would make the survey too long and would demand an unreasonable/unrealistic amount of attention from students voluntarily answering a graduate student's questionnaire.

As aforementioned, before I conducted the survey I e-mailed the hardcopy version of the survey to 10 graduate students in journalism and 10 graduate students in communication, and received 7 responses—3 from graduate students in journalism and 4 from graduate students in communication. Taken together, these responses compose my pre-test. I asked the graduate students for their feedback on content and suggestions for improvement. After showing the survey to 7 grad student respondents in journalism and communication (3 journalism graduate students/ 4 communication graduate students) and collecting comments from them via email, it was determined that the overall impression and reception of the survey was positive.

One communication graduate student made the point that questions where undergraduate students are asked to give short answers, more space should be provided to them. A second communication graduate respondent wondered how familiar students would be with the differences and similarities among the different mass communication fields (especially students who are first-semester journalism majors). This respondent also questioned how familiar undergrads would be with the conflicting loyalties of all the stakeholders involved in mass communication fields. Would an undergraduate *student* know about the various loyalty-conflicts

a *professional* deals with? She also suggested that the Trish scenario might be too long and that the prompt accompanying the scenario be re-worded to make it simpler to understand. A third communication graduate respondent thought students might skip question number 5 because the instructions to part 2 of the survey address questions 6 though 11, but do not mention question 5 (which has its own set of instructions). This graduate respondent also thought that the space given for short answers was too long, not too short. The concern is that the longer the answer, the more complicated and time consuming the data collection would be for the researcher. Also expressed was the concern that the two open-ended questions in the survey are not sufficiently related to each other. This student also suggested that the "year" of the undergrads be replaced with the number of credits the student has achieved so far at the University of Memphis. He was also concerned that ethical questions and concerns related to mass communication may discourage some students away from the field. A fourth communication student suggested that certain words and phrases should be either italicized or put in a slightly larger typeface for the purpose of emphasis.

One journalism graduate respondent thought the survey was a little too long, but did not advise how to shorten it. Her main concern was that students would take it to be helpful, but would end up rushing through it. She thought the scenario should be placed at the top of the survey, rather than the bottom. Though she thought the survey as a whole was a bit long, she didn't suggest abridging the scenario. She did suggest, however, separating the scenario into sections so that it wouldn't be as intimidating (as a solid block of text). She also suggested moving the prompt accompanying the scenario to the start of the scenario. A second journalism respondent did not find any fault with the survey, but did suggest that one scenario may not be enough to properly illustrate double-effect. A third journalism graduate respondent said she

39

thought the survey itself "sounds good," but that the scenario at the end is too lengthy.

Hypotheses

There are no hypotheses proposed for this study.

Research Questions

RQ1: Of the journalism undergraduate students at the University of Memphis, who is the most receptive to the elements of double-effect reasoning (news majors, public relations majors, or advertising majors)?

RQ2: Of the journalism undergraduate students, are the freshmen and sophomores (underclassmen) more receptive to the elements of double-effect reasoning than the juniors and seniors (upperclassmen), or are the juniors and seniors more receptive than the first- and second-year students?

Method

This thesis involved a survey of undergraduate journalism students at the University of Memphis. My research design utilized an anonymous survey of journalism undergraduate students, first administered with Qualtrics software during the summer semester of 2015. For the survey of the journalism undergraduates, I asked the journalism department's administrative assistant to send out an invitation to take the survey on Qualtrics via a mass email to all currently-enrolled undergraduate journalism majors. No sensitive information was requested in the survey. However, I received only 63 responses. Because I was unable to collect a larger number, I distributed hardcopies to the students personally and collected 100 usable surveys (meaning the responses needed to answer RQ1 and RQ2). This was accomplished during the fall semester of 2015. Due to slight differences between the Qualtrics survey and the hardcopy version, I opted not to use the Qualtrics responses for my analysis; instead, only the 100

hardcopy responses were used. (Thus, $N = 100$.) After assigning each anonymous, completed survey its own unique identification number, I then coded each answer per survey item. The data was entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), a popular program for statistical analysis. The students were not given extra credit from any of their professors for doing the surveys, nor were they compensated in any way (money, prizes, etc.).

Undergraduate students were asked on the survey to give their age, university class (freshman, sophomore, etc.) and gender, but not their name, race, nationality, UID number (the student's University ID number), or e-mail address(es). Again, no identifying information was requested. This satisfied the requirements of the University of Memphis Institutional Review Board.

The population here can be defined as all college and university students in America, including undergraduate and graduate students. The sample I use for this thesis can be defined as undergraduate students (only) from one academic institution, the University of Memphis (representing one area of the country, the Mid-South). The survey dealt with the ethical beliefs of students –specifically concerning mass communication. For example, it asked them questions about how important they believe intention is in making moral decisions in mass communication. They were also asked about the significances of the consequences of one's actions, as well as the role foresight plays in ethical reasoning. Most of the questions asked were on a Likert-type scale of 5 answer options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Students were also asked whether or not they had taken an ethics class or classes prior to taking the survey.

The survey was also used to gauge students' receptivity to the application of a moral framework called *the doctrine of double effect*, which may prove a useful tool in the moral

reasoning of journalists, public relations practitioners, and advertising specialists. This particular framework was operationalized in the form of certain survey questions that used key elements of double effect (for example, intention, foresight, and the consequences of one's actions), as well as a scenario—illustrating double effect—for students to consider. This thesis examined the receptivity to double effect of undergraduate journalism students only.

Students, as aforementioned, were categorized under the traditional labels freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. I have no pre-existing relationship with the survey pool. No vulnerable populations were surveyed for this thesis. The survey took 15 min. or so of respondents' time, for those who completed the survey. In terms of my own qualifications for conducting this survey, I hold a M.A. in philosophy from Loyola Marymount University and I have taken a graduate seminar in the journalism department at the University of Memphis on social science research methods (in addition to completing all course work for the journalism M.A.). I have conducted interviews before for the school newspaper (*The Daily Helmsman*) and for journalism classes. I have also successfully completed my CITI training, thus allowing me to do survey-level research with what the Institutional Review Board terms "human subjects." It should be noted that there was no secondary analysis of existing data involved in this research project.

Findings

As aforementioned, there are no hypotheses for this thesis. However, there are the two research questions:

RQ1: Of the journalism undergraduate students at the University of Memphis, who is the most receptive to the elements of double-effect reasoning (news majors, public relations majors, or advertising majors)?

RQ2: Of the journalism undergraduate students, are the freshmen and sophomores (underclassmen) more receptive to the elements of double-effect reasoning than the juniors and seniors (upperclassmen), or are the juniors and seniors more receptive than the first- and second-year students?

In reporting the results of the survey distributed to undergraduate journalism majors, I sought to answer these research questions using both one-way ANOVA and an independent sample t-test. The one-way ANOVA is used when the researcher is working with more than two groups. The independent sample t-test is used when the researcher is working with two groups. Both the one-way ANOVA and independent sample t-test were performed using SPSS software provided by the University of Memphis.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effects of *double effect, intention, foresight,* and *consequence* on journalism majors focused on news, public relations, or advertising. The one-way ANOVA was used to test for significant differences between students based on area of focus or emphasis. In answering the question on the survey (see Appendix; cf. survey item 26) regarding the dependent variable *double effect* as outlined in the scenario (again, answered by news-focused majors, PR-focused majors, and advertising-focused majors), the results were: $F(2, 86) = 1.837$, p = 0.165. For the dependent variable *intention* (cf. survey item 1), answered by the same groups, the results were: $F(2, 95) = 1.445$, p = 0.241. For the dependent variable *foresight* (cf. survey item 2), answered by the same groups, the results were: $F(2, 95) = 3.074$, p = 0.051. For the dependent variable *consequence* (cf. survey item 3), answered by the same groups, the results were: $F(2, 95) = 0.570$, p = 0.568. Therefore, there was no significant difference between news-focused, PR-focused, and advertising-focused majors when it came to any of the dependent variables mentioned above.

For the independent sample t-test, the two groups of students (independent variables) were upperclassmen (the traditional label for juniors and seniors) and underclassmen (the traditional label for freshmen and sophomores). The dependent variables were the same ones as listed above: *double effect*, *intention*, *foresight*, and *consequence*. The independent sample t-test was used to determine if there were a significant difference between students based on year. The results of the t-test revealed the differences between the underclassmen ($N = 61$) and the upperclassmen ($N = 30$) regarding the dependent variable of *double effect* as ($M = 5.4590$, $SD = 1.39730$) and ($M = 5.9667$, $SD = 0.99943$); $t(89) = -1.777$; $p = 0.079$. The results of the t-test revealed the differences between the underclassmen ($N = 66$) and the upperclassmen ($N = 34$) regarding the dependent variable *intention* as ($M = 1.7273$, $SD = 0.83289$) and ($M = 1.6765$, $SD = 0.68404$); $t(98) = 0.306$; $p = 0.760$. The results of the t-test revealed the differences between the underclassmen ($N = 66$) and the upperclassmen ($N = 34$) regarding the dependent variable *foresight* as ($M = 1.6364$, $SD = 0.90531$) and ($M = 1.5000$; $SD = 0.78817$); $t(98) = 0.745$; $p = 0.458$. The results of the t-test revealed the differences between the underclassmen ($N = 66$) and the upperclassmen ($N = 34$) regarding the dependent variable *consequence* as ($M = 1.8636$, $SD = 0.82063$) and ($M = 1.5882$, $SD = 0.70141$); $t(98) = 1.667$; $p = 0.099$. Therefore, there was no significant difference between upperclassmen and underclassmen regarding any of the dependent variables mentioned above.

To answer the research questions, then: for RQ1, no one major was more receptive to the elements of double-effect reasoning than the other majors. In other words, the news students were not more receptive than the PR students, and the advertising students were not more receptive than the news students or the PR students, etc. For RQ2, the underclassmen were no more receptive to the elements of double-effect reasoning than were the upperclassmen. Again,

there was no significant difference among *any* of the groups. The reason or reasons for this lack of significant difference can really only be speculative in character. It may be that the sample size was too small. It may be that journalism students do not believe they need the doctrine of double effect as a moral framework. They may feel as though ethics codes are sufficient. They may rely on alternative frameworks instead, such as utilitarianism, deontological ethics, teleological ethics, virtue ethics, or religious ethics. Although great efforts were taken to make double effect understandable or more accessible as a concept, its intrinsic difficulty (or residual difficulty) may have proven too much for undergraduates not familiar with an admittedly esoteric approach to moral reasoning. This too is a possibility. Also, this lack of significant difference between all the groups may point to greater similarity in sentiment between the majors and the upperclassmen/underclassmen that might be assumed by researchers.

Of all the students surveyed ($N = 100$), 44% strongly agree that intention is very important when making moral decisions in mass communication; 5% strongly disagreed. Of all the students surveyed, 66% answered *yes* to the question concerning whether or not it is ever acceptable to perform an act that one foresees as having both good and bad consequences; 9% answered *no* to this question. Of all the students surveyed, 45% answered *yes* to the question of whether or not it is ever acceptable to perform an act if it will produce a good effect or consequence that will (in the mind of the moral agent) outweigh the original wrong act; 33% answered *no* to this question. Of all the students surveyed, 2% said that the doctrine of double effect—as explained in both the 543-word scenario about Trish the journalist (survey item 25), as well as the 140-word discussion of double effect following the scenario (survey item 26)—2% of the respondents said that double effect as a method of moral reasoning would *not* be *very useful* to them (answering 1 on a scale of 1 to 3); 17% said it would be *somewhat useful*

(answering 4 on a scale of 4 to 6); and 33% said it would be *very useful* (answering 7 on a scale that went from 1, meaning *not very useful* to 7, meaning *very useful*).

Of all the students surveyed, 27% reported that, from a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the most helpful and 4 the least helpful, personal rules of behavior that derived from either religion or a life philosopher were their major source of ethics in thinking about mass communication. Of all the students surveyed, 61% reported that professional codes were the major source of ethics; 6% reported that outside pressures from the various publics they serve as journalists/ PR practitioners/ or advertising specialists were the major source of ethics; and 17% reported that organizational policies at their place of work made up the major source of ethics.

Of all the respondents, 10% had taken Jour4708, the journalism department's mass communication ethics course for undergraduate students; 90% had not taken this course. Of all the respondents, 5% had taken at least one ethics course outside of the journalism department; 95% did not take such a course.

Of all the respondents, 31% were freshmen; 34% were sophomores; 17% were juniors; and 18% were seniors. In other words, 66% of the respondents were underclassmen and 34% were upperclassmen. Of the respondents who answered the relevant question ($N = 98$), students focused on journalism (news media) were 51%, 8% were focused on advertising, and 39% were focused on public relations. Of all the respondents, 35% were male and 62% were female. The students who took the survey were born between the years 1981 and 1997; 30% of the respondents were born in 1996. The average age of the students who took the survey: 25.

Discussion and Conclusion

I believe this thesis is a good start, considering it is the first of its kind. The undergraduate students surveyed were, as a group, more supportive of double-effect reasoning

than not. Given the affinity students show for this framework, perhaps professors who teach ethics in journalism/mass communication departments may consider incorporating it into their courses.

Here are suggestions for future researchers thinking about conducting a replication of my study, or who may want to conduct a similar study but not necessarily a replication. To begin with, the number of surveys used for my project ended up being a relatively small number: 100. Had I passed out or sent out surveys to other higher-education institutions in Tennessee, Middle Tennessee State University or the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, for example, the number may have been larger. If I had used Qualtrics to send out surveys to 50 or a100 American colleges and universities (all over the country), the number may have been considerably larger. Moreover, it is possible that the language of the survey itself might be simplified for students, particularly when considering different levels of reading ability and comprehension. Here, it may prove useful to include graduate students in the survey.

It may also prove useful to give surveys not only to journalism (PR and advertising) students, but perhaps to students in other disciplines as well: business and management, sociology, public heath, economics, political science, and so forth. Discovering how these students respond to double-effect reasoning in comparison with mass communication students may reveal even more about the efficacy of this particular moral framework than surveying students from only one academic department. Furthermore, discovering where students are now in their mass communication ethics thought and behavior—plus determining the appeal of an old, time-tested framework for a new, exciting time—may help researchers re-conceptualize their ideas about the relationship between college students, ethics, and journalism. Comparing the ratio of risks and benefits, it is reasonable to assert the value of this study. Journalism

educators, for example, can gain more knowledge and insights into the way college students frame ethical dilemmas and frame mass communication ethics in particular. It will also prompt students to think about (or continue to think about) ethics and mass communication.

It is important to note here that there might not be direct benefits to the subjects of my thesis. Intangible benefits include a better understanding of how journalism undergraduate students think about ethics and mass communication. The study would help to gauge a willingness on the part of students to accept the double-effects method of moral reasoning. As mass communication continues to evolve in our society, especially with the arrival of new media, the ethical beliefs and practices of young news reporters, public relations practitioners, and advertisers may evolve as well.

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Appendix

Survey of Journalism Students on Mass Communication Ethics and Double-Effect Reasoning

Dear Students,

Every day you are faced with ethical issues and questions when you work for a news organization, as a reporter, at a public relations or advertising firm, and in any other mass communication-related career. Tyler Stafford, a journalism graduate student, would like to find out how receptive students are to a moral framework called *double-effect reasoning*. Additionally, he would like to know more about the ethical views and ethics backgrounds (in terms of academic courses) of students. He is working with three journalism professors who make up his thesis committee: Dr. David Arant, Dr. Carrie Brown Smith, and Dr. Jin Yang.

If you are 18 years of age or older, currently enrolled at the University of Memphis, and an undergraduate journalism major, then you are eligible for this research project. All we need is 15 minutes or so of your time to take the survey. You will not be asked about your private life or to provide any sensitive information. You remain anonymous in taking the survey. The data collected will be accumulated for the purpose of statistical analysis. Participation in this survey is voluntary. Survey participants may quit at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please contact Tyler's thesis committee chairman, Dr. David Arant, at darant@memphis.edu or call 901-678-2402. Tyler can be reached anytime at tstfford@memphis.edu.

This research project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Memphis. If you wish to know more about the approval process, please contact the IRB Administrator at irb@memphis.edu or call 901-678-2533.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Tyler Stafford

If you choose to participate, please check "I agree" below to indicate that you agree with the terms of the survey and to confirm that you are at least 18 years old. Thank you very much.

____ I agree.

Part One: These survey items have to do with intention, foresight, consequences, and responsibility. Please mark only one answer.

1) One's intention is very important when making moral decisions in mass communications (news, public relations, and advertising).

◯ Strongly agree.

◯ Agree.

◯ Neutral.

◯ Disagree.

◯ Strongly disagree.

2) Is it ever acceptable to perform an action if you foresee that it will produce both good and bad consequences?

◯ Yes.

◯ No.

◯ Not sure.

3) Is it ever acceptable to do something wrong if it will produce a good effect or consequence that will (in one's mind) outweigh the original wrong act?

◯ Yes.

◯ No.

◯ Not sure.

4) Should journalists and other mass communication professionals take responsibility for any negative impact their work might cause.

◯ Yes.

◯ No.

◯ Not sure.

Part Two: These survey items have to do with basic ethical questions or concerns that mass communication professionals deal with daily. For items **6** through **11**, please mark only one answer.

5) In the absence of formal controls (laws, regulations), journalists, public relations practitioners, and advertising agents must rely on informal controls (ethics) to do their professional work. Please rank order the options below based on how helpful each one is when making ethical decisions in mass communication. Please use number **1** to mean the most helpful and **4** to mean least helpful, with **2** and **3** falling somewhere in between.

_____ Personal rules of behavior derived from religion or a life philosophy.

_____ Professional code of ethics created by the mass communication organization that is most relevant to my field, e.g., the Society of Professional Journalists, the Public Relations Society of America, or the American Advertising Federation.

_____ Outside pressures from the various publics I serve as a journalist, public relations person, or advertising person.

_____ Organizational policies at my place of work (a public relations firm, advertising agency, or newspaper, for example).

6) It is an acceptable practice for journalists to cover an issue in which they or their news organization may have a vested interest.

○ Strongly agree.

○ Agree.

○ Neutral.

○ Disagree.

○ Strongly disagree.

7) It is an acceptable practice for journalists to accept gifts or "freebies" from organizations or corporations they are covering.

○ Strongly agree.

○ Agree.

○ Neutral.

○ Disagree.

◯ Strongly disagree.

8) It is acceptable for photojournalists to alter their photos if the altered photo would fit the story better or be more aesthetically pleasing (for example, Photoshopping a Coke can out of a photo).

◯ Strongly agree.

◯ Agree.

◯ Neutral.

◯ Disagree.

◯ Strongly disagree.

9) It is acceptable for journalists to correct grammar in quotes from sources or to change certain words if the source meant one word but said another (for example, substituting the word *energizing* if the source said, "I find an early morning swim *enervating*. It keeps me pumped all day!").

◯ Strongly agree.

◯ Agree.

◯ Neutral.

◯ Disagree.

◯ Strongly disagree.

10) There is a diminishment of standards (less or no fact-checking, for example) with the growth of Internet-based journalism.

◯ Strongly agree.

◯ Agree.

◯ Neutral.

◯ Disagree.

◯ Strongly disagree.

11) The publishing of anonymous reviews in service to one's public relations client is an acceptable practice.

◯ Strongly agree.

◯ Agree.

◯ Neutral.

◯ Disagree.

◯ Strongly disagree.

For questions **12** and **13**, please write your answers on the lines provided below.

12) What role do you place on the value of truth in journalism as opposed to public relations and advertising? Is truth more important in one field as opposed to the others? Is it the same?

_____

_____

_____

_____

13) What role do you think loyalty plays in journalism, public relations, and advertising? To whom should the journalist, public relations practitioner, and advertising agent be most loyal?

_____

_____

_____

_____

For items **14** through **16**, please mark only one answer.

14) The Internet, particularly social networking, has made it more difficult in deciding what constitutes invasion of privacy and what are the boundaries of privacy that journalists ought to respect.

○ Strongly agree.

○ Agree.

○ Neutral.

○ Disagree.

○ Strongly disagree.

15) Journalists, advertising specialists, and public relations practitioners should all be concerned about community standards. Determining when news, an ad, or a public relations campaign may be in bad taste or indecent is an important exercise of a professional's judgment.

○ Strongly agree.

○ Agree.

○ Neutral.

○ Disagree.

○ Strongly disagree.

16) Journalists should avoid using anonymous sources.

○ Strongly agree.

○ Agree.

○ Neutral.

○ Disagree.

○ Strongly disagree.

○ Not applicable.

Part Three. Questions about you and your education here at the University of Memphis.

17) What year are you at the University of Memphis?

○ Freshman

◯ Sophomore

◯ Junior

◯ Senior

18) What area of journalism are you majoring in?

◯ Print news

◯ Online news

◯ Broadcast news

◯ Advertising

◯ Public relations

19) What is your career goal in being a journalism major? What is it you would like to do?

_____

_____

_____

_____

20) Have you taken the journalism course named Jour4708 Mass Media Ethics?

◯ Yes, I have taken Mass Media Ethics.

◯ No, I have not taken this course.

21) Have you taken any non-journalism ethics courses at the University of Memphis? Business ethics? Marketing ethics? Or any ethics course at this university?

◯ Yes, I have taken an ethics course in a department other than journalism.

◯ No, I have not taken an ethics course in a department other than journalism.

22) If you have taken a course in ethics in the journalism department while at the University of Memphis, in what year did you take it?

◯ Freshman year

◯ Sophomore year

◯ Junior year

◯ Senior year

23) If you have taken a course in ethics in a department other than the journalism department at the University of Memphis, in what year did you take it?

◯ Freshman year

◯ Sophomore year

◯ Junior year

◯ Senior year

24) What is your gender?

◯ Male

◯ Female

25) In what year were you born? Please write your birth year here_____.

Part Four. Scenario illustrating double-effect reasoning. Please use the following scenario to answer Question **26.** Double-effect reasoning is a method for ethical decision-making. Read the scenario first; the information in the box below it will help you match this method with Trish's journalistic dilemma.

Trish is a journalist working for a local community newspaper, *The Main Street USA Gazette*. She discovers through an anonymous tip that her father's (Carl's) employer, Stan of Stan's Automotive Repair, created and operates his own pornographic pictures blog. While Trish finds this news distasteful, she shrugs it off in a live-and-let-live manner. However, she suddenly remembered that Stan is running for mayor. And not only is Stan running for mayor, he's running as a religious conservative who frequently gives speeches about what he terms "the moral decay of America". In fact his latest speech, posted on his campaign website, is entitled "How Pornography is Ruining a Once Great Nation." Trish

uses her skills as an investigative reporter and sure enough the tip checks out. This particular revelation might be of great public interest in the local community, but if published it might also cost Trish's father his job. What should Trish do? Using double-effect reasoning, we might look at the dilemma this way:

Although the articles journalists publish can sometimes negatively impact certain relevant parties, there is nothing *morally objectionable* about journalism as a profession (thus the first criterion of double-effect reasoning as been met straightaway). It is not Trish's *intention* to hurt either Stan or her father. Rather, she wants to expose the blatant hypocrisy of someone who is running for office. The people, she reasons, have a right to know who exactly they are voting for. Her objective is to tell the truth, even if it will no doubt embarrass Stan and his family and possibly cost Carl his job (these are unfortunate consequences, or *effects*, that Trish *foresees*).

What about the good that will result from her news article? In double-effect reasoning, the good effects must be proportionate to or greater than the bad effects. The good here is what might be termed *the common good*. Journalists are "watchdogs" who look out for the public by keeping them informed. The community has been fooled by Stan into thinking that he is in fact what he presents himself as—and this reflects poorly on his character. It is not in the best interest of the community to elect a leader who lies and deceives, even if what he is doing is private and not illegal.

What about the bad that will result from her news article? First, we must understand the *relationship* of the two kinds of effect. According to double-effect reasoning, a good outcome cannot come as a result of a harmful outcome. In this case, the good that comes from Trish's article must not come about *through* the bad effect produced by the article. Here, the good would *not* result from Stan and his family's embarrassment, his dropping out of the race, or Carl's job loss. Rather, the good would result from the information contained in the article itself. For double-effect reasoning to work, the good effect (results) must be sufficiently desirable to compensate for the allowing of the bad effect. Trish's writing the article is sufficiently desirable to compensate for Stan's fall from grace and the possibility of her father's being fired. While it would be a shame if Carl lost his job, such a loss would not be Trish's responsibility. After all, she is not her father's employer.

26)

Double-effect reasoning, as shown in the scenario, is a method used to explain the moral permissibility of an action that causes a harm *as a side effect* of promoting some good objective or goal. The idea here is that it is sometimes okay to cause a harm as a side effect (or "double effect") of bringing about a good result even though it would not be okay to cause such a harm as a means of bringing about the same good goal. In other words, according to double-effect reasoning, it is ethically acceptable to bring about as a merely *foreseen* side effect a harmful event that it would *not* be ethically acceptable to bring about *intentionally*. What is the level of usefulness for you in accepting double-effect reasoning as a framework and method for thinking about ethical dilemmas in news/public relations/advertising.

Not very useful			Somewhat useful			Very useful
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

------- End of the survey. A big thank you for your help! -------

Copy of the University of Memphis's Institutional Review Board's Approval Letter

-----Original Message-----
From: Institutional Review Board <irb@memphis.edu>
To: Tyler Stafford (tstfford) <tstfford@memphis.edu>; Morgan D Arant Jr (darant) <darant@memphis.edu>
Sent: Tue, May 19, 2015 1:55 pm
Subject: IRB Approval 3672

Hello,

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed and approved your submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical principles.

PI NAME: Tyler Stafford
CO-PI:
PROJECT TITLE: A Quantitative Study of Student Receptivity to Double-Effect Reasoning as an Ethical Framework for Journalism
FACULTY ADVISOR NAME (if applicable): Morgan Arant

IRB ID: #3672
APPROVAL DATE: 05/19/2015
EXPIRATION DATE:
LEVEL OF REVIEW: Exempt

Please Note: Modifications do not extend the expiration of the original approval

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. If this IRB approval has an expiration date, an approved renewal must be in effect to continue the project prior to that date. If approval is not obtained, the human consent form(s) and recruiting material(s) are no longer valid and any research activities involving human subjects must stop.

2. When the project is finished or terminated, a completion form must be completed and sent to the board.

3. No change may be made in the approved protocol without prior board approval, whether the approved protocol was reviewed at the Exempt, Exedited or Full Board level.

4. Exempt approval are considered to have no expiration date and no further review is necessary unless the protocol needs modification.

Approval of this project is given with the following special obligations:

Thank you,

▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board Chair

The University of Memphis.

Note: Review outcomes will be communicated to the email address on file. This email should be considered an official communication from the UM IRB. Consent Forms are no longer being stamped as well. Please contact the IRB at IRB@memphis.edu if a letter on IRB letterhead is required.