

DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL ETHICS CODES IN MEDIA OUTLETS

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Abstract: This qualitative literature study contributes to the question of journalism education by providing an example how knowledge contained in media ethics studies can help a newsroom develop an effective code of ethics. The paper constructs a matrix that guides newsrooms in developing their codes of ethics through all stages of this process depending on the purpose of the code outlined in scholarly literature. The matrix contains codes' purposes and functions in its rows, and stages of codes' creation process in its columns. The matrix will be useful for application in the work of media staff in the fields of reporting, streamlining the production process, gaining audience's loyalty and organizing internal education of the staff.

Introduction

The study starts with identifying stages of code building: purpose, content, form of presentation, means of enforcement, and indicators of effectiveness. Then it proceeds to theories outlined in scholarly literature discussing those aspects of ethics codes with regard to their purpose. This stage of research inquiry takes into account several points of view reflected in scholarly literature. The paper concludes with creating a matrix that summarizes the main points of the discussed pieces of research devoted to each stage of code building. The matrix aims to accumulate suggestions of major scholars in the field of media ethics on how ethics codes should be modeled to be useful for journalists in newsrooms.

Ethical codes are one of five properties of professional ethics together with intraprofessional status, enforcement of formal ethics, “application to individual professionals and individual occasions of professional behavior” (Abbott, 1983, p. 860), and “division and balance of the injunctions” (Abbott, 1983, p. 862). Hafez (2002) classifies codes of ethics into five categories: single media codes, national official codes, national independent codes, regional official codes, and multinational codes. This paper focuses on single media codes “designed as guidelines for specific publications” (Hafez, 2002, p. 227).

Only few studies focus on codes of ethics in single newsrooms.¹ The majority of studies are more theoretical and focus on various aspects of usage of ethics codes. Judging on the topics that are raised in scholarly literature devoted to codes of ethics, a chain of problem areas regarding the usage of codes of ethics in specific media outlets could be modeled:

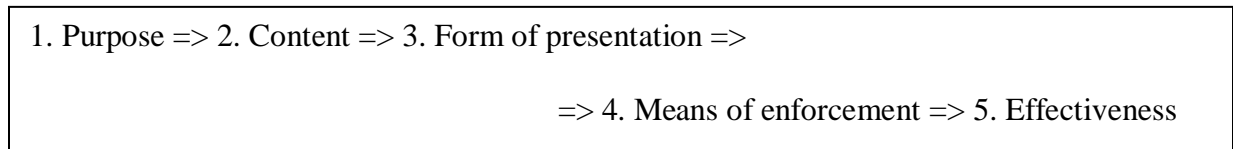


Figure 1. Topics addressed in literature on codes of ethics (areas of decision making regarding the usage of codes of ethics)

1. Research devoted to purpose of codes explains their functions, or, in other words, it answers the question why codes are needed. Simultaneously with criticism of current practices of code-building, scholars investigate what are the proper, morally justified, functions of codes.²
2. Scholarly sources on content of codes explore what exactly should be written in codes. Content strongly depends on the way ethical dilemmas are solved. Dilemmas such as usage of anonymous sources and publishing of disturbing images are so complicated that scholarly sources are often devoted to only one of them at a time (e.g. Marion and Izard, 1986), and those sources do not necessarily mention how this problem should be reflected in codes of ethics. One of the debates over the content of codes is on the range of issues which code should cover. For example, should conflict of interest be addressed in the body of codes is discussed.
3. Form of presentation explores how content should be organized. Should codes be in a form of a short general manifesto, or should they constitute detailed guides with specified wording and even examples and rationale for each point?
4. Means of enforcement are the procedures that make journalists abide their codes and use them as guides. Those means can be outside the medium, and in this case publishing the code for wide audience can enforce obedience to it.
5. Effectiveness shows how strong the code is in shaping behavior. We looked at the specific measurable indicators of codes' effectiveness in every case.

In this chain (Figure 1), the purpose and functions of codes is the topic that is most often addressed in scholarly literature, and the debate over the purpose brings to the discussion several purposes of codes. In our opinion, this may be so for two major reasons. First, as

Elliott-Boyle (1985-86) states, “the basic problem with current codes of ethics in journalism is the lack of clarity concerning the purpose of the individual codes” (p. 22). Second, understanding purpose and functions of ethics codes determines their content, which influences codes’ effectiveness on the opposite end of the chain.

Aspects of means of enforcement and effectiveness are rarely researched in scholarly literature. Means of enforcement are mostly viewed from the point of view of strictness of codes and the subject of control (whether it is inside or outside the medium). Since effectiveness is the least addressed area of ethics codes’ usage³, we’ve risked inferring logical markers of effectiveness from scholarly discussions of other problems of usage of codes. We found possible to define effectiveness in codes that have following functions: internal control, consistency, and accountability and responsibility.

Scholarly literature on purpose of codes and other aspects of codes’ building

Sorting codes’ purposes into separate categories could be problematic because scholars analyze several purposes in comparison to each other: for example, they look at accountability vs. responsibility function. Since it might be impossible to extract arguments in favor of responsibility from the logic of arguments in favor of accountability, in this study three categories share two to three functions of codes.

After analysis of literature on ethics codes, the following concepts that describe codes’ purposes were identified: accountability, consistency in making decisions, control, education and reflection on practices, loyalty, moral development, professional aggrandizement, protection of business, and responsibility.

1. Aggrandizement and external loyalty. There are two main schools of interpreting professional ethics: functionalists who attribute professional ethics function of control; and

monopolists, who attribute it function of aggrandizement. Abbott (1983) introduces a third theory that gives his own explanation of a wide movement of adopting formal codes of ethics in the United States in 1900-1930: attempts to gain security of the profession (Abbott, 1983, pp. 875-877). Cooper et al. (1989) support Abbott's theory of status enhancement and response to status insecurity. They prove that current concern with professional ethics is still explained by the function of responding to insecurity:

...since the late 1960 there has been growing public criticism of "the media" aimed precisely at their misuse of power for economic or ideological goals. An earlier image of disinterested service and expression of a public trust has evaporated. The public may attribute high status to the lonely investigative reporter and to the brave dissidents among the profession, but the profession as a whole is seen as a production organization with economic and/or ideological motives. (p. 54).

Kultgen (1988) adds to the aggrandizement function of codes, giving two functions of professional codes, social and human, and saying that the codes' social function is often turned into ideological:

The professional ideology maintains that every genuine profession has an ethic. An occupations' code conveys the impression that this is true for it and hence it is a profession... (p. 212).

Kultgen (1988) notes that ideology is not always false. The main outcome of ideological function is that content of codes should be simple and easy to understand for a wide audience. Kultgen's understanding of codes' functions also fits the loyalty category of functions. Kultgen (1988) says that ethics codes "are instruments for persuasion both of members of the profession and the public" (p. 212). Targeted for broader audience rather than for professionals, "attractive version" of codes can be sometimes put in frame in the office of professionals. "People who really use lists of rules for professional guidance do not hang them in public places," Kultgen (1988) notes in parenthesis (p. 231).

PR-function of codes causes debate over itself. Bertrand's (2000) vision of codes of ethics are codes aiming encouragement of audience's loyalty toward the medium, which is external, public relations type loyalty:

The code informs the public on the particular trade: it tells it about its rules of conduct. By thus increasing its credibility, it insures the loyalty of its patrons and, in the case of media, the loyalty also of its advertisers, the source of its prosperity (p. 42).

Pritchard and Morgan (1989) agree with Christians (1985-86) in his assumption that codes are most often intended as a public relations tool for the press to show that newspeople are not arrogant and unaccountable. Boyeink (1998) views codes as designed for shaping ethical behavior of journalists and argues that codes are successful in shaping behavior only when not looked upon as public relations tools.

In our matrix we unite functions of aggrandizement and gaining audience's loyalty towards the medium. From the point of view of these two functions code should be publishable and its content it should formulate "what leaders of the profession would have the public think its operative ethics is. This is intended to instill trust in its actual practices," (Kultgen, 1988, p. 212).

2. Internal control. Frost (2000) approaches ethics codes as internal means of control and says codes of ethics are a matter of self-regulation for print only because "[b]roadcasting is tightly controlled by licensing authorities; in contrast the press is subject to self-regulation" (p. 116). Hence codes of ethics should not be public, but they should be treated close to legislation as they are, in fact, replacing licensing legislation.

3. Accountability and responsibility. Studying the concept of professional accountability, Newton (Newton, Hodges, and Keith, 2004) writes about accountability in general as being in compliance with Mill's Principle of Utility that "[p]rofessionals have a duty to society at

large, to the greater good for the greater number, whether their clients and their employees agree” (p. 170). Kultgen’s (1988) human function of codes requires promoting human welfare.

Newton (Newton et al., 2004) states that accountability is equal to responsibility. Bertrand’s (2000) definition of media accountability systems as “any non-State means of making media responsible towards the public” (p. 107) leans towards Newton’s understanding of accountability as equal to responsibility. Christians (1985-86) exploring media industry codes argues for “the use of codes for answerability, that is as a responsible explanation for the public’s legitimate questions about press behavior” (p. 17). Hodges (Newton et al., 2004) insists on separating these two concepts. “Responsibility has to do with defining proper conduct, accountability with compelling it,” he says (p. 173). Hodges (Newton et al., 2004) also clarifies that responsibility deals with the answer to what needs of society journalists should respond while accountability deals with the ways society could make journalists explain and justify why they perform their responsibilities the way they do. McQuail (2003) supports the assumption that it is necessary to distinguish between those two concepts saying that responsibility “is a chosen or attributed standard of behavior,” and accountability “usually implies some external pressure to comply” (p. 297). This means that accountability is not voluntary, though responsibility is.

Paying respect to both points of view, we keep accountability and responsibility functions in one cell of the matrix.

Hodges (Newton et al., 2004) looks at journalistic accountability defining to whom and for what journalist is accountable. One of the questions he asks is if journalists are accountable to audience and employers for their private life. He comes to a conclusion that journalists’ private life (e.g. sexual misconduct with a teenager) that doesn’t affect the quality

of journalistic performance judged by compliance with standards of accuracy, clarity, etc., must be separated from other kinds of out-of-work conduct:

We do, and should, hold them [journalists] accountable for conflicts of interest. Conflict of interest (e.g., accepting gifts from sources or subjects, holding public office, finding secondary employment with subjects) do affect the quality, accuracy, and framing of stories. That is to say, they do affect the quality of one's journalistic performance (p. 179).

Elliott-Boyle (1985-86) brings a slightly different dimension to the problem of accountability, saying that there are two approaches to understanding of codes as standards of professional practice. The difference between approaches derives from the difference in understanding the word 'standard.' If one understands standards as minimum expectations which journalists must fulfill to stay out of jail and keep the job, this is a code of accountability. More than that, the scholar thinks that code of accountability should constitute a part of a single code of ethics. Another part is shaped by understanding standards as ideal that may not be reachable in real life. In contrast to minimum expectations, there is no punishment of any kind for failure to meet the ideal. If guidelines require a lot of consideration and effort on the part of a journalist (Elliott-Boyle's standard-as-ideal), their power should be stated as a power of guideline, not the compulsory law. This coincides with Hodges's understanding that conflict of interest part of the code can be translated as minimum expectations towards a working professional, and yet ideal standards of journalistic behavior are not mandatory.

Christians, Ferre, and Fackler (1993) who are also in favor of accountability function of codes disapprove the public relations function of codes, yet they still don't support resistance of some media not to publish codes. Christians et al. (1993) explain how open written codes work:

People cannot legitimacy be called to account without a visible process that applies agreed-on principles to determine innocence or guilt. Written codes force corporate leaders to declare and explain themselves, and allow fair negotiation of claims (pp. 136-137).

4. Loyalty. There are two types of loyalty that are addressed by scholars: loyalty of audience towards the medium and loyalty of journalists towards the medium and audience. In general theory and practice of business administration, different divisions are in charge of maintaining two types of loyalty: loyalty of clients/readers (public relations department that is in charge of external public relations) and of loyalty of personnel/journalists (human resource department that is often responsible for internal public relations, that is for loyalty of personnel). Scholars address both types of loyalty, and we've discussed the PR-type of loyalty in the *Aggrandizement and external loyalty* entry of the paper.

Addressing loyalties of personnel, public relations practitioners and scientists inquire if the greatest loyalty should be to society or to the client. Speaking of possible conflicts between narrower loyalty to client and broader loyalty to society, Royce (Stoker, 2005) brings the issue of 'loyalty to loyalty' that implies some responsibility in the choice to what to be loyal:

A loyalty to loyalty would require practitioners to choose a client or organization possessing the qualities worthy of a universal loyalty. Showing loyalty to an organization to which all might not be loyal would qualify as a persuasion of loyalty. One's loyalty to society might conflict now and again, but one could justify continued association based on loyalty to the organization's constitutional mission and vision. The question is not whether serving the client serves the public interest or society but whether one shows loyalty to loyalty in choosing and continuing to associate with organization (p. 280).

Stoker (2005) states the idea that codes of ethics should pursue values worthy to be a universal law caring about the society at large while addressing issues of medium's work.

Kavtryeva (1997), a business consultant who advocates universal codes for organizations regardless of their field of operation, lists a function of codes as ones creating organizational culture and spirit among employees because codes incorporate values, attitudes and beliefs specific to the organization. She states that an employee should think if his or her actions will harm the company, coworkers, clients or outsiders when they don't know what to do in a particular situation. Consideration of who will be harmed should be a compulsory process in the decision-making, and if the evaluation shows that people will be harmed, procedures eliminating such harm should be equaled to law, Kavtryeva (1997) writes.

Two other functions she mentions qualify for the codes' purpose of consistency.

5. Consistency. Boeyink (1994) in his research of codes of ethics in newsrooms says that newspeople value ethical codes as a tool for consistency. Without ethics code there is no policy, and different decisions might be made in the similar situations. That is, in one case the unnamed source might be used, and in another case the usage of unnamed source might be rejected.

Kavtryeva (1997) lists two functions that fit into the category of consistency as codes' purpose. The first one is elimination of typical mistakes practitioners might make due to lack of knowledge, experience or other circumstances. The second function is reproduction of methods of work. This function comes useful when members of old staff leave. In this case new staff has the opportunity to read the body of practical knowledge (organizational wisdom) gathered over the years of work of experienced staff.

6. Education, reflection, and moral development. This category combines functions of educating new people to the industry and the function of reflection on communication practices because both these functions are equal to each other with the only difference that reflection is a process of educating those who are already in the profession. They face the

task of the reflection because they are to compose a formal code of ethics for their medium. Both functions are also merged with the function of moral development. From our perspective, moral development and reflection are more of an intrinsic psychological and natural process while education is a more comprehensive (pedagogical) process that requires some kind of organized process. At the same time, psychology and education go hand in hand together. For instance, the theory of Russian psychologist Vygotsky (also spelled *Vygotskii*) is used in teaching children in schools.

Elliott-Boyle (1985-86) writes: “The purpose of the document of usual practice is the process itself – the critical analysis of the profession by practitioners” (p. 26). Johannesen (1998) agrees that the process of developing ethics code encourages participants to reflect on their practices and forces them to think about their goal and on how to achieve it.

Johannesen (1998) also emphasizes the educational function of codes saying that codes help people new to journalistic profession or news media business get acquainted “with guidelines for ethical responsibility based on the experience of predecessors and by sensitizing them to ethical problems specific to their field” (p. 61). Johannesen (1998) introduces his vision of codes as a ground for public discussion of journalistic practices. He calls this function ‘argumentative.’ Argumentative function fits into the category of reflection as well as into the category of accountability.

Wilkins and Coleman (2005) provide evidence that codes of ethics might influence young journalists more than the experienced ones: “As observed by many of the journalists, codes may be useful for a young reporter entering the profession, but they are less so for a veteran journalist with years or decades of journalism experience” (p. 113). Analyzing the results of moral development study, scholars suggest that “[t]hese journalists may have rejected codes

of ethics but, rightly so, they viewed laws to be a more binding and enforceable set of rules” (p. 113).

Building on knowledge provided by developmental psychology, especially on Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, Black and Barney (1985-86) explain what type of code (code using general terms, or code more specific in its wording) suits each of the six levels of journalist’s moral development: “[W]e can consider how a journalist would likely behave at each stage along the way, and what role the ethics codes might play throughout” (pp. 32-33). Black & Barney (1985-86) view codes of ethics as a tool for moral development of journalists. Their psychological and pedagogical angle of viewing the purpose of codes corresponds to Elliott-Boyle’s viewing codes as standard-as-ideal. All three scientists here think along the same lines with Russian psychologist Vygotsky. Working as a researcher and a teacher, Vygotsky “recognized that children were able to solve problems beyond their actual development level if they were given guidance in the form of prompts or leading questions from someone more advanced” (Wink and Putney, 2002, p. 86). This phenomenon is known as Vygotsky’s zone of proximate development.⁴ If codes of ethics provide the standard-as-ideal level to which journalists should constantly ‘reach for,’ in compliance with Vygotsky’s theory, the development will be enhanced because of the attempts to complete a difficult task. In a highly diverse in terms of moral development newsroom, it seems logical to orient on the golden mean which is journalist in stage 3 or 4 of moral development according to Kohlberg’s theory.⁵ The code could also have a part targeting those experienced journalists who are on stages 5 or even 6.⁶ In that case journalist on lower stages of development (stages 1-2) will face the demands of stages 3-4, and those on stages 3-4 will face demands of 5-6, which is standard-of-ideal.

7. Protection of business. Comparing codes of ethics of American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) and American Newspaper Guild (ANG) with 2003 *New York Times* code, Wilkins and Brennen (2004) discovered the concern of the latter about financial success and economic wealth of this medium. This concern made its way into entries of ethics code and hence assigned the code the function that might be called ‘protection of business.’

Kavtryeva (1997) views codes as means of protection of business. Since media aim to gain profit, it’s logical to link code’s provisions to salaries: penalties should be applied if provisions of the code equaled to law were ignored (Kavtryeva, 2000). It’s worth noting once again, that Kavtryeva is an author of a universal model of professional ethics that defines problem areas in any business or non-profit structure and modifies code’s provisions to make them up-to-date and fair for each company. She cautions against the use of the model if its adoption was not well thought through.

Matrix for codes’ building

The matrix below summarizes suggestions outlined in scholarly literature depending on the aim the code pursues in the newsroom.

Developing Organizational Ethics Codes in Media Outlets

Table 1

Matrix for developing newsrooms' codes of ethics depending on the purpose of the code

| | Purpose | Content | Form of presentation | Means of enforcement | Effectiveness |
|----|--|---|--|--|--|
| 1. | Aggrandizement (“...every genuine profession has an ethic,” Kultgen, 1988, p. 212), and winning loyalty of audience (“The code informs the public on the particular trade: it tells it about its rules of conduct. By thus increasing its credibility, it insures the loyalty of its patrons and, in the case of media, the loyalty also of its advertisers, the source of its prosperity” (Bertrand, 2000, p. 42)). | Code “formulates what leaders of the profession would have the public think its operative ethics is” (Kultgen, 1988). | Content should be simple and easy to understand for a wide audience. | Publishable for wide audience. | Not measurable. |
| 2. | Internal control (“a matter of self-regulation for the press, which in contrast to broadcasting is not controlled by licensing authorities” (Frost, 2000, p. 116)). | Obligations that would have been otherwise enforced by law. | Not addressed by literature. | Internal use only. It is the outlet’s responsibility to control the compliance with the code’s provisions. | The number of cases that would be otherwise subject to punishment by law should be as small as possible. |

Table 1
(Continued)

| | | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|---|--|
| <p>3.</p> | <p>Accountability and responsibility (the ways society could make journalists explain and justify why they perform their responsibilities the way they do (Newton et al., 2004)).</p> | <p>Specific every-day decisions journalists make while working on the story. Standards of accuracy and clarity; explanations of what is considered conflict of interest (“accepting gifts from sources or subjects, holding public office, finding secondary employment with subjects,” in general – behavior that affects the quality of journalistic performance (Newton et al., 2004, p. 179)).</p> | <p>Two-part codes where one part is devoted to everyday how-to-do journalistic practices and the other part – to conflict of interests (Boeyink, 1998). The first part with the power of a guideline and short rationale behind every entry, the conflict-of-interests part – with the power of law if it doesn’t trespass constitutional rights of journalist as citizens (Isralowitz, 1992).</p> | <p>Publishable document available for usage by both journalists and audience. Guidelines restricted by country’s law should have a power of law in the code of ethics, too. Those that are not should have a power of a guideline (advice), not law (Elliott-Boyle, 1985-86). Journalists are accountable to their editors in the part of conflict of interests. In that case editor eliminates all the possible harm by controlling the quality of the story (Isralowitz, 1992).</p> | <p>Public with its legitimate questions holds the press accountable for its behavior (Christians, 1985-86, p. 17). The number of questions can be traced through letters to the editor and other inquires.</p> |
|-----------|--|--|--|---|--|

Table 1
(Continued)

| | | | | | |
|----|---|--|---|---|--|
| 4. | Loyalty of personnel: creating organizational culture and spirit among employees (Kavtryeva, 1997). | Codes of ethics should pursue values worthy to be a universal law caring about the society at large while addressing issues of medium's work (Stoker, 2005); code addresses rules of communication with the client, relationships with co-workers, relations with the outside world, performing one's functions and responsibilities, and responsibilities of keeping the jobsite (Kavtryeva, 1997). | Codes should have rationale behind them so that employees could decide how to act in the situation not described in the code. | Internal document. | The number of failures to follow the rules can be punished by penalties. |
| 5. | Tool for consistency: without ethics code there is no policy, and different decisions might be made in the similar situations (Boeyink, 1994). | The body of practical knowledge (organizational wisdom) gathered over the years of work of experienced staff (Kavtryeva, 1997). | Codes should have a rationale to help journalists to act better in situations that don't quite match the example (Boeyink, 1994). | Internal document available to all staff. | Number of inconsistencies spotted by all staff of the medium. |

Table 1
(Continued)

| | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|---|
| 6. | <p>Education and reflection (Johannesen, 1998), and moral development of journalists (Black & Barney, 1985-86; Elliott-Boyle, 1985-86).</p> | <p>More experienced journalists contribute to the content stated as a standard-as-ideal – how the work should be done from the ethical point of view (Elliott-Boyle, 1985-86).</p> | <p>Content can be elaborated and can cover complicated issues with which only highly professional journalists deal and inexperienced journalists should strive to reach for (Black & Barney, 1985-86; Elliott-Boyle, 1985-86); the code should be more simple in wording because codes “may be useful for a young reporter entering the profession, but they are less so for a veteran journalist with years or decades of journalism experience” (Wilkins & Coleman, 2005, p. 113).</p> | <p>Internal document with the power of a guideline, or, in Johannesen’s (1998) view, it can be publishable to serve as a ground for public discussion of journalistic practices.</p> | <p>Journalists voluntarily take the responsibility to show ability to decide on how not to harm public and their profession.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Protection of business (concern about financial success and economic wealth of the medium (Wilkins & Brennen, 2004)).</p> | <p>Explanations of keys to financial success and economic wealth of the medium.</p> | <p>Short precise instructions in simple language (Kavtryeva, 1997).</p> | <p>Internal document for the entire newsroom.</p> | <p>The number of mistakes due to failure to comply with code’s provisions resulting in losses for the company are counted as penalties applied to salary.</p> |

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The matrix will be useful for application in the work of media staff in the fields of reporting, streamlining the production process, gaining audience's loyalty and organizing internal education of the staff.

Notes

1. Pritchard & Morgan (1989) study how ethics codes influence judgments of journalists and compared *Indianapolis News*, which has a stronger emphasis on conflict-of-interest part of code that was adopted by a participatory procedure, and *Indianapolis Star*, with a stronger emphasis on reporting ethics and a code that was adopted by using a top-down process.

Findings of the survey containing three hypothetical situations that required ethical decisions in conflict-of-interest area and three situations that required decisions in the sphere of ethical reporting indicate no difference in responses of both newspapers' staff. Two more studies of real-life newsrooms and their usage of ethics codes (Boeyink, 1994, and 1998) demonstrate a variety of factors that shape ethical decision making along with codes of ethics.

2. For instance, Bok (1989) says "codes of ethics function all too often as shields; their abstraction allows many to adhere to them while continuing their ordinary practices" and concludes that "codes must be but the starting point for a broad inquiry into the ethical quandaries encountered at work. (...). Methods of disciplining those who infringe the guidelines must be given teeth and enforced" (p. 246).

3. Pritchard & Morgan conclude that "[i]f there is a link between the content of newspaper ethics codes and the behavior of journalists faced with ethical decisions, the link is almost certainly indirect and mediated by a wide variety of other factors" (Pritchard & Morgan, 1989, p. 941). They name unwritten rules embedded in newsroom's culture as one of these factors. Boeyink (1998) lists three factors apart from codes of ethics that influence

decisions on ethical issues (hierarchical structures, economic constraints, and individual beliefs of editors). In his earlier study Boeyink (1994) states that “ethical guidelines are likely to be important when newsroom leadership is committed to institutional standards, when newsroom discussions of the ethics of controversial cases are encouraged, and when a culture of ethical sensitivity is fostered” (p. 902). These studies suggest that codes of ethics are not the main predictors/shapers of journalistic behavior. Perhaps the main reason for the lack of studies on effectiveness of codes is difficulties in finding the relationship between two variables because too many factors affect the dependent variable, effectiveness. Black & Barney (1985-86), for instance, list a stage of moral development of journalist as a factor that influences effectiveness of codes.

4. Vygotsky gives zone’s definition as follows: “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 86).

5. Stage 3 and 4 are stages of conventional level of moral development in Kohlberg’s theory. It’s characterized by “conformity to the expectations of society” (Coleman & Wilkins, 2002, p. 210). Black & Barney (1985-86) call Stage 3 a stage of Behavior Based on Pro-Social Motives when “codes would naturally serve as documentation of team allegiances and means of achieving team goals” (p. 33). Authors note that abstractly phrased codes do not work here. They call stage 4 a stage of Behavior Based on Rules, Law, Duty and write that journalists are likely to subdue to codes of ethics because they are more concrete “than the abstract ‘public interest’ value of the information” (p. 34).

6. Stage 5 and 6 are stages of Kohlberg’s post-conventional level of moral development where “universal principles guide moral reasoning” (Coleman & Wilkins, 2002, p. 210).

Black & Barney (1985-86) call stage 5 as one of Behavior Based on Social Conduct, Utility. At this stage, codes should suggest fulfilling Mill's Principle of Utility. They call Stage 6 a stage of Behavior Based on Universal Principles. They say that journalists' conscience and their principles are more important for them than codes of ethics on that stage. Scholars also say that people who have reached that stage are very rare.

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