Constraints Alter Journalists' Ethical Decision-Making

by Jenn Burleson Mackay

This study shows how constraints, ranging from technology to community values and newsroom organization, affect ethical decision-making at different news media. The author found that journalists are pressured by a variety of forces that taint decisions.

In its purest form, journalism exists to uphold justice. This is apparent in the media's role as the fourth estate. Journalists pride themselves in the pursuit of truth and the ability to be objective. Yet, journalists are embedded within media that have specific goals, technological abilities and audiences. These external influences may interfere with the journalist's ability to uphold justice and good journalism.

John Rawls' theory of justice provides an opportunity to examine how journalism should function if it were designed to be a fair or "just" institution.[1] An interpretation of Rawls suggests that journalists should be driven by the need to uphold the individual liberties of people. The theory conflicts with models of journalism, which suggest that constraining forces manipulate journalists. Those pressures can come from a journalist's background, society, the audience, the news organization or other areas.[2]

This paper delves into Rawls' work to describe a theory of just journalism. By relying on a survey of television, daily newspaper and weekly newspaper journalists, this paper considers what factors influence journalistic ethical decisions and how those influences conflict with Rawls' just journalism. It is hoped that this descriptive data can be used as a tool to prepare future journalists to make sound ethical decisions despite constraining pressures. The researcher also hopes that this data will inform future research, which considers how convergence affects ethical decisions.

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Literature Review

Influences on Journalistic Ethics

A number of scholars have studied the factors that influence journalistic decisions. The most influential model was developed by Shoemaker and Reese. The model suggests that journalists are most strongly influenced by ideological values, followed by extramedia influences (i.e. audience, competition), professional routines, the news organization and individual characteristics. Ideology is a force that allows groups or individuals with differing values to operate collectively.[3] Journalists face additional influences outside of their news organizations in the extramedia level, which incorporates factors such as audience, technology, public relations and governmental regulations. They suggest that individual influences come from the journalist's gender, education, religious beliefs, social status or personal experiences. Organizational constraints come from employer and stockholder decisions.[4] Several scholars have studied organizational influences. Breed suggested that journalists were socialized to the policies of a specific newsroom. He argued that the process leads the newsroom to become more important to journalistic decisions than the journalism profession.[5]

Shoemaker and Reese's model has inspired numerous studies. Voakes suggested that there are seven levels of influence.[6] He says individual influences come from the individual's personal values and experiences, while organizational constraints come through the organization's culture, structure and managerial policies. Competition was treated as an external influence and legal rulings, regulations and informal laws served as another constraint. Emphasis was placed on small-group influences, which come from informal groups in the workplace. Extramedia influences were issues outside of the news media such as advertisers and news sources.

In another study, Voakes suggested that journalists have values that are "filtered through one or more social determinates of behavior before they can actually influence a decision."[7] Individual values, competition, the organization, occupation, law, small groups or extramedia influences may affect values. The values can affect decisions, which will influence news content. Berkowitz and Limor used a similar framework but suggested that decisions are influenced by organizational and journalistic socialization. They also suggested that ethical decisions might depend on the situation.[8]

Journalists may interpret ethical issues as situations that pose a challenge to objectivity, according to Rilla Dean Mills. In data that looked primarily at newspaper journalists, Mills found that journalists vary in the degree to which they encounter ethical issues. Mills found that several journalists (10 out of 153) felt that they never experienced any ethical issues on the job. Others suggested that they experienced ethical issues almost constantly.[9] The researcher noted that those journalists who experienced ethical issues typically equated them with objectivity.[10]

In another model, Dimmick and Coit considered government rules, ownership, organizational influences and competition.[11] The researchers stressed that television was more vulnerable to government regulations than newspapers because of FCC licensing. They also suggested that employees might be influenced because they are part of the community. Croteau and Hoynes took a different approach. They described a circular model in which journalists are encompassed by the society but also affected by technology, consumers and media messages. The media affect the development of technology, but new technology also affects how the media do their jobs.[12] Turrow describes the influence derived from conflict between organizations: "The creation, distribution, and exhibition of mass media materials is essentially the struggle of organizations over a broad range of society's resources."[13] The model considers a variety of conflicting influences such as regulatory agencies, investors, clients and producers who create and distribute information to the public. It also considers unions which can determine the access the organization has to resources, distributors, who ensure that information is public, advocacy groups who try to influence the media, the public who decides which information to consume, the process of moving a product from one organization to another and auxiliary factors, such as technology.[14] Similarly, Gerbner considered power roles on journalistic decisions. He considered clients or investors, supervisors, colleagues, competitors and auxiliaries (resources such as paper and technology). He also considered roles outside of the media such as authorities, organizations, experts and patrons.[15]

Although the journalistic medium traditionally has not been included in models of journalistic constraints, Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes and Wilhoit found patterns of ethical thinking among journalists working for different types of news media. The results suggested that weekly newspaper journalists and television journalists were more concerned about audience research than were journalists working for other types of news media. They also found that wire and television journalists value quick information delivery more than do weekly or daily newspaper journalists.[16]

Additional research has considered the ethics of journalists working for specific types of news media. Ehrlich found that the staff of a large television station aired a sleazy package to increase ratings.[17] Research also suggests that television journalists accept deceptive newsgathering methods more than do other journalists. Weaver et al. found that television journalists are more likely to feel that it is acceptable to use hidden cameras or microphones than do other journalists.[18] Lee suggested that organization size or type of medium were more likely to influence ethical decisions than were individual characteristics.[19] Lee found that television journalists and journalists working for smaller news organizations were more tolerant of deceptive practices than were reporters at larger news organizations.[20]

Several journalistic influence models suggest that the community can affect journalistic decisions.[21] The type of organization that employs a journalist may affect how connected a journalist feels to a particular community. For example,

Viall suggested that journalists share common values, but characteristics in the community affect journalistic decisions. Journalists working in smaller communities will have a value system that reflects their community's values.[22]

Rawls suggested in his *Theory of Justice* that individuals are capable of determining principles to guide morality within their society if they blind themselves behind the "Veil of Ignorance."[23] Behind this mythical veil, individuals are not aware of their own station in life. Individuals do not know whether the decisions that they make will benefit themselves. The blindness allows individuals to evaluate concepts such as slavery and determine whether it should be allowed in their society without knowing how their own lives will be affected. Rawls suggested that the principles that individuals select for their society should have five qualities: transparency, simplicity, applicable to everyone, preferential order and the principles should act "as the final court of appeal in practical reasoning."[24]

Rawls' theory acknowledged that individuals have different abilities and experiences that lead to differences in life. Regardless of those differences, Rawls suggested that all individuals should receive certain rights equally. His basic liberties included the right to vote, own property and run for office, freedom of speech, assembly and opinion and freedom from random arrests and seizures. He referred to these rights as the first principle of justice.[25]

His second principle considers how different opportunities prevent the development of a perfectly equal society:

> *It isn't a matter of justice that some people are born into privilege. What's a matter of justice is how society chooses to deal with the issue.[26]*

To address these differences, Rawls suggests his difference principle. This principle stated that resources should be distributed so that the least privileged benefit the most. An equal distribution of resources is only permitted when it will be advantageous to everyone.[27]

Just Journalism is Good Journalism

Rawls' theory recently has been applied to journalism. Ward suggests that

> *... his approach to ethics and politics, especially his notion of pursing good in the right, is correct and has important implications for ethics in general and journalism ethics in particular.[28]*

Ward suggests that journalism, from Rawls perspective, should provide information about international events, ensure that everyone has access to food and shelter and other social services, study discrimination and equality. Rawls' work is relevant to this study because the philosopher stresses the need for individuals to strip themselves of traits that might prevent them from making just decisions. His theory seems appropriate for this analysis because this paper is

particularly concerned with characteristics that can influence journalistic choices.

Rawls suggests that journalists should strive to uphold their society's principles.[29] A just society's government should ensure liberties such as the right to vote, to run for office and gather in assembly. Rawls might suggest that journalism provides an additional assurance that rights are upheld. Just journalism should act as a watchdog of the government, striving to make sure that leaders consistently follow the principles of justice. Journalists should look for potential injustices, where freedom is in question. They have an obligation to protect the rights of people regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, religious preference or any other individual characteristics.

Journalists must ensure that the type of community they serve does not affect how they cover the news. It doesn't matter whether the community is full of diverse people or if it is more homogeneous. Journalists should focus on providing a platform for all voices—even if some of those voices may be unpopular within their communities.[30] By using town hall meetings, editorial pages, blogs, social networking and comment functions on news stories, journalists should encourage everyone to share his or her thoughts. Likewise, the need for high ratings and circulation should not dictate coverage. Important issues and the pursuit for justice must receive coverage.

Technology should be used to foster public discussion, but it should not manipulate coverage. For example, a television journalist should not ignore an important story merely because it does not lend itself to strong visual imagery. Instead, the journalist should focus on the story that needs to be told. All newsrooms should share a single philosophy driven by the need to uphold the two principles of justice. Regardless of the type of media that employ them, journalists should have one voice that calls for justice that spans the profession.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

The study explores journalistic constraints. The news medium was of particular interest to this study since research has suggested that it is an influential factor in journalistic decisions, but it typically has not been included in models of journalistic constraints.

Previous research led to the following hypotheses and research questions:

H1:
Journalists working for television stations or weekly newspapers will feel more pressured to maintain a high circulation and high ratings.

H2:
Journalists working for more technologically driven media (television) will be more pressured by technology than journalists working for less technologically dependent media (weekly newspapers).

RQ1:

Do journalists working for different news media feel pressured by a need to uphold community values?

RQ2:

How frequently do journalists feel that they experience ethical issues?

RQ3:

What type of ethical constraint is most frequently discussed?

RQ4:

Do journalists working for different news media tend to discuss similar types of ethical constraints?

Method

Local television journalists, metropolitan newspaper and weekly newspaper journalists were invited to participate in a survey. A random sample of daily and weekly newspapers was acquired from the *Editor & Publisher International Yearbook* Online database.[31] A television station sample was acquired from the Radio and Television News Directors Association's membership directory.[32] The researcher visited the website for each news organization in the sample and searched for a directory of news staff. If a directory was available, the names and e-mail addresses of each reporter were added to the sample. News organizations without websites or directories were removed from the sample. Reporters, anchors and columnists were included. The sample included 25 daily newspapers, 306 daily reporters; 20 television stations, 305 reporters; 50 weekly newspapers, 215 weekly journalists.[33]

The survey was posted on Surveymonkey.com and participants could sign up for a drawing to win an iPod or a $50 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble bookstore. Participants had one week to take the survey.

Participants were asked for their gender, their type of media outlet (daily newspaper, weekly newspaper, or television) and their organization's name.

> *Rawls suggests that individuals should free themselves from constraining forces as they make ethical decisions. They should strive to support a just society.[34] Influences, such as technology and community, may distract journalists from focusing on the stories that need to be told.*

They were asked if they considered themselves to be community news journalists. Participants also were asked: Do your concerns about maintaining a high circulation or high ratings affect how you do your job? Do you feel that the technology that you use to distribute the news affects how you cover stories? Do you feel that it is important to uphold your community's values when you write news stories? Participants indicated how often they encounter ethical issues on the job (every day, at least once a week, periodically, but not every week, occasionally, a few times a year, rarely or virtually never).

Participants were asked to explain the most recent ethical issue that they have experienced on the job. These responses were analyzed with a content analysis. The content analysis considered 10 types of constraints, which would be similar to the influences described by previous models. The news organization category considered whether the entry mentioned an employer, the news organization, boss or corporate owner. Source considered an individual outside of the newsroom such as a news source or a victim. Profession evaluated professional standards such as privacy, bias and accuracy and receiving gifts or other items that might appear in ethics codes. Competition considered competition from other journalists. Social looked for a mention of social pressures such as discrimination, capitalism or business interests. Legal considered lawsuits or government regulations. Technology discussed computers, cameras or other relevant issues. Audience included viewers, readers, ratings or circulation. Community considered community values, standards or norms.

A single entry from a journalist could theoretically discuss multiple types of constraints. Intercoder reliability was tested with two coders coding 15 percent of the journalists' responses. Cohen's Kappa ranged from .83 to 1 on all of the categories except individual and professional. For those two categories, Kappa was .69.

Findings

The final sample included 71 completed responses: 33 daily newspaper journalists, 24 television journalists and 14 weekly journalists. Of those, 42.3 percent were male and 57.7 percent were female. Most participants, 85.7 percent, reported that they considered themselves to be community news journalists.

The findings were accessed using correlations.

H1: Journalists working for television stations or weekly newspapers will feel more pressured to maintain a high circulation and high ratings.

Most of the participants (59.2 percent) reported that they did not feel pressured by ratings and circulation, but 40.8 percent reported that they were concerned. More than half of the television journalists (54.2 percent) reported concern. Of the remaining participants, 42.9 percent of the weekly newspaper journalists were concerned along with 30.3 percent of the metropolitan newspaper journalists. The relationship was not statistically significant.

H2: Journalists working with more technologically driven tools (television) will be more pressured than journalists working with fewer tools (weekly newspapers).

Most participants, 75.7 percent, reported that they felt pressured by technology. Most of the television journalists, 87.5 percent, reported concern along with 75 percent of the daily journalists. Half of the weekly journalists (57.1 percent) reported technological pressure. The relationships were not statistically significant.

RQ1: Do journalists working for different news media feel pressured by a need to uphold community values?

Television (70.8 percent) and weekly (85.7 percent) journalists reported being more concerned about upholding community values than did daily newspaper journalists (42.4 percent). A total of 60.6 percent of the participants reported community concerns as compared to 40 percent who were not concerned. The relationship was statistically significant, $r = -2.75$, $p. = .02$.

RQ2: How frequently do journalists feel that they experience ethical issues?

Overall, 26.7 percent of the participants reported that they experienced ethical issues every day, 26.7 percent reported ethical issues at least once a week, 31 percent reported ethical issues periodically but not every week, and 14.1 percent reported occasional experience or a few times a year. The remaining 1.4 percent did not respond to the question.

Of the television journalists, 37.5 percent reported they experienced ethical issues every day, along with 30.3 percent of daily newspaper journalists. No weekly journalists reported daily ethical issues. There was one daily newspaper journalist who reported never experiencing ethical issues. The relationship was not statistically significant.

RQ3: What type of ethical constraint is most frequently discussed?

The most frequently discussed constraint was at the professional level. More than half of the journalists (55 percent) mentioned ethical issues that appear in ethics codes. Some participants mentioned gifts or free meals. Others mentioned struggling with pressure from advertisers who wanted to manipulate coverage or choosing to name rape victims. The second most frequently coded category was organization (35.3 percent). This category included entries that discussed relationships within the newsroom such as discussions with editors or other co-workers. Technology was the third most frequently discussed category (16.9 percent). Several journalists mentioned difficulties in getting sources to talk on camera.

RQ4: Do journalists working for different news media tend to discuss similar types of ethical constraints?

Professional issues were most frequently mentioned by all three groups of journalists. There was statistical significance with two of the con-

Table 1
Frequency Constraints Mentioned

Constraint	Daily	Weekly	Television	Totals
Professional	20 (28.2)	6 (8.5)	13 (18.3)	39 (55)
Organization	12 (16.9)	6 (8.5)	7 (9.9)	25 (35.3)
Technology	3 (4.2)	2 (2.8)	7 (9.9	12 (16.9)
Source	5 (7)	1 (1.4)	3 (4.2)	9 (12.6)
Audience	2 (2.8)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	4 (5.6)
Legal	0	1 (1.4)	3 (4.2)	4 (5.6)
Social	2 (2.8)	0	0	2 (2.8)
Community	0	1(1.4)	1 (1.4)	2 (2.8)
Competition	0	0	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)
Total	44	18	36	98

Note: Parentheses indicate the percentage of the oveerall group of respondents.

straints. The legal constraint, was not mentioned by any daily journalists, but it was mentioned by 12 percent of television journalists and one weekly journalist (7.1 percent), r=.242, p.=.04. The technology constraint was mentioned by 29.1 percent of television journalists, 14.3 percent of weekly journalists, and by 9 percent of daily newspaper journalists. The relationship was statistically significant, r=.234, p.=.05.

Discussion

Rawls suggests that individuals should free themselves from constraining forces as they make ethical decisions. They should strive to support a just society.[34] Influences, such as technology and community, may distract journalists from focusing on the stories that need to be told. The journalists in this study appear to struggle with constraints that prevent them from upholding Rawls' just society.

The journalists whose jobs are more dependent on technology tended to feel more pressured by that technology than did other journalists. That may mean that the television journalist is more apt to use hidden cameras, as suggested by Lee.[35] Perhaps this finding is not surprising because as noted by Lee, television journalists continue to have a greater need for video and sound than do newspaper journalists. Regardless, the finding supports the notion that there are differences in how journalists at different news media perceive ethical quandaries. This finding suggests that ethical patterns exist at the medium level as indicated by Weaver et al.[36] It also suggests that there may be a gap in traditional models of journalistic constraints, which typically do not acknowledge the medium.

This study suggests that technology can affect journalistic decisions in multiple ways. One journalist mentioned that the most recent ethical issue that (s)he had experienced was:

> . . . *the coverage and promotion for a man accused of raping and killing a female bicyclist. He was the only suspect, and evidence to convict him was very strong, but as he had not been convicted of the crime, there was a lot of debate on video to use – if we could show his face or not.*[37]

Rawls might suggest that showing the suspect's face comes into conflict with preserving the basic liberties of individuals.[38] Rawls also would suggest that the journalists should rethink their approach to technology. Rather than feeling pressured by it, journalists should look for ways to use it to foster discussion and to ensure that everyone knows his or her rights.

Similarly to Mills, this study suggests that there is a differentiation in how frequently journalists feel that they experience ethical issues.[39] While 26.7 percent of the participants suggested that they experienced ethical dilemmas on a daily basis, there were a few participants who indicated they only experience ethical issues a few times each year.[40] On the other hand, one participant reported:

> *Virtually everything I do as I research, report and write a story is an ethical issue. Whose voice will get into the story? Which quotes will I use and where and in what context?*[41]

It is difficult to explain this variation. Perhaps the journalists do not have a common definition of the term ethics. Additional research should consider how journalists define the term ethics. How could an individual be expected to make an ethical choice if (s)he doesn't recognize that there is an ethical choice to consider?

The majority of journalists who participated in this study considered themselves to be community journalists and suggested that they feel pressured by community values. This raises some question as to how much some journalists may be influenced by the community. One participate stated:

> *The Hawaiian community is very sensitive in Hawaii and I was recently faced with doing an interview with one of their community leaders and had to be careful as to not offend either the Hawaiian or outside communities while still maintaining an objective viewpoint to get the story across.*[42]

Viall suggested that community journalists are more likely to make decisions that uphold the values of their community.[43] If the majority of journalists consider

themselves to be community journalists, these data raise some questions as to whether journalists in general are less likely to challenge community values. Rawls might suggest that journalists who surrender to community pressure may avoid stories that oppose the community norm. For example, a newsroom may avoid stories about minority groups, such as homosexuals, because their lifestyles or values stray from community values.

The organization appeared to be a frequent concern for the journalists in this study. In 16 of the responses, journalists used the word "we" when discussing their most recent ethical issue.[44] This could suggest that journalists frequently view themselves and their ethical experiences as part of the collective news organization rather than an individual experience. Perhaps some journalists lose their individuality when they enter the news organization. One participant mentioned being reprimanded by an editor after the journalist questioned seeking "trashy" sound bites about a political figure who had been arrested.[45] Berkowitz and Limor suggest that organizational and professional responsibilities may pressure journalists to determine whether to support their newsroom or their professional principles.[46] Regardless of the reason that journalists support the organization, the choice interferes with the journalist's ability to uphold justice. For example, one journalist made this statement:

> . . . *editor asked me not to cover a controversial story because the person involved was a big advertiser.*[47]

The organization (i.e. his/her editor) pressured the journalist through what Shoemaker and Reese would call the extramedia level—an advertiser's needs were held above the needs of the public.[48] Allowing an advertiser to control coverage creates a multitude of concerns, not the least of which is that the advertiser receives a pass on wrongdoing because of a financial privilege.[49]

This study suggests that journalists are pressured by a variety of forces that taint journalistic decisions and come into conflict with Rawls' concept of justice. The Internet has unleashed a host of new ethical dilemmas as journalists struggle to use social networking and as editors debate how to handle questionable story comment posts. Additionally, changing technology and converging relationships may lead journalists to encounter new ethical dilemmas that they never considered before as newspaper journalists wield video cameras. Ward suggests that journalists should investigate themselves to see what impact they are having on the world.[50] Perhaps it is time for journalists to consider what influences their ethical decisions and how those factors influence the impact that they have on the world.

Notes

1. John Rawls, _A Theory of Justice_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

2. Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, _Mediating the Message: Theories of Influence on Mass Media Content_ (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1991).

3. For example, capitalism and democracy are American ideological foundations.

4. Shoemaker and Reese, _Mediating the Message: Theories of Influence on Mass Media Content._

5. In regard to journalists, Breed states "instead of adhering to societal and professional ideals, he re-defines his values to the more pragmatic level of the newsroom group." Warren Breed, "Social Control in The Newsroom: A Functional Analysis," _Social Forces_ 33, no. 4 (1955): 236-335.

6. Paul Voakes, "Social Influences on Journalists' Decision Making in Ethical Situations," _Journal of Mass Media Ethics_ 12, no. 1 (1997): 18-35.

7. Paul Voakes, "Public Perceptions of Journalists' Ethical Motivations," _Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly_ 74, no. 1 (spring 1997): 20

8. Dan Berkowitz and Yehiel Limor, " Professional Confidence and Situational Ethics: Assessing the Social-professional Dialectic in Journalistic Ethics Decisions," _Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly_ 80, no. 4 (2003): 783-801.

9. Rilla Dean Mills, "Newspaper Ethics: A Qualitative Study," _Journalism Quarterly_ 60, no. 4 (1983): 589-594.

10. Some scholars would view the emphasis on objectivity as evidence of the professional level constraint. For additional information, see Shoemaker and Reece, _Mediating the Message: Theories of Influence on Mass Media Content._

11. John Dimmick and Phillip Coit, "Levels of Analysis in Mass Media Decision Making: A Taxonomy, Research Strategy, and Illustrative Data Analysis," _Communication Research_ 9, no. 1 (1982): 3-32.

12. Similarly, the technology available determines the media that consumers receive. The authors also suggested that consumers have power in this relationship. The consumer's choice of whether to adopt new technology determines whether an invention becomes a permanent media fixture. David Croteau and William Hoynes, _Media/Society Industries, Images, and Audiences._

13. Joseph Turrow, _Media Systems in Society: Understanding Industries, Strategies, and Power_ (New York: Longman, 1996), 22.

14. Food and accommodations when the journalist travels also can be considered auxiliary functions. Turrow, _Media Systems in Society: Understanding Industries, Strategies, and Power._

15. George Gerbner, "Institutional Pressures Upon the Mass Communicator," _The Sociological Review Monograph_ 13 (1969): 205-248.

16. The researchers perform a study of journalists every 10 years. It is interesting to note that the some of the trends among groups of journalists have changed over time. For example, the most recent study showed that journalists working for all of the various media were less likely to view getting information to people quickly as an extremely important function of the media than they were in the last study. David H. Weaver, Randal A. Beam, Bonnie J. Brownlee, Paul S. Voakes and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, _The American Journalist in the 21st Century: U.S. News People at the Dawn of a New Millennium_ (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2007).

17. Matthew C. Ehrlich, "The Ethical Dilemma of Television News Sweeps," _Journal of Mass Media Ethics_ 10, no. 1 (1995): 44.

18. Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes and Wilhoit, _The American Journalist in the 21st Century: U.S. News People at the Dawn of a New Millennium._

19. Seow Ting Lee, "Predicting Tolerance of Journalistic Deception," _Journal of Mass Media Ethics_ 20, no. 1 (2005): 22-42.

20. The term deception was used to cover a variety of journalistic behaviors such as using hidden cameras, recording sound without someone's knowledge, lying about one's identity, editing photographs, etc. The author attributed the need for visuals as a reason for the television journalist's willingness to use deception. Hidden cameras are a way for television journalists to obtain visuals, but additional hidden techniques often must be used before a hidden camera can be used. Lee, "Predicting Tolerance of Journalistic Deception."

21. Dimmick and Coit, "Levels of Analysis in Mass Media Decision Making: A Taxonomy, Research Strategy, and Illustrative Data Analysis."

22. The author suggested that journalists working for large newsrooms in pluralistic communities have more influences from within their newsrooms than community journalists who tend to work in an isolated setting. The isolation keeps community journalists from having specific professional values reinforced by large staffs of journalists and leaves room for the community to be influential to decisions. Elizabeth K. Viall, "Measuring Journalistic Values: A Cosmopolitan/Community Continuum," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 7, no. 1 (1992): 41-53.

23. The philosopher is concerned with maintaining a well-ordered society. He says that society can exist when "everyone accepts and knows that the others accept the same principles of justice and the basic social institutions generally satisfy and are generally known to satisfy these principles." Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 5.

24. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 135.

25. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*.

26. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 102.

27. The philosopher argues that the two principles of justice allow individuals to protect their own individual rights while also protecting themselves against the worst things that could happen to them. He states that individuals "run no chance of having to acquiesce in a loss of freedom over the course of their life for the sake of a greater good enjoyed by others, an undertaking that in actual circumstances they might not be able to keep." Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 176.

28. The author applies Rawls to what he develop a global approach to journalistic ethics." Stephen J.A. Ward, *Global Journalism Ethics*, (Quebec, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 125.

29. Ward suggests that journalists must investigate the government to insure that their nation is a well-ordered society. Ward, *Global Journalism Ethics*.

30. Ward explains that journalism should serve the public. To perform that service, journalists should create "news media systems, or news media space, that encourages a critical, open public sphere of diverse, often unpopular, views. Journalists serve the public by helping a reasonable, informed, inquiring public to exist." Ward, *Global Journalism Ethics*, 205.

31. Editor & Publisher International Online, accessed Sept. 30, 2007, <http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/yearbook/index.jsp> (n.d.).

32. RTNDA Membership List, accessed December 19, 2007, <http://map.rtnda.org/login.aspx?redirectUrl=/membership/MS15MembershipDirectory.aspx>.

33. Fewer weekly journalists were included because many weekly newspapers do not maintain websites.

34. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*.

35. Lee, "Predicting Tolerance of Journalistic Deception.

36. Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 21st Century: U.S. News People at the Dawn of a New Millennium*.

37. The completed participant's response read "The coverage and promotion for a man accused of raping and killing a female bicyclist. He was the only suspect and evidence to convict him was very strong, but as he had not been convicted of the crime, there was a lot of debate on video to use – if we could show his face or not."

38. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*.

39. Mills, "Newspaper Ethics: A Qualitative Study."

40. This variation in ethical experience appeared in some of the statements made by journalists. One journalist went so far as to say, "Virtually everything I do as I research, report and write a story is an ethical issue. Whose voice will get into the story? Which quotes will I use and where and in what context," whereas another journalist responded "(I) haven't really faced any ethical issues."

41. The completed participant response read "Virtually everything I do as I research, report and write a story is an ethical issue. Whose voice will get into the story? Which quotes will I use and where in what context? Then there are the issues related to the literal and figurative shrinking of the newspaper, its coverage area, its areas of interest and its dedication to its role in a healthy society, particularly a healthy democracy."

42. The completed participation response is printed in the text.

43. Viall, "Measuring Journalistic Values: A Cosmopolitan/Community Continuum."

44. For example, one participant wrote, "It is against the law to not have a satellite truck operator in the sat truck at all times. We face challenges when asked to stretch our staff too thin. Had to fight to uphold the law." Another participant wrote, "Should we release information regarding tornado fatalities we have confirmed but authorities asked us to withhold."

45. The completed participant's response was, "A man who was a lawyer for the school district was taken into custody because some pornographic images were found on his work computer. That day we ran a package and told the whole story. The next day I was told to go to his neighborhood, knock on the doors of his neighbors and get those trashy reaction sound bites: ("I can't believe this is happening here, " "I can't believe Mr. Smith would do that.") I spoke up against the assignment because I think it's trashy journalism and the man hasn't even been convicted. I didn't end up having to do that story, but I was reprimanded for questioning the assignment. And another one, not really a dilemma, but an interesting subject for conversation in an ethics class: One reporter at our station was recently berated after his breaking news live shot for saying the two suspects are black. Our assistant news director believes there's no reason to ever use race in describing suspects but others in the newsroom, including myself, believe we're here to explain the facts, describe the scene and cover the news – not make a politically correct statement."

46. Berkowitz and Limor, "Professional Confidence and Situational Ethics: Assessing the Social-Professional Dialectic in Journalistic Ethics Decisions."

47. The completed participant response is printed in the text. Other participants mentioned additional advertising issues such as, "To follow up on a story about possible police misconduct when there was only one source and little other evidence." Similarly, another participant stated: "A local business was angry that a new business in a related field had been featured in a news story in the paper. They were unhappy that their business was not featured, despite being an advertiser.

48. Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influence on Mass Media Content*.

49. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*.

50. Ward, *Global Journalism Ethics*.