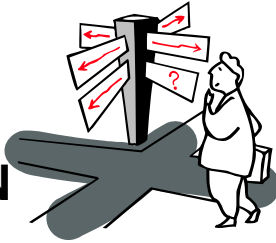


# ETHICAL DECISION MAKING



## The need for ethical media

### ● Credibility and Profit

- people won't buy a paper or watch a news program they don't trust
- > drop in circulation, ratings hurts advertising
- > without advertising, newspaper/TV program disappears

## The need for ethical media

### ● Accuracy

- reporting information in a context that people to understand it fully

### ● Objectivity

- without bias
- journalists want objectivity
- public relations & advertising want to enhance the client/product

## The need for ethical media

### ● Fairness & Balance

- providing equal coverage to all points of view

### ● Accurate Representation and Absence of Fakery

- lying to readers & viewers
- > leaving a false impression

### Ethics:

A rational decision-making process based on certain philosophical principles

### Morals:

Rules based on religion or other societal norms

### Laws:

Rules created by government

## Types of ethical dilemmas in the media:

### ● Gatekeeping role

determining what to give readers or viewers

### ● Privacy

### ● Protecting people

### ● Protecting government secrets

### ● Offensive materials

### ● Deceiving audience, sources or the media (PR)

**Ethical principles:**

● **The Golden Mean**

- Take a position that is in the middle of the two extremes

**Ethical principles:**

● **The Categorical Imperative**

- absolute ethics
- no exceptions to the rules
  - > what is right for one is right for all
  - > what is right in one situation is right for all similar situations

**Ethical principles:**

● **The Principle of Utility (utilitarianism)**

**See the most useful action**

- seek the greatest good for the greatest number of people
  - > weigh the amount of harm against the amount of good

**Ethical principles:**

● **Pluralistic Theory of Value**

We must choose between competing ethical duties

**Types of duties:**

- fidelity (keeping promises)
- reparation (taking responsibility for wrongful acts)
  - > based on my previous acts
- gratitude
  - > based on the acts of others

**Types of duties:**

- justice (to ensure equitable distribution of pleasure happiness)
- beneficence (giving charity to people in need)
- self-improvement (improve our own condition)
- not injuring others (do no harm)
- veracity (tell the truth)
- nurture (help others achieve self-worth)

**Ethical principles:**

● **Communitarianism**

- your obligations to your community
  - > deals with society-wide issues
  - > community's needs are more important than individual's needs
  - > focuses on outcomes and social justice
  - > supports democratic ideals

### **Ethical principles:**

#### ● **The Veil of Ignorance**

- treat everyone equally and justice will prevail
  - > we cover our eyes so we don't see differences in power, wealth, education, responsibility etc.

### **Ethical principles:**

#### ● **Judeo-Christian Ethics**

- “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”
  - > treat people with respect
  - > try to minimize harm

### **Ethical principles:**

#### ● **Antinomianism**

- there are no guiding principles

### **Ethical principles:**

#### ● **Situational Ethics**

- decide each case on its own merits
  - > use your guiding principles to make decision

### **Philosophies**

**Golden Mean:** Look for the middle ground

**Categorical Imperative:** No exceptions to the rules

**Principle of Utility:** Seek the greatest good for the greatest number

**Pluralistic Theory of Value:** Choose among competing duties

**Communitarianism:** First obligation is to the community

**Veil of Ignorance:** Treat everyone equally

### **Ethical Reasoning Processes:**

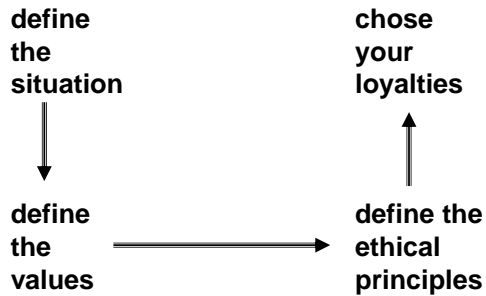
#### ● **Sissela Bok**

– Three questions for ethical decision making:

1. How do I feel about the action?
2. Is there any other way to achieve the same goal that will not raise ethical issues?
3. How will my actions affect others?

### Ethical Reasoning Processes:

#### Ralph Potter: Potter's Box



### Ethical Reasoning Processes:

#### ● Roy Peter Clark

– Five questions for ethical decision making:

1. Is the story, photo or graphic complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge?
2. Am I missing an important point of view?
3. How would I feel if this story or photo were about me?
4. What good would publication do?
5. What does my reader or viewer need to know?

### Ethical Reasoning Processes:

#### ● H. Eugene Goodwin

– Seven questions for ethical decision making:

1. What do we usually do in cases like this?
2. Who will be hurt and who will be helped?
3. Are there better alternatives?
4. Can I look myself in the mirror again?
5. Can I justify this to other people, the public?
6. What principles or values can I apply?
7. Does this decision fit the kind of journalism I believe in and how people should treat one another?