MORALITY MANAGEMENT AND SITUATION ETHICS

METATHEORY AND PRACTICE

Jan Franciszek Jacko

Morality Management and Situation Ethics

This book presents the philosophical assumptions of situation ethics to show the practice of morality management that follows from them. This research comprises theoretical and applied aspects: It is an investigation into meta-ethics that encompasses strategic and quality management problems. With the example of situation ethics, the book illustrates the role of philosophical investigations and solutions in management theory and practice. It will be of interest to researchers, academics and advanced students in the fields of business and management studies, ethics, quality management and philosophy. Furthermore, this book may be useful for senior executives and politicians charged with negotiating complicated moral quandaries and overseeing the implementation of ethical policies in their organisations and communities.

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Routledge Studies in Business Ethics

Business ethics is a site of contestation, both in theory and practice. For some it serves as a salve for the worst effects of capitalism, giving businesses the means to self-regulate away from entrenched tendencies of malfeasance and exploitation. For others business ethics is a more personal matter, concerning the way that individuals can effectively wade through the moral quagmires that characterise so many dimensions of business life. Business ethics has also been conceived of as a fig leaf, designed to allow business-as-usual to continue while covering over the less savoury practices so as to create an appearance of righteousness.

Across these and other approaches, what remains critical is to ensure that the ethics of business is the subject of incisive questioning, critical research, and diverse theoretical development. It is through such scholarly inquiry that the increasingly powerful purview of corporations and business activity can be interrogated, understood and, ultimately, reformulated. This series contributes to that goal by publishing the latest research and thinking across the broad terrain that characterises business ethics.

The series welcomes contributions in areas including: corporate social responsibility; critical approaches to business ethics; ethics and corporate governance; ethics and diversity; feminist ethics; globalization and business ethics; philosophical traditions of business ethics; postcolonialism and the ethics of business; production and supply chain ethics; resistance, political activism and ethics; sustainability, environmentalism and climate change; the ethics of corporate misconduct; the politics of business ethics; and worker's rights.

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To my Mother

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Acknowledgements

Foreword

Jan Jacko offers us a new approach to the age-long debate between situation ethics and ethics of conviction. Instead of contrasting them with one another, he tries to see how they can enlighten different aspects of human morality. This new approach is enhanced through a sensible selection of the starting point and the scope of his research: morality management. This selection corresponds to a practical demand: A growing number of institutions are confronted in their everyday practice with ethical issues related to the correct and human treatment of their workers, their customers and their different stakeholders. It offers, at the same time, an interesting perspective in which different theoretical approaches are called to give practical guidance in concrete situations.

Shall we say then that Jacko's approach is eclectic and lacks internal consistency? Not at all. While reading, the similar approach of St. Thomas Aquinas came to my mind. St. Thomas is convinced that, in most cases, the moral quality of the act is determined through the circumstances and the intention of the agent. There are, however, some cases in which this is not possible. The killing of an innocent human being is one of them. In this case, an infinite moral value is lost without any possible repair. Many other human acts, whose moral characterisation is dependent on the circumstances, have the value of human life as their presuppositions. We evaluate the circumstances and the intentions of the agents from the binding point of view of their contribution to the enhancement exactly of the value of human life. In the case of its destruction, this argumentative strategy cannot be applied. Here, the ethic of conviction or the ethic of moral absolutes is not contrasted with situation ethics but is used to give situation ethics a firm foundation. We should not forget about another interesting aspect of the thought of St. Thomas. Even in cases in which the circumstances and the intention of the agent do not influence the moral qualification of the action, they still determine the level of responsibility of the agent for the action. The action remains bad in itself, but the responsibility of the agent for the action can be reduced or even excluded. There are situations in which to

do the right thing, a more than human level of virtue is required. In these cases, we admire those who do the right thing but do not condemn those who do not.

The Morality Manager operates in a human environment that possesses a culture of its own. This culture determines the horizon of the action. The Morality Manager must take this horizon into account. She will assume that the starting process in the formulation of the norm of the case is the convictions that are present and deeply rooted in that particular human community. This conviction can coincide with the principles of rational morality but may also diverge from them. What shall we do in the latter case? It is not easy to find an appropriate answer to this question. One possible answer is as follows: (Lat.) *fiat justitia pereat mundus* (justice be done even at the cost of the destruction of the world). This cannot be, however, the position of a responsible Morality Manager. One of the values she is supposed to preserve is the unity and the capacity of functioning of the human community over whose morality she is called to supervise. To affirm a value that the people are not able to recognise in their cultural and existential situation breaks the functional solidarity of the group without any enhancement of the value considered. The Morality Manager cannot, however, take the opposite stand and identify herself so much with the prejudices of her environment that she gives up the possibility of correcting them. She has rather the task of finding a path leading to the recognition of truth that has its starting point within the cultural and existential situation of her human community. The task, of course, is not easy and requires time and patience. Her endeavours may fail to produce the desired outcomes, and one may feel compelled to do something she considers to be evil. In this case, the only way out is to resign.

The situation ethic lacks a metaethical foundation, or rather, its metaethical foundation seems inadequate. This foundation is identified with love. Nevertheless, what is the proper meaning we attribute to this word: love? A possible determination of love is the well-being of the persons and/or institutions entrusted to our care. A Morality Manager is not usually responsible for the whole of mankind. She is responsible for the common good of a given community. This includes the structural laws that allow to exist and to persist in being.[1] We presuppose that the existence and persistence of the community entrusted to our care is good. Good are, therefore, the actions and the habits that guarantee its persistence in being.

Love is so determined as what is due to being. The Morality Manager must guarantee persistence in being of the community she is responsible for, but her responsibility does not end there. She must take care of respecting the dignity of each one of the persons that constitute the community. We could call this duty "principle of inclusion." Suppose the performance of the societal functions is guaranteed at the price of the violation of the dignity

of some persons, for instance, through their enslavement or their systematic humiliation. In that case, the persistence of the institution as a human society is not really guaranteed. The institution is healthy if, and only if, all the stakeholders find their proper satisfaction: the workers, the managers, the providers of capital and services, the customers, and the local community. All these stakeholders have legitimate interests and rights, and the first right, closely connected with and reflected in the others, is the right to the respect of their dignity or (in an equivalent formulation) the right to finding the proper fulfilment of their humanity in the participation to the life of the institution. The responsibility of the Morality Manager is therefore not only limited to the enforcement of the structural rules that allow for the persistence in being of the institution but also to the rules that make the institution a "home" for the stakeholders who in participating do not forfeit their dignity and their humanity but rather see it enhanced. A third level of the responsibility of the Morality Manager regards the cooperation with her institution, for which she is responsible (with other institutions) for caring for the common good of the whole human commonwealth. The more general the responsibility is, the more abstract and independent from particular circumstances the rules must be. When we come closer to individual action, specific circumstances become more important for decision-making. They may diminish or even cancel the responsibility of the individual for the action, or they make it unadvisable to retain strict enforcement of the rules. The Morality Manager who stands nearer to the particular action makes the law of the case on the basis of the principles stated at a higher level. At a higher level, the principles are established not only on the basis of the particular experience but also (and in a certain sense foremost) on the basis of a priori laws that manifest themselves in the human mind. Consequently, one should anchor the first principle not just to love but to human existence. Love and being are strictly connected: In love, we see the preciousness of being, and the preciousness of being is the adequate justification for love.

I wish now to say a few words on another issue that is not explicitly thematised in this magnificent work of Jan Jacko but is, however, present under the radar in many of his arguments. It is the theme of engagement in the particular form that is present in the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre. According to him, freedom is intended as the capacity to decide without any constraints and against all constraints independently. This freedom seems to be unborn and inborn and enters into the sphere of perception of other human beings chiefly as liberation. It engages itself in reality, but this engagement does not seem to be dependent on any conditions or situation. This freedom also seems to be independent of being. A few centuries before Sartre, Shakespeare had formulated the dilemma of this freedom in the Monologue of Hamlet: *to be or not to be*. Here, *not to be* seems to be an alternative of equal value to being. This kind of absolute (abstract) freedom has a long history in French philosophy. The

capacity to choose nonbeing seems to be the ultimate root of freedom. We find this, for instance, in the story of the philosophical suicide of Jules Lequier.

If we follow the logic of the argument of Jan Jacko, we see that the engagement of freedom with the world is not devoid of presuppositions.[2] Namely, we are always situated in being, and we take a stand in front of and within a situation that precedes us. We are born from a mother and with the contribution of a father. We exist in a system of social cooperation without which or out of which we could not act and survive. Morality Manager presupposes this state of affairs. Morality presupposes the insertion of the individual within society. This does not mean, however, that the question of the decision between being and not being and of the material content of the act of self-engagement is devoid of philosophical interest. It pertains, however, to another domain of philosophy: not to morality management but to the foundations of morals or pure ethics if we distinguish ethics as an a priori science from morality management as the science that regulates the concrete and particular exercise of the moral choices in a given historical context. Perhaps this issue will be dealt with in the next book by Jan Jacko.

Rocco Buttiglione

Notes

1 This argumentative strategy presupposes being as a value but the restrictive paradigm of morality it adopts (morality as the normative system that allows an institution or a community to exist and to flourish) makes it unnecessary to take into account the objection of David Hume that from an "is" statement no "ought" statement can be derived. An interesting answer to Hume's problem can however be derived from Dietrich von Hildebrand's discovery of the "value response": the ought statement is not derived from the is statement but is phenomenologically given together with the is statement in the immediate human experience. We never experiment beings as neutral. The neutrality is an effect of the abstraction. Beings are immediately charged with a value perception.

2 This remark does not oppose the requirement of unbiased approach that the German idealistic philosophy called *Voraussetzungslösigkeit*.

Introduction

Morality management and *managing morality* do not have any canonical definition yet. In this book, these terms (abbreviated as "MM") mean the purposeful shaping (preserving or changing) of people's moral preferences (see Section 12). Applied sciences have rapidly accumulated growing information on this practice. This descriptive and *know-how* knowledge is increasingly asymmetric towards the awareness of MM goals. The normative question remains problematic as it was in ancient times. One way of framing this question is as follows: *Which value preferences should be promoted and supported in the process of MM?* Its answer is more pressing than ever due to the recent development of AI, big data technologies and electronic communication media, which provide unprecedented and unprecedentedly effective social engineering tools to manage human preferences. This study addresses this question in the context of situation ethics (situationism), a philosophical concept that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s of the 20th century.

Although *situation ethics* is not a popular term today, the situationist approach to MM is still interesting because it addresses people's moral knowledge limits, which our generation faces. Namely, the sciences and technology provide effective tools for managing morality without providing answers to the above question. Without an answer, these instruments are as useless and risky as medicines without knowledge of the ailments they can cure and their side effects. The situation of MM is dramatic when people do something they do not fully understand, and there is something very important to lose or gain. However, as situationists (proponents of situation ethics) show, this situation is not tragic because there are analytical and phenomenological methods of philosophy to investigate and *weigh* normative assumptions that specify the directions of MM. These premises specify the nature of goods or values and their hierarchy.

Situation ethics does not offer a simple answer to the above question. They propose a methodology to set MM goals by investigating the rationale for divergent and competing normative assumptions and accounting for

the relevant circumstances for action. This approach may be a novelty in this management research, which marginalises philosophical theory behind solutions.

Situationists do not use the term *morality management* or *managing morality*. However, these thinkers thematise the ideas and practices of MM by showing how they emerge from philosophical (ontological, epistemological and normative) premises.[1]

Situation ethics proposes the MM method, which commences with a philosophical exploration of normative premises. According to situationists, such philosophical investigation is the most secure point of departure for establishing MM goals. Without this foundation, they might be randomly selected or blindfolded according to stereotypes or arbitrary wishes. Philosophical methods cannot present proof, but they can enable agents to *weigh* the rationale for various options and make rational choices about normative assumptions.

Situation ethics shows how *know-how* questions presume logically prior *know-why* answers. Situationists discuss normative assumptions that explain and determine solutions to moral problems. In this way, situationism pertains to the metaethics of ethical approaches. This ethics proposes a method to select normative assumptions for practice. Situationists do not prejudice what MM practices are right or wrong. However, situation ethics demands that they be consistent with the agent's intentions and best available knowledge.

Situationists require that people who manage morality (morality managers) investigate their normative premises. Without this investigation, these managers risk that their action destroys what they want or should attain. Situationists warn that failing to examine the normative rationale behind actions renders such actions highly risky, potentially ineffective or inefficient.

As situationists have shown, implicit normative assumptions may determine the practical meaning of moral norms, rules and postulates. Situationists demand that MM's ideas and doctrines disclose their normative assumptions. Suppose they are hidden behind the nice wrapping of political advertisements. In that case, the MM process may take the form of manipulation, in which the nice-sounding MM postulates have a different meaning in practice than in how they are presented.

Situationists identify the normative assumptions of various MM theories and practices to present discrepancies between their premises and outcomes. These thinkers require MM practices consistent with their assumptions, which may be explicit or implicit in MM's actions, strategies and tactics. When a practice differs from its premises, one should change the practice or modify the premises to make them compatible with the practice, as situationists suggest.

Consequently, the situationist approach to MM focuses on relationships between normative assumptions and MM's practices. These relationships are both logical and practical. From a logical perspective, situation ethics show mutual logical inferences between the assumptions and divergent codes of moral conduct. Its applied (practical) concerns involve how normative assumptions programme the directions and methods of the MM.

Situation ethics focuses on peculiar metaethical *know-why* issues related to selecting normative assumptions concerning the capacity to explain data and solve problems. It primarily concerns managing thoughts and ideas that programme the goals and practices of the MM. This investigation aspect is relatively rare in the literature; however, as situationists show, it is necessary because ethical theories without metaethical investigation are uncritical and groundless.

1   Goals and Methods

This study presents and discusses the situationist approach to MM. Consequently, the metatheories of MM and their relationships with MM are central to this investigation. It is a conceptual and primarily metaethical enquiry.[2]

The aims of this study are theoretical and practical (applied). The theoretical aim is to present normative assumptions of divergent metatheories of MM according to situation ethics. In this respect, the book is philosophical. It addresses the philosophical problems of MM. The applied goal is to demonstrate the possibilities of applying situation ethics in MM and the risks associated with it.

Abductive reasoning (from conclusions to premises) led to the theoretical goal of this study. This investigation began with the projects of morality and the practices of MM according to legalism, antinomianism and situationism to arrive at their most fundamental normative premises.

The analytical methods and deductive reasoning led towards the applied goal of this study, highlighting the practical implications of the normative premises. When discussing their impact on practice, this investigation aligns with a phenomenological method to show how they shape the intentions and attitudes of agents who adopt these premises. Consequently, the applied aim is to present the role of normative assumptions in the practice of MM. This study addresses business and management ethics, strategic management and quality concerns by demonstrating how normative assumptions affect MM. However, the applied problems, case studies and historical examples play only illustrative roles in investigating situationism. This monograph marginally deals with typical issues of business and management ethics handbooks, such as questions about equality, discrimination

or workplace safety issues because this book is not about applied ethics. It is a study in the metaethics of MM.

This book consists of the following seven chapters: Chapter I describes the methodology and defines the key concepts of the study. Chapter II presents the situationist typology of MM projects. Chapter III shows the situationist typology of MM metatheories and their normative assumptions. Chapter IV presents the situationist typology of MM tactics. This study adopted a critical approach to situation ethics. After demonstrating its advantages, this book provides a thorough risk critique of the situationism method in Chapters V and VI. Chapter V presents ambiguities in situation ethics and the metaethical questions that situationists raise without answering. The hazards of these ambiguities are presented in Chapter VI. Chapter VII offers solutions that situation ethics suggests but does not make explicit. These conclusions provide further perspectives for investigating metaethics in MM, which conclusions embrace.

This study is the first instalment of a trilogy on MM. Two more sequels are planned: one will present the philosophical investigation of situation ethics, and the other will present the full spectrum of MM metatheories, extending beyond the typology offered by situation ethics.

2   The Problem: Morality Management Paradox

Situationists highlight the paradox,[3] which is a practical contradiction between respect for moral duties and an attempt to modify them. It occurs in the process of MM, when people intend to change morality morally. This intention is paradoxical because if one wants to change moral duties, one cannot respect them; by modifying them, one acts against them. This practical contradiction is the *MM paradox*. Situationists present it with examples of legalism and antinomianism without naming this practical contradiction a *paradox*.

As situationists have shown, according to legalism, a moral code (a set of moral norms and rules) specifies moral duties. From this perspective, changing moral norms and rules aims to create something impossible and immoral. This is impossible because, according to legalism, no human preference can alter moral duties. Each attempt to alter moral norms and rules is immoral because it denies moral duties. Therefore, according to legalism, someone respecting moral duties should respect moral standards rather than question them (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 26–37, Section 16).

As situationists suggest, the position of legalism is itself paradoxical (against common sense) when actions accordant to some moral code contradict moral duty – when they harm people or generate injustice. As situationists notice, these situations expose the agent to a moral duty to disrespect, abandon or redesign the code (Fletcher, 1966b; Robinson, 1963).

Antinomians (proponents of antinomianism) offer a solution to MM paradox by assuming radical normative relativism in metaethics and a distinction between private and public morality (see Section 17). From this perspective, private morality is a source of moral duties. This consists of individuals' moral preferences. Public morality is a code of moral conduct imposed on individuals. In this view, public morality does not specify moral duties. This position sets the goal of the MM as managing public morality according to the private morality of morality managers.

As Fletcher shows, the antinomian solution is also against common sense (paradoxical), given the broad consensus that managerial decisions, including acts of MM, require some moral justification beyond the perspective of private value preferences. Consequently, agents (who manage morality) should respect some moral norms and rules (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 22–26). Therefore, by solving the MM paradox, antinomianism generates another paradox, which states that there must be nothing morally wrong when people impose their private morality on others—for instance, when malevolent people, according to their private value preferences, introduce socially destructive ideas into public morality.

Situationists solve the MM paradox by suggesting a distinction between normative and descriptive morality (see Section 11.1). Normative morality comprises the moral principle of love and its requirements, which are moral duties. Descriptive morality is people's moral preferences and codes of moral conduct based on these preferences. According to situation ethics, the goal of MM is to accommodate descriptive morality to meet the requirements of normative morality.

3   The Subject Matter and Its State of Research

The subject matter of this study comprised several aspects. It is about the situationist approach to MM, and the normative assumptions of MM. This study also addresses the paradox of MM that situation ethics pinpoints. Consequently, this object is fourfold: situation ethics, the MM, its normative assumptions and the MM paradox.

3.1   *Situation Ethics*

In this study, the terms *situationism* and *situation ethics* are synonymous.[4] They refer to the stream of ethics and its ideas, which became popular after World War II. One should distinguish the movement of situation ethics from its ideas, which was an intellectual rebellion in the 1960s and the 1970s against laws, institutions and controls. This uprising was expressed in philosophical and theological writings and literary works that presented the experience of feeling lost in the world of the

legal structures of the state and religious communities. However, these writings have not yet been composed of theories. In the 1950s and the 1960s, situation ethics sparked a wave of criticism. In response, situationists refined their primary ideas. They offered a theory known today as situation ethics (Cox, 1968; Dimmock & Fisher, 2017, pp. 79–89; Ebikaboere, 2012; Gustafson, 1965, pp. 171–172; McCormick, 1982, pp. 74–77; Poppi, 1957, pp. 26–56; Rosik, 1986). This theory is the subject matter of this study.

Richard McCormick and James M. Gustafson consider three thinkers to be the most representative of situation ethics Joseph F. Fletcher, Douglas A. Rhymes and John A. Robinson (Gustafson, 1965, p. 172; McCormick, 1966, pp. 612–613; McCormick, 1982, pp. 74–75). When relating to situationists in this book, these thinkers' ideas are the main point of reference. However, this book also discusses the thoughts of other situationists, such as Paul Lehmann and Paul Ramsey.[5]

There is no claim of coherence among situationist conceptions. Their positions differ at certain points and evolve accordingly. Nevertheless, these thinkers share common ideas that define situation ethics. For instance, situationists criticise ethical legalism; warn against radical relativism in ethics; stress the individuality and uniqueness of each person, situation and moral duty; demand that moral agents follow the principle of love; pay more attention to human needs than to any law[6]; and base decisions on a sincere recognition of concrete situations and circumstances.

In his book *Situation Ethics* (1966b), Fletcher outlined the common philosophical background of these ideas through *four presuppositions* (pragmatism, relativism, positivism, and personalism). His formula of these assumptions is considered "the clearest statement of situation ethics" (Lutzer, 1972, p. 16), and the literature on situationism identifies the theory of situation ethics by these premises (Daniel, 2009; Dimmock & Fisher, 2017, pp. 79–89; Ebikaboere, 2012). This study follows this suggestion and presents a situationist metatheory based on these four presuppositions.

Critical studies formulated five canonical arguments against situation ethics: it (a) is ambiguous (Connery, 1954; Dimmock & Fisher, 2017, pp. 79–89; Hildebrand & Hildebrand, 1966; Lutzer, 1972), (b) does not sufficiently specify the principle of love to make it applicable to practice (Childress, 1992; Daniel, 2009; De George, 1986, p. 428; DeMartino Swyhart, 1979; Dimmock & Fisher, 2017, pp. 79–89; McCormick, 1966, 1982; Styczeń, 1973), (c) is self-contradictory, (d) is inadequate to moral experience and (e) is risky in practice (Hildebrand & Hildebrand, 1966; Styczeń, 1973). Some authors discreetly defend situation ethics against the accusations mentioned above by demonstrating its possible refinement by combining it with broader theories of

philosophy (Childress, 1992; Doris, 1998; Harris, 2002; Price, 1985), theology (Ebikaboere, 2012; Tuttle, 2002), psychology (Stoudenmire, 1976, p. 299) and virtue ethics (Harris, 2002, 2002; Kamtekar, 2004a; Merritt, 2000).

After the 1980s, debates on situation ethics gradually ceased. However, extensive literature exists on the application and impact of situation ethics on modern theories and practices. Besides the publications of situationists, few systematic monographs are dedicated to situation ethics (Ebikaboere, 2012; Hildebrand & Hildebrand, 1966; Lutzer, 1972; Pieniążek, 2008; Rosik, 1986). Many studies have reviewed the publications of situationists (Bantjes, 1980; Barnard, 1980; Bass, 1955; Cory, 1975; Davis, 1980; Elkind, 1971; Foster, 1955; Gurak, 1975; Kirkendall, 1974; Kolbe, 1968; Milosh & Littell, 1973; Shryock, 1955; Smith, 1967; Swyhart, 1980; Westberg, 1955; Zetterberg, 1956).

Although the historical stream of situationism belongs to the past, and the name of *situation ethics* is neither well known nor do its proponents dominate contemporary ethics, many publications show that the ideas of situation ethics are alive in contemporary times. For example, some management concepts incorporate situationist decision-making methods (Harris, 2002). Some empirical management investigations follow the situationist distinction between antinomian, legalist and situationist decision-making methods (Gillmore & Hunter, 1974). Thinkers present applications of situation ethics in management (Barnett, Bass, & Brown, 1994; Brigley, 1995; Forsyth, 1992; Gillmore & Hunter, 1974; Ramsey, Marshall, Johnston, & Deeter-Schmelz, 2007; Tansey, Brown, Hyman & Dawson, 1994), managing crises of values (Frederick, 1982, p. 96), moral education of professionals (Brady, 1999, pp. 313–314), and counselling (Houts, 1974). Some publications have presented the impact of situation ethics on contemporary bioethics (Childress, 1992; Daly, 1987; Houts, 1974; Jonsen et al., 1993; Koop, 1990; Monday, Esq, & Pearce, 2018; Shelton, 1978; Smith, 1967, 2020), moral theology (Szostek, 1989), the ethics of law (Pieniążek, 2008; Shelton, 1978) and administrative (Laverty, 1989, pp. 377–378) or management ethics (Merritt, 2000; Upton, 2009).

Although situation ethics includes a thorough analysis of MM, situationists do not name this process. It remains nameless and, therefore, is implicit in their texts. This is probably why the MM's situationist idea goes unnoticed in the literature on situationism. Although some authors have indicated the impact of situationism on morality (Connery, 1954; Dimmock & Fisher, 2017, pp. 79–89; Hildebrand & Hildebrand, 1966; Lutzer, 1972), no study has presented the situationist approach to MM. This monograph aims to fill this gap in research on situationism.

As Section 3.2 shows newer and more refined conceptions of MM exist. However, the situationist concept of MM is worth investigating for several reasons.

a Situation ethics investigates the spectrum of normative assumptions that specify MM's various projects and tactics. This metaethical approach is still unique to the managerial literature.
b Situationists ground their idea of MM in philosophical investigations, which is rare in the subject-related literature on MM. Most approaches to MM concentrate on its practice and only marginally discuss the rationale for its philosophical assumptions behind the practice.
c Situationists show how philosophical theories are instruments of MM. Situation ethics offers an exciting idea for MM through philosophising.
d Situationism exemplifies the peculiar luck of some ideas that become influential despite their ambiguities and contradictions. This luck warrants further investigation.
e Finally, situation ethics thematises the MM paradox (see Section 2). This topic appears to be under-researched or possibly unexplored, although it is not definitive that no studies exist.

Situation ethics emerged in the context of theological disputes in Christianity. However, Ramsey (following the recommendations of William K. Frankena) summarises the Christian influence on situation ethics with the sole normative assumption that love is the intrinsic value (Ramsey, 1967, pp. 1–3). For Fletcher, the position of agapism is a philosophical theory independent of any theological or religious context (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 14–15, 154-159). Accordingly, this study focuses on the philosophical contents of situation ethics without diminishing the importance of situationists' theological problems and religious inspirations.

3.2 *Morality Management*

Until now, the idea of MM has evolved over centuries under divergent names. For example, Niccolò Machiavelli outlined the idea of moral education in his conception of effective governance, in which agents with power (kings and princes) manage their subjects' preferences using persuasion or coercion (Benner, 2009; Cosans & Reina, 2018). Friedrich Nietzsche (1989) revisited this idea in his conception of master-slave dependencies. Marxist theories demonstrate economic mechanisms that explain how social *classes* can shape people's moral preferences through ideology to achieve political or economic goals (John Morgan, 2005; Rengger, 2008). Modern authors unanimously emphasise changes in organisational morality and warn against leaving this process out of investigation (Goodpaster & Matthews, 1982; McMahon, 1981; Sridhar & Camburn, 1993).

Approaches to MM focus on descriptions, applications, explanations and evaluations. Descriptive studies present the practices of MM in states (Chakraborty, 2009; Henricson, 2016, pp. 95–112) and other organisations (Kucharski, 2016; Maclagan, 1998, pp. 137–185; Rossouw & Vuuren, 2003; Ruiz Palomino et al., 2011). Applied psychology and sociology offer numerous tools to shape value preferences of people (Cialdini, 2007; Coons & Weber, 2014; Leary, 2022). Explanatory studies elaborate on the mechanisms of the MM. For example, Michel Foucault showed a mutual interdependence between power and knowledge. He showed that those who control knowledge can exert power, including shaping societal norms, ethics and morals. Herbert Marcuse's critical theory explores how technology and social systems shape and limit human value preferences. Cass R. Sunstein's work on behavioural economics examines how governments and institutions can influence decision-making and societal preferences without coercion (Sunstein, 2016, 2020). Yuval Noah Harari investigates the impact of technology and social engineering on human values and ethics (Harari, 2016, 2018). Explanatory studies observe tensions between private and public morality and question the preferences that should be privileged in the MM process (George, 2000; Hendry, 2004; Medina, 2010; Svara, 2015; Swanson, 1992).

Normative approaches set goals for MM and evaluate their practices. For example, Robert P. George maintained that organisations should introduce respect for moral principles into public morality. In his opinion, they should play a legitimate role in preserving the *moral ecology* of the cultural environment in which people make morally significant choices (George, 1995). Plato, Aristotle, and some representatives of virtue ethics suggest that the main goal of MM is to shape virtues (MacIntyre, 2007). Ethical utilitarianism presents this goal in the utilitarian optimisation principle of the greatest possible good. Various approaches suggest MM (without using the term *morality management*) as a *remedy* against egoism, distrust and irresponsibility, which can reduce the inefficiency of an organisation's performance (Bugdol, 2013; Maclagan, 1998) or burnout (Schaufeli, Maslach, & Tadeusz Marek, 1996).

Some normative studies on MM are critical. For example, moral paternalism[7] has recently faced intense discussion (Begon, 2016; Groll, 2012; Salvat, 2008). Barak Medina and Eyal Zamir criticise *legal paternalism* in MM, which limits individuals' autonomy in deciding moral preferences (Zamir & Medina, 2010). The authors seek a compromise between paternalism and freedom. Medina argues that MM decisions should promote common-sense morality (Medina, 2010, pp. 77–78). Luciano Floridi proposes the tactics of *tolerant paternalism* in MM, which protects some principal social values "while still safeguarding toleration and respect for individual preferences, including the desire not to be implicitly forced into a position and fostering the development of a more critical understanding of one's own choices"

(Floridi, 2016). However, some thinkers such as Joseph B. Tamney have shown the risk of overvaluing private liberty in the practice of MM (Tamney, 2005). Reviews on paternalism study show its practice variants balance respect for human freedom and the well-being of societies in the process of MM (Begon, 2016; Floridi, 2016; Groll, 2012; Hanna, 2015; Salvat, 2008).

Some thinkers in fictional texts warn against paternalism and social engineering and depict their risks. For example, in *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley explored the themes of social engineering, dystopian societies and manipulating human values and behaviours through technology and conditioning. George Orwell's novel *1984* explores the dangers of totalitarianism, censorship, and information manipulation, highlighting the moral and ethical concerns associated with social control. In the fictional work *Walden Two* (1948), Burrhus Frederic Skinner wrote about behaviourism and operant conditioning, which have implications for understanding how society influences and manipulates behaviour.

In the normative approach to MM, one can distinguish between traditionalist, evolutionary and revolutionary tendencies. Traditional MM aims to protect traditional value systems. Evolutionary MM aims to refine moral standards and improve human actions according to widely accepted moral principles (Bernthal, 1962; Freeman, Gilbert & Hartman, 1988; Freeman et al., 1988; Ruiz Palomino et al., 2011). Such approaches may obtain the names *moral management* (Carroll, 2001; Carroll & Meeks, 2002), *value-based management* (Anderson, 1997; Ruiz Palomino et al., 2011) and *value management* (Freeman et al., 1988; Ruiz Palomino et al., 2011; Stoker, 2006).

MM's revolutionary practices question moral traditions and promote alternative moral preference systems. Revolutionary approaches may propose redefinitions of moral standards on an economic basis, in the flux of ideological battles, or by meticulously using the *know-how* knowledge to manipulate social and cultural factors that determine moral standards (Blackburn, 2008; Gutting & Oksala, 2019).

Some interpreters maintain that situation ethics is a revolutionary approach to MM (Melhaven & Casey, 1967, p. 213). However, situationists disagree with this interpretation and emphasise that their approach is evolutionary and aims to improve moral standards of decision-making (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 26–40).

3.3   *Normative Assumptions*

This study makes the distinction between value preferences and normative assumptions. Value preferences are (volitional or emotional, conscious or subconscious, intentional or unintentional) acts of and inclinations towards valuing (appreciating, preferring) something more than something else (the concept of value preferences is further presented in Section 12.1).

Normative assumptions are ideas that conceptualise and explain value preferences by defining what should exist and why it is precious. If these premises are philosophical, they specify the nature and hierarchy of goods or values. These assumptions play the role of explanatory hypotheses named *assumptions* because they do not have scientific proof. Nevertheless, as Section 39 argues, they can be validated by philosophical methods and selected rationally using sources of knowledge (Reed, 2022; Stanley, 2008; Vollet, 2022).

Normative assumptions can conceptualise existing or expected value preferences (for an individual or group). In the latter case, these premises specify a morality project. This project involves a pattern of expected (right, good and moral) value preferences. For example, organisations can manage the value preferences of their members by setting normative assumptions in their *mission*, *vision*, or *ethical codex* to promote the expected organisational culture (Cunningham & Quidt, 2016; Segnestam Larsson & Brandsen, 2016).

Normative premises are the basis of moral and ethical frameworks, public policy suggestions and research methodology requirements. These premises are presumptive ideas or values that support prescriptive judgements. They frequently go unnoticed or unacknowledged but greatly affect how we perceive the world, make choices and behave.

Normative premises may be implicit in theory when they are followed without formulation. The idea of implicit normative assumption is an explanatory hypothesis to suppose and explain the motives for actions that are against the agent's explicit preferences. For example, this concept provides a clue to explain some cases of discrepancy in innovation management when decisions contradict the declared hierarchy of values (Cunningham & Quidt, 2016; Ogunnaike, Dunham, & Banaji, 2010; Segnestam Larsson & Brandsen, 2016).

Today, the literature on management and politics shows how normative premises determine the direction of economic and political decisions (MacRae, 1973) and research (Currie, 1980; MacRae, 1973; Segnestam Larsson & Brandsen, 2016). However, studies have presented normative assumptions in fields other than MM (Currie, 1980; Jacko, 2018a; Luce & Raiffa, 1989; Maclagan, 1998; Segnestam Larsson & Brandsen, 2016) and on the fringes of managerial investigations (Ciulla, 2003; Weber, 2002).

Notes

1 Philosophical assumptions are ontological, epistemological and normative. Ontological assumptions are concerned with the nature of existence and the structure of reality 1964. Epistemological premises determine the sources, limits and methods to gather reliable knowledge. Normative assumptions specify the nature of goods (values) and their hierarchy.

2 In this study, the term *metatheory* means "a theory the subject matter of which is another theory" ("Metatheory" *Britannica*), and the term *metaethics* means a metatheory of an ethical theory. It is a stipulative convention because there are various conceptions of metatheory (Williamson, 2018) and metaethics (DeLapp, n.d.).

   Theories and metatheories have dynamic (functional) and static (structural) aspects. In the dynamic aspect, the metatheory is some research activity. It is "an investigation, analysis, or description of the theory itself" ("Metatheory" *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*). In the static (structural) aspect, metatheories are a logically ordered set of theorems. In this respect, metatheory "… can be seen as the philosophy behind the theory, the fundamental set of ideas about how phenomena of interest in a particular field should be thought about and researched" (Bates, 2005, p. 2).

   Metaethics is a metatheory of ethics, encompassing both theories and systems of value preferences. In its dynamic dimension, metaethics means conducting a metaethical investigation, which is "… the attempt to understand the metaphysical, epistemological, semantic, and psychological presuppositions and commitments of moral thought, talk, and practice" (Sayre-McCord, 2014). In the static aspect, metaethics consists of the philosophical premises of an ethical theory. These assumptions can be ontological, epistemological or normative (see Endnote 1).

3 The word "paradox" literally means "beyond belief" (Gr. παράδοξο). It is an "apparently sound argument yielding either a contradiction or a prima facie absurdity" (Colman, 2015). Paradoxical assertions or decisions contradict common sense (sensory or prima facie evidence), are self-contradictory, or lead to conclusions that contradict common sense.

   The contradictions may be logical or practical. Logical contradictions violate the principle of the excluded middle. Directives of action (postulates, norms and rules) contain practical contradictions when they are counterproductive – when respecting them makes it impossible to act according to them (Galvin, 2013; Horn, 2018).

4 Situation ethics has other names such as "ethical situationism," "contextualism" (Gustafson, 1965, p. 1973), "ethical existentialism," "ethical actualism," "ethical individualism," "morality according to situations," "contextual ethics," (Ford & Kelly, G, 1958, p. 104) "circumstantial ethics" (Mattei, 2017) "contextualism," "occasionalism," circumstantialism," "actualism" and "new morality" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 29).

5 James Gustafson proposes a longer list of leading situationists: "Paul Lehmann, Alexander Miller, Joseph Sittler, H. R. Niebuhr, Albert Rasmussen, Joseph Fletcher, Gordon Kaufman, Charles, C. West, and the author [James Gustafson]" (Gustafson, 1965, p. 172).

6 By the term *law*, situationists mean a code of conduct.

7 Paternalism is a practice or policy wherein an authority restricts the freedom and responsibilities of individuals or groups, ostensibly to promote the well-being of individuals or society, even if imposed against their will.

I Preliminary Concepts

4 Metaphysical Realism versus Subjectivism in Metaethics

Metaphysical realism and subjectivism in metaethics are counter-assumptions regarding the existence of moral duties, goods and values. In metaethics, supporters of **metaphysical realism (objectivism, absolutism)** maintain that moral values are extra-subjective properties of reality (Campbell, 2015; Sayre-McCord, 2011). They constitute *moral facts* that are either "natural (objects that are knowable only through experience), non-natural (but not supernatural), or theological (or supernatural)" (Campbell, 2015).

According to the counter-assumption of **metaphysical subjectivism (anti-realism) in metaethics**, moral values and duties belong only to human perception (Kim, 2006; Sayre-McCord, 2011). They are *predicates* (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 60–62) – purely intentional objects that exist under the power of human acts.[1] According to this stance, "moral predicates are not possessed by actions or actors in the absence of people who pass judgments upon them or respond to them with feelings such as admiration, love, approval, detestation, hate or disapproval" (Harrison, 1967, p. 78). In this view, human acts *create* moral values by intending to or perceiving them as something worth respecting or attaining. I use the term *create* in italics because it means forming purely intentional objects (which are nothing real). In this view, these acts can be decisions (according to **metaphysical decisionism in metaethics**) or emotions (from the perspective of **metaphysical emotionalism in metaethics**).

5 Epistemological Realism versus Subjectivism in Metaethics

Epistemological realism and subjectivism in metaethics are assumptions about the sources of moral knowledge of moral values and duties. According to **epistemological realism in metaethics**, they are perceivable by human reason (**epistemological rationalism**), emotions (**epistemological**

emotionalism) and moral intuition (in the view of **ethical intuitionism**) (Campbell, 2015). For example, Plato and Aristotle maintain the rationalist position that human reason can know moral goods and duties. Max Scheler states that emotions mediate human knowledge of moral values. In the view of intuitionism, "basic moral propositions are self-evident, that is, evident in and of themselves, and thus can be known without the need for an argument" (Stratton-Lake, 2016).

The counter position to epistemological realism is **epistemological anti-realism** (subjectivism) in metaethics. According to this stance, humans cannot possess any knowledge of moral values and duties because they either do not exist (ethical nihilism) or are not knowable (ethical agnosticism). This stance can take various forms. For example, in the view of ethical non-cognitivism, moral knowledge may concern moral emotions or decisions. From this perspective, the only object of an ethical investigation is the perceptions of moral values and duties. As Harrison puts it, "A subjectivist ethical theory is a theory according to which moral judgments about men or their actions are judgments about the way people react to these men and actions – that is, the way they think or feel about them" (Harrison, 1967b, p. 78).

The stance of epistemological subjectivism in metaethics is compatible with the metaphysical subjectivism in metaethics. In these views, moral knowledge stems from decisions (according to **epistemological decisionism in metaethics**) or emotions (from the perspective of **epistemological emotionalism in metaethics**).

The position of epistemological subjectivism may lead to the assumption of **epistemological perspectivism** in metaethics. According to this view, understanding moral values and obligations is limited by the interpretive viewpoints of individuals who observe and encounter them. There is no shared perspective on moral perceptions across individuals and groups. Consequently, moral judgements are true (in some non-classical meaning of *truth*) only from the perspective of given assumptions or moral perceptions; something may be true in one perspective and simultaneously false in another. Theories of perspectivism may presume that this perspective is unique to each person (**individual epistemological perspectivism**), the situation (**situational epistemological perspectivism**) or some groups of people (**group epistemological perspectivism**) (Dancy, 2006; Nietzsche, 2012; Rorty, 1989, 1991).

Epistemological scepticism in metaethics adopts a moderate stance of epistemological subjectivism. This position does not deny the possibility of moral knowledge but argues that there is no dependable way to investigate the accuracy or suitability of moral judgements. This scepticism asserts that there is no way of ascertaining moral judgements' veracity or appropriateness indubitably. This stance does not inevitably result in ethical agnosticism

or nihilism (the rejection of moral standards). Conversely, it contributes to metaethics by questioning conventional perspectives on moral epistemology, underscores a methodological quandary in moral philosophy and promotes investigating alternate approaches to comprehending and discussing moral matters (Comesaña & Klein, 2019; Hume, 1739; Mackie, 1977).

6   Normative Relativism versus Normative Anti-Relativism (Absolutism) in Metaethics

Normative relativism versus anti-relativism (absolutism) stances in metaethics relate to the relationship between human acts of preference and moral values or duties. According to the assumption of **normative absolutism (anti-relativism) in metaethics** (called *normative absolutism* or *normative anti-relativism* in this book), some goods and values are precious independently of any human preference. They are referred to as *intrinsic* in theories of normative absolutism. For example, this stance is adopted by human rights defenders who believe that each person's dignity, life and freedom are intrinsic values and should be upheld by groups and cultures regardless of whether someone appreciates these values.

According to the counter-assumption of **normative relativism in metaethics**, something is of value or good because and insofar as someone (an individual, a group, an organisation) appreciates it (Brandt, 1967; Gowans, 2012; Westacott, 2012; Wreen, 2018). This stance is termed *normative relativism* in the book. In this view, human acts make something precious by appreciating it, respecting, aiming at, wanting, intending and valuing it. Consequently, moral duties are functions of human acts of appreciation, and moral judgements, norms and rules fit or are true depending on people's opinions, decisions or feelings[2] (Beauchamp, 2009; Brandt, 1967, p. 76; Campbell, 2015).

Theories of normative relativism divergently specify the acts of appreciation that give rise to value. According to normative relativist **decisionism** in metaethics, humans *posit* moral values and duties by deciding whether something is precious, willing or aimed at. According to normative relativist **emotionalism** in metaethics, something is precious when and insofar as it evokes emotions of appreciation, respect or admiration.

Theories of normative relativism differ in their answers to the question: *Whose preferences determine moral duties?* Proponents of **individualistic normative relativism in metaethics** maintain that moral duties arise from individual preferences. Theories of **social normative relativism** (cultural relativism, consensual ethics or collectivism) assume that group members' collective will (as expressed in social contracts, consensus or agreements) gives rise to moral duties (Harrison, 1967, p. 87; Tatarkiewicz, 1919, p. 22). Conceptions of **universal normative relativism** presume that some

moral duties are universal. Some thinkers support this thesis by observing common-value preferences across cultures and conflicting groups (Carchidi, 2020; Graham et al., 2012; Hauser, 2006; Kukathas, 2008; Mikhail, 2007).

A more profound version of universal relativism takes the point of departure in analysing *a priori* preconditions for intentions to show that rational acts require respecting some moral duties. For example, Kant presents this reasoning in his conception of the categorical imperative. This stance leads to normative anti-relativism in metaethics (Gowans, 2012; Hill, 2007; Tatarkiewicz, 1919, p. 22; Westacott, 2012).

Normative relativism and absolutism are not metaphysical views (although they may follow from or lead to some metaphysical stances). Consequently, in metaethics, normative relativism should be distinguished from metaphysical relativism, which refers to the relational nature of values and goods. For example, Fletcher declared metaphysical relativism in metaethics. In his view, values and duties "consist in an interaction of mind and environment" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 58). This metaphysical remark does not prejudice whether he takes the position of normative relativism or anti-relativism.

7 Normative Generalism versus Particularism in Metaethics

According to the position of **ethical particularism in metaethics**, moral duties are unique in each situation. Consequently, there are no universal moral norms and rules. This stance has significant implications in practice: "Moral particularism, at its most trenchant, is the claim that there are no defensible moral principles, that moral thought does not consist in the application of moral principles to cases, and that the morally perfect person should not be conceived as the person of principle" (Dancy, 2013).

The opposite stance is the position of **ethical generalism (universalism) in metaethics**. In this view, all or some moral duties, norms and rules are universal, or a rational agent should consider them universal. Consequently, "Ethical generalism is the view that the rationality of moral thought and judgement depends on a suitable provision of moral principles" (Dancy, 2013).

Situationists take the middle position between ethical generalism and particularism. They opt for universalism by claiming that the principle of love is universal. However, situation ethics presents particularism by postulating that the concrete moral imperative to love may be unique and irreducible to any general norms or rules.

8 Rational Decisions

In this study, the term *rational attitude*[3] means a disposition (inclination) of the agent to make rational decisions, and the word *rational agent* signifies a person who makes rational decisions or adopts a rational attitude

when making decisions. The term *rational decision* can have several meanings in this study. It can designate (a) methodologically, (b) instrumentally or (c) value-rational decisions.

8.1 Methodological Rationality

According to Tadeusz Kotarbiński, methodologically rational decisions are (x) consistent with the available knowledge, (y) motivated by rational beliefs and (z) aimed at efficient action:

(x) A methodologically rational agent (who makes rational decisions) investigates the reasons for decisions and accommodates decisions to available knowledge.[4] Consequently, methodologically rational decisions respect epistemic reasons.[5] Methodologically irrational agents (who make methodologically irrational decisions) neglect their knowledge in their decision-making. For example, they can ignore information on the risk or relevant circumstances of their actions (Kotarbiński, 1973, p. 123).

(y) The assertion of rational beliefs is symmetric to their rationale. A methodologically rational agent is more certain of better-justified beliefs and less sure of worse-justified beliefs. She abandons self-contradictory beliefs and the beliefs which contradict her knowledge. For example, she is more certain of more probable predictions than less probable ones. Decisions are methodologically irrational when they are not motivated by rational beliefs. A methodologically irrational agent can maintain beliefs regardless of their justification. For example, she can be more certain of less probable than of more probable predictions or maintain their beliefs when knowing that they are false (Bortolotti, 2010; Jacko, 2016a; Pagin, 2014).

(z) The methodologically rational agent considers all available means and chooses the means that give the best chances for effective and efficient action. They are effective when they reach their goal and efficient (economic) when effective with minimal costs (Dennis, 2012; Hey, 1993).

Weber specifies condition (z) by distinguishing two aspects of a rational decision: its instrumental and value rationality. He demonstrated that these aspects are inseparable and complementary (Callahan, 2007; Kalberg, 1980; Kim, 2007; Kronman, 1983; Oakes, 2003; Peukert, 2004; Weber, 1985, p. 565; 2002).

8.2 Instrumental Rationality

According to Weber, instrumentally rational (Ger. *zweckrational* – aim-rational) decisions adopt effective means of attaining their aims (Weber 1985, s. 565). An instrumentally rational agent chooses means that, according to her

best knowledge, will produce the desired effect (will be effective). Instrumentally rational agents must be methodologically rational because they adopt available knowledge to choose the means and predict the consequences, probability, chances and risks of their actions (Oakes, 2003, pp. 38–39).

8.3   *Value Rationality*

Weber calls decisions *value-rational* (Ger. *wertrational*) when they are coherent with agents' value preferences (Weber, 1985, s. 565). He shows that value-rational agents crystallise their value preferences into a hierarchical system of preferences and act according to this hierarchy. In this hierarchy, some values are more important than others. Value-rational decisions can sacrifice lower values to attain higher ones when necessary. Value-irrational decisions do the opposite: they sacrifice some higher value to attain a lower value or destroy values without any significant reason. Value-rational agents may differ in their preferences and hierarchies of subjective values (Kim, 2012; Kronman, 1983; Minner, 2020; Oakes, 2003; Peukert, 2004).

Jean-Paul Sartre names value rationality of decisions *authenticity*. They are consistent with the existential commitment, which is the decision to specify the value hierarchy of the agent (see Section 17.2).

Situationists specify benevolence in terms of the value rationality or authenticity of decisions. They refer to these as *self-sincerity* and *honesty*. In their view, benevolent agents admit honestly to their value systems and make decisions accordingly (Robinson, 1963).

9   Goods, Values and Their Hierarchies

Situationists interchangeably use the words *good* and *value,* meaning their subjective sense. In this meaning, they denote value preferences or something (for example, an entity, its property, aim, ideal, relation) that someone appreciates. In this terminological convention, the term *hierarchy of values* refers to a system of value preferences for a person or group (Hansson & Grüne-Yanoff, 2018). This subjective definition is compatible with the premises of metaphysical subjectivism and normative relativism in metaethics.

However, when situationists specify value of love, they adopt a position of normative absolutism and introduce an objective sense of the terms *good* and *value*. In this meaning, they denote something precious and independent of human preferences. In this context, the term *hierarchy of values* has an objective meaning and refers to the value preferences that each rational agent should adopt. This definition is compatible with normative absolutism. In this study, I use word *value* to denote subjective meaning and reserve the term *good* for contexts in which normative anti-relativism is presented.

9.1   *The Principal Good*

The hierarchy of values has some top. It is the most precious or appreciated good or value. It can be referred to as the *principal value*, *principal good*, *moral principle* or *the principle of morality*. Situationists call this (Lat.) *summum bonum* (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 31, 43, 129).

   Under the assumption of normative relativism, something becomes the principal value due to value preference. Consequently, the value hierarchy is the product of the value preferences of certain entities (individuals, groups or organisations) that most appreciate the principal good, which is at the top of this value system.

   According to theories of normative absolutism, the principal good is most precious regardless of human preference. Consequently, according to normative absolutism, there is some intersubjective hierarchy of goods, and the principal good is atop this hierarchy, which each rational agent should adopt.

   Pluralistic value concepts (e.g. Plato's metatheory or George Moore and Hastings Rashdall's ideal utilitarianism) encompass divergent types of principal goods. Monist metatheories of ethics specify one type of principal good: For instance, Aristotle (and the ethics of eudemonism initiated by him) identifies the principal good with human development, the fulfilment (eudaimonia, εὐδαιμονία in Greek) of the most precious possibilities of humans, which are capacities to understand reality and create social bonds of friendship (Brink, 2014; Crisp, 2016; Kraut, 2016). Some personalist conceptions make normative assumptions about every person's intrinsic value (dignity), which is the principal good (Williams and Bengtsson, 2016; Sen, 1990). Ethical liberalism in metaethics assumes that the principal good is the freedom of each individual (Kelly, 2005). Some of these concepts specify the principal good in terms of fundamental human rights or the requirements of justice, which specify the preconditions for respecting the principal good (Brems, 2001; Keys & Burke, 2013; Sen, 1990, 2017). Situationists assume goodwill (love) is the principal good (Fletcher, 1966a).

9.2   *Intrinsic – Extrinsic*

The terms *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* can have several meanings in metaethics (Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2015; Zimmerman, 2001, 2019):

a An *intrinsic* good or value is precious regardless of whether someone appreciates it. Value is *extrinsic* when it is precious because and insofar as someone (an individual or a group) appreciates it.
b The disjunction between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* values can specify the *locus* of these values. Intrinsic values are the properties *in* and *of* beings, and extrinsic values are *outside* the being in human perception or intention.

c The principal good is called *intrinsic*. Extrinsic values are not the principal good.
d Goods or values are *intrinsic* when a principal good cannot exist in their absence. For example, human existence is a prerequisite for freedom. Consequently, when freedom is considered a principal value, human existence is intrinsically good.
e Situations use *intrinsic* to designate value as precious in all circumstances. *Extrinsic* values are precious in some situations but not in all.
f The distinction between *intrinsic and extrinsic* can also indicate the difference between *autotelic* and *instrumental* values (see Section 9.3).

In this study, *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* have meaning (a). However, situationists can use these terms for all meanings mentioned above in divergent contexts.

9.3   Autotelic – Instrumental

According to Weber, instrumental values are appreciated because of their (utility) function – because and insofar as they are conducive to other (autotelic and instrumental) values. In contrast, autotelic (intrinsic, Ger. *Eigenwerte*) values are appreciated regardless of this function (Kim, 2012; Oakes, 2003; Weber, 1985, pp. 51, 565; Zimmerman, 2001, 2019).

Conceptions of normative absolutism and relativism differ in their idea of autotelic value. According to normative relativism, human preferences specify autotelic values. In normative absolutism, the principal good(s) and other intrinsic goods are autotelic, regardless of human preferences.

10   The Adjective *Moral*

In the normative meaning, the adjective *moral* means positive and *immoral* means negative value (anti-value) of human acts (decisions or actions). It is the positive moral value of morally good decisions or morally right actions; *immoral* designates morally bad decisions and morally wrong actions. Moral *goodness* and *badness* are qualities of decision's intention, whereas moral *rightness* and *wrongness* are qualities of action which is the outcome of the decision. In this sense, decisions and actions are *moral* when they respect and contribute to the principal good. They were considered *immoral* in this normative sense when they disrespected or destroyed it. Moral norms specify relationships between the principal good and human acts (see Section 11.2). Consequently, moral acts deserve a positive evaluation, and immoral acts deserve a negative evaluation according to moral norms.

Adjective *moral* may also have a descriptive (value-neutral) meaning, denoting something related to the moral principle (i.e., something morally

relevant). In this sense, the term *moral* is the opposite of *amoral* or *morally neutral.* For example, a physics theory is morally neutral, as it is not about a principal good. In this meaning, the adjective *moral* does not imply that its designate is moral in the normative sense. This term can refer to morally good or bad, right or wrong preferences, codes, evaluations, stereotypes, decisions, intentions, and actions. In this book, the adjective *moral* has descriptive meaning. Consequently, the term *moral preferences* in Section 12.1 means any preference that relates to the principal good. Norms, rules and codes of conduct are considered *moral* (see Section 11.2) when they are about respecting or disrespecting moral principle(s). In contrast, for example, norms and rules of praxeology or economics are morally neutral when they do not relate to the principal good.

11   Morality

This study distinguishes morality from ethics. Ethics include knowledge, reflection and the theory of morality. Morality is a subject of ethics and ethical research.

11.1   Descriptive and Normative Morality

In the literature, *descriptive morality* can encompass a wide spectrum of phenomena. It can be:

a   Moral preferences of individuals and groups.
b   Moral codes that express or outline moral preferences, as specified above.
c   The practices of evaluation according to a moral code.
d   Individual or social stereotypes (of thinking, feelings and acting) about moral principle(s), including motives for moral preferences in ideas or ideals. In this sense, descriptive morality embraces the culture of societies and the organisational culture of institutions.
e   Morally relevant decisions, intentions, actions and consequences.
f   Any direct cause or motif of moral preferences.

In this book, *morality* without adjectives means descriptive morality in the meaning in (a). The term *normative morality* denotes the normative meaning of *morality*, which means a pattern for or ideal of morality ("Morality," n.d.). It can be some moral code:

"In its normative sense, morality may be defined as a code of conduct that would be accepted by all rational people under certain idealised conditions. In simpler terms, 'morality' is the set of correct moral

principles, which, though they probably will never be universally adopted, ought to be adopted."

<div align="right">(Gert, 2012)</div>

Stances of normative relativism and absolutism divergently specify normative morality. According to normative relativism, each morality begins with some moral preferences (of individuals, groups and organisations) concerning the principal value and its requirements. In this view, there can be divergent normative moralities specified by people's moral preferences about the principal value and its requirements.

In the view of normative absolutism, principles of normative morality do not depend on human preferences. For example, according to Aristotle, normative morality comprises requirements of human eudaimonia. For St. Thomas Aquinas, normative morality comprises requirements of natural law. In the view of Kant, morality is based on a priori (i.e., independent of experience) conditions of action that are in accordance with the requirements of practical reason, and proponents of personalism may specify normative morality in terms of requirements of human dignity and fundamental human rights.

11.2   *Moral Norms, Rules and Codes*

Moral norms and rules translate the principle of morality into action language. Moral rules are directives and procedures that specify the conditions for respecting or promoting the principal good. Moral norms are criteria for evaluating acts' compliance with the moral principle. These tools are used for moral judgement.

Situationists distinguish between *general* and *universal* norms and rules. General ones have a general meaning but may have exceptions. Universal norms and rules are valid for each situation. For example, the rule *One should not still,* or the norm *Theft is morally reprehensible,* has a general meaning. However, as situationists maintain, they are not universal because they may have exceptions and may not apply to situations where stilling is morally permissible.

In this text, the term *code of moral conduct* or *moral code* refers to a system of (logically ordered sets) moral norms and rules. They specify standards for intentions, decisions, actions and evaluations. However, not every code is moral (in the descriptive meaning of *moral*). For example, the norms and rules of grammar are not moral when they do not (implicitly or explicitly) refer to moral principle(s).[6]

11.3   *Private and Public Morality*

In this study *public morality* means codes of moral conduct and value preferences imposed on society (by force, coercion, persuasion, law or police

work or social pressure), in contrast to private morality, which consists of value preferences and moral codes of individuals (Hampshire, 1978; Medina, 2010; Swanson, 1992). In this definition convention, *public morality* embraces moral standards enforced in society and applied to public life, including the media and conduct in public places (Saha, 2010, p. 35). In contrast, private morality can be defined as the moral value preferences and codes put forth by individuals in their private sphere (Hampshire, 1978; Medina, 2010).

12 Managing Moral Preferences

12.1 Moral Preferences

Preferences are intentions, decisions, emotions or mental attitudes (involving thinking, deciding and acting) that favour something over something else. Preference is the greater liking or inclination towards one alternative over another. Some preferences are between values. These are *value preferences*. Not all preferences are value preferences. For example, if the client prefers one car over another, this inclination is a preference but not a value preference. However, when she appreciates a car's safety rather than its aesthetic appeal, this concerns values and is the value preference.

Some value preferences relate to the principal good(s). In these preferences, agents decide that something is or is not at the top of their hierarchy of values or take a stance on this good by affirming its superior worth directly or indirectly. Such value preferences are called *moral* in this study. They take place, for example, when someone considers something the principal good or adheres to norms, rules or duties by believing they safeguard respect for moral principle(s).

According to a longstanding distinction in psychology, preferences can be explicit or implicit. Agents know and declare their *explicit preferences*. *Implicit preferences* guide agents' decisions; however, they are unaware of or hide their preferences. Implicit preferences are remarkable only through action. Therefore, subjective hierarchies of values can also be explicit or explicit (Cunningham & Quidt, 2016; Ogunnaike et al., 2010).

12.2 Morality Management

One can manage preferences without managing value preferences. For example, a seller reduces the price of a product to make it more attractive to customers. When consumers prefer this product, they act according to their value preferences (presuming that a lower price is better than a higher price in their value system). Therefore, price reduction manages preferences but not customer value preferences.

One can also manage preferences *via* managing value preferences. In this case, a seller can run an advertising campaign to change the buyer's value system, expecting it to motivate their purchase decisions. For example, the pharmaceutical company fosters an appreciation for health to increase sales of its products. In this case, the advertisement campaign aims to motivate people to modify their value preferences (so that they start appreciating their health).

In this study, *value management* means managing value preferences (in economic contexts, this term may have different meanings). It occurs when some actions sustain or change people's preferences about values. This process may be unintentional. For example, creators of some advertisement campaigns may not intend to affect people's value preferences, but when this effect occurs, they change. It may also happen when the effect is intended but does not occur. For example, when some advertisement is to change the value preferences but turns ineffective in attaining this goal. It is an example of ineffective value management.

Usually, it is impossible to identify intentional value management when managers do not express their intentions. However, the attributive interpretation method allows us to explain actions regarding supposed intentions.

Moral preferences are those value preferences that concern a supreme good (e.g. recognizing something as such a good, defining the conditions for respecting it, and the ways to achieve it). MM involves managing these preferences. MM is a type of value management, but not each case of value management is MM. For example, when marketing activities lead customers to appreciate the aesthetics of a car more than before, it does not necessarily qualify as MM. Managing value preferences becomes MM when imparted or intended to moral preferences. For example, an advertising campaign that seeks to evoke customers' feelings that having an attractive car contributes to their fundamental values or the principal good(s).

Across history, there have been numerous noteworthy occurrences of intended or unintended MM. For example:

- In the West, the social respect for fundamental equality and dignity of all humans was originally initiated by Christianity and fostered by social revolutions and the civil rights movements.
- The Enlightenment Era, which spanned the 17th and 18th centuries, provoked departing from some traditional value systems.
- The Industrial Revolution, which occurred throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, resulted in modifications to valuing labour and its legislation.
- The environmental movements contributed to recognising nature as an intrinsic value, reinforcing how people rank and engage with the natural world.

In many cases it may be impossible to distinguish MM from other cases of value management. However, one can suppose and investigate the impact of change in the hierarchy of values on the perception of principal value. For example:

- Cosmetic surgery: Ad campaigns, particularly those in the early stages of some treatments, sometimes gloss over potential health hazards in favour of the beauty and attractiveness of the outcomes.
- Tanning salons and sunscreen: Despite the well-known dangers of excessive UV exposure, tanning advertisements in the 1970s and the 1980s emphasised the attractiveness of bronzed skin, convincing many people to place a tanned appearance above health protection.
- Gear for extreme sports: Companies may emphasise the cooling factor of extreme sports, sometimes by marginalising necessary safety measures.

12.3 Managerial Functions

MM can be specified regarding managerial functions defined by Henri Fayol if they relate to moral preferences. These are *planning (designing)*, *organising*, *commanding (motivating)*, *coordinating* and *controlling* outcomes and processes.[7] By adopting this typology in MM, one can define it as *planning (designing)* the morality project and its implementation in terms of *organising* actions and structures, *commanding (motivating)* people to accept and follow the project, *coordinating* and *controlling* the process of project performance.

Situation ethics presents a framework for planning morality. It primarily comprises a morality design. This managerial function involves designing a morality project, which is moral preferences and the moral code the MM should foster and promote. For example, one can plan MM in education by defining the moral preferences that teaching should foster or planning MM through the media may involve deciding the moral preferences that media coverage should advertise.

In addition to morality design, morality planning can include the formulation of tactics to promote and implement morality projects. In this function, actions can be programmed, their sequence and priority established, and procedures defined. Planning morality may consist of specifying policies for respecting and promoting the code of conduct, scheduling (deciding on a time sequence for program steps) and budgeting (allocating resources) for implementing the plan.

Organising morality involves coordinating social structures, institutions and interactions between people to promote morality projects. This function allocates activities and resources.

The motivation function of MM aims to adjust the decisions and preferences of individuals and groups in the project. For example, in legislation,

penalties motivate people to respect legal order. Therefore, they play a motivational role. Controlling mortality involves checking a morality project's performance.

In this book, the people (individuals and groups) who manage morality (perform the managerial functions mentioned above) are called *morality managers*. These agents may have the formal or informal authority and power to do so. For example, formal (organisational) authorities in a company can order respect for some rules or norms, and workers are obliged to respect these orders because of their contracts with the company. Informal authorities become morality managers through their influence on people.

Morality managers can perform divergent managerial functions in the process of MM. For example, some agents may be morality designers (design morality) without performing other managerial functions, such as planning the implementation of the project and organising, commanding (motivating), coordinating and controlling the processes of project performance.

Notes

1 In this study the terms *intention*, *intentionality, existential autonomy, existential heteronomy* and purely *intentional objects* have the meaning as defined by phenomenologists. Terms *intention* and *intentionality* denote the relation between human acts and their intentional objects. Phenomenologically, intention denotes the focused orientation of the mind towards an object, regardless of whether the item is tangible or conceptual. Intentionality, a crucial principle in phenomenology, refers to the inherent structure of consciousness, indicating that all mental events are inherently oriented towards or directed at something external to themselves. Intentionality denotes that consciousness is inherently directed towards something, establishing a relational connection between the mind and the objects it is focused on. In this context, one can distinguish intentional from purely intentional objects. The intentional object is any reality or content that is the focus of mental acts. Purely intentional objects do not have independent, autonomous existence outside the mental acts that create or refer to them (Anscombe, 1957; Brentano, 1973; Husserl, 2001; Ingarden, 1983, 1989; Jacob, 2010; Meinong, 1904).

2 "Moral relativism is the view that moral judgments are true or false only relative to some particular standpoint (for instance, that of a culture or a historical period) and that no standpoint is uniquely privileged over all others" (Westacott, 2012). In this view, "moral claims contain an essential indexical element, such that the truth of any such claim requires relativisation to some individual or group" (Joyce, 2015).

3 By *attitude*, I mean an inclination to perform acts in a peculiar way. Attitudes contain emotional cognitive and behavioral factors: the emotional component is emotional reactions to the intentional object, cognitive component is thoughts and beliefs about the object and the behavioral component is the action, which is observable behavior toward the object (McGuire, 1985).

4 By *knowledge*, Kotarbiński means all the information available to the agent, which, given its justification, he or she should assign the probability to act on as if it was true (Kotarbiński, 1973, p. 123).

5 In this text, *epistemic reason* means a piece of knowledge compatible with a belief. The *compatibility* between beliefs and reasons can mean that some beliefs logically follow from judgements expressing knowledge or that these judgements do not contradict the beliefs. It is the broad meaning of *epistemic reasons*. In the strictest meaning, "Epistemic reasons are reasons for believing in a proposition through being facts which are part of a case for (belief in) its truth (call such considerations 'truth-related')" (Turri, 2009, p. 490).

6 The term *moral code* can also refer to a set of factors that impact moral preferences. In a broad sense, moral codes can mean, for example, "… moral principles... Ideals, virtues, goals, goals, and values, and at least ideally integrate all such components into a unified, workable whole, a 'way of life'. Order, structure, coordination, and integration, in other words, are important features of a moral code, as is an explanation and justification of both the content and structure of the code" (Wreen, 2018, pp. 345–246).

7 Many authors modified and enriched Fayol's typology; however, it continues to serve as a canonical point of reference in presenting managerial functions (Shinde, 2018).

II   Three Projects of Morality

13   The Project of Legalism

Legalism may have various theoretical and ideological backgrounds (Section 16 presents them). However, as Fletcher maintains, they all foster the same method of decision-making, which is as follows:

> one enters into every decision-making situation encumbered with a whole apparatus of prefabricated rules and regulations. Not just the spirit but the letter of the law reigns. Its principles, codified in rules, are not merely guidelines or maxims to illuminate the situation; they are *directors* to be followed.
>
> <div align="right">(Fletcher, 1966b, p. 16)</div>

Situationists do not make a sharp distinction between the legal and moral orders. That is why they name every code of norms and rules of conduct as *law*, regardless of whether they are legal, moral, customary or ritual.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed substantial societal and political transformations, marked by endeavours for civil liberties, opposition to war and a more extensive scrutiny of established power structures. For example, the following events situationists might have in mind when criticising legalism:

- During the 1960s and 1970s, administrations employed legalism in certain societies to quell political dissent and opposition. Consequently, these circumstances frequently led to the suppression of unrestricted expression incarceration of political dissidents and control over media content.
- During this era, several governments established excessively intricate legal frameworks that posed challenges for civilians to comprehend, resulting in corruption inside the judicial system.

- Legalistic segregation and minority laws were contested during this time for their disregard of the circumstances and racial or orientation discrimination and injustice.
- The draft system implemented during the Vietnam War faced frequent criticism due to its rigid implementation, disregarding individuals. However, on the other hand, Fletcher criticises and classifies the ideology of classical pacifism (presenting a rigid stance) as legalism.[1]

By presenting legalism, Fletcher presents its risks, which are as follows:

- The legalistic method places greater importance on the literal interpretation of the law than considering the underlying essence or the circumstances that specify the law's meaning. This practice can result in formally accurate decisions but ignore the subtleties and intricacies of specific circumstances.
- The legalistic method can lead to a deficiency of adaptability in response to changing circumstances or unique cases. Situationists argue that a strict and inflexible reliance on rules is insufficient to effectively address the varied and ever-changing nature of human experiences and social relationships.
- Legalism's insistence on rigid adherence to rules might hinder individuals from exercising critical thinking and making morally nuanced choices.
- Strictly adhering to rules can often result in unfair consequences, particularly when the rules are obsolete, too simplistic or fail to consider all pertinent facts. Situationists condemn legalism for its propensity to sustain injustice while appearing to adhere to rules.
- Situationists contend that ethical decision-making should encompass emotional and human dimensions, which a rigid rule-based legalism approach may fail to acknowledge.
- Situationists perceive legalism as an obstacle to societal and moral advancement. By adhering to existing laws, legalism can impede essential reforms and advancements that tackle emerging difficulties or growing cultural ideals.
- Legalism tends to oversimplify intricate ethical situations by emphasising strict adherence to rules. Situationists contend that ethical decision-making is intrinsically intricate and should encompass more elements than rigid norms.

Fletcher does not make an explicit distinction between *good* and *bad* legalism. His criticism focuses on *bad* practices, which are called *legalism* by him. There is also *good* legalism that situationists appreciate, which consists of due respect for laws and moral traditions. This respect flows from

responsibility and care for people. It consists of setting and respecting some norms and rules for the sake of people. As situationists notice, this respect is indispensable in moral decision-making (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 100; Robinson, 1963, p. 120).

There are some advantages of adherence to set guidelines, which situationists do not mention but can indicate as requirements of responsibility. For example:

- The legalistic method guarantees the predictability of administrative decisions, which is an advantage for society.
- Adhering to established guidelines allows decision-makers to exhibit objectivity. By reducing a person's prejudices and preferences, this method ensures that decisions are not arbitrary.
- Making decisions under well-defined guidelines can result in increased efficiency; when these rules offer a ready foundation for decision-making, it saves time and effort to analyse each case from the ground up.
- Adhering strictly to regulations can reduce risks, especially legal and regulatory risks, by guaranteeing that choices align with current laws and norms.
- A well-defined set of guidelines streamlines the decision-making process.

13.1   *Correctness Instead of Responsibility, Obedience Instead of Benevolence*

Fletcher does not see anything wrong in respecting a law. However, he warns legalists against substituting responsibility with fear of breaking the law and desire for correctness in "neurotic comfort rules" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 82), which are "neurotic security devices" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 137). As he maintains, the legalistic method shuns the effort of predicting, calculating and evaluating the consequences of actions. It requires adherence to the law and (legal, political, social) correctness. It may substitute responsibility with obedience to the law and its interpreters in legalistic decision-making (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 82, 98–99, 143–145). To illustrate its absurdity, Fletcher compares the legalistic correctness to the actions of *Tic-Toc* man in *The Wizard of Oz*:

> There the mechanical man had the special grace of always doing 'what he was wound up to do' but wanted instead to be *human*. And what did he lack? Freedom to choose.
>
> (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 138–139)

As situationists notice, the legalistic strive for correctness may deform benevolent intentions, as the legalistic method fosters respecting the law regardless of human dignity and well-being (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 20–21, 98–99, 141–145)

and requires serving norms and rules rather than persons (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 82, 137). In this way, the legalist method substitutes care for persons or other values with care for some (legal, ritual, political) correctness.

As Fletcher notices, legal correctness is insufficient for morally right actions because the law codifies typical situations, but decision-making situations may be untypical. Then, applying norms and rules requires creativity. Still, the legalistic method suppresses creativity and requires deducing solutions from the letter of the law. As Fletcher maintains, this method "produced a bed of Procrustes onto which the decisions of life had to be forced and cut to fit the bed's iron shape and size" (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 54–55).

13.2   The Legalistic Society

The novel *The Trial* of Franz Kafka depicts institutional legalism when it turns into a social system. Then, it is complicated without necessity, incomprehensible and inaccessible to rational agents, represented by the main character, Joseph K. He hires Dr. Huld, a lawyer. This persona depicts a typical legalist who is intimately familiar with and focused on the letter of the law but ineffective, often absent, and ill. He would like to help Joseph K. but escapes from responsibility by inaction.

Legalists may seem amusing when they look for sophisticated legal solutions for simple problems or escape responsibility by inaction. However, legalists can also be dangerous when they use their power to force people's obedience to act against common sense and conscience.

As Fletcher notices, rigid adherence to the *letter of the law* without regard to its *spirit* can lead to unfair outcomes despite being legally sound. Situationists indicate various examples of socially harmful or unjust decisions according to the legalistic method (Fletcher, 1966b; Lehmann, 1963; Robinson, 1964), for example, heavy penalties (like life sentences) for relatively minor offences (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 87–102; Robinson, 1964, pp. 12–17, 116–120).

Situationists do not write it explicitly but show it in examples of how legalists (those who follow the legalistic approach) take the attitude of a *mentally enslaved person* who searches for a *master* in some law or law interpreter to free them from the burden of their responsibility and freedom. Consequently, the project of legalism designs the society of people who are mentally dependent on some authority in their thinking and decisions (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 85).

13.3   Deductive Morality

As situationists maintain, legalistic decision-making methods involve *deducing* decisions from the *law*. Legalistic applied ethics presents the method of

deductive casuistry, where decisions and criteria of moral judgement follow from some general norms and rules or a code of moral conduct (Robinson, 1964, pp. 40–41). Consequently, legalistic moral assessments come down to controlling the compliance of actions with some norms and rules of the law (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 27, 76).

The situationist critique of the legalistic method culminates in examples of moral dilemma cases, which this method cannot solve because the law contradicts itself when applied to a given situation. For example, the law requires the protection of human life. However, in some situations, one cannot save one person's life without sacrificing another, or it is impossible to save human life without lying (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 123–125). In this case, the legalistic method would suppose inaction, as any action is against legalistic obedience and correctness. However, Fletcher maintains that inaction creates an illusory feeling of good conscience because inaction also violates moral norms of the moral law in such situations.[2]

As situationists notice, when the deductive legalistic decision-making method does not offer solutions, it requires a justification for decisions in legal provisions and permission from some authority. If a legalist cannot find some solutions in the law, she looks for some interpretation. As the law rarely applies to situations without some aid of interpretation, the practice of legalism perpetually requires some interpreting authorities. The argument (Lat.) *ad auctoritatem* is decisive in this decision-making method. Consequently, legalists cannot solve simple problems without the aid of authorities, even when common sense is sufficient to know right and wrong (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 20–21, 98–99).

There are managerial hazards of the *deductive approach* of legalism that are worthy of mentioning because they impact the process of morality management (MM) when morality managers apply the legalistic method:

- Strict adherence to laws in some organisations can inhibit the adoption of new solutions. In effect of the legalistic approach, innovative novelties may be neglected or rejected in favour of adhering to traditional solutions.
- A rigid strategy may leave opportunities on the table that a more flexible, situation-specific strategy might seize.
- Legalistic decision-making may generate a deficiency in adaptability: Strict adherence to predetermined guidelines can limit one's capacity to adjust to unforeseen events or circumstances.
- Over time, legalists may become unduly reliant on rules, which may impair their capacity for critical thought or the use of judgement in situations when rules are ambiguous.

- The legalistic method may lead to decisional paralysis because relying too much on rules can cause delays, especially if such rules are unclear, contradictory, or do not apply well to a particular situation.
- Continually employing obsolete or ineffective procedures might result from relying on established regulations without regular examination and revisions.
- Following the *letter of the law* can delay rapid response to emergencies. For example, suppose a procurement process requires approval from multiple levels. In that case, it can delay the delivery of critical supplies in an emergency.

14   The Project of Antinomianism

Fletcher sees the antinomianism project of morality as the opposite of legalism. As the method of decision-making, antinomianism

> is the approach with which one enters into a decision-making situation armed with no principles or maxims whatsoever, to say nothing of rules. In every 'existential moment' or 'unique' situation, it declares that one must rely upon the situation itself, *there and then*, to provide its ethical solution.
>
> <div align="right">(Fletcher, 1966b, p. 22)</div>

Fletcher illustrates this method with the practices in some streams of early Christian libertinism or Gnosticism (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 22–23). A form of this thinking in the times of situationism may be some anarchist and hippie movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

14.1   *Practical Subjectivism and Relativism*

As Fletcher maintains, antinomians (agents who follow the antinomian method of decision-making) refuse "to admit to any generally valid principles at all, nothing even ordinarily valid, to say nothing of universal laws" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 25). This method follows the normative assumption that the moral order does not morally bind people (Robinson, 1964, p. 21). According to this method, decisions should be "random, unpredictable, erratic, quite anomalous," as Fletcher maintains (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 23).

Situationists briefly discuss antinomianism in contrast to their critique against legalism. Their critiques of the antinomian method focus on practical subjectivism in decision-making and practical relativism in moral assessment. **Practical subjectivism** consists of acting according to arbitrary preferences. **Practical relativism** is the method of moral evaluation based on arbitrary preferences (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 44).

14.2   Social Hazards and Egoism

Situationists maintain that the antinomian decision-making method leads to anarchism in private and social practice.[3] Situationists may agree with anarchism when it means civil disobedience against unjust laws.[4] However, situationists deny anarchism, which generates chaos, cultural degeneration and the destruction of social bonds (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 44, 100; Robinson, 1964, pp. 12, 21).

As situationists suppose, the antinomian method forces moral agents to appreciate their freedom above everything else. Therefore, as Robinson writes, love cannot motivate the antinomian (who follows the antinomian decision-making method) because she uses persons to satisfy her freedom, according to this method (Robinson, 1964, pp. 12, 21). Fetcher maintains that this premise puts a premium on the attitude of egoism, according to the maxim "my first and last consideration is myself" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 109). Consequently, antinomianism envisions a society where individuals and groups strive to realise their own freedom by imposing it on others, leading to social conflict and the domination of the most effective individuals or groups.

14.3   Some Advantages

However, the antinomian method has some advantages which situationists appreciate but marginalise in presenting antinomianism. These benefits are, for example, as follows:

- Adapting to any situation without preconceptions or rules fosters creativity. Relying on the circumstances can encourage a greater reliance on instinct or intuition, sometimes leading to fitting unconventional solutions.
- Entering a situation without preconceived notions makes it possible to be more receptive to new ideas and points of view.
- Without rigid rules or principles, there is a low risk of developing an ideological or dogmatic commitment, which can hinder good decision-making. This decision-making method ensures that ethics are always relevant to the context, which may vary from scenario to scenario.
- Relying on the circumstances themselves for direction ensures direct engagement with the circumstances. It fosters a thorough understanding of their intricacies.
- This method enables faster and more effective responses to rapidly changing situations than legalism, which requires actions according to some rules.

15   The Project of Situation Ethics

Fletcher sums up the situationist method of decision-making as follows:

> The situationist enters into every decision-making situation fully
> armed with the ethical maxims of his community and its heritage, and
> he treats them with respect as illuminators of his problems. Just the
> same, he is prepared in any situation to compromise or set them aside
> … if love seems better served by doing so.
>
> (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 26)

Various decisions can exemplify the situationist method. For example:

- Doctors may give an experimental drug to a terminally ill patient,
  even if it is against the accepted practice, if they believe it will save
  her life.
- Even if it goes against professional norms, an individual may expose un-
  ethical actions within an organisation if it is necessary for protecting the
  public's safety or well-being.
- Throughout history, people have decided to break the law to pursue
  a higher moral purpose because they believe justice and love are more
  important than respecting some norms.

Legalists may see situationists as interpreting the law too loosely. Typical
legalistic allegations include non-compliance with legal regulations, gener-
ally accepted codes and constitutions or against the legalistically understood
rule of law. Antinomians, on the other hand, may find situationism too le-
galistic and too respectful of the laws and social systems of control.

Fletcher believes this method takes advantage of legalism and antinomi-
anism and minimises the risks mentioned in the former two sections. Like
legalists, situationists want to respect the laws and learn from moral tradi-
tions, which store the experience and wisdom of the communities. Like an-
tinomians, situationists foster autonomy of human freedom and conscience
by focusing the decision-maker's attention on decision-making situations.

Contrary to legalism, this method prevents judgements from being rig-
idly constrained by one-size-fits-all rules. Instead, it allows them to adapt
to each circumstance's particular nuances. This approach considers both
general moral principles and the requirements of the given circumstance,
resulting in more rounded conclusions. Rather than relying on established
norms, decision-makers are encouraged by this method to think critically
about the optimal course of action. This stance requires respecting the *spirit
of the law* more than its *letter*, where the spirit means the principal good and
intrinsic values that the law is to protect and promote.

In contrast to antinomianism, the situationist method leads to compassionate and humane outcomes by emphasising love as a guiding principle. People and organisations that follow this method must develop their understanding of what is ethical by routinely re-evaluating and reflecting on actions considering established principles and current circumstances. According to the situationist decision-making method, one uses the law to solve problems. Situationists do not marginalise the law. They aim to interpret and change it following its *spirit* to fit reality best.

According to situation ethics, MM is to foster love in society. Although Fletcher denies any ontological interpretation of virtue (Fletcher, 1970), the situationist approach to MM follows the tradition of virtue ethics, accentuating moral education's role in MM (Frankena, 1973). In the situationist view, MM aims to create a society of virtuous citizens.

15.1   *Agape. Benevolent Decision-Making*

For Fletcher, *love* means *agape* or *agapeic* love. Fletcher distinguishes this love from emotions that may have love's name. In his view, *agape* is goodwill – the will aiming at the good of people (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 103–119) according to the optimisation principle of utilitarian ethics. According to this principle, benevolent (morally good) decisions aim at the greatest possible good of the greatest possible number of people (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 95; Fletcher, 1967, pp. 19, 56).

As Fletcher stresses, love is neither egoistic nor altruistic (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 107). Loving decisions search for compromising interests of all people, including the interests of the decision-maker (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 110–114). Love is not an emotion or feeling for him (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 103, 105). It is primarily the will – goodwill, which is rational, which works "in partnership with reason" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 69). Situationists specify the rationality of love by the requirement of prudence and responsibility.

15.2   *Prudent Decision-Making*

For Aristotle, prudence is a moral virtue involving practical wisdom and the ability to reasonably judge what is morally right and advantageous in particular situations. This virtue is intellectual ability and moral discernment, which synthesises intuition, knowledge and life experience to determine the optimal course of action in concrete circumstances (Uhr, 2015).

According to Fletcher, prudence is not a virtue. It is a "careful calculation" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 88), recognising existing or potential good in concrete situations and finding the best way to protect or promote this good. It is a practical consideration in determining the means to attain the goal of love.

Prudent decisions are methodologically rational (Section 8.1), using available knowledge. General knowledge embraces data from sciences and moral traditions. Concrete knowledge is about the circumstances of the decisions (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 87–88). Prudence can also mean a capacity for intuitional moral knowledge and choice (see Section 24).

15.3 Responsible Decision-Making

In the context of situationist texts, the term "responsibility" takes on different meanings. Each of these meanings influences understanding individual actions and decisions in different ethical and moral contexts.

15.3.1 Motivation

Responsibility can mean motivation, which is the quality of **responsible decisions**. Fletcher defines this quality in line with utilitarian ethics: Responsible decisions prefer solutions that best meet the optimisation principle (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 114–119).

Responsible decisions are motivated by their chances and risks. Responsible agents (who make responsible decision) predict and scale them according to their best available knowledge and choose the course of action that gives the best chances and minimises risks. In contrast, irresponsible decisions may involve introducing risky innovations without testing their impact on society. However, as Fletcher notices, responsibility may require the courage to permit risks when inaction or a delay in deciding carries a greater risk (Fletcher, 1966b. pp. 83–84).

15.3.2 Moral Duty

Responsibility is also a **moral duty** to make responsible decisions. In this respect, people are responsible for making socially useful choices based on their best available knowledge and understanding. This duty involves considering and minimising potential harm to others and maximising the positive impact of decisions. In this meaning of responsibility, individuals and organisations have the moral obligation of responsible decision-making.

15.3.3 Moral Responsibility

The duty of moral responsibility generates moral responsibility of agents in terms of their responsibility for the consequences of their actions. This responsibility occurs when agents hold responsibility for something in terms

of their **merit** or **guilt** for the effects of their actions. In this meaning of *responsibility*, individuals and organisations are responsible for caring for and promoting the welfare of those affected by their decisions.

15.3.4   Conscientiousness

Fletcher also specifies the **internal responsibility of decisions**. In this respect, agents ensure their motives are genuinely loving and compassionate. A crucial aspect of this responsibility is the care for intentions behind one's actions – this responsibility is typical of *examining conscience*. Fletcher names this responsibility *conscientiousness* (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 27; 1967, p. 8). When defining it, Fletcher draws on the works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and the philosophy of dialogue. In this approach, responsibility is seen as relational and dialogic, representing a **response** of love towards persons. This responsibility should be guided by the well-being of people and the best available knowledge about what benefits them (Fletcher, 1967).

15.3.5   Taking Responsibility

Responsibility can also mean taking **responsibility for someone or something**. Fletcher specifies this responsibility as *care* in terms of caring for people (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 87–89). However, he also specifies taking responsibility as courage. As all decisions are risky – they can cause unpredicted bad side effects – Fletcher defines taking responsibility as courage to permit them (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 84).

Fletcher maintains that responsible decision-makers should profit from the community's wisdom in the written and unwritten law. However, he denies universally valid criteria to evaluate the consequences of actions. Accordingly, responsible agents should first investigate and then decide on these criteria. Fletcher postulates that in the moment of decision-making, "the *responsible self in the situation* decides whether the *Sophia* can serve love there" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 33). According to him, this evaluation should be responsible – considering the consequences of respecting or disrespecting them (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 82, 135–137). Therefore, in his view, a responsible decision-maker evaluates the social utility of moral norms and rules in each decision-making moment. She must take responsibility for adopting some law and for breaking it.

Consequently, Fletcher postulates **taking responsibility for the evaluation criteria**. In this respect, *responsibility* means that the agent grants herself the competence to choose the criteria for evaluating consequences. Fletcher maintains that this responsibility is unavoidable in the situationist method, as it follows from personal autonomy and freedom

in decision-making. However, he notices that some agents may abuse this privilege by making arbitrary moral preferences out of their moral ignorance or malevolence.[5]

Notes

1 "Classical pacifism … holds the use of violence to be always wrong regardless of the situation. This is a legalism, even though many pacifists would be unhappy to think of it as such. The subtlety here is this: the pacifist knows that if, as in the 'just war' doctrine, it is possible that some wars are just and some are not…" (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 83–84).

2 Fletcher indicates various examples of situations where moral actions according to some moral norms must violate other norms of the law. For example: "Alexander Miller interviewed some of the French *maquis* after World War II, about their experiences in the resistance struggle. (It is a famous passage in his *Renewal of Man.*) They had lived on lies (forged passports, ration cards, I.D. cards, etc.), by theft of food and supplies, by killing occupation officers and collaborators, sometimes even killing one of their own members in danger of arrest and exposing their whole conspiracy. He asked if everything, then, is permissible? Their reply was clear and crucial. 'Yes, everything is permitted – and everything is forbidden.' Miller's comment was that 'if killing and lying are to be used it must be under the most urgent pressure of social necessity, and with a profound sense of guilt that no better way can be presently found.' We should change his 'guilt' to *sorrow,* since such tragic situations are a cause for regret, but not for remorse" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 124).

3 "While legalists are preoccupied with law and its stipulations, the Gnostics are so flatly opposed to law – even in principle – that their moral decisions are random, unpredictable, erratic, quite anomalous. Making moral decisions is a matter of spontaneity; it is literally unprincipled, purely *ad hoc* and casual. They follow no forecastable course from one situation to another. They are, exactly, anarchic – i.e., without a rule. They are not only "unbound by the chains of law" but actually sheer extemporizers, impromptu and intellectually irresponsible. They not only cast the old Torah aside; they even cease to think seriously and *care-fully* about the demands of love as it has been shown in Christ, the love norm itself. The baby goes out with the bath water!" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 23).

4 "We ought not to hesitate to break a law that is in all conscience unjust, that is to say, unloving. Perhaps also we should before or *pari passu* do what we can to get it reinterpreted in the courts or thrown out on some ground such as constitutionality, using legislative machinery to correct it. But neither the state nor its laws is boss for the situationist; when there is a conflict, he decides for the higher law of love. He has to weigh immediate and remote consequences as well as local and broader interests, but if the scales go against law, so does he" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 101).

5 "A noteworthy complaint is that situation ethics presumes more ability to know the facts and weigh them than most people can muster. It is true that all of us are limited in how much we know about things and how competent we are to evaluate even what little we know or think we know. … But in his more immediate situation, he must make his own decisions and should. If it is true that one's

opinions are no better than his facts, then situation ethics puts a high premium on our knowing what's what when we act. We are always free and often well advised to call in expert and professional advice *if we choose* to call upon it. But if the law cuts down our range of free initiative and personal responsibility by doing our thinking for us, we are so much the less for it as persons. Law easily undermines political freedom (democracy) and personal freedom (grace)" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 84).

III Three Metatheories of Morality Management

16 Metatheories of Legalism

Fletcher presents two metatheories characteristic of legalism: theories of natural and scriptural laws. According to the former theory, humans by their nature aim to achieve a certain goal (happiness, fulfilment), which is the principal good of each person. In this perspective, morally good intentions align with and morally right actions contribute to this goal. Morally bad decisions and actions are not compatible with this objective. In this view one can notice some preconditions for accomplishing happiness. They specify the law that is in the human nature (natural law). Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas initiated this metatheory.

According to theories of scriptural laws (which are called *scripturalism* in this book), values manifest through interference with the will of certain authorities, who *posit* the moral law by their decisions. In this perspective, the moral value of decisions depends on their adherence to this authority's will. Religious scripturalists point to the Divine Authority of God, while areligious scripturalists point to human authority (of an individual, group or organisation) that designs the positive law (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 47; Fletcher, 1970, pp. 121–137; Robinson, 1970, pp. 7–18).

16.1 *Deontological Ethics: Obedience Instead of Benevolence*

Deontological ethics posit that some actions are morally obligatory, permissible or forbidden based on principles and duties inherent to the action rather than the outcomes they produce. This approach contrasts with consequentialist theories, which evaluate actions regarding their outcomes. Situationists maintain that legalist ethics is deontological, where general moral norms and rules dictate morally good and bad or right and wrong actions and their moral evaluations. In this view, "there are a great many actions that would be wrong … no matter what good consequences are expected to follow …" (Fletcher, 1988, p. 120). As situationists notice, Immanuel

Kant exemplifies this position (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 65; Lehmann, 1963, pp. 165–189).

Situationists challenge this stance by examining case studies involving "moral dilemmas, trilemmas, and multilemmas," where conflicting moral norms contradict each other or when one cannot adhere to a rule without practically undermining another rule (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 95; Robinson, 1964, pp. 34–47). Situationists reveal that this method excessively elevates moral traditions, hindering change when they become useless, harmful, outdated and incompatible with reality (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 20–21, 98–99).

As situationists maintain, moral norms and rules specify solutions for typical situations. In atypical situations, the agent should invent socially useful solutions. Here, the law requires interpretation, and decisions require prudent creativity instead of strict adherence to norms and rules. However, legalistic ethics forbids this creativity by fostering the requirement for obedience to some moral authorities, who interpret the natural law or posit the law (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 54–55).

Situationists argue that legalistic ethics presents a false picture of benevolence (love) by equating it with obedience and presuming that moral goodness (love, benevolence) consists in obedience to a law – be it the law of reason, the law of nature, the law of duty or the law of God (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 138). This view is flawed, as love is a free stance and cannot be compelled, whereas obedience can be enforced. Love is directed towards the well-being of humans, while obedience may stem from other motives, such as fear of punishment or the need for "the neurotic comfort of rules" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 82). Consequently, Lehmann suggests that benevolence (as love) and obedience should be distinguished. They can coexist in "free obedience" to love. However, they are distinct mental attitudes (Lehmann, 1963, pp. 138–139).

16.2   *Normative Universalism*

The examples of legalism presented by situationists demonstrate that a common feature of theories underpinning legalistic practices is the assumption that certain universal duties bind agents uniformly, regardless of circumstances. It is the stance of normative universalism (generalism) in metaethics. Fletcher challenges the epistemological assumptions of this stance.

Fletcher maintains that the theory of natural law presents unjustified epistemological optimism by claiming that people can learn universal moral principles from studying facts (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 21). He alludes to David Hume's argument: "… we simply cannot climb across the gap from

descriptive to prescriptive propositions; from *is* statements to *ought* statements" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 49). Consequently, Fletcher is sceptical about the epistemological optimism of the natural law theory:

> To those in the natural law camp we say, 'Oh, yes. You may postulate the presence of right and wrong objectively in the nature of things, de rerum natura. But this does not entitle you to suppose that you can possess them cognitively — that you can know what right and wrong are and wrap them up neatly in formulas, thinking God's thoughts after him.'
>
> (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 76)

Situationists also accuse scripturalists of unjustified epistemological optimism, criticizing their literal application of scriptures to reality, arguing that any law requires interpretation based on suppositions about what the lawmaker would intend in a given situation and how that interpretation aligns with fundamental assumptions (the *spirit*) of the law. Situationists maintain that laws refer to typical cases and can, at best, present guidelines for actions with examples of solutions, as moral principles apply by an analogy and require interpretation and constant research for concrete decision-making situations (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 21, 140).

16.3   Meaningful Omission

Lehman shows that normative absolutism in metaethics can ground the deontological ethics of legalism. According to this stance, some values or goods are precious independently of human preferences (Lehmann, 1963, pp. 124–132). Situationists present *bad* legalism with examples of theories that presume normative absolutism. However, legalism is also compatible with the opposing position of normative relativism in metaethics. For example, although legal positivism is mainly descriptive and not an ethical theory *per se*, it can present the will of lawmakers as practically considered infallible (Dworkin, 1986; Dyzenhaus, 2021; Finnis, 1979; Fuller, 1969). Relativistic metatheories of ethics can present the faith in the infallibility of some human authorities. For example, group normative relativism, such as the stance of cultural relativism, can ground legalism when it presents standards of local consensus or contract as unquestionable moral standards.

Fletcher maintains that metaphysical realism in metaethics is typical of legalistic ethics. According to this stance, values are inherent and real properties of actions or other objects (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 67, 123). He calls this stance *intrinsicalism* or *intrinsic theory of value* (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 125).

However, bad legalism ethics does not necessarily rely on metaphysical realism in metaethics. For example:

- Legalism can emerge without any explicit metatheoretical background, where individuals establish moral standards, present them as universal and force others to respect these constructs.
- Kantian ethics does not presume metaphysical realism in metaethics (Kant, 1996).
- Theories of scripturalism can ground morality on the will of some Divine or human authority without necessarily presuming metaphysical realism in metaethics.

Therefore, it is important to distinguish between the essential normative assumptions of legalism and the features that are specific to certain instances of this ethical approach. However, situationists do not discuss legalism in metaethical contexts other than normative absolutism and metaphysical realism in metaethics. It is a meaningful omission that may suggest the situationists' sympathies lie with normative relativism and metaphysical realism in metaethics.

17   Metatheories of Antinomianism

Fletcher exemplifies antinomianism through the *early* philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, particularly the ideas from the initial period of his writings presented in *Being and Nothingness* (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 22–26). This section presents some of Sartre's ideas interpreted by Fletcher without evaluating the accuracy of the interpretation.

17.1   *Nominalism in Metaphysics and Normative Particularism in Metaethics*

According to Fletcher, Sartre's philosophical foundation lies in the experience he named *nausea*, described as "our anxious experience of the *incoherence* of reality" (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 24–25). Consequently, every moment of existence or situation is radically discontinuous for him, "without past or future … There is no web of life or connective tissue between episodes or situations in human experience…" (Fletcher, 1970, p. 63). According to this experience, Sartre rejects any belief in the coherence of reality (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 25) and supposes metaphysical nominalism. According to this position, "one moment of existence is entirely discontinuous from others" (Fletcher, 1966a, p. 427).

This nominalism leads Sartre to embrace radical particularism in metaethics. According to this stance, each decision-making situation entails a

unique moral duty that is neither generalisable nor comparable. He refuses "to admit to any generally valid principles at all, nothing even ordinarily valid, to say nothing of universal laws" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 25). Consequently, he presumes particularism in metaethics and maintains that "we cannot generalise about our decision-making" (Fletcher, 1966a, p. 427).

Fletcher shares Sartre's nominalism but disagrees with his radicalism. According to Fletcher, situations are often similar to each other, allowing for the acquisition of provisional general knowledge. This, in turn, permits the creation of provisional moral norms and rules.

Sartre presents value creation as the process of giving meaning in creating existential self-identity through existential commitment (Fr. *engagement*), which *makes* sense of reality.[1] This commitment is an arbitrary decision (choice) that specifies the main goal of life and the principal value (Sartre, 1946, p. 78). In making these choices, individuals experience, acknowledge and determine their self-identity and the hierarchy of values (their *project of life*, Fr. *durée de vie*) stemming from the existential commitment. Consequently, existential commitments are considered pre-moral (neither morally good nor bad, right nor wrong, beyond good and evil) because they establish values and criteria for moral assessments, according to Sartre (Peursen, 2014; Sartre, 1946). Accordingly, morality managers are beyond any moral order when designing morality. Their sole moral obligation is to respect their existential commitment (Crowell, 2004; Flynn, 2013; Hartmann, 1966, pp. 53–60; Heter, 2006; Santoni, 2010; Sartre, 1946, pp. 83–84; Sartre, 1956, pp. 63–74).

17.2   *Normative Decisionism*

Radical normative relativism in the version of normative decisionism is the central assumption of antinomianist ethics. This concept considers that moral duties or values stem from human decisions.

According to Sartre, freedom manifests through decisions' authenticity (Fr. *authenticité*), aligning with the existential commitment. Decisions are inauthentic when they directly or indirectly deny it. In his approach, authenticity is the only moral obligation, with other moral duties being the products of existential commitment and invariants of the authenticity requirement. Thus, authentic decisions are morally good and inauthentic decisions are morally bad (Crowell, 2004; Flynn, 2013; Hartmann, 1966, pp. 53–60; Heter, 2006; Santoni, 2010; Sartre, 1946, pp. 83–84; Sartre, 1956, pp. 63–74).

Situationists agree with Sartre that the universal moral obligation is to choose freedom, which requires authentic decision-making (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 63). They name it *self-sincerity* and *honesty* (Fletcher, 1966b,

p. 37; Robinson, 1963). However, situationists disagree with Sartre's radical normative relativism. According to Fletcher, the existential commitment to love possesses intrinsic value, deeming existential commitments against love-hatred, egoism or indifference – immoral and intrinsically bad (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 63).

17.3   Perspectivism. Epistemological Subjectivism in Metaethics

To specify the role of reason in decision-making, Sartre introduces the concept of *bad faith* (Fr. *la mauvaise foi*). It is a self-lie when agents contradict their judgement and abandon freedom. However, according to Sartre, the reason cannot discern moral duties without active freedom. In his view, reason only controls whether the subject's decisions are compatible with existential commitment and authentic (Crowell, 2004; Flynn, 2013; Hartmann, 1966, pp. 53–60; Heter, 2006; Santoni, 2010; Sartre, 1946; Sartre, 1956).

According to Sartre, respecting knowledge is not a prerequisite for existential commitments. In this view, the reason is to make actions effective and select effective means to achieve the aims set by freedom. However, the reason cannot indicate whether the goal is morally right or wrong because existential commitments specify and evaluate the goals of action. Existential commitments are beyond any moral evaluation of the reason because they set the criteria for moral assessment (Santoni, 2010; Sartre, 1956).

Sartre's stance presents a peculiar combination of nominalism and normative particularism, culminating in ethical perspectivism. From this viewpoint, values exist in the perspective of perceptions set by existential commitments, yielding unique perspective on moral perception for each individual. Moral duties and values do not exist beyond this perception – they are purely intentional entities that exist by the power of decisions of individuals' existential commitments. Fletcher reduces this position to absurdity by stating that it is "the radical form of *de gustibus non disputandum*, so that 'What's one man's meat is another man's poison'…" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 44).

18   Metatheory of Situation Ethics

Situationists present a wide spectrum of viewpoints, which do not compose a homogeneous theory. However, according to Fletcher, they all share *four presuppositions*: relativism, personalism, positivism and pragmatism (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 40–56). This section presents these premises. The term *relativism* denotes several stances outlined in Sections 18.1–18.4.

18.1   Moderate Nominalism in Metaphysics

Situationists adopt the existential idea that decision-making situations are unique, and moral imperatives are *situational* – **relative to situations**.[2] This stance involves two ontological suppositions: moderate metaphysical nominalism and moderate particularism in metaethics.

Situationists assume an existentialist ontology where reality consists of unique decision-making situations. However, Fletcher abstains from the radical version of this stance, positing that situations can be similar. Their similarity is reflected in conceptual constructs, which grasp analogies between them.

According to Fletcher, similar moral duties occur in similar situations, allowing agents to learn moral duties from past moral experiences and gain general moral knowledge about typical (repetitive) situations (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 57–58; Fletcher, 1970, p. 63).

Fletcher's position lies between normative generalism and particularism in metaethics. According to him, some general norms and rules are valid in typical situations. However, these norms and rules are not universally valid. In atypical situations, they may prove inadequate in specifying moral duties. According to situation ethics, moral norms and rules are provisional. They assist in understanding decision-making situations through analogies with similar situations.

According to situation ethics, codes of morality store past knowledge, offering good practices for typical situations. However, as each new situation can be atypical, agents must investigate if norms and rules apply to each decision-making moment (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 31). Consequently, Fletcher denies any universal prohibitions. For example, the prohibition against killing is statistically right. However, he argues that love may require killing in situations of trolley-like dilemmas (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 37–39, 62, 75, 98, 152).

18.2   Principled Relativism

In situation ethics, the term *relativism* can denote the relationship between moral duties and the imperative of love. According to this stance, **moral imperatives are relative to love**, presuming that love holds independent value beyond human evaluation. In contrast, other values are instrumental in their function of expressing or fostering love. Fletcher refers to this stance as *principled relativism*.[3]

18.2.1   Agapism

Situation ethics takes over from Sartre the idea of existential choice. This concept is present in the thought of other thinkers who inspire situationism,

such as Paul Tillich and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. However, these thinkers distinguish between morally right and wrong existential choices. In their view, only the existential commitments to love are morally good. In practice, this position requires acting out of love and aiming for love in others (Fletcher, 1967, p. 56).

Fletcher asserts that love is precious "regardless of the context" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 60) and independent of human appreciation (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 57–68). As Fletcher puts it, "… Nothing is intrinsically good, but the highest good, the *summum bonum*, the end or purpose of all ends – love" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 129). Situationists label this position as *agapism*. This stance presents normative absolutism regarding love. In this view, all other values are instrumental. They are precious only when they contribute to love. As Fletcher maintains, "*Everything*, please note … whatever it is – might be sold for love's sake if the situation calls for it" (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 33, 121).

According to this stance, the universal duty of love does not determine any universally valid norms and rules, as the content of concrete moral duties depends on the unique situation of decision-making and the decision-maker's preferences. Fletchers summarises this by stating, "… there are no universals of any kind. Only love is objective value, only love is universal" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 64).

18.2.2   *The Essence of Love: Sharing Intention*

According to Fletcher, no symptoms of loving intentions would allow individuals to recognise loving intentions and actions in extraspection. In his view, moral judgments are only possible through introspection. He states that "Every man must decide for himself according to his own estimate of conditions and consequences, and no one can decide for him or impugn the decision to which he comes" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 37).

Fletcher warns against defining love. He maintains that "Love like good itself is axiomatic and ostensive, categorical, like blue or sour or anything else that simply is what it is, a 'primary' not definable in terms of something else" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 47).

Fletcher presents love in terms of the Aristotelian friendship: It is a decision – the will of good for another person. In contrast to Stagirite's idea, according to situationist positivism (see Section 18.4), each person defines love through their existential commitment. According to this view, love has no universal symptoms or preconditions. The only remarkable symptom of love is the sharing intention, which is the will of the principal good for others, which is love according to situation ethics.

This definition of love is formal and circular. It is formal because situation ethics specifies the structure of love's intentions without determining

its intentional object. It is circular because its *definiendum* ("love") belongs to its *definiens*. However, according to Fletcher, this formality and circularity of definition are right because they embrace divergent conceptions of the principal good.

Fletcher asserts that regardless of whether benevolent agents assume love or any other value (human personality, personhood, well-being, dignity or happiness) to be the principal good, they make similar decisions because they intend to share this good with others. This *sharing intention* is the essence of love, as he shows (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 96).

18.3   Utilitarianism

In situationist literature, the term *relativism* can designate the utilitarian notion of value and moral duty. According to this conception, **moral imperatives are relative to the value of the consequences of respecting them**.

18.3.1   Optimisation Principle

Utilitarian ethics presents the stance of consequentialism (teleologism) in metaethics. In this view, "… whether an action is *morally right or wrong* has exclusively to do with whether its consequences are intrinsically better than those of any other action one can perform under the circumstances" (Zimmerman, 2019). From this perspective, morally good decisions strive for, and morally right actions promote "the greatest good for the greatest number (of people)" (Fletcher, 1988, pp. 138–139). When saying terms like *useful* or *harmful*, situationists consider social utility (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 107–110).

According to situation ethics, love is the intention (decision or preference) to enhance the well-being of all humans (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 79, 103, 107, 109) adhering to the utilitarian principle of "the greatest amount of neighbour welfare for the largest number of neighbours possible" as outlined by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 95; Fletcher, 1967, pp. 8, 53). However, situationists replace the utilitarians' "pleasure principle" with *agape* (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 95). Consequently, the optimisation principle of situation ethics requires pursuing the greatest possible love in the universe – "the greatest amount of agape for the greatest number of neighbors possible." (Fletcher, 1967, p. 56)

Fletcher observes that the optimisation principle may seem cruel when it requires sacrificing individuals and minorities, if it is indispensable, to protect "the greatest good for the greatest number of people." However, he maintains that "calculation is not cruel" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 114). He presents various examples of dilemmas (invariants of the trolley dilemma),

prioritising the good for the "greatest possible number," even if it entails harm to a smaller amount of people (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 114–119).

18.3.2   *Rule Utilitarianism*

In selecting codes of moral conduct in MM, Fletcher suggests the method of rule utilitarianism,[4] which involves evaluating and selecting moral rules and norms based on the consequences of their implementation. The preference is for the most useful moral norms, rules and codes.

Situationists task MM with predicting the social consequences of implementing codes of moral conduct and selecting the code that best motivates agents to make morally good and sound decisions. They argue that this code should primarily specify the decision-making method instead of codifying actions as morally right or wrong in the legalistic style. Following the act utilitarianism in the MM process involves predicting and evaluating the social consequences of implementing a moral code to select the most socially useful code for society, according to the utilitarian optimisation principle.

Situationists observe that some moral prohibitions are well-grounded in human experience. However, according to situation ethics, even the most fundamental moral prohibitions may have exceptions in atypical situations (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 26–31; Robinson, 1970, pp. 15–16).

As Ramsey notices, empirical investigation of the past allows us to formulate *summary rules* specifying the statistical probability that some actions violate the principle of love. However, he notices that these rules are fallible in predicting future consequences, emphasising that each agent must investigate their suitability in new situations (Ramsey, 1966, p. 192).

18.4   *Positivism*

In outlining situationist positivism, Fletcher alludes to Sartre's idea of existential commitment, labelling it "our choice of our *summum bonum*" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 43), which is the highest good (value) in the hierarchy of values adopted by the entity and the most important aim in life. According to Fletcher, this choice determines agents' value preferences and comprehension of values. In situationism, this stance encompasses three premises: normative, metaphysical and epistemological decisionism in metaethics.

18.4.1   *Normative Decisionism*

In situation ethics, *relativism* can denote the assumption or normative relativism that **values are precious because someone appreciates them**. The normative decisionism presumes that something "…is a value because somebody decided it was worth something" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 59).

Consequently, values become precious when someone appreciates, wants or aims to achieve them by an existential commitment, which is a decision. This relativism is moderate, as situation ethics assert that love is precious regardless of human preferences.

18.4.2 Metaphysical Subjectivism in Metaethics

Situation ethics adopts the existential ontology, where decisions are the source of moral meaning of reality, leading to metaphysical subjectivism. In this view, values are purely intentional objects and lack inherent reality. It is the stance of metaphysical subjectivism in metaethics. As Fletcher states, "There *are* no 'values' at all; there are only things (material or nonmaterial) which *happen* to be valued by persons …" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 58). In this view, decisions *create values* by specifying purely intentional objects for decisional intentions of wanting, aiming for, or appreciating something.

18.4.3 Epistemological Decisionism

According to situationist positivism, moral knowledge arises from decisions. Emotions only mediate the understanding of existential commitment (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 106). The reason's function is to discover the most effective means to achieve the goals set by the will (Fletcher, 1988, p. 34). In this view, the reason is a function of freedom – a tendency of freedom not to contradict itself. In this view, human reason can recognise facts as well as their causal and logical links between statements or norms. However, it lacks knowledge about moral imperatives without a decision that presents something as a value or an end worthy of attaining. Thus, human reason can only deduce imperatives from normative premises elected by existential commitment. Consequently, reason alone can find facts and instrumental values by identifying the most effective means to achieve a given end, but reason does not establish any moral aims of action.

According to Fletcher, value preferences are arbitrary, arising from arbitrary decisions of existential commitment: "Value choices are made, and normative standards are embraced in a fashion every bit as arbitrary and absurd as the leap of faith" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 48). According to him, value choices (existential commitments) are self-justifying, similar to the choice to love is self-justifying, according to Bernard of Clairvaux's statement, "*Amo quia amo* (I love because I love)" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 47). No reasoning or knowledge can prove a value preference (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 47–49) because there is no logical method to justify or falsify existential commitments (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 49). They can be "vindicated" by reductive reasoning showing their compatibility with knowledge, experience or a theory. However, Fletcher stresses

that the existential choice logically precedes any theory, which takes place *ex-post* – logically *after* the existential choice is already valid (made).

18.5   Personalism

As Fletcher states, "the bias of [the situationist] … ethical standpoint … is probably best pin-pointed as personalist" (Fletcher, 1979, p. XVIII). In their personalism, situationists draw on Kant's conception of the categorical imperative and the existentialist notion of human existence (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 50–52). Situationist personalism comprises the following two assumptions: (a) Human personality serves as the primary means of understanding values, and (b) human beings (their personality and freedom) are the highest good (Fletcher, 1979, p. XVIII).

Situation ethics presents their personalism by suggesting respecting people by protecting and fostering their love. Consequently, the theory of human nature and well-being is marginalised.

Situationists assert that morally right actions should contribute to "human personality" (Robinson, 1964, p. 12) or "well-being" (Fletcher, 1970, p. 2). Fletcher provides examples of well-being, such as human "health, survival, growth, joy, social interest, self-realisation, and so on" (Fletcher, 1988, p. 30). However, situationists do not investigate these requirements by emphasising that all the characteristics of human existence are instrumental values when "they happen to contribute to some good other than themselves" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 129). In this view, love is the only intrinsic and autotelic value that specifies the good *of* persons – human well-being in the strict sense.

Consequently, the situationist postulation of personalism narrows to agapism – the requirement to protect and foster love in people. This narrowing is remarkable in the situationist conception of moral rightness. According to situationists, this value of actions encompasses the utility of their consequences. As situation ethics denies any intrinsic value of the consequences, except for the value of love, the optimisation principle translates into the imperative of optimising love in the universe.

18.6   Pragmatism

Fletcher selectively alludes to American pragmatism, introducing the pragmatic concept of meaning and theory of the truth into situation ethics (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 40–43).

18.6.1   Theory of Meaning and Objectives of Ethics

According to pragmatism, theories derive meaning from their outcomes – the actions of their adherents and the resulting consequences (Hookway, 2013).

Fletcher embraces this idea. He observes no significant difference in ethical theories when motivating people to make similar decisions (Fletcher, 1970, p. 2).

Situation ethics adopts a "*practical* or *success* posture" of pragmatism (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 42) by marginalising theoretical problems and prioritising applied (pragmatic) ethical objectives. The theoretical goals include defining and explaining some (objective or subjective) reality and justifying statements or norms. The pragmatic goal is to evoke some expected outcomes regarding actions from the theory's followers. Fletcher considers these pragmatic objectives to be the primary goal of any ethics, leasing to morally good decisions, morally right actions and socially useful practices. Consequently, situation ethics is an ideology that serves as MM's tool (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 41–42).

18.6.2 Ideologies

According to Fletcher, situation ethics adopts the pragmatic method of choosing among competitive ideologies (ideas, conceptions, theories, codes of moral conduct, theories that he collectively refers to as "ideology"). Fletcher summarises this method in the following way:

> When beliefs or non-empirical opinions, neither of them being falsifiable, contradict or clash with each other, the only possible way to choose between them morally is in terms of their consequences if they are followed out logically in practice. The one which results in greater good for people is the correct one.
>
> (Fletcher, 1988, pp. 138–139)

Consequently, situationists propose evaluating ideologies based on their consequences. However, to evaluate the consequences, one must apply some criteria belonging to a certain ideology. Here, the method of rule utilitarianism comes full circle under the pragmatic definition of truth: To evaluate an ideology, it is necessary to evaluate its outcomes. To evaluate them, one needs some criteria (ideology) that also need evaluation. To evaluate them, it is necessary to evaluate their outcomes according to some criteria (ideology) and so on.

18.6.3 Truth Markers

With pragmatism, Fletcher posits that the validity of ideas and theories lies in their success. He defines it in terms of "satisfaction" according to John Dewey, "expediency" according to William James and "what *works*" according to F. C. S. Schiller. Consequently, in the situationist literature, the term *truth* does not have the classical meaning of epistemological truth

(according to the correspondence definition specified by Aristotle or Alfred Tarski). For Fletcher, *truth* denotes the utility of ideologies in providing satisfaction, expediency and functionality to people. This function serves as the indicator (marker) of truth (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 41–42).

Situationists assert that socially useful ideologies gain popularity over time and, thereby, become (pragmatically) true. People abandon socially harmful and useless ideologies because they do not satisfy people. Consequently, situationists contend that the popularity of ideologies is the decisive marker of their truth (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 43; Rhymes, 1966; Robinson, 1964, p. 14). Accordingly, true theories express the dominant value preferences or be persuasive enough to become popular (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 47). Situation ethics is without the answer to the question of whether socially harmful ideologies are (pragmatically) true when they are popular.

Notes

1 I have translated *engagement* (French) as *existential commitment* or *existential choice*.

2 "Our obligation is relative to the situation, but obligation in the situation is absolute. We are only obliged to tell the truth, for example, if the situation calls for it; if a murderer asks us his victim's whereabouts, our duty might be to lie" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 27).

3 "To be relative, of course, means to be relative to something. To be 'absolutely relative' (an uneasy combination of terms) is to be inchoate, random, unpredictable, unjudgeable, meaningless, amoral – rather in the antinomian mode. There must be an absolute or norm of some kind if there is to be any true relativity. This is the central fact in the normative relativism of a situation ethic. It is not anarchic (i.e., without an arche, an ordering principle). In Christian situationism the ultimate criterion is, as we shall be seeing, 'agapeic love.' It relativizes the absolute, it does not absolutize the relative!" (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 44–45).

4 According to rule utilitarianism "A moral rule is justified if its inclusion into our moral code would create more utility than other possible rules (or no rule at all)" (Nathanson, n.d.).

IV Three Tactics of Morality Management

19 The Tactics of Legalism

Situationists present legalism as morality management (MM) tactics of codifying morally right actions and anticipating that obedience to codes of moral conduct (laws) will produce benevolent actions. Situationists argue that this tactic builds legalists' social authority but does not always result in benevolent actions. Situation ethics present three obstacles to this tactic: First, respect for the principle of morality (love or any other principal value, like God, happiness or human dignity) is not fully codifiable. Second, the complexity and variability of reality prevent any code of morality from embracing all situations and moral dilemmas. Third, respecting moral principles requires freedom and creativity, elements restricted by the legalistic decision-making method.

19.1 The Method of Codification

Any practice of legalism begins with codifying actions through legislation or casuistry. Although situationists recognise the utility of codes of conduct in preventing risks and harmonising social actions,[1] they deny the possibility and need to codify everything. They maintain that codification is useful only when it offers better solutions than common sense, rendering codification unnecessary in other cases (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 19–21).

As situationists notice, in complex or atypical situations, the moral agent must sometimes independently and creatively find the best solutions. Overly detailed codification of morality can hinder the development of a sense of responsibility in people for the consequences of their actions. Furthermore, excessive codification poses the risk of abuse of power as codifiers may insert their own interests behind detailed norms and rules.

19.2 The Goal of Obedience

Situationists warn against confusing the means with the goal of MM. According to situation ethics, MM should promote morally good and

right decisions, with the laws serving as the means to this end. However, *bad* legalism substitutes the end of MM by its means. Consequently, legalistic MM aims to evoke obedience to the laws, relying on this obedience to generate or account for benevolence. This tactic is utopian as Section 19.5 shows.

The distinction between the means and end of MM involves nuances and subtle shifts of accents in legalist theories or narrations. However, these nuances and accents are decisive for practice of MM: Situationists stress the significance of determining whether a legalist considers respect for the law as a **precondition** or **goal** of moral action.

In *good* legalism, the accent is on the principal good. In this approach, lawgivers and interpreters constantly investigate laws to accommodate them to the requirements of the principal good. In *bad* legalism, the emphasis is on obedience. In this approach, morality managers spare all effort in accommodating the perceptions of the principal good to satisfy some ideology.

19.3   *Management by Prejudice*

Situationists debunk assumptions of legalism as prejudices that legalistic MM uses to foster the authority of morality managers in social perception. These premises are superstitions because, as situationists argue, they contradict evidence and *prima facie* moral experience. These prejudices are about perfect laws, infallible traditions and authorities.

19.3.1   *Perfect Laws*

As situationists notice, converting the law into action necessitates interpretation and heuristics according to the premises that belong to the *spirit* of the law, which specify the values that the law is to protect and foster. Hence, any understanding of the law necessitates surpassing its literal wording (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 47; Fletcher, 1970, pp. 121–137; Robinson, 1970, pp. 7–18).

Situationists observe that proponents of scripturalism employ respect for laws by propagating the belief that they apply to reality without any dose of interpretation. As situationists maintain, propagating this belief may be a trick in which agents hide their interpreting role under the guise of presenting the law to a wider audience.

Proponents of natural law may also use this tactic when presenting one of some optional interpretations of natural law as unquestionable natural law itself. However, authors (also sympathising with the natural law theory) have already criticised this misinterpretation (Finnis, 1979; Fried, 1964; George, 1992; Murphy, 2001).

19.3.2   Infallible Traditions

The situationists' central criticisms of legalism focus on the legalist faith in the infallibility of legal solutions, a belief shaken by examples of unjust and socially harmful laws, when they become outdated. As situationists notice, laws may require changes. Nevertheless, legalism impedes such changes. The radical position of scripturalism denies any changes in laws, while moderate scripturalists allow evolutionary changes under the requirement of their coherence with the existing laws. According to this interpretation of the rule of law, any changes of laws must adhere to the applicable actual laws.

According to situation ethics, the rule of law primarily requires compliance with the *spirit of the law*, which encompasses values the laws should protect (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 18).[2] Situationists maintain that in some exceptional situations, legal systems may not permit significant changes when the laws or their institutions are fundamentally unjust. In such situations, situationists propose "civil disobedience" to these laws and institutions (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 101–102). Situationists consider these situations exceptional, stressing that MM should foster respect to moral and legal traditions, especially by teaching to leverage the wisdom stored in them for prudent and responsible decision-making.

19.3.3   Infallible Authorities

Some views of legalism presume the infallibility of moral authorities (who interpret the law and present its meaning to the public). As situationists maintain, this assumption is false, as any interpretation "stands always in the presence of the interpreter who is fallible" (Gustafson, 1963, p. 23). Section 19.5 further presents and criticises this superstition.

19.4   Substitutive Solutions

Situationists observe that the legalistic MM centred on obedience shifts the attention of society and morality managers away from important moral issues, focusing on marginal or fake moral problems. Morality managers may do it on purpose. Then, they introduce substitutive topics, red hearings diversity tactics to diverse public opinion from their inaction or failure in problem-solving. Situationists do not name this trick and do not present its case studies. However, their critiques of legalism allow some of these variants to be specified.

The tactic of substitutive solutions entails presenting a solution to a secondary problem (problem B) as if it were the solution to the primary problem (problem A). Problem B, which is easier to solve, has some similarities to the more difficult problem A. The trick lies in portraying the solution to B as the solution to A.

As situationists stress, the main problem of any MM is promoting the principal good, often demanding a great social effort. The typical legalistic pseudo-solutions involve prohibitions, coercion, censorship or punishments. These might be enthusiastically accepted since they are relatively easy and inexpensive ways to create the impression that the main problem has been solved or is being taken appropriately. When immediate outcomes of these solutions are quantifiable, they can be presented to the public as tangible successes.

Some substitutive solutions are counterproductive and socially harmful, causing the problem by cracking it or solving one problem but causing more serious issues elsewhere (Merton, 1936; Pierson, 1993; Sayre, 1949). A paradigmatic surrogate problem of this kind, presented across cultural studies, is the *scapegoat's stratagem*. In this case, the surrogate solution involved blaming someone for the problem and punishments instead of solving it.

This stratagem may consist of diverting social attention from social issues by finding an enemy among those who disrespect some customs and beliefs. Societies employing this strategy may prioritise identifying and fighting the enemy at the expense of solving their problems, substituting the fight as a solution for the real problem. Notably, some groups, societies or organisations experiencing scapegoating tend to be aggressive, spending energy on conflicts and tracking down incorrigibility.

Here are examples of this stratagem trick in management, prioritising punitive measures to mask inaction in solving problems. These tactics may be right, but they become a trick when masking inaction and negligence to solve the real problem.

- A government may increase traffic fines to mask the omissions in investments in constructing routes and ensuring their safety.
- Redirecting the focus of security systems towards identifying minor offences can serve as a strategy to emphasise the number of detections rather than prioritising the less apparent yet vital endeavour of combating organisations that practice systemic injustice or crimes. This trick may create a false perception of efficacy and safety by emphasising the resolution of minor violations while more serious and widespread criminal activities are not adequately addressed. This approach reallocates resources and focuses away from addressing more intricate offences that present a significant risk to the overall security of society.

Substitutive solutions contribute to the main problem but do not solve it. They are deceptive when presented as the solution to the whole problem. A typical surrogate problem of this sort involves shifting society's attention from the source of the problem to its effects, similar to therapy, which,

instead of curing the disease, covers its symptoms. These solutions are usually laudable but are substitutive when presented to the public as a solution to the problem they do not solve. For example:

- Policies may camouflage inaction on the problem of economic injustice or educational discrimination by selectively solving their effects through minimal wage increases or temporary subsidies for some groups, which may increase the systemic discrimination against these groups (Neumark & Wascher, 2008).
- Some companies may engage in corporate social responsibility to enhance their reputation or to divert attention from unethical business activities. For example, a company may publicly support environmental sustainability while engaging in socially harmful activities in less visible parts of the business (Austin, 2019).
- When an organisation is ineffective in fighting discrimination, it may reinforce actions of political correctness to mask this negligence. In this case, to gain social sympathy and to divert social attention from the sources of discrimination, one can present the practice of political correctness as a solution to the whole problem. Addressing the source of the problem, which is educational discrimination, among other things, would be expensive and require a significant social effort; in contrast censorship is relatively easy to implement and quantifiable – it may be presented as a tangible *success* to mask the failure of problem-solving (Strossen, 2018).

As situationists show, the substitutive legalistic problems may lead to paradoxes of counterproductive practice, where protecting justice leads to injustice, promoting respect for people humiliates them or when instead of protecting the well-being of societies, the legalistic practice of MM exposes them to unnecessary risks, according to the Latin maxim "*Fiat justitia, ruat caelum! – Do the right even if the sky falls*" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 20).

19.5   Moral Education

Situationists agree with legalism in that education is a tool for MM. However, situationists maintain that coercion and punishments are typical methods of moral education according to legalism. They are ineffective in promoting love or moral respect between persons because these methods force people to act out of egoism or fear. Both motives contradict love and moral respect. They motivate agents to imitate virtues but do not lead to genuine love or moral respect between people (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 143–145; Robinson, 1964, pp. 34–47).

As situationists suggest, legalistic education does not require understanding the rationale behind the laws. This education can be compared to

taming, where agents imitate patterns of morally good behaviour without knowing or appreciating their rationale. This taming discourages critical thinking, especially when curricula are created to prioritise memorisation and compliance rather than exploration and discussion.

19.5.1   *Moral Authoritarianism*

As situationists observe, legalism requires respect for the law only in appearance. In reality, legalists demand obedience to those in power.

As situationists stress, each application of laws requires their interpretation. Consequently, obedience can only seem to refer directly to the law. Obedience to the laws means obedience to their interpreters, whose legalists sometimes do not notice or purposely pass over in silence under the slogan of respecting the law.

As situationists notice, bad practices of legalistic MM promote blind allegiance to human authorities when any investigation of their decisions or interpretations (through questions and examination of their validity) is considered a rebellion against the moral order. As this obedience meets the characteristics of fanaticism (Levesque, 2018), fostering it is called *fanatic authoritarianism* in this study.

This obedience may be justified in some task situations (when there is no time and no need to explain the reasons behind the superior's decisions, for example, in army warfare, during a storm on a ship). However, besides untypical circumstances, this practice is needless. It is also harmful, leading to a loss of moral sensitivity as the following section shows.

19.5.2   *Distorted Moral Perception*

According to situationists, the ethics of legalism diverts people's attention from the principal good and focuses on the law. In this view, obedience and adherence to some code of conduct replace moral motives, and the questions about legal correctness (as conformity with some laws or standards) replace the questions about principal good. This perception generates indifference to values, as situationists notice. This distorted perception facilitates fanaticism when agents stop investigating the nature of the principal good with its requirements and mindlessly follow some ideology or authority.

As situationists point out, when agents unquestioningly adopt and follow the law, they lose their interest in its rationale, which is in the principal value that the law fosters. This loss of sensitivity sometimes is compensated by the redundancy of ritual invocations to the principal value, which has purely customary meaning without due respect in this case (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 143–145; Robinson, 1964, pp. 34–47).

Consequently, the legalistic MM produces something else as legalists promise. It should foster respect for the principal good by employing the law. However, this tactic marginalises the principal good(s) in social perception and fosters uncritical respect for laws with some ideology and authority behind them.

19.5.3   *Coercion*

Situationists present coercion as the method to foster fanatic obedience. They do not deny that individual freedom can be restricted to safeguard social security and well-being. This practice may entail imposing moral standards on others, even using coercive penalties and threats to ensure compliance with the law. However, as Fletcher warns, force and coercion are inappropriate means to foster moral standards (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 80, 100).

As situationists observe, coercion proves counterproductive in evoking benevolent intentions, as they are free stances, and coercion limits freedom. Acts lacking freedom may only imitate the external appearance of love or moral respect without embodying their intention. Coercion may force people to behave similarly to those who love or respect someone. However, it will produce neither love nor genuine respect. Coercion destroys these motives, replacing them with fear or the desire to benefit. Consequently, "legalism's attempt to *force* people to be good" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 80) is counterproductive.

19.5.4   *Manipulation*

Manipulation is against the will of the manipulated person – it limits her capacity of choice by determining human will and making humans incapable of taking a free stance either by coercion, disinformation or emotional deception. Consequently, manipulation is generally seen as immoral since it is dishonest and disregards the welfare of the individuals.

Situationists do not mention that, but one should add manipulations to the repository of the means of fanatic authoritarianism, which can evoke obedience. Such manipulation may not violate the *letter* of the law. For example:

• News Media Framing: News media organisations can shape how information is presented by selectively reporting and framing it, which can subtly influence how events are interpreted. This manipulation is not based on explicit lies but rather on selectively highlighting certain narrative elements while disregarding others. This influences audiences to develop attitudes that align with the favoured narratives of the media outlet or authority.

- Public Relations: Some methods employ emotional appeals to influence public perception. For instance, efforts that emphasise the personal narratives of leaders or employ fear-inducing messaging on security matters might incite individuals to endorse policies or authority without critically evaluating the underlying motivations or potential outcomes of such support.

It is worth mentioning some examples of these methods that have significantly improved since the times of situation ethics. For example:

- Social Media Algorithms: Social media platforms employ algorithms that curate and present material customised to individual interests, frequently establishing echo chambers reinforcing preexisting opinions and perspectives. This may foster the unquestioning acceptance of authority by excluding dissenting or challenged perspectives, causing users to adhere to specific narratives without critical examination.
- Entertainment as Propaganda: The incorporation of political and ideological ideas into entertainment media functions as a discreet method of manipulation. By incorporating specific value perspectives in films, TV shows and music, creators can subtly and organically shape the beliefs of their audiences, resulting in the passive adoption of particular ideologies.

19.5.5   Rational Legalism

Situation ethics does not discuss *good* legalism, which can avoid most of the objections presented by situationists. It involves the practice of designing and enforcing laws in accordance with the requirements of human dignity and social benefit. In this approach to MM, agents are expected to understand the rationale of laws and their interpretation. Consequently, moral education fosters skills for methodologically rational decisions, promoting the virtue of inquisitiveness, associating facts and norms logically and concluding from the accepted premises.

This approach to MM requires testing authorities' credibility before trusting them. This practice involves weighing, selecting moral authorities and respecting their opinion in a methodologically rational way. For example, Józef Maria Bocheński specifies requirements of methodological rational beliefs and criteria to evaluate the reliability of divergent types of authority (Bocheński, 1965a, 1965b; Brożek, 2013).

20   The Tactics of Antinomianism

According to antinomianism of Sartre, it is a matter of preference if agents prefer selecting the means of action in a methodologically irrational or rational way. Agents can opt for inchoate decisions that

situationism criticises. However, they can also prefer instrumentally rational decisions. In this case, agents may meticulously plan actions to make them effective.

Consequently, the antinomian tactics of MM must be presented in options. This section presents the option that situationists do not consider, where antinomian morality managers intend to manage morality effectively. These agents are methodologically and instrumentally rational in selecting the means of their action (see Section 8).

Antinomian morality managers may intend to foster the antinomian method of decision-making or not. In the former case, they should act to destroy institutions, promoting respect for values or preventing these institutions from performing this function. However, antinomian morality managers may set any MM goal. The antinomian method and metatheory only require that they manage morality according to their private morality specified by their arbitrary existential commitment.

20.1   Egoism

Robinson notices that the antinomian decision-making method can foster egoism, requiring agents to prioritise their freedom above all other values (Robinson, 1964, pp. 12, 21). This remark finds its explanation in the metatheory of antinomianism. For Sartre, human freedom crystalises in existential commitment, which defines the agent's interests. As some critics of his ethics show, according to this view, persons can present only instrumental value when they are useful in accomplishing the existential commitment of the agent. When they limit the agent's freedom, they become instrumental in anti-values. In such cases, "Hell is other people," as Sartre puts it in his play *Huis Clos.* Consequently, Sartre presents a refined version of ethical egoism,[3] where agents are morally obliged to respect only one value: their arbitrary freedom. In the later period of his writings, which situationists do not take into account, Sartre enriches his position by the conception of solidarity. However, it is disputable if this idea contradicts the stance of ethical egoism (Aku, 2012; Bronner, 2021; Crowell, 2004; Flynn, 1986; 2013; Ray, 2012; Sealey, 2012).

Suppose that the antinomian morality manager makes her existential commitment to love and altruism. However, even such cases can fit the idea of ethical egoism. According to the antinomian metatheory, in these cases, the agent uses persons as opportunities (means) to exercise her existential commitment (to love or altruism) rather than respect their dignity and autonomy. If this agent follows the antinomian decision-making method, she should impose her will on others by making them happy according to her views on happiness, regardless of their will; she should foster her idea of love regardless of whether they share or want it.

Consequently, the antinomian idea of MM offers something else as it promises. It is supposed to foster human liberty. However, it limits civil liberties by requiring that morality managers impose their views against other people's freedom.

20.2 *Antinomian Fanaticism*

When Sartre characterises existential commitments as *arbitrary*, he signifies the core existentialist concept that human life has any predetermined essence or intrinsic significance that prescribes objectives or principles. In his view, individuals must autonomously select their ideals and trajectories in life, devoid of any moral compass external to their decisions. From an external perspective, this decision may seem arbitrary due to the lack of predetermined significance or moral absolutes. Nevertheless, the term *arbitrary* in this context does not suggest any form of negligence or capriciousness in making decisions.

Nevertheless, as some critics notice, Sartre does not present any way of grounding existential commitment in knowledge, which means that moral (authentic) agents may remain insensitive to rational argumentation concerning their goals as specified by existential commitment (Aku, 2012; Bronner, 2021; Crowell, 2004; Ray, 2012; Sealey, 2012). According to this interpretation, situationists present the antinomian decision-making method as irresponsible, as it requires agents to make existential commitment regardless of the knowledge they have or can possess. Even if they are methodologically rational in selecting the means of their actions, they must be methodologically irrational in setting their goals, as these goals follow from their existential commitment, which is arbitrary. Agents who act this way should remain insensitive to reasons for and against these goals under the premise that they must remain arbitrary. Consequently, as Fletcher notices, their decisions can be "random, unpredictable, erratic, quite anomalous" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 23). When this way of decision-making becomes a permanent in a person, it perfectly meets the characteristics of fanaticism (Levesque, 2018). However, the antinomian fanaticism is untypical, as fanatics usually follow some external authority. Antinomianism requires that agents adhere to their arbitrary goals blindfolded.

20.3 *The Primacy of Power*

As situationists suggest, the ethics of antinomianism does not specify any moral limit for actions besides the requirement of authenticity. The only external limitation of activities is the resistance of reality. Consequently, when a morality manager sets some MM goals according to her existential commitment, she has the moral obligation to use any effective means to attain them. It can be coercion and manipulation. These tools may become more

extreme than legalism allows, as antinomianism does not require respect for the law or any other moral norms external to the agent's will. Efficacy is the only criterion and test for selecting actions' means in this view.

Consequently, according to the logic of antinomianism, the power becomes also the decisive factor for selecting morality managers: Entities compete to manage morality. The strongest and the most influential individual, group or organisation wins this competition, becoming the morality manager by the power of facts. Her arbitrary will specifies the goals of MM. Here, the reason of power substitutes the power of reason in MM.

21   The Tactic of Situationism

Situationists share the antinomian respect for individual freedom. However, situation ethics sets the principal value in love. In this view, MM should protect and promote love in the universe. However, situationists distance themselves from forcing this motivation through legal regulations or sanctions. Situationists present the tactics for reaching this goal without force and coercion.

21.1   *The Optimisation Principle and Rule Utilitarianism*

Situationists do not draw a clear boundary between morality and law. Consequently, in the writings of situation ethics, the term *law* may refer to written laws, unwritten or customary moral standards reflecting the moral beliefs of a community.

According to situationism, the *spirit of the law* should be utilitarian. In this view, one should design and execute legal and moral laws in a socially useful way. This tactic follows rule-utilitarianism. In this view, MM should design and implement the most socially useful code of conduct, adhering to the utilitarian optimisation principle of aiming at the "greatest good of the greatest number" of people (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 95–96). Consequently, situation ethics fosters the adoption of socially useful laws.[4]

Situationists emphasise that morality managers should not change law and morality without significant reason. They should respect the moral and legal traditions when they remain socially useful, abolishing norms and rules that are socially harmful (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 99–102; Robinson, 1963, pp. 118–119).

According to situationism, citizens should control the decisions of morality managers. People should respect the law but have a moral obligation to disobey it when it is unjust and socially harmful. As Fletcher puts it, "We have a moral obligation to obey civil law, for order's sake; and we have a moral obligation to be situational (even disobeying the law) for love's sake" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 101).

21.2   *Principled Relativism*

As Fletcher maintains, the theory or name of the principal good holds marginal significance in the practice of MM because the true meaning of moral theories lies in the practice of their followers. He assumes that benevolent agents make similar decisions regardless of whether the name of the principal good is personhood, human dignity, happiness or love. Namely, they are benevolent because they intend to share this good with others. He names this sharing intention *love* or *agapeic love*. According to him, MM should encourage agents to make benevolent decisions without censoring their comprehension of the principal good (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 96).

Fletcher suggests that MM should promote a dose of relativism, which consists of avoiding generalisations: "The situationist avoids words like 'never' and 'perfect' and 'complete' as he avoids the plaque, as he avoids *absolutely*" (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 43–44). This relativism is the shift "from a hierarchy of values, ranged in some supposedly 'given' and permanent order of bad or better, to a fluid *spectrum* of values" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 44).

Fletcher maintains that some principal good should remain central to the ethical narratives of MM. However, this good should be general enough to embrace divergent views. He proposes defining this good as love. Consequently, MM should teach society to consider all moral norms and rules conditionally, depending on how they "serve love" (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 33). Fletcher names this tactic *principled relativism* (see Section 18.2).

21.3   *Didactic Paternalism*

Situationists do not deny moral (personal or institutional) authorities. On the contrary, situationists often take the role of morality teachers, and some writings of situation ethics present the style of *ex-cathedra* preaching ethics rather than question-asking or discussing divergent moral views (Gustafson & Johnson, 1989). However, situationists stress that the role of moral authorities is primarily inspirational. Situationists propose a new approach to authorities that reduces their role to case studies and inspiration for investigations:

> The modern history of the arts and sciences, and of the technologies that undergird them, makes it plain that they no longer bow down to nor cut their cloth to authoritarian principles. Their lifeline is no more handed down in advance or dropped from above by "revelation" or majesty. Men have turned to inductive and experimental methods of approach, working by trial and error, appealing to experience to

validate their tentative and loosely held generalisations. It has worked with unprecedented success as a strategy or method of inquiry and growth. Psychology, for example, got its start and growth this way. The same is true in many other sectors of the growing edge of the human enterprise. Now, at last, ethics and moral inquiry are doing it too. This is the new turn in the history of Christian ethics. This is the temper of clinical, case-centred, situational "concretion" – to use Bonhoeffer's word.

(Fletcher, 1966b, p. 158)

Situation ethics presents the educational role of MM in narration that presents past actions to motivate agents to make moral decisions. This narration is called *neocasuistry* or *neocasuistics*. In contrast to classical casuistry, neocasuistry does not present any pattern for action but serves as a motivational role. It is a didactic tool motivating people to take moral actions by illustrating the attractiveness of benevolent decisions and the dreadfulness of malevolent decisions (Gustafson, 1971, pp. 177–185).

Consequently, situation ethics proposes MM as moral education that does not violate human autonomy. In this view, methods of MM should make values attractive for decision-makers – without coercion and deception. Although situation ethics does not present any examples of this practice, one can imagine practices that meet the above requirements of situationist moral education. Their examples are presented in Sections 21.4 and 21.5, concluding this chapter.

21.4   Making Values Accessible

According to situation ethics, coercion and punishment should be the last methods of MM when other methods do not work. In this view, one should first make values attractive to people. Therefore, primarily, one should facilitate possibilities by enhancing accessibility to ethical options.

For example, consider MM promoting respect for ecology: The legalistic approach to ecology may consist of prohibiting and enforcing measures, such as imposing high taxes on environmentally unfriendly cars (including those with older or diesel engines) and banning their entry into city centres. In contrast, the situationist approach would seek to find a solution to make sustainable cars more attractive and affordable to drivers or to organise public transport infrastructure in a more attractive way than using cars.

21.5   Making Values Attractive. Rational Persuasion

In this study, *rational persuasion* means to influence without coercion and deception. Situationists, by criticising legalistic methods of moral education,

suggest that MM should use only such persuasion. Although the situationists did not develop methods of this persuasion, they have already been formulated. This section presents exemplary tactics of rational persuasion, which fit the situationist idea of MM.

21.5.1   Knowledge to Make Moral Preferences

When people lack the information needed to make a rational choice, MM may provide them with this knowledge. MM can help people understand and accept the full consequences of their choices by highlighting indirect and long-term effects. MM can play this role by various methods, such as educational campaigns or workshops, which raise awareness about further consequences of human activities or the implications of their choices. For example:

- One can implement a health promotion initiative by disseminating empirical data regarding the advantages of a well-rounded diet and the hazards associated with bad eating practices. This approach upholds individuals' liberty while equipping them with information to make well-informed choices on their dietary habits.
- One can organise workshops and provide materials to enlighten the general public on prudent expenditure, saving and investment methodologies. This approach upholds the autonomy of individuals in making financial decisions while equipping them with resources and information that may steer them towards adopting more conscientious financial behaviours.
- One can organise seminars and workshops for educators and parents, emphasising the significance of digital literacy in contemporary society and its integration with the overarching objective of holistic education.

21.5.2   Raising Self-Awareness

Situation ethics and psychoanalysis developed at the same time. Although direct connections between these schools are not reflected in their writings, these lines of thought share some common ideas of motivation functions, which psychoanalysis used in therapy and situation ethics may use in MM (Bardecki, 1957).

As Erich Fromm, Karl Gustav Jung and Karen Horney show, therapeutic methods may facilitate developing awareness of the meaning of value preferences. Similarly, situationists assign the didactic role to ethics, starting from what is known and leading to the discovery of preconditions for values and implications of value preferences.

Socrates originally specified these didactic roles. In his view, the *elenctic methods* cure agents of inconsistent beliefs, and *maieutic methods* help

agents to make independent discoveries, which in moral matters may concern consequences of value preferences that agents originally did not accept. For example:

- People appreciate their safety but are reluctant to respect other people's fundamental rights in some respects. In this case, MM may show how fostering mutual respect between people is reasonable because it safeguards their safety.
- Society members find no appeal to respecting the lives of some groups. However, members of this society highly appreciate their life. In the process of MM, one can show how universally respecting the fundamental right to life safeguards the life of each member of society.
- A society appreciates peace but does not respect cultural diversities. MM may show how respecting a common set of fundamental human rights can assist diverse cultures and societies to coexist peacefully.

21.5.3 Strengthening Moral Motivation

MM can strengthen moral motivation without changing it. For example:

- One can enhance dedication to upholding moral principles by fostering activities that prompt individuals to contemplate their value preferences and invent new possibilities by aligning with these preferences. Educational campaigns and participating in workshops or courses focused on ethical thought and decision-making might assist individuals in harmonising their everyday behaviours with their moral principles. For example, an awareness campaign focused on responsible innovation can educate the community on successful social responsibility practices for individuals who already prioritise this.
- Cultivating environments that promote and foster the manifestation of value preferences may entail establishing platforms, forums or communities where individuals with similar preferences can exchange ideas and cooperate on ethical endeavours. For instance, educational institutions or organisations can create clubs or committees promoting social responsibility. These groups would offer assistance and resources for initiatives that align with these principles.

In some circumstances, these initiatives can generate manipulation. However, one can prevent it by applying some tactics. For example:

- Transparency: Initiatives can provide explicit details regarding their aims, techniques and the sources of their information. One should ensure that participants comprehensively understand the purpose and context of the

campaign or workshop in which they are involved. Transparency is a precaution against concealed motives that may seek to manipulate the participants.

- Voluntary participation: Initiatives that permit individuals to freely select their level of involvement uphold the participant's autonomy, avoiding coercive methods that could alter their moral inclination.
- Critical engagement: Encouraging critical engagement ensures that individuals are not merely receiving knowledge passively but actively encouraged to question, analyse and interact with the material. This critical perspective enables individuals to develop their well-informed viewpoints instead of being influenced by possibly manipulative speech.
- Freedom of speech: Promoting interactive conversation instead of one-sided information sharing cultivates an atmosphere prioritising exchanging ideas, thoughtful contemplation and mutual regard. Individuals can delve into ethical intricacies by engaging in discourse while retaining their autonomy and ability to engage in reasoning.

Notes

1 Although situationists do not investigate these cases, they are worth mentioning as they depict the utility of codification in minimising risks:

   - Pilots and crew strictly adhere to specific operational protocols and checklists for ordinary flights and emergencies. The key to safety is to follow these rules.
   - The legalistic approach creates a precise framework for accountability. If everyone plays by the rules, it will be easier to identify when and where deviations occur, making it easier to hold people or organisations accountable for their actions.
   - Strong safety standards in some sectors, including pharmaceutics, chemical manufacture, nuclear energy and construction, must be strictly followed.
   - Following defined standards and guidelines enables decision-makers to reduce the impact of subjective judgements, feelings or arbitrary variables, fostering fairer decisions in circumstances where objectivity is important.
   - In some companies or bureaucracies, precise, codified rules expedite decision-making by enabling decision-makers to refer to the established rules, resulting in quicker decisions without extensive consideration of each circumstance.

2 Situationists do not present an in-depth analysis of the legalist conception of the rule of law. However, there is literature that expands on this topic in a way that aligns with the argumentation of situationists, without referring to situationism (Dyzenhaus, 2008, 2021; Raz, 1970; Sen, 2010).

3 According to the position of normative egoism, "I morally ought to perform some action if and only if, and because, performing that action maximizes my self-interest" (Shaver, 2019). Ethical egoism "…holds that one is always to do what will promote his own greatest good — that an act or rule of action is right if and only if it promotes at least as great a balance of good over evil for him in the long run as any alternative would, and wrong if it does not" (Frankena, 1973b, p. 14).

4 "Situation ethics welcomes law for love's sake sometimes, all depending. This is why anarchism is a fallacious social idealism and why Tolstoy was wrong. It recognizes the need for love but fails to see the need for order. It sees the importance of voluntary order but is too myopic toward the reality of sin to see the need for *a loving use of force* to protect the innocent and to make 'rights' practicable …. We ought not to hesitate to break a law that is in all conscience unjust, that is to say, unloving. Perhaps also we should before or *pari passu* do what we can to get it reinterpreted in the courts or thrown out on some ground such as constitutionality, using legislative machinery to correct it. But neither the state nor its laws is boss for the situationist; when there is a conflict, he decides for the higher law of love. He has to weigh immediate and remote consequences as well as local and broader interests, but if the scales go against law, so does he" (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 100–101).

V Metaethical Dilemmas

This chapter reverts to the morality management (MM) paradox (presented in the Introduction) by addressing questions that situation ethics provokes but does not directly formulate and answer. These questions are the following: *Whose interests should MM foster?* (Section 22), *What goods and values should MM promote?* (Section 23), *What are the sources of moral knowledge?* (Section 24), *Whose preferences set values?* (Section 26), *What are the goals and methods of MM?* (Sections 25, 27 and 28) and *Who should manage morality?* (Section 29).

22 The Metaethical Dilemma of Economics. *Stakeholders of Morality?*

According to the optimisation principle of situation ethics, MM should foster the most socially useful code of moral conduct. To operationalise this principle, one must answer the question: *Whose benefit constitutes social utility?* This question addresses stakeholders of morality and MM. This section presents three canonical responses to this question from the perspectives of ethical egoism, universalism and individualism.

22.1 *Ethical Egoism*

According to descriptive egoism, many or all agents act out egoistic motives – they primarily foster their own (individual egoism) or their group's (group egoism) interests and place them above those of others. This stance should be distinguished from normative (ethical) egoism, which specifies the moral duty to act out egoistic motives (Hutchinson, 2001; Shaver, 1999, 2019; Tullberg, 2006). In this view, answers to the question about the stakeholders of morality must be relative: As individuals and groups compete to foster their interests, they consider themselves stakeholders of MM. Consequently, egoists consider themselves the main stakeholders of MM as they expect any change of

morality fostered to benefit them. Moore and Kant outline a canonical philosophical critique of this stance, while managerial investigations show that it may justify injustice and discrimination (Hill, 2007, 2007; Hutchinson, 2001; Kant, 2010; Moore, 1903; Reath, 2012; Shaver, 1999, 2019; Tullberg, 2006).

Situationists do not discuss the moderate theories of rational egoism, which presume that rational egoists foster social interests through rational decisions. Critics of this position show that rational egoists may act socially destructively for a long period and have no egoistic reason to change the course of their actions (McMahon, 1981; Sen, 2017; Stiglitz, 2003).

Situationists do not oppose egoism to altruism. They believe a certain amount of self-love is required to love others. However, self-love without loving others is immoral in this view. According to situation ethics, love embraces all persons, including its subject. In this view, all people are stakeholders of MM; the agent should take care of her love and intend to optimise love in others – in the universe. In this way, situation ethics takes the stance of ethical universalism.

22.2 *Ethical Universalism*

It can be assumed that all people are stakeholders in MM. This approach can be explained by the stance of universalism in ethics:

> […] *Ethical universalism*, or what is usually called *utilitarianism*, takes the position that the ultimate end is the greatest general good -- that an act or rule of action is right if and only if it is, or probably is, the position that the ultimate end is the greatest general good - that an act or rule of action is right if and only if it is, or probably is, conducive to at least as great a balance of good over evil in the universe as a whole as an alternative would be, yet wrong if it is not, and obligatory if it is or probably is conducive to the greatest possible balance of good over evil in the universe.
>
> (Frankena, 1973, pp. 15–16)

According to this stance, all humankind, both present and future, is the stakeholder of morality. In this view, individual interests should be subordinated to the common good, understood as the sum of the interests of all people. Critics of this stance notice that many individuals or groups' interests compete with those of others; thus, satisfying the interests of all implies prioritising the interests of majorities and marginalising the interests of some. Therefore, this stance can justify discrimination against individuals and minorities if it is profitable for the majority (Dworkin, 1990; Fleurbaey, 2014, 2016; Shaver, 1999, 2019).

This position generates the universalism paradox: On the one hand, ethical universalism presumes that *all* persons are stakeholders of morality. On the other hand, in practice, this stance denies this postulate by favouring the majority's interests.

Situation ethics, in tandem with the utilitarian optimisation principle, presumes ethical universalism with the above paradox, even though situationists criticise discrimination (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 91, 100; 1967). Fletcher (1966b) maintains that one should always prefer the interests of the *greatest number*, according to the utilitarian optimisation principle (pp. 116, 118, 132–133, 141). Consequently, he permits discrimination in his case studies of divergent versions of the trolley dilemma, which illustrates a choice between the interests of the majority and those of a minority (pp. 74–75, 95, 98).

22.3   *Ethical Individualism?*

Some thinkers have advocated for ethical individualism to reduce the risk of discrimination and avoid the universalism paradox. From this perspective, *each person* is a stakeholder of morality. This position differentiates between the collective *everyone,* and the individual *each* (person). According to ethical individualism, MM should foster and protect the interests of each person in terms of their fundamental needs, rights or justice (Lévinas, 1996; Mill, 1859; Sen, 2010). Situationists do not explicitly advocate for this solution. Nevertheless, it is a plausible interpretation of the situationist conception of MM, as Section 37 will show.

23   The Ontological Dilemmas of Consequentialism. *Intrinsic Goods?*

The teleological approach in ethics centres on evaluating the moral value of activities based on their outcomes or repercussions. The core of this method is around the notion of intrinsic goods, which are qualities or conditions that are desirable for their own sake, rather than solely as a way to achieve other objectives. In order to properly apply the teleological method, it is crucial to clearly define these goods. This comprehension serves as a guiding principle for assessing activities based on their capacity to generate these desired results. In order for the teleological technique to be effective, it is essential to provide definitions and methods to state that these goods take place (Driver, 2014; Marseille & Kahn, 2019; Nathanson, n.d.; Singer, 1983).

According to situation ethics, intrinsic goods are occurrences of love. Consequently, to evaluate past practices of MM actions according to

situationist agapism, one must know the symptoms of love to identify its past occurrences. In future-oriented evaluations, one must know some pre-conditions for love to state that some action or moral code is conducive or destructive to love. However, situation ethics questions available methods that can facilitate the applicability of the teleological method, as this section shows.

23.1 Symptoms of Love?

Love is understood through introspection. Extrospective methods can be used to investigate the symptoms of love: actions. For example, they are practices protecting and promoting human "health, survival, growth, joy, social interest, self-realisation, and so on" (Fletcher, 1988, p. 30).

However, symptoms of love can occur without love (when people care for others without loving them), while love may also occur without its typical symptoms. Consequently, inferring that love occurred based on observing its symptoms is probabilistic and fallible. However, these observations facilitate the statistical knowledge that MM can adopt to identify the actions MM should promote (Gustafson, 1965; Ramsey, 1966, 1967). Knowledge of these symptoms facilitates adopting "summary rules," as Ramsey (1966) notices:

> Summary rules are reports that cases of a certain sort have been found to be most love-fulfilling. They are summaries of past decisions that have been made by a direct application of agape to particular cases. Thus, judgments concerning rules of behavior arise proximately and judgments concerning the right in particular cases arise immediately from the same source: the discernment of what love implies or requires in particular deeds.
>
> (Ramsey, 1966, p. 192)

Situationists maintain that historical experience allows us to understand the correlations between codes of moral conduct and past love occurrences (Gustafson, 1965; Ramsey, 1966, 1967). In this way, one can learn good practices when MM correlates positively with symptoms of love.

A more certain reasoning may be found in the case of the negative symptoms of the absence of love. These are, for example, "stealing, lying, killing, and committing adultery" (Robinson, 1970, pp. 15–16). Nevertheless, situationists maintain that such negative symptoms do not allow for certainty regarding the absence of love, as love can occur in their presence. For example, "… lying can … be right in certain circumstances… killing – in a just war, for example, or in capital punishment" (Robinson, 1970, p. 16).

However, these thinkers notice that it is implausible to foster love by promoting the negative symptoms of love (Robinson, 1970, p. 15). Consequently, determining the correct MM practice is challenging. Nonetheless, it may be clear when MM is flawed.

23.2   *Preconditions for Love?*

X is a prerequisite for Y when Y is impossible without X. Situationists abstain from specifying the preconditions for love by denying its operational definition (Fletcher, 1966b, p. 47). However, situation ethics is not without a conception of love. In this view, love is the will to promote love in the universe for all people, including the subjects of love. This idea is circular and formal but allows for specifying some preconditions for the capacity to conceive the intention of love. For example:

- **Respect for freedom**: As situationists stress, love is a free stance. Therefore, one cannot intend love in another person without respecting her freedom, which conditions her capacity to love. This assumption is remarkable in the situationist critique of legalistic methods of moral education (Section 19.5). Consequently, respect for freedom is the intentional prerequisite for love. Thinkers of divergent worldviews present this observation (Fahmy, 2016; Frankfurt, 1998; Fromm, 1956; Sartre, 1956).
- **Respect for reason**: As Kant demonstrates, knowledge is a prerequisite for freedom. Consequently, by fostering love, one should foster human freedom, while to foster freedom, one should protect human access to information (Allison, 1990; Hill, 2007; Kant, 1969, 2010). As it seems, Fletcher notices this prerequisite for love when presenting the right of patients to know the truth about their health (Fletcher, 1954).
- **Respect for life**: Non-existent people cannot love. Therefore, one cannot intend love in another person without respecting her life. Some contemporary thinkers conclude from this observation in ethics (Spaemann, 2012) and social politics (Dworkin, 1981). Situationists remarkably marginalise this intentional precondition for love.

These are necessary conditions for the intention of love to occur. They are insufficient conditions for the intention of love to happen. For example, one can respect freedom, reason or life of others without loving them, as seen in *bad* legalism.

As one cannot directly cause love (by power and coercion, for example), the only thing that MM and any political action can do to optimise love in the universe is to foster love's preconditions. Consequently, these preconditions are intrinsic values in the teleological method of calculating and evaluating the consequences of MM.

Fletcher expands the above list of preconditions for love using *indicators of humanhood*, which are preconditions for human existence (Fletcher, 1972, 1974). Although one can use these symptoms to distinguish persons from non-persons (Fletcher, 1954), which may justify discrimination, one should not diminish the ethical meaning of these indicators in the context of situationist agapism: They define what benevolent agents intend to respect and protect in another person. Accordingly, one cannot conceive the intention to love others without respecting their humanhood.

These preconditions are general manifestations of the imperative of love that specify normative morality, as one cannot conceive the intention of love without fulfilling at least one of these intentional prerequisites. Nevertheless, situationists deny their universality, insisting that normative morality consists of concrete imperatives of love without a universal dimension.

In normative ethics, knowledge of the preconditions for love lies in the language of universal moral prohibitions. Situationists deny their universality (according to situationist normative particularism in metaethics), except for the general prohibition of hatred and indifference towards people. In this view, love may have only situational preconditions. In the situationist interpretation, universal prohibitions are *summary rules.* Their validity depends on the circumstances and consequences of their practice.

As situationists stress, prior investigation is needed before formulating moral norms and rules because, if they are simplistically framed, they may function against love. Consequently, situationists warn for naïve translation of knowledge about preconditions for love into universal prohibitions.

This warning applies to divergent practices of legalism, which have their source in the good intentions of the law creators but result in what they probably did not want. These practices may also manifest bad faith as lawmakers may promote their hidden interests by promoting prerequisites for love. One should especially consider the mutual relationships between preconditions to love. For example:

- Norms that promote human life may violate human freedom – for example, the interventionist maintenance of vital functions may go against the patient's will.
- Norms that promote human freedom can occasionally clash with the right to life, leading to circumstances in which the quest for personal freedom jeopardises or compromises human life.
- Promoting the freedom of some groups may lead to discrimination against others, as exemplified by the tension between the regulations on hate speech and the right to freedom of speech.

However, the difficulties in formulating and applying universal prohibitions in a socially useful manner do not falsify their rationale, which lies in the intentional preconditions for love.

Universal prohibitions may be ineffective in evaluating human actions, as situationist rightly notice. Nevertheless, if they contain some knowledge about the intentional preconditions of love, they are of utmost importance for MM, as they specify the general directions of MM. Moreover, they can play educational roles by informing society about the operational meaning of the principle of love.

Intentional preconditions for love are *prima facie* data of moral experience, as some thinkers notice (Fahmy, 2016; Fromm, 1956; Hildebrand, 2009; Kant, 1969, 2010; Scheler, 1919, 1954; Spaemann, 2012). Situationists accept this experience in concrete situations but require denying its generalisations. *Why not?* One should ask, delegating the *onus probandi* to situation ethics. If moral experience contains some general knowledge, its denial requires a reason in some more reliable sources of knowledge. Situation ethics does not provide a definitive answer to this question.

Situationists point to risks of generalisations, but risks do not falsify any experience, as some discoveries may be risky. Situationists point to disagreements in interpreting this experience. However, they also do not falsify the experience. They only show that some or all opposing interpretations are false.

As Hildebrands note, moral discoveries do not occur in every situation. Agents can face moral duties once discovered in the past, as some previous moral experiences can remain valid in future moments of decision-making. For example, if someone once experienced human dignity, she may respect it in every new situation without reinvesting this discovery each time she meets a person. Situationists overlook this observation and presume that agents must rediscover moral imperatives anew in each decision-making situation (Hildebrand & Hildebrand, 1955, p. 137).

23.3   *Ontological Dilemmas between Normative Absolutism and Relativism*

Situation ethics presents normative absolutism by presuming that love has an intrinsic value (i.e. it is precious, regardless of human preferences and circumstances). However, situationists opt for normative relativism when discussing the prerequisites for love. In their positivism, they presume that all the requirements of love are products of some arbitrary existential commitment. Therefore, situation ethics does not present a clear stance between normative absolutism and relativism.

However, morality managers need to know if some intrinsic values are precious independently of human appreciation or not. Moreover, the

teleological method cannot work without setting the idea of intrinsic values.

The choice between normative relativism and absolutism in specifying intrinsic goods is a metaethical dilemma because these metatheories divergently specify the teleological method of MM that is adopted by situation ethics. Suppose morality managers who adhere to situation ethics adopt the assumption of normative absolutism in their teleological method. In this case, they should investigate the preconditions for love and subsequently manage morality to protect and foster them. This premise may give rise to uncompromising standards that specify respecting (love in) people – e.g. safeguarding fundamental human rights across cultures, governmental systems and personal preferences (Brems, 2001; Keys & Burke, 2013).

In contrast, in normative relativism, all values are extrinsic. They are precious insofar as someone appreciates them. From this perspective, the teleological approaches should adhere to certain human preferences. Consequently, from this perspective, morality managers should primarily study human preferences and manage morality according to them. In this view, the teleological method should begin by identifying value preferences and determining intrinsic goods according to these preferences. Consequently, morality managers may see the metatheories of normative relativism and absolutism as two distinct methods of MM, which oppose each other in practice.

23.3.1   Normative Absolutism?

According to normative absolutism, any practice of MM should begin with investigating the principal value and its relationship to actions. This stance requires the most realistic approach possible. For example, if this value is human well-being, this stance forces unbiased investigation of its preconditions of human nature by all available philosophical and scientific methods. This investigation should differentiate between real needs that fulfil and accomplish well-being and artificial needs that give subjective satisfaction that do not make this contribution (Doyal & Gough, 1991; Hapla, 2018). This stance requires respecting conditional relationships between intrinsic values and reality, which give rise to instrumental values. According to this approach, respect for these values should be conditional, as they are precious insofar as they contribute to intrinsic values.

The position of normative absolutism does not deny the importance of value preferences and extrinsic values, which may originate in fashions and social stereotypes. However, this position primarily requires promoting and protecting intrinsic values, which are precious regardless human preferences (Brandt, 1967; Garnett, 1944; Gowans, 2012; Jacko, 2019; McDonald, 2010; Westacott, 2012; Wreen, 2018). Consequently, in this view, MM

should promote respect for these values and foster preferences that contribute to intrinsic values in practice. For example, if human freedom, dignity or well-being is the principal value, MM should primarily promote appreciation for this value.

The main advantage of normative absolutism (anti-relativism) in meta-ethics are as follows:

- This stance opens the perspective for investigating intersubjective criteria for evaluations.
- This stance offers a set of values that can serve as an ethical framework in MM.
- This premise can guarantee the safeguarding of fundamental human rights and values, such as dignity, freedom and well-being, notwithstanding utilitarian concerns.
- The stance of normative absolutism fosters a sense of responsibility and accountability among morality managers towards societal and ethical obligations by upholding unwavering values.

However, limits of knowledge expose this stance to some risks:

- Normative absolutism may foster imposing universal principles against local traditions in the process of MM.
- One can abuse this metatheory to impose some arbitrary views under the guise of normative absolutism, presenting them as undisputable without adequate reason. This practice can generate superstitions.
- Determining which values are principal and intrinsic is contentious, resulting in controversies within and between groups.
- Rigorous adherence to rigid principles may impede changes.
- This attitude may lead to oversimplifying intricate ethical problems that necessitate nuanced, context-specific resolutions.

Divergent theories that adopt normative anti-relativism consider the above risks. Some authors present it as the framework for investigation that is opposed to *bad* legalism, fanaticism or ideological imperialism in ethics (Chroust & Osborn, 1942; MacIntyre, 1985, 2007; Uhr, 2015).

23.3.2　*Normative Relativism?*

According to normative relativism, *respect for values* means respecting some value preferences. In this view, MM is influencing some people's value preferences according to the value preferences of other people, who are considered authorities for some reason. In this practice, the appeal to authority (Lat. *argumentum ad auctoritatem*) plays a crucial role. This authority can

be the whole society, its elite, individual or organisation, as will show. The main advantages of this stance in MM are as follows:

- Normative relativism offers effective methods to identify evaluation criteria in human preferences. For example, one can investigate them through interviews, questionnaires and surveys.
- This stance may foster tolerance and diversity in considering and respecting divergent value preferences of societies and organisations.
- By recognising the significance of individual and collective preferences, this stance promotes a comprehensive approach to including stakeholders' preferences in MM.
- Normative relativism may foster open discussion and contemplation regarding divergent moral preferences.

However, this stance also poses some risks for MM, which are as follows:

- The lack of universally accepted principles can result in moral uncertainty, complicating the establishment of consistent ethical rules for action.
- Implementing this stance may intensify tensions between various groups' values, making it more difficult to reach a consensus.
- Multiple ethical frameworks might complicate the decision-making process.
- Prioritising individual or group preferences may impede the ability to hold morality managers responsible for adhering to universally accepted ethical principles.

Normative relativism, not less than normative absolutism, is at risk of *bad* legalism. Under relativism, this risk is higher as the ultimate stance of evaluation is in the value preferences of some authority. This stance may impede ethical investigation by fostering obedience, when opinions of a *value creator* are presented as beyond discussion.

23.3.3   The Pragmatic Balance?

Situation ethics presents a conundrum between normative absolutism and relativism. According to situationist utilitarianism, one should weigh theories' benefits, drawbacks and risks to select the least hazardous and most advantageous ideologies that specify intrinsic values. However, this method cannot operate without an idea of intrinsic goods. Consequently, the choice between normative absolutism and relativism logically precedes the teleological method.

Situationists marginalise the ontological issue about intrinsic goods by claiming that humans have sources of knowledge that are sufficient to know

what is right and wrong. The following section presents these sources of knowledge.

24   Epistemological Dilemmas. *Sources of Moral Knowledge?*

24.1   *Act-intuitionism?*

According to Fletcher, moral knowledge about intrinsic values is intuitive. *Intuition* in this text refers to the act and capacity to gather or synthesise information into new information without reasoning. Some thinkers (including G. E. Moore, W. D. Ross and Michael Huemer) presume that intuition is reliable or the only source of fundamental moral knowledge. This assumption constitutes the stance of *ethical intuitionism*. Phenomenology presents the possibility of methodically using this source of knowledge in ethical investigation, which explores moral experience.[1]

One should distinguish moral intuition (discovering moral principles) as presented above from act-intuition in finding moral solutions without reasoning. Situationists name this intuition *prudence* and *insight* into moral imperatives (Fletcher, 1966b, pp. 143, 158; Fletcher, 1979, pp. 222–225; Gustafson, 1965, p. 184; Rhymes, 1966, p. 173). According to situation ethics, people find moral solutions guided solely by act-intuition. This stance is called *act-intuitionism* in this text.

Intuitionism may be either elitarian or egalitarian. According to moral elitism, some people have greater act-intuition than others. Moral experts have developed this intuition at a high level, while non-experts are deprived of it or have not sufficiently developed it. In this view, there may be a continuous difference between moral ignorance (lack of moral intuition) and perfect moral competence (of moral experts).

In the elitarian version of this stance, there are limits to communicating moral experts' decisions to those deprived of moral intuition. In this view, non-experts cannot fully understand the intuitive rationale behind experts' moral evaluations or decisions. Consequently, non-experts must sometimes or even always agree or disagree with moral experts blindly – without understanding their intuitive moral views.

According to ethical egalitarianism, each person is a moral expert or at least has sufficient moral intuition to know what is right and wrong. However, disagreements among benevolent people regarding moral matters falsify this stance. To explain this disagreement, proponents of this position must either presume ethical elitism or assume that contradictory moral judgements are equally true. In the latter case, ethical egalitarianism must presume that each person has a unique perspective of moral perception, which has its moral truth that may contradict the truth from another perspective.

Consequently, if situationists presume no extra-intuitive sources of moral knowledge, this stance may foster two opposite practices, which range from extreme tolerance to intolerance. An egalitarian stance accounts for the assumption that everybody is right in their moral opinions (extreme tolerance). Proponents of the elitist version of this stance should maintain that only moral experts and people who agree with them are right, which leads to intolerance in discussing moral matters.

One can avoid these extremes by presuming that moral rightness or wrongness has symptoms known to non-experts and via non-intuitive knowledge. In this view, experts may have the best moral intuition but other people may have enough common sense to notice when moral authorities commit gross errors – for example, when they preach nonsense, become entangled in contradictions or their actions destroy principal good. For example, Józef Maria Bocheński shows how one can investigate the liability of moral authorities instead of trusting them blindly (Bocheński, 1965a; Brożek, 2013). In this view, non-experts can know prerequisites and symptoms of love. Based on this knowledge, one can assess, without the use of intuition, whether the actions of an authority promote love or contribute to its destruction. However, situationists deny any extra-intuitive sources of moral evaluation. Consequently, moral authorities must be trusted or distrusted blindly in this view. This consequence leads towards the decisionistic interpretation of situationist act-intuitionism, which the following section presents.

24.2 Decisionism?

Theories of moral intuition typically presume normative absolutism and epistemological realism in metaethics, which is the premise that agents can know moral values and duties, which do not depend on human preferences. However, situationist positivism presents the stance of normative relativism and epistemological subjectivism in metaethics, which presumes that moral knowledge is about mental acts. According to this stance, decisions *create* the intentional object of act-intuition (moral values and duties). Thus, act-intuition is awareness of existential commitment and its compatibility or incompatibility with a particular decision. In this view, act-intuition is about the authenticity or inauthenticity of decision-making. This stance introduces arbitrariness into MM. Section 30 further discusses this view.

25   Control Dilemmas

The MM of normative absolutism and relativism may foster similar moral preferences and solutions. Some conceptions combine these stances in a not-classifiable way according to the dichotomy between these

assumptions. For example, Amartya Sen's conception of justice combines normative absolutism and relativism (Sen, 1990, 2010). Nevertheless, the differences between the stances of normative absolutism and relativism may become remarkable in the controlling function of MM, especially if something goes wrong. For example, imagine the following situation:

> Authorities in some societies promote practices that violate fundamental human rights. However, these practices eventually garner approval in society.

There are historical cases of the above situation. For example:

- Slavery: In antiquity and modern times, the slavery system gained widespread social acceptance, not only among moral authorities but even among enslaved persons. Thus, some morality managers argued that this system was right.
- Child labour: In some developing countries, child labour is a successful business practice acceptable to local authorities and society.
- Usury: Financial organisations can exploit disadvantaged populations through predatory lending practices. These highly profitable practices are accepted or even encouraged by moral authorities in cultures that value consumerism.

Let us assume that proponents of normative absolutism and relativism respect the same fundamental human rights and define their requirements similarly. Still, these stances divergently identify the problem in the above situation.

For normative absolutists, the problem is on the side of reality, which is unjust regardless of human opinion and preference. For proponents of normative relativism, a situation is wrong because it contradicts some human value preferences. In this view, the problem lies in the relationship between the human will and reality. It may seem a slight ontological difference in defining values as inherent (intrinsic) or external (extrinsic) to reality. Nevertheless, it is an applied difference.

Because these stances divergently identify the *locus* of a problem, they offer divergent methodologies for solutions. For example, when evaluating usury, proponents of normative absolutism and relativism may investigate the requirements of justice. Suppose these thinkers follow the method of consequentialism; they consider the utility of these practices to distinguish predatory usury from morally acceptable financial assistance between entities (e.g. by specifying the upper limit of the permitted loan and borrowers' responsibility to repay the loan).

In making the difference between predatory usury and acceptable financial assistance, proponents of normative absolutism would search for some intersubjective criteria that do not depend on human preferences. These criteria may embrace context-dependent, subjective, cultural and legal aspects of the problem.

The solution of normative relativism may be similar, but of divergent operational meaning. In this case, MM should aim to manage the situation according to the preferences of some authorities. This solution begins with identifying them. Here, the appeal to authority plays a crucial role. These authorities may diverge in the different versions of this stance. In normative individualism, the evaluator considers herself to be this authority. In collectivism, the evaluation must presume the opinions of certain groups. In the view of elitism, authorities are individuals or minorities whose opinion is decisive.

For example, normative relativists can presume that this authority is the local group. In this case, if the local community or authorities appreciate the situation, one should presume it is right, according to normative relativism. If one presumes that some external group is the authority, then their opinion accounts for the evaluation. For example, when one evaluates the situation according to the opinion of some experts or legal provisions.

26   *Value Creators?* The Dilemma within Normative Relativism

This section presents the relativistic interpretation of situation ethics. Under this premise, intrinsic values depend on human preferences. The stance of normative relativism requires answering the question of whose preferences define the intrinsic values. The agents who do so are called *value creators* in this book. They do not create anything real by *creating* values. They *create* values by determining the social patterns of *right* perceptions of intrinsic values. This section presents candidates for the position of *value creators*.

26.1   *Each Person? Ethical Egoism*

According to the position of individual normative relativism (typical to antinomianism), each agent sets intrinsic values by her moral preferences – she is a *value creator* for herself. In this view, each agent has her perspective on moral perception, which determines what intrinsic are and what the rank of these values is. This stance is compatible with individualistic ethical egoism, as presented in Section 22.1. In this view, each agent should consider herself the *value creator*. If morality managers present this view, they manage morality according to their personal moral preferences.

26.2   All Individuals? Normative Egalitarianism

The appreciation for the freedom of individuals may lead to normative egalitarianism. In this view, all people or members of society are *value creators*, and MM's job is to act according to their preferences. This stance is compatible with ethical universalism, as presented in Section 22.2. From this perspective, morality managers in MM should foster preferences of all members of a group or organisation.

Critics of this stance argue that it is impossible to simultaneously satisfy the preferences of all people. Thus, MM must favour some preferences and counteract others, which may lead to discrimination against minorities and individuals whose moral preferences are marginalised or neglected (Dworkin, 1990; Fleurbaey, 2014, 2016; Shaver, 1999, 2019).

26.3   Elites? Normative Elitism

According to normative absolutism, some experts may know the preconditions for love and how best to implement love in social practice. This conception on moral experts should be distinguished from normative elitism, which presumes with normative relativism that some humans (individuals or groups) *create* intrinsic values by preferring them. In this view, value preferences are *correct* when they adhere to the value preferences of some elite of *value creators*. It is usually a group, but a single person can be the elite in this sense.

Situationist pragmatism proposes a peculiar competence that *value creators* should possess. Namely, situation ethics presumes that popularity is the marker of truth. From this perspective, success (defined as popularity) makes ideologies true. This stance posits that a standpoint's ethical validity or endorsement depends from the impact and control specific persons, groups or organisations have in moulding public sentiment.

Consequently, according to situationist pragmatism, entities with persuasive power (the most influential individual, group or organisational agents) are *value creators* because their preferences have the best chance to influence the rest of society. It is that individual or group that is sufficiently influential to make its ideas popular. Consequently, this stance can lead to considering the power of influence as the decisive reason to consider someone or a group as a moral elite or *value creator*.

26.4   Individualism versus Pragmatism

The ontology of situation ethics is existential and individualistic. It is hardly composible with the collectivistic, egalitarian or elitarian postulate that a morality manager should abandon her existential commitment to respect

someone else's will. This ontological background presents no moral reason for morality managers to foster others' moral preferences beyond their compatibility with her existential commitment, which can happen in three cases discussed in this section. They are as follows:

a Alliances: A morality manager represents a group with preferences similar to hers. In this case, the morality manager considers this group a *value creator* because she agrees with the group's collective moral preferences.
b Opportunism: A morality manager modifies her moral preferences for pragmatic reasons.
c Influence: A morality manager influences *value creators* to accommodate their preferences to her own.

26.4.1 Alliances?

Sartre (in his later writings) outlined alliances in the process of MM through his idea of solidarity with people with compatible existential commitments. The pragmatic reason for this action is that an individual is too weak to introduce her value preferences to the public. Accordingly, a group is more powerful than its members (Anderson, 2002; Boileau, n.d.; Bronner, 2021; Flynn, 2013; Sealey, 2012). In this scenario, the morality manager consolidates with a group and considers it a collective *value creator* because this group presents her moral views and gives her impact power to impose her existential commitment on the society.

26.4.2 Obedience?

The concept of *value creators* is normative in normative relativism. In this view, *value creators* cannot be wrong about moral matters because their moral preferences set the criteria for any moral assessment. Consequently, acting against them is immoral by definition.

Accordingly, one can interpret situationist pragmatism opportunistically, as it presumes that successful ideologies are right due to their popularity. From this perspective, morality managers should adopt and foster the most popular views or the moral views of the most influential social agents.

26.4.3 Ex-Post Pragmatic Validation

Morality managers can influence *value creators*. In this scenario, they originally disagreed with some stance but eventually accepted it, validating the new moral standards. Therefore, according to situationist pragmatism, some moral preferences and initiatives may receive *ex-post* validation in the

future preferences of *value creators*. Note the following examples, assuming that society is the collective *value creator*:

- Assume the government introduced some innovations against the will of society; however, after the effects of these solutions become apparent, society begins to appreciate them.
- Initially, resistance may emerge due to the perceived economic burden of medical innovations. However, environmental quality and public health improvements lead to widespread support.
- Radical social reforms such as the abolition of slavery and the extension of voting rights have gained widespread acceptance over time.

In *ex-post* validation, the morality manager takes the initiative to specify moral standards. She may pretend to respect the will of some *value creators* but takes their role in deciding the moral standards. Consequently, according to situationist pragmatism, morality managers start playing the role of *value creators* on the pragmatic condition that their initiatives are successful.

Under situationist pragmatism, successful persuasion *ex-post* validates actions of MM, as the success and popularity of ideas are decisive markers of their truth. Consequently, in this view, the process of MM is a *game of power* in which divergent players attempt to manage morality and those who happen to be successful become temporary *value creators*. The stance of situationist pragmatism may present this game as a perpetual reinterpretation and recreation of normative morality.

The pragmatic stance requires a method of control to curb the abuse of power. One such method may be systemic power division. This strategy requires adherence to legal regulations and rigorous assessment criteria in divergent political systems. Situationist pragmatism also requires respect for the law. Therefore, this stance should go hand-in-hand with a dose of *good* legalism, which requires players to respect the game's rules.

26.5   Dilemmas of Pragmatic Morality Managers

Imagine a situation in which the preferences of *value creators* are so fundamentally wrong and socially destructive that a morality manager cannot authentically abandon her voice of conscience. This situation presents the MM paradox of normative relativism. This view presumes that *value creators* cannot be wrong in their moral preferences because they set the standard for correct moral preferences. To avoid this paradox, a morality manager can presume that these *value creators*:

a are not *value creators*,
b are right, and she is wrong in moral evaluation,
c are right but are inconsistent.

These options specify divergent MM tactics. In case (a), morality managers should rebel against those who pretend to be *value creators* or their morally wrong beliefs. For example, in their critique of *bad* legalism, situationists suggest abandoning morally wrong authorities and disobeying unjust legal systems.

In case (b), morality managers blindfolded distrust their conscience and trust the preferences of *value creators*. This solution can lead to *bad* legalism and fanatic authoritarianism, which situationists criticise. However, this scenario is thinkable under situationist pragmatism, which may require morality managers to adhere to the most influential groups' views.

The typical situation of MM occurs in situation (c), in which *value creators* are inconsistent – when their preferences deny their other preferences or facts. In this case, morality managers should persuade *value creators* to avoid inconsistencies and contradictions in the therapeutic functions of MM, which Section 21.5 presented. This scenario can also lead to *ex-post* validation, as presented in Section 26.4.3, where morality managers take on the role of *value creators*.

27   The Goal of Morality Management. *Love or Success?*

Success refers to two characteristics of an action: efficacy and efficiency. Actions are effective when they reach their goals. Efficiency is achieving the best possible outcome with minimal losses and resource expenditure. Situation ethics sets the goal of MM in its success. However, this ethic proposes two divergent conceptions of success depending on whether one assumes normative absolutism or relativism.

According to normative absolutism, success and failure are a matter of fact. When MM's goal is love, the efficacy of MM is its function of protecting and promoting love, while efficiency is the optimal efficacy according to the situationist interpretation of the utilitarian optimisation principle – the greatest possible love to the greatest possible number. In this view, protecting and fostering love focuses on its preconditions, as love cannot exist without them, and MM cannot directly cause love.

The metatheories of normative absolutism may specify additional requirements for efficiency of MM. For example, Aristotle's concept of *eudaemonia*, or the flourishing of human potential, requires understanding human nature and its best possibilities. This perspective aligns with natural law, as outlined by Thomas Aquinas. Here, the preconditions for human existence and development are intrinsic goods that MM should protect and foster, while their promotion accounts for the efficiency of MM (Aristotle, 2002; Jayapalan, 1999; Kraut, 2002, 2016). Analogously, some proponents of fundamental human rights presume that they define the efficiency of actions. In this view, MM should foster respect for these rights (Brems, 2001; Keys & Burke, 2013; Sen, 1990, 2017).

In the view of normative relativism, MM is effective when it satisfies the preferences of *value creators* and efficient when it optimally satisfies them. Aligned with this definition of success, the satisfaction of *value creators* becomes MM's ultimate goal.

Under relativistic interpretation, the goal of MM may be called *love*, but it has no operational sense, meaning anything *value creators* highly appreciate and label as *love*. This interpretation poses two risks to MM, which are as follows:

- The absence of intersubjective criteria for evaluating the success of MM undermines the ability to systematically identify and address the goal of MM.
- The pragmatic criteria of situation ethics risk empowering temporary moral authorities through successful persuasion, potentially fostering a manipulative and power-centric approach to MM.

To limit the arbitrariness of MM, situationists presume that morality managers ground their decisions on intuitive moral knowledge. However, as Section 24 shows, this intuition allows morality managers to know only their authenticity and moral value preferences. This intuition is not the method to know what practice of MM can best protect and promote love.

28 The Means of Morality Management. *Is Manipulation Permissible?*

According to situation ethics, the most appropriate means of MM are non-coercive motivators that induce agents to engage in benevolent and morally right actions. These tactics make values accessible and attractive. Section 21.5 presented these methods.

One should distinguish manipulation from rational persuasion, which may be coercive but is not deceptive (in education, for example). Manipulation is a persuasion that goes against the will of the manipulated person; it limits her capacity to choose by determining her will and making her incapable of taking a free stance, either through coercion, disinformation or emotional deception. Consequently, manipulation is generally considered immoral because it is dishonest and disregards the welfare of the target (Cialdini, 2007; Leary, 2022; Perloff, 2016; Sarkissian, 2017).

Situation ethics does not address the problem of manipulation in MM, suggesting only that one should adopt proportionate means of persuasion, which balance the expected profits and the costs (including the moral *costs* of violating human autonomy) according to teleological method of utilitarianism. Situationists deny coercion in MM but their theory does not present any good reason to abstain from manipulation, which may effectively

implement the objectives of MM without coercion. Section 35 will present examples of this kind of manipulation in MM to problematise the disjunction between rational persuasion and manipulation.

29   The Recruitment Dilemma. *Who Should Manage Morality?*

This section presents the recruitment criteria for morality managers according to situation ethics. In organisations, these managers may have divergent names, such as chief ethics officer, ethics and compliance officer, director of corporate responsibility, ethical culture leader, corporate integrity officer, business ethics consultant, ethical standards manager, compliance and ethical practices manager, sustainability and ethics manager, ethical governance officer and organisational ethics facilitator.

Situationists maintain that these managers should be benevolent and prudent. Fletcher defines benevolence in terms of goodwill and responsibility (Section 15). However, he denies any extrospective criteria and method for evaluating intentions (Fletcher, 1970, pp. 21–50, Section 24). In his view, the only extrospective marker is a declaration of the candidate. However, malevolent agents can declare benevolent intentions. This marker is insufficient to select morality managers.

However, according to situationist pragmatism, one can evaluate the prudence of candidates in terms of their efficacy in selecting agents who effectively pursue their goals. Yet, this criterion is also insufficient because malevolent or morally ignorant agents may be effective.

Consequently, situation ethics presents two criteria for recruitment: candidates' declarations of benevolence and efficacy. The conjunction of these criteria is insufficient to select morality managers as malevolent or morally ignorant agents may be effective and declare benevolent intentions.

In their intuitionism, situationists marginalise morality managers' recruitment risks by presuming that prudent people recognise prudent morality managers without any recruitment criteria. Situationists impugn legalists' paranoid suspicion and tendency to codify and control everything. Situation ethics promotes trust in the prudence of decision-makers. However, these encouragements contrast with the situationist policy of civil disobedience and the critique of legalism that illustrates how malevolent or morally ignorant people may assume positions as morality managers. Thus, organisations that recruit morality managers require a methodology to do so.

As Aristotle shows, virtue is a lasting inclination and the ability to make morally right decisions (as opposed to vices, which comprise lasting inclinations to make morally wrong decisions). In this view, one can evaluate the benevolence and prudence of decision-makers based on the moral rightness of their decisions. Fletcher (1970) denies the idea of virtue. However,

he notices that one can rationally expect the agent to act as she did in the past. However, Fletcher denies any criteria for evaluating the moral rightness of actions, thereby making recruitment problematic. Without these criteria, recruiters can make evaluations without standardised criteria, which means that recruiters apply their arbitrary preferences or recruit egoistically – according to the expected profits resulting from recruitment.

Note

1 "In saying 'experience' we do not mean observations and inductions, i.e., experience in the sense of science. We mean the immediate contact with intelligible, evident data, which being offers to our mind, in our lived, pre-philosophical communion with reality. To hypothesis or theoretical explanations, or to induction and deduction, we oppose experience as the intuition of the 'given'" (Hildebrand & Hildebrand, 1966, p. 151).

VI Some Moral Hazards

The former chapter discussed the ambiguities inherent in situation ethics and how they allow for the adaptation of this theory to various metaethical viewpoints. This flexibility is an advantage that also introduces moral hazards. Under normative absolutism, situation ethics cannot formulate any method to identify intrinsic values as this stance does not consider the intentional prerequisites for love (see Section 23.2). This creates the hazard of unspecified moral standards in morality management (MM) within the context of situation ethics. However, normative relativism's assumptions allow for the formulation of this method to identify intrinsic values with the moral preferences of some *value creators* (see Section 26).

This chapter interprets situation ethics according to normative relativism. This assumption allows for the operationalisation of the ideas of situation ethics into the language of social action. It is argued that if, according to this stance, situation ethics denies the intentional prerequisites for benevolence (love), it offers a method of MM that is either arbitrary or prioritises power over other values. The question marks in this chapter's headings indicate the risks posed by situation ethics. They do not logically follow from situation ethics, as this stance is ambiguous in its premises and allows for another interpretation that minimises these risks. Chapter VII offers a formula to address these issues.

30 Arbitrariness?

Fletcher (1966b, p. 44) notes that the antinomian position of radical epistemological subjectivism in metaethics is conducive to **practical subjectivism** in decision-making and **practical relativism** in moral assessments in line with arbitrary moral preferences (Section 14.1). The situationist' counterproposal to these practices is **practical realism** (named *methodological rationality* in this book), which consists of considering the available knowledge (about circumstances and consequences) in decision-making

and moral evaluations. To safeguard this realism, situation ethics should explain how empirical knowledge relates to moral duties and values.

Fletcher (1966b, p. 49) impugns the naturalistic fallacy of deriving normative conclusions (i.e. statements concerning what *should* be) from this knowledge (specified by statements about what *is*) and finds a solution in intuitionism and decisionism (Section 24) to derive normative solutions from empirical knowledge. His normative relativism presents the reasoning from empirical knowledge to moral duties as a preference. This reasoning takes normative premises from value preferences, which are arbitrary according to situationist positivism (Section 18.4). Consequently, the conclusions of this reasoning are also arbitrary, as critics of situation ethics show (Biesaga, 2008; Bockmühl, 1975; Curran, 1968; De George, 1986; Geisler, 1981, 2010; Häring, 1975a; Lutzer, 1972; Styczeń, 1973). As these authors demonstrate, situation ethics presents a way to justify social engineering in MM, grounded in the hope that it will become socially useful in fostering love. Bockmühl (1975) opines that one can abuse the narrative of situation ethics to justify any goal, including genocide (pp. 139–140).[1] Here, hope substitutes chances and risk evaluation.

Situationists maintain that this hope is rational because agents possess act-intuition, which enables them to fittingly evaluate the future consequences of actions in situations of limited knowledge. However, situationists offer minimal justification for this hope, relying on the concept of act-intuition, as Section 24 shows.

31   Scepticism

The term *scepticism* etymologically refers to a research approach rather than a stance. Greek σκεπτικός derives from σκέπτεσθαι, meaning *to examine* or *to look closely*. This denotes research that challenges the overinterpretation of data and logical errors. It has accompanied ethical research since its origins, beginning with Socrates' elenctic method. It encourages continuous questioning and acknowledging human limitations in achieving absolute certainty (Comesaña & Klein, 2019). This research typically abstains from taking any definite stance. Situation ethics contributes to this sceptical research in discussing ethical theories of legalism and antinomianism.

One should distinguish between sceptical research, as specified above, and scepticism as a stance. It is the assumption that humans cannot possess reliable knowledge about anything (general scepticism) or something specific (particular scepticism, for example, in ethics or science). This stance has various versions (see Section 5).

This section presents the sceptical research of situation ethics and how situationists attempt to avoid the stance of scepticism. Section 31.1 shows how the research of scepticism applies to the method of situationist

consequentialism. Sections 31.2–31.3 present situationism's proposal to go beyond the position of scepticism in ethical research.

31.1   *Teleological Scrupulosity?*

Situation ethics adopts the teleological evaluation method that calculates the consequences of individuals' actions to identify their value. Moore (1903) noticed the epistemological and ontological obstacles to this method. The main ontological obstacle is the fact that actions cause endless chains of consequences, while the main epistemological obstacle comprises the limits of knowledge about the future and its predictability (Moore, 1903, § 64, p. 2). Herbert Simon's (1982) concept of *bounded rationality* presents them in the context of strategic management. This section presents this challenge in MM.

As Joseph Seifert (1987) notes, the approach referred to as *teleologism* might result in a condition that he calls *teleological scrupulosity*. This situation occurs when individuals carefully analyse a decision's potential scenarios and outcomes without arriving at a definite conclusion because of the limits of knowledge about the future (Seifert, 1987, p. 18).

Andreas Laun (1978) expands upon this criticism of the judicial sphere, contending that the same mindset might erode the efficacy of the legal system. He notes that if judges were to embrace this perpetual examination of the repercussions of crimes, it would render it unfeasible to arrive at conclusive determinations of culpability. Such persistent contemplation could impede legal procedures and weaken the principles of fairness (Laun, 1978, p. 167).

Situation ethics offers two solutions to teleological scrupulosity: intuitionism and decisionism. In the intuitionist solution, situationists presume that morality managers should follow their act-intuition, while, according to situationist decisionism, a decision must *cut* the endless evaluations of future scenarios.

31.2   *Act-Intuitionism*

According to situation ethics, responsible decision-making involves two scenarios: the agent follows either her act-intuition (normative individualism) or the intuition of an external authority (normative egalitarianism, elitism or pragmatism). In both cases, intuition precedes moral knowledge and reasoning. Consequently, agents must trust their intuition or the intuition of authorities blindly (Hildebrand & Hildebrand, 1966, p. 149).

Consequently, situation ethics presents the teleological evaluation as some unspecified insight into the value of consequences without presenting any method for controlling this insight. This theory only requires informed

intuition (it should consider all available knowledge). However, intuition is the last stance when evaluating consequences, according to situation ethics. This solution poses the danger of arbitrary evaluations, as this stance presents no extra-intuitive and intersubjective method to control intuition (see Section 24.1).

31.3   *Normative Decisionism*

The situationist stance of epistemological decisionism presents act-intuition as a decision (see Section 18.4). In this view, at some stage of the investigation, the agent decides the value of consequences. This decision *cuts short* the endless pondering of consequences. However, the stance of decisionism does not minimise the risk of arbitrariness. This position only canonises this hazard.

According to this interpretation, individuals establish values at every juncture. Although this solution provides an escape from the risk of teleological scrupulosity, it redirects the decision-making method towards antinomianism, where the final assessment regarding intrinsic values reflects the arbitrary value preferences of the agent or some *value creators*. In the latter case, situationist decisionism may adopt normative egalitarianism, elitism or pragmatism (see Section 26). In these options, the risk of teleological scrupulosity can emerge when the agent is unsure about who the *value creators* are (see Section 26) and whether the final calculus of consequences will satisfy their preferences.

32   **Fanaticism?**

This section presents a potential conjunction between scepticism and fanaticism in situation ethics, where scepticism as a stance is canonised and presented as true and indisputable. Situationists do not advocate this stance but promote it indirectly under the premises of normative relativism and pragmatism, as this section argues.

32.1   *Normative Perspectivism*

Intuitionistic and decisionistic interpretations of situational epistemology presume epistemological perspectivism. In this view, moral judgements occur from the perspective of moral perception and are unrelated to any intersubjective goods or values. Depending on the version of this stance, this perspective may be individual, collective, private or specified by the opinion of some authority (*value creator*).

Perspectivism can be descriptive when it states that people have a perspective on moral perception. However, this stance becomes normative under

the assumption of normative relativism. In this view, human preferences set intrinsic values. This stance's individualistic (antinomian) version requires agents to believe that their authentic decisions or act-intuitions are *automatically* or *magically* true or morally right only because they authentically originate from their existential commitment to love. Collective versions of this stance presume that some collective will *creates* values. In the elitist version of this position, it is the decisions of authority that bring values into existence.

This position can lead to extreme tolerance, respecting the diversity of moral decisions and ideals, including the most destructive and absurd. However, this stance can also lead to extreme intolerance, meaning that agents could disrespect any view, except their own or that of some authority.

32.2   Moral Fanaticism?

Moral fanaticism refers to the attitude and practice of marginalising or denying available moral knowledge when making moral preferences. Situationists try to counteract moral fanaticism by demanding respect for knowledge. However, situationism does not offer a method that allows the principle of love to be operationalised in decision-making, thereby requiring the evaluation of moral norms and rules at each moment of decision-making or adhering to *value creators* blindfolded. Consequently, situationist perspectivism presents discussions on moral matters as ideological conflicts of arbitrary moral preferences. In this view, value preferences are arbitrary and thereof – indisputable. This stance presents the ground for various beliefs and practices that may be called *fanaticism*.

32.3   Aspects of Fanaticism

The term *fanaticism* has many meanings. In this study, the term denotes a methodologically irrational attitude (as specified in Section 8.1) that leads to assertions, decisions or actions that go against the available knowledge (Levesque, 2018; Toscano, 2017).

Fanaticism can occur in various contexts. For example, in management, agents experiencing *hubris syndrome* are under the illusion that the power they possess or the responsibility they carry guarantees the infallibility of their preferences (Owen, 2008). The contexts of fanaticism may include the following:

- Corporate leadership: Executives or managers may exhibit overconfidence due to their experience and position within a corporation.
- Political leadership: Elected officials or government leaders may exercise their perceived authority to make choices without contemplating the consequences or obtaining advice from specialists in pertinent domains.

- Medical practice: Physicians or healthcare administrators may display an overconfidence bias by neglecting to seek secondary opinions or review fresh research when making diagnoses or treatment decisions, presuming that their experience alone is adequate.
- Legal professions: Lawyers or judges in the legal field may succumb to overconfidence bias, mistakenly believing that their legal experience grants them a comprehensive understanding of intricate issues.
- Academic research: Scholars or researchers may become entrenched in their theories or methodologies, neglecting to critically assess alternate perspectives or developing information that contradicts their preconceived notions.
- Parenthood: Parents may believe that they know what is best for their babies without gathering knowledge or seeking outside advice.

Usually, fanaticism refers to excessive, irrational zeal or uncritical enthusiasm, especially concerning beliefs or ideologies. However, fanatics can also be irrationally zealous about denying knowledge data. Fanaticism can generate exaggerated indifference towards information and values, producing paradoxical forms of fanatic scepticism (agnosticism). In this case, fanatics lack genuine interest in the truth, presuming that endorsing some viewpoints, a particular authority, or adhering to an ideology renders it unnecessary to scrutinise their rationale.

In this study, methodologically irrational beliefs are referred to as *prejudices* or *superstitions*. The fanaticism of these beliefs lies in *how* they are held, rather than their content. True statements may become superstitions when people fanatically adhere to them. In this case, the agent believes in them without any interest in their justification. However, fanatic beliefs are usually self-contradictory or against common sense and available knowledge (Bocheński, 1987). For example, Popper (1962, 2002) noted that scientific hypotheses might gain biased assent. His approach inspired a historical reflection, showing how uncritically held views (that might be true or not) hinder scientific development (Kuhn, 2012) and generate fruitless ideological disputes in science (Latour, 1987).

Superstitions consist of irrational beliefs that deny the knowledge of the agent or available knowledge. Fanatical perceptions are methodologically irrational assertions against fundamental logic rules and evidence. Fanatic attitudes may embrace indifference to available knowledge, leading to abstaining from investigating the rationale underlying beliefs (Bortolotti, 2010).

Fanatical perception can embrace divergent mental attitudes. For example, **ideological thinking** is thoughtlessly following an ideology, **superstitious attitudes** consist of fear or inferiority to testing beliefs, and **tribal**

perceptions deny the humanity of some people solely because they do not share certain beliefs or belong to a group (Vyse, 2000).

People with fanatical attitudes tend to dismiss or disregard any evidence or reasoning that goes against their views or may react to sound reasoning with aggression, which may increase proportionally with the fitness of the arguments. Fanaticism can motivate individuals or groups to feel firmly that their stance is superior, unquestionable and immune to criticism, disregarding alternative viewpoints and the wider consequences of their acts (Bortolotti, 2010; Graham, Nosek, & Haidt, 2012; Haidt, 2012). Fanatical agents may embrace **inferiority** against people who do not agree with their superstitions, question them or investigate their rationale (Bortolotti, 2010).

Methodologically irrational assertions are sources of fanaticism. As Sartre notes, this assertion plays a central role in self-denial (*bad faith*) because it denies something the agent asserts (Anderson, 2002; Heter, 2006; Santoni, 2010; Sartre, 1956). This denial may involve the belief that one perceives something that is not perceived, as exemplified in Christian Andersen's fairytale *The Emperor's New Clothes.* However, these assertions typically involve individuals not acknowledging what they know. Suppose that an agent has a sensual perception. She cannot rationally deny such a perception. She can doubt whether she is interpreting it correctly. However, denying the perception is self-denying, as its denial presumes that the perception has already occurred. Analogous denial can occur in any perception. For example, a fanatic can deny her moral experience.

Fanatic beliefs typically involve violating the rules of logic in interpreting raw data from immediate experience. In such a case, the fanatic may be aware that the rules of logic offer reliable methods for understanding her experiences. However, she (in wishful thinking) may prefer to violate them in order to achieve a desired conclusion (Bortolotti, 2010; Kahneman, 2011; Stanovich, West, & Toplak, 2016).

Given these characteristics, one should distinguish between strong moral convictions and fanaticism. Fanaticism is the dearth of receptiveness to knowledge and alternative perspectives, as well as a readiness to enforce moral beliefs on others against their freedom, available knowledge, evidence and common sense. Thus, deep faith may not be fanatical when it is open to arguments seeking the truth in a respectful dialogue with others (Arendt, 1951; Mill, 1859; Popper, 1945, 1947).

32.4   *Fanatic Paternalism*

Moral paternalism is a belief and practice. As a belief, it is the assumption that one is permitted to impose moral standards on society against the will of its members when it is profitable for them. The practice of moral

paternalism consists of an influence process between the paternalising and paternalising parties. Paternalising parties intend to safeguard the interests of the paternalised ones by imposing specific moral standards.

Situationists propose didactic paternalism in educating people, aiming to motivate them (without coercion) to make morally good and right decisions (see Section 21.3). In this view, MM should motivate people to make responsible, prudent and benevolent decisions without coercion or compulsion. As situationists suggest, educating people in moral decision-making should encompass more than simply teaching a predefined set of values or ideas. It should also involve providing them with the necessary abilities to critically examine, analyse and comprehend the intricate nature of moral dilemmas and evaluate the opinions of moral authorities. This paternalism does not exclude manipulation (see Section 28).

Suppose that each individual is the *creator* of value for herself. Consequently, any type of paternalism is morally wrong. Situationists present this line of argumentation when criticising legalist authoritarianism. However, this supposition allows for the opposite interpretation, where individuals should influence each other's moral preferences when they deeply believe it is good for others. In this case, paternalism is morally permissible and, moreover, is the requirement of love. Situationists present this view.

Under the relativistic interpretation of situation ethics, the moral rightness of value preferences consists of their consistency with the value preference of a moral authority (i.e. a *value creator*). In this view, the idea of *value creators* is normative because they *create* the standards of *correct* value preferences that morally bind individuals by moral duty.

When investigating the authority of *value creators*, one can consider their education, prudence or position within the organisation if they are formal authorities. However, situation ethics does not present any intersubjective method to determine whether these entities' value preferences are correct. Consequently, according to this view, value preferences can be *correct* or *incorrect* (right or wrong) only regarding the value preferences of some other *value creator*.

In this view, to control the correctness of *value creators*' value preferences, one must assess their coherence with the value preferences of other *value creators*. In turn, we can control their value preferences by confronting them with other *value creators'* preferences, and so on. This reasoning is either endless or circular. (Korsgaard, 1996; MacIntyre, 2007; Nagel, 1989)

Situationist pragmatism may suggest a method to escape the vicious circle or infinite justifications of authority by assuming that the most popular views are correct and most influential entities are *value creators* for the

society. However, this standard of moral justification has the potential for various pitfalls:

- Justifying injustice: Various morally wrong ideas and unjust social practices have remained popular for long periods throughout history. Thus, situationist pragmatism would justify these ideas and practices if they reach the pragmatic goal of popularity.
- Fake authorities: Within this framework, it is possible for power or popularity to unjustly take on the function of epistemic authority over moral matters.
- Power delusion: This stance may lead to power delusions if the influential power of the authorities is confused with their moral correctness. In this scenario, those in positions of power or influence authority are assumed to possess greater moral understanding or expertise through their achievements or sway. Consequently, the situationist idea of didactic paternalism must become fanatical when the reason of power (of influence) substitutes the power of reason in moral argumentation.

Situation ethics challenges legalism's fanatical authoritarianism. However, this theory mirrors this fanaticism by dismissing structured control methods. This overconfidence overlooks the necessity for a methodology to minimise the above moral hazards.

32.5   *Appeal to Ignorance?*

Any stance can become fanatical when adopted fanatically. The stance of scepticism can also be fanatical when meeting the characteristics presented in Section 32.3. *Fanatical scepticism* is an oxymoron, as sceptical research refrains from assuming a definite position and aims at criticising prejudices. However, this term refers to real practices that originate in sceptical research but lead to radical positions of the sceptical stance.

Arthur Schopenhauer notes various fallacies that may lead to or justify fanaticism, where some logical error substitutes the search for truth (Schopenhauer, 2019). The typical fallacy that sceptical researchers challenge is the error of deriving knowledge or certainty from ignorance. This error is named (Lat.) *argumentum ad ignorantiam* or *appeal to ignorance* in reasoning. The misconception rests on the paradoxical assumption that ignorance is the knowledge of something (Walton, 1996). This fallacy occurs in two typical cases:

a   A proposition is asserted to be false because it has no proof.
b   The lack of evidence for a claim serves as evidence for its counterthesis.

Versions of this fallacy represent various reasonings that the following structure can adopt: *If X has no proof, X is certainly false, and its opposite (the negation of X) is certainly true.*

Situationists do not formulate the appeal to ignorance in one sentence. However, they sequentially build their argument against the intentional prerequisites for love according to the following schema: *They have no proof; therefore, love has no preconditions.*

Situationists do not directly attack the intentional preconditions for love. These thinkers question the universal prohibitions that operationalise the idea of the preconditions. In this case, the above formula is as follows: *One cannot prove universal prohibitions; therefore, they are not universal.* This reasoning has some invariants in situation ethics. Here are some examples where X designates the thesis that these prohibitions are universal (valid in all situations), and ¬X signifies the counterthesis (that they are not universal):

a There is cultural diversity and disagreement regarding universal prohibitions. Therefore, one cannot justify them through a social consensus. Therefore ¬X.
b There are exceptions to applying universal moral norms and rules in a morally right way in situations of moral dilemma. Therefore, one cannot justify them by enumerative induction. Therefore ¬X.
c In some situations, adhering to these prohibitions is less profitable than breaking them. Therefore, one cannot justify them by consequentialism (showing their social utility). Therefore, ¬X.

These premises of the above reasonings (*a–c*) are true but do not justify thesis ¬X. Argument *a* would be a sound reason for ¬X, assuming that a broad or full consensus is a typical or necessary marker of true statements. However, this assumption is false. There is rarely universal agreement on statements requiring high expertise, as exemplified by disagreements regarding heliocentrism before modern times.

Situationists exemplify argument *b* through moral dilemmas in which one cannot simultaneously satisfy all preconditions for love. For example, in situations where respecting human freedom means risking human life, whereas by rescuing human life, one disrespects human freedom. In such situations, one must break one prohibition to respect another prohibition. However, argument *b* does not shake the assumption about universal prohibitions but only shows that in some situations, they cannot be simultaneously respected. Moreover, as the theory of double effect shows, these prohibitions apply to solutions to these dilemmas (Anscombe, 1982; Dworkin, 1990; Hills, 2003; McIntyre, 2014).

Argument *c* entails a hasty generalisation (extrapolation) when situation-ists present atypical situations and presume that they are typical. Atypical situations are exceptions, and exceptions do not constitute a rule.

32.6   *Fundamentalist Antifundamentalism?*

Situationism converges with the antifundamentalist movement in ethics; i.e. through sceptical research, it undermines the possibility of identifying un-changing moral norms and rules. The situationist critique of legalism con-cerns a variant of this position called fundamentalism. However, divergent types of fundamentalism and antifundamentalism must be distinguished to identify the situationist approach.

The discussion of fundamentalism and antifundamentalism in ethics highlights the complex conflict between unwavering ideals and the need for flexibility and receptiveness. Fundamentalism is characterised by a steadfast belief in specific ideas, manifested in two main forms: rational (methodo-logical) and irrational (fanatical).

Rational fundamentalism uses a methodical technique to select basic re-search principles in science or ethics. This method is dedicated to research and discussion, a willingness to accept criticism and the development of eth-ical ideas based on the most solid foundations available (see Section 39.2).

In contrast, fanatical fundamentalism demonstrates methodological ir-rationality by selecting principles without foundation in research and logical reasoning. This approach weakens the basis of ethical thinking and deviates from the quest for truth and comprehension of ethical discussions.

Antifundamentalism promotes a flexible ethical approach that does not uncritically adhere to conventional doctrines. Situation ethics joins this an-tifundamentalist movement in critiquing legalism.

Antifundamentalism, similar to fundamentalism, ranges from research to obsessive rigidity. Rational antifundamentalism is associated with scepti-cal research. It involves research, dialogue and the exploration of ethical perspectives.

Fanatical antifundamentalism is dogmatic, imitating the inflexibility it aims to combat by suppressing differing views and claiming the moral su-periority of the sceptical stance above other views. This stance involves the outright rejection of applicable universal principles and general knowledge. By prioritising novelty to negate established ethical thought, antifundamen-talism risks creating a vacuum in which critical ethical insights are lost or undervalued (Haidt, 2012).

Although situation ethics presumes the principle of love, this research presents fanatical antifundamentalism in ignoring the intentional pre-requisites for love and denying universal prohibitions, which can provide

a normative minimum for this ethics. Situationists tend to present all views as *bad* legalism when they advocate for universal moral norms and rules.

32.7   Intolerant Tolerance?

The concept of tolerance, championed by Enlightenment thinkers, was fundamentally rooted in the aspiration to mitigate conflicts and wars sparked by divergent beliefs, particularly those about religion, which elude definitive human comprehension. This idea posited tolerance as a passive virtue and a proactive strategy for cultivating peace and understanding amidst the diverse beliefs that transcend the bounds of empirical verification. However, this noble pursuit encounters a paradoxical challenge when confronted with fanatical antifundamentalism. Popper (1945, 1947), for example, presents the paradoxical practices of *intolerant tolerance*, offering examples of views classified as intolerant solely because they present fundamentals of thinking or morality.

Situation ethics, which puts tolerance on a pedestal of social priorities, generates the risk of intolerance when morality managers take situationist normative perspectivism seriously and silence any views that search for the fundaments of tolerance in some universal moral norms or rules. In ethical investigations, this practice can take the form of self-censorship when researchers deny or ignore their research data, which opposes the sceptical stance (Bracken, 1994; Duignan, 1995; Kersch, 2003; Lukianoff, 2014; Magee, 2002). Situationists present this practice when marginalising the intentional preconditions for love, probably out of fear of their normative conclusions.

33   Powergaming?

Effective MM requires some degree of power. Power is necessary for effectively implementing the persuasive and organisational functions of MM. Therefore, regardless of their existential commitment, morality managers should obtain and maintain a modicum of power to manage morality if they are to do it effectively. *Power* refers to the capacity for effective action. This can include the powers of coercion or persuasion. However, situation ethics prioritises the power of persuasion, as this ethics is against coercion, while situationist pragmatism sets success as the goal of ethics.

According to situation ethics, the power of persuasion is MM's means rather than its aim. However, as this section argues, the reason for power may substitute the power of reason in ethical disputes when success is considered the main goal of ethics. This situation is named *powergaming* in this study.

The psychology of role-playing games specifies a situation called *power-gaming*, in which the strategic sub-goal of gaining an advantage over other players absorbs the players' attention so much that the means become the main goal in the perception of players.[2] Powergaming may occur in various situations; for example, when the conditions for enjoying life consume the attention of a person to a degree that they never have the time to enjoy life. This situation can occur in politics and business when agents sincerely declare noble goals but are more concerned with obtaining power rather than achieving said goals. In these cases, the means substitute the goals of action. For example:

- Corporate strategy: Executives may perpetually prioritise enhancing the organisation's position to guarantee operational efficiency and postpone other goals for an undefined future.
- Corporate social responsibility: A manager might agree with the principles of corporate social responsibility but continuously delay integrating these practices into business operations, perpetually prioritising gaining power.

Systemic powergaming takes place when the rules of a game make powergaming the best strategy (Bowman, 2010; Burak & Parker, 2017; Jacko, 2018a; Juul, 2003; Sicart, 2005, 2011; Tekinbas & Zimmerman, 2003). Life situations can be examples of such games. For example:

- Justice: Some organisations may declare their goal of fostering justice, but their internal rules gratify players who violate the standards of justice.
- Efficiency evaluation: Henry Mintzberg (1982) highlights the risk of imposing only quantitative measures of efficiency in organisations. As he shows, these measures prioritise the profits of organisations and marginalise social values that are not quantitatively measurable.
- Corporate governance: Organisations declare their goal of fostering social well-being and security. However, their gratification system and diffusion of responsibility may allow managers to prioritise short-term profit maximisation, which is risky for society in the long term. This situation can promote the practice of manipulating the system by prioritising tactics that increase stock prices in the immediate term, even if they are risky in the long term to the interests of stakeholders. For example, the 2008 global financial crisis exemplifies this moral hazard, as banks engaged in risky lending and investment practices driven by incentive structures that rewarded short-term profits. These actions contributed to the housing bubble and financial instability, with banks and employees benefiting from immediate gains without

bearing the full risks. When the bubble burst, leading to a global economic downturn, governments bailed out many of these institutions, effectively socialising the losses. The broader society absorbed costs through government interventions, economic recession and austerity measures, while responsible financial institutions faced limited direct consequences. This scenario underlines the critical issue of aligning corporate incentives with long-term sustainability and social well-being.

Powergaming strategies may have unspecified goals and, in this way, prioritise power above other objectives. Here are some examples:

- Political leadership: Political leaders may be motivated by ideals but their search for re-election may eliminate their genuine motivation or require compromises that contradict these ideals.
- Management: In non-profit organisations that lack a clear mission and set of objectives, the effectiveness of their actions may be assessed based on their capacity to increase social acceptance rather than on the attainment of philanthropic objectives.
- Environmental advocacy: Consider an ecological advocacy organisation that lacks precise environmental objectives or methods to attain ecological equilibrium. Under such circumstances, it may prioritise becoming more influential, obtaining places on regulatory bodies or exerting influence over legislation by marginalising the issue of accomplishing specific ecological enhancements.

In each of these instances, the lack of an operational objective results in a situation in which the quest for effectiveness may transform into a quest for power. These risks may not occur if the agent is perfectly virtuous. However, it would be wishful thinking to presume that all people are like this. It is the job of ethics to investigate and determine solutions to minimise these risks.

Situation ethics does not require the practices of powergaming. However, situationist pragmatism fosters powergaming by presenting MM in a way that does not require anything but success, which is unspecified in situation ethics (see Section 27). When the objectives remain unspecified, and the only success is a tangible effect of MM, morality managers may prioritise any kind of success over the social utility or moral rightness of MM. It is the risk that situationism poses. However, situation ethics also fosters this risk by defining the success of MM in terms of popularity. In this case, a metatheory of situation ethics can justify any action of MM that gains social approval.

34 Egoism?

As some critics of situation ethics show, a situationist ontology can justify prioritising one's freedom over that of others and any social benefit by emphasising existential commitments. One can present this prioritisation as ethical egoism.

Situationists believe that their agapism contradicts egoism in practice, as this ethics postulates the acting out of benevolent motives defined according to the utilitarian optimisation principle as the greatest good for the greatest number of people. However, the practical meaning of this postulate is its operationalisation. Situation ethics specifies the operational meaning of the principle of love in the following manner, which can be summarised in the form of a syllogism:

- Major premise: Moral decisions should aim to accomplish the agent's existential commitment.
- Minor premise: Existential commitments specify the interests of the agent.
  - Conclusions: Moral decisions should aim to satisfy the agent's interests.

Requiring that the existential commitment should be love does not change the conclusion because situation ethics denies any intentional prerequisites for love. Therefore, the assumption of situationist agapism does not change this conclusion.

- Major premise: Moral decisions should aim for love, as specified by the existential commitment of the agent.
- Minor premise: Existential commitments specify the interests of the agent.
  - Conclusions: Moral decisions should aim to satisfy the agent's interests.

Egoism is not wrong if it does not harm anyone. Further, it may even be laudable if it fosters social profit. The risk of situation ethics is not that it requires egoistic motivations. The risk consists in reversing the traditional meaning of *love* through a metatheory of situation ethics hidden in its premises. This theory offers morality managers an attractive advertising tool to foster and hide the egoistic goals behind *love* narration.

35 Manipulation?

In this text, *manipulation* refers to influencing agents against their will and well-being. Typical methods of manipulation include coercion and deception. Situation ethics criticises coercion but does not present any moral

limit for MM's non-coercive methods. Situation ethics requires that MM is effective according to the principle "the end justifies the means." Manipulative methods may find their justification in situationist pragmatism if they effectively influence *value creators* and become validated *ex-post*, as shown in Section 26.4.3. This section presents some tactics of manipulation that situation ethics exemplifies.

35.1   *Wrong Reasons for Good Practices*

Some deceptions may merge truth and falsehood in moral reasoning. This manipulation method may use incorrect, questionable or inconsistent premises to foster laudable goals. For example, in some cultures, certain medical principles are explained by the taboo of impurity, which emphasises hygiene, thus protecting people's health.

Notably, situationists consider socially useful consequences as the main goal of their ethics. Consequently, situationists may know that their premises are unfaithful to moral experience or self-contradictory but adopt them expecting good consequences. For example:

- Situation ethics marginalises the intentional preconditions for love. See Section 32.5.
- Situation ethics presumes that moral norms and rules do not apply to decision-making before the decision-maker accepts them. See Section 15.3.5.

These premises are useful – they foster agents' creativity and responsibility against the risks of *bad* legalism incarnated in universal prohibitions (see Section 15.3.5). This line of argumentation should give situationists pause when these assumptions can lead to harmful consequences. For example:

- If one ignores the prerequisites for love, agents can name any intention as *love*, including those detrimental to human freedom, well-being or life.
- The situationist requirement that the agent validates the applicability of moral norms and standards through her decisions or intuitions may result in erratic or capricious evaluations and decision-making. An individual may exploit this requirement to justify the disregard of established ethical or legal principles, ultimately leading to detrimental or prejudiced decisions.

35.2   *Implicit Goals*

The tactics of implicit goals may conceal some of MM's consequences if society does not accept them. This trick presents an explicit goal of action to hinder the goals that this action accomplishes as a side effect. This tactic

involves manipulating through understatement. This could have a socially beneficial impact. For example, morality managers who want to foster moral creativity may do it by promoting normative relativism.

However, these tactics are risky because implicit goal tactics can be used for bad reasons. For example, one can foster normative relativism to weaken the solidarity between people so that they are guided by egoism to stop caring about their common good and distrust each other (Häring, 1975b, p. 48). These may not be the intentions of situationists. However, situation ethics presents the tactics of MM that may justify any implicit goal tactics by integrating hidden agendas into the *love* narrative.

35.3   *The Instrumentalisation of Ethics*

According to situationist pragmatism, ethics is a tool of MM that finds its justification in success (popularity). Consequently, situations present their theory as an ideological tool for social persuasion (see Section 18.6). However, motivating people with a theory and considering the theory merely as an instrument of social influence are two different things. Situationist pragmatism presents the latter case, which accounts for the instrumentalisation of ethics.

The instrumentalisation of ethics consists of subordinating ethical research and its interpretation to pragmatic goals. This process may utilise ethical justifications to conceal an agenda, welcoming tricks that substitute rational communication. In ideologically driven communication, ethical research and knowledge are subordinated to the pragmatic goals of convincing or battling opponents. This may entail utilising ethical principles and ideals to advance agendas that are hidden and unrelated to advancing moral conduct (Habermas, 1988, 1990; Horkheimer, Adorno, & Noeri, 2002; Marcuse, 2012; Žižek, 2008).

There is nothing wrong with ideologies. However, they may be misleading when presented as theories (Lewandowsky, Ecker, & Cook, 2017). This trick presents ideology as trustworthy and grounded in scientific research. Masking ideology as impartial knowledge can generate *ideological thinking*, which occurs when one perceives ideology postulates as indisputably true and beyond discussion (Chalmers, 1999; Kuhn, 2012).

The instrumentalisation of ethical research and communication fosters social hazards. For example:

- Trust erosion: The instrumentalisation of ethics can undermine trust in institutions, organisations and individuals proficient in investigating and maintaining moral principles. Rational agents perceive each moral narration as a cover for hidden agendas.

- Disengagement: Instrumentalising ethics can result in sceptical and detached attitudes towards moral values among the public.
- Erosion of social perception: Exposure to ideologies can erode the significance and value of ethical standards in social perception since activities that truly embody these values become indiscernible from those that use them for persuasion.

Situation ethics, with its pragmatism, inherits these risks by identifying the truth of ethical theories based on their popularity.

Notes

1 "Wenn es keine absoluten Werte gibt außer der Liebe, und wenn die Liebe den Nutzen der nach subjektiven Urteil jeweils größeren Zahl bedeutet, dann kann man nur hoffen, daß uns diese Logik nicht noch einmal nach *Auschwitz* führt!" (Bockmühl, 1975, pp. 139–140) "If there are no absolute values except love, and if love means the benefit of the greater number according to subjective judgment, then one can only hope that this logic does not lead us to *Auschwitz* again!" (translation of the author).
2 Powergaming is primarily noticed in gaming, particularly role-playing games, video games and tabletop games. It refers to a style of playing that prioritises personal power or advantage over collaborative storytelling, immersive experience or fair play (Bowman, 2010; Burak & Parker, 2017; Jacko, 2018a; Tekinbas & Zimmerman, 2003).

VII Some Perspectives for Research on Morality Management

This chapter expands upon the examination of situation ethics by proposing improvements to tackle its ambiguities and potential hazards, focusing on metaethical factors. It underscores the significance of adapting normative assumptions to preserve the advantages of the theory while minimising its limitations. The primary objective of this chapter is to augment situation ethics while maintaining its fundamental principles, providing a more accurate interpretation that underscores the theory's implementation in ethical decision-making. As this chapter focuses on metaethics, it will only marginally discuss applied improvements in organisational procedures and concentrate on how refining the normative assumptions of situation ethics can safeguard its achievements.

This chapter presents suggestions concerning the further development of the situationist metatheory in the following direction: situation ethics and morality managers who adhere to this theory should operationalise normative assumptions, refine standards of decision-making and ground MM in philosophical and scientific research.

36 A Metatheory for Risk Management

The main applied advantages of situation ethics in MM are as follows:

- Adaptability: Situation ethics offers the flexibility of an ethical investigation that permits the formulation of answers tailored to concrete circumstances. Situation ethics requires adapting the codes of moral conduct to situations of decision-making. Adaptability is essential in untypical situations.
- Focus on compassion: Situation ethics fosters empathy in decision-making by prioritising benevolent motivation in decision-making and the most loving outcome of actions.
- Focus on utility: According to the utilitarian optimisation principle, situationists encourage decision-makers to evaluate the outcomes of their choices rather than simply adhering to a set of abstract rules.

- Focus on moral autonomy: Situation ethics acknowledges and upholds individuals' moral autonomy in decision-making, acknowledging their ability to make ethical judgements based on their best knowledge and evaluation of the situation.
- Capacity to resolve conflicts: Situation ethics offers a method to resolve moral conflicts or legal contradictions by prioritising the solutions that maximise love and social utility. This method can be particularly advantageous in intricate ethical environments where numerous values are jeopardised.
- Adaptability: As societal norms and values change, situation ethics enables moral reasoning's proper adaptation to the cultural and situational context of MM.

Although situation ethics has these positive qualities, Chapter VI elucidates the main hazard in applied MM: adopting the metatheory of situation ethics to justify arbitrariness, fanaticism, manipulation, egoism and powergaming in MM. The evaluation of these risks is a matter of value preferences and normative assumptions that this study takes from situation ethics, which argues for the evaluation of moral theories in terms of their social utility. Organisations that oversee ethical conduct have long engaged in practices that minimise the risks mentioned above. These practices can be described as follows:

- Ethical guidelines: Organisations can formulate and respect some principal values that provide a framework for decision-making. However, they should be adaptable to the requirements of the situation.
- Checks and balances: Morality managers could introduce checks and balances into their decision-making process, which would presuppose the existence of criteria for evaluating MM's outcomes. This process could involve ethical review boards, stakeholder consultations and mechanisms to investigate MM's consequences.
- Harm prevention: Although flexibility is important, MM decision-makers should establish procedures to prevent harm.
- Monitoring and ethical auditing: Regularly monitoring the outcomes of decisions and conducting ethical audits helps identify unexpected consequences of MM and allows for course correction when necessary.

By implementing these tactics, organisations can utilise the advantages of situation ethics, such as flexibility and contextual awareness, to mitigate the aforementioned hazards. However, under the metatheory of situationism, these practices can remain vulnerable to the problem of arbitrariness, which they are supposed to prevent. Consequently, a meticulous refinement of the normative assumptions underlying situation ethics is required to substantiate these methods.

37 Stakeholders of Morality

37.1 A Dose of Normative Absolutism

As Section 23 argues, morality managers must make a metaethical choice between fostering the value preferences of some *value creators* and protecting intrinsic values – i.e. those that are precious regardless of human preferences. Although these options are not exclusive, this choice is unavoidable in MM whenever the authorities deny or ignore intrinsic values.

Suppose that *value creators* accept some forms of discrimination. For example, there have been points in history when the authorities have commonly accepted slavery and considered it good for society and the enslaved. In this case, some methodology is needed to determine whether *value creators* are correct. Without this methodology, any social movement against discrimination may easily turn into another form of discrimination when groups fluctuate in their positions as *value creators* and perpetually foster discrimination against other groups. In this case, any political struggle is viewed as a clash of interests and preferences, discretely introducing another form of discrimination according to the tactics of implicit goals specified in Section 35.2. Actions intended to dismantle existing power structures and inequalities might inadvertently establish new ones, thereby perpetuating cycles of exclusion and marginalisation, albeit under new guises. This outcome is particularly concerning in movements and efforts in which vigilance against such possibilities is not maintained. For example, revolutions typically aim to introduce justice; however, in the process of implementing revolutionary reforms, such as land redistribution and social reorganisation, new forms of discrimination and oppression may emerge (Patterson, 1991).

Suppose that love is the principal good and is understood as the will to do good to others, as situationists presume. Formulating anti-discrimination ethics in this context necessitates specifying certain requirements for love that are not a matter of human preference. In this case, situationist research should investigate human nature to understand what is good for people and the intentional prerequisites for love. This requires a dose of normative anti-relativism, which must not be a philosophically formulated stance or extensive codification. This implies the assumption or belief that some principal values are precious regardless of human preferences. The following section presents the metaphysical framework for such research. This position is named *normative individualism* in this chapter.

37.2 Normative Individualism

Economic metatheories attempt to minimise the risk of discrimination by postulating standards of efficiency that embrace individuals' (including minorities) interests. For example, Vilfredo Pareto's (2014) allocative

efficiency principle introduces this idea of efficiency into economic calculation. This efficiency occurs when at least one person improves and no one worsens.

However, few or no actions satisfy this principle. By promoting the interests of one individual or group, one always acts against the interests of another when it concerns competitive goods; by giving such goods to some people, one deprives others of the opportunity to have them. Moreover, in situations of injustice, efficiency standards may engender injustice. Amartya Sen identifies this as follows:

> An economy can be optimal in [the Pareto] sense even when some people are rolling in luxury, and others are near starvation as long as the starvers cannot be made better off without cutting into the pleasures of the rich. … In short, a society or an economy can be Pareto-optimal and still be perfectly disgusting.
>
> (Sen, 2017, pp. 68–69)

Kaldor-Hick's efficiency test aims to make Pareto's principle applicable to real situations. This requires that those who are made better off compensate those who are made worse off and recreate a Pareto-efficient outcome. This standard requires intervention politics when those who profit do not want to recreate efficient situations. However, Kaldor-Hick's efficiency test cannot work without presuming intersubjective measures of profits and losses. Otherwise, they remain bound to arbitrary opinions (Wight, 2017).

If all standards of justice were merely a product of human preferences, the differentiation between justice and injustice is a clash of competing preferences. Otherwise, one should assume that the preferences should meet some standards to be just. This stance requires a dose of anti-relativism, which involves searching for fundamentals of justice that are not a product of human preferences. For example, Aristotle provides this dose of anti-relativism by specifying standards of distributive and corrective justice. Sen (1992) describes this dose via the *capability approach*, which focuses on providing individuals with equal opportunities.

These stances can conceptualise their metaphysical principles of justice in the idea of some principal good, which is not only good *for* persons (which persons can possess) but also good *of* persons (that enrich human existence), and presume that standards of justice should promote and protect the principal good in *each* person (Sen, 1990; Wight, 2015; Williams & Bengtsson, 2016). In this view, each person (as opposed to *everyone*) is a stakeholder in MM. This position presumes that morality managers should design morality guidelines that best foster the principal good of each person. I call this position *normative individualism*.

This perspective is open to divergent ontological and epistemological interpretations. For example, Aristotle (and the ethics of eudaemonism, initiated by him) identifies the principal good with human development – the fulfilment (*eudaemonia*) of the most precious possibilities of humans, i.e. their capacity to understand reality and create bonds of friendship (Brink, 2014; Crisp, 2016; Kraut, 2016). Ethical liberalism in metaethics assumes that the principal good is the individual's freedom (Kelly, 2005). Some personalist conceptions make normative assumptions about every person's intrinsic value (dignity), which translates into fundamental human rights in the language of practice (Brems, 2001; Keys & Burke, 2013; Sen, 1990; Williams & Bengtsson, 2016). Situation ethics presents the principal good as love and presents it to be the principle of justice.

Normative individualism accentuates the individuality of persons, which presumes a dose of deontological theory into the teleological method. In this view, the consequences account for evaluating actions but actions destructive to the principal good are wrong (inefficient) regardless of their consequences and any calculation of profit (Sen, 1990; Wight, 2017; Williams & Bengtsson, 2016).

In normative individualism, the decisive moral reason against discrimination is that it deprives individuals of access to the principal good. If the principal good is love, as situationists maintain, discrimination is morally wrong, primarily because it corrupts the intentional prerequisites for love.

37.3   The Common Good

Economics traditionally centres on competitive products, wherein each individual's consumption directly diminishes said good's availability for others, thereby resulting in resource competition. This idea serves as the foundation for numerous economic theories and models, emphasising the concept of goods that become inaccessible to others once they have been acquired by one party. Nevertheless, not all goods are competitive. The common good is one example. It is the principal good of each person.

Aristotle originally outlined this idea of the common good. For the Stagirite, the common good is happiness, which is the fulfilment of a person's best possibilities. As he shows, it is not something that people **have** in common, such as a property. The common good comprises what they **are** in common. Providing this good to others increases it for the donor. Whenever this goodness appears in one person, everyone benefits; by protecting it in one person, one protects it for each person (Brink, 2014; Crisp, 2016; Kraut, 2016).

The idea of the common good can have divergent interpretations depending on the philosophical context. Thomas Aquinas and Thomists outline this

idea from the perspective of natural law (Finnis, 1979). Proponents of personalism may define the common good in terms of human dignity and fundamental human rights (Gueye, 2011). Liberal ethics specifies the common good in terms of the preconditions for human freedom (Chappell, 2009; Schroeder, 2012; Zimmerman, 2001). Situationists assume that goodwill (love) is the principal good in everyone. Respect for the common good has various names: solidarity (Aku, 2012; Buttiglione, 2012), compassion (Nussbaum, 2013) or rational compassion (Bloom, 2016).

Although the idea of the common good is not a conceptual monolith, it presents the direction of MM, which is as follows: MM is not expected to satisfy all interests, which are usually competitive and irreconcilable. This fosters the value preferences that best protect and promote the common good.

38   Intrinsic Goods

According to the situationist approach, the common good is love, and intrinsic values are instances of love that are understood as peculiar intentions and decisions. Situationists propose a teleological method that involves assessing the value of actions and solutions in terms of their function of promoting love in relationships. This method cannot work without identifying probability of these values in the future-oriented MM. This section presents an abductive reasoning that can support the teleological method of situation ethics in predicting the consequences of MM in terms of protecting and promoting love.[1]

38.1   Abductive Reasoning

According to situation ethics, love is the intention and action aimed at human well-being. From this perspective, the capacity to love is the most precious potentiality of human beings. This potential has preconditions. For example, one cannot love without existence, freedom and access to information. They are essential human needs which compose human well-being as they are preconditions for the human capacity to love.

Situationists are right that predictions about love are uncertain, as symptoms of love may occur without the intentions of love. One states them via abductive (stating a phenomenon's consequences to presume its existence) reasoning. In this reasoning, one notices some typical symptoms of love and presupposes that intentions of love cause them. This reasoning is fallible as other causes can cause these symptoms. Consequently, this reasoning may not suffice to evaluate actions morally.

However, this reasoning gains some knowledge about the probability of love occurrence. This method can identify tendencies – typical symptoms of

love and circumstances that favour or hinder the creation of various types of relationships, including relationships of love. As situationists point out, this method should take into account the circumstances which may determine atypicality and exceptions.

There is a disproportion in the level of predictability that an action has and does not have the intention of love based on its outcomes. In the former case, the reasoning is highly uncertain as one can easily imitate love without having the intention of love. For example, legalistic motivations may not be loving, although they may foster some preconditions for love, as situationists show.

The more certain (but still fallible) reasoning emerges when the preconditions for love are absent. For example, when someone tortures people, it is highly implausible that she loves them when no extraordinary conditions occur. In some untypical situations, one may cause pain with benevolent intention, for example, when human health requires a painful medical procedure. Case analysis may facilitate the identification of these extraordinary circumstances. However, without such circumstances, some types of actions are indicative of the absence of love.

The same reasoning applies to investigating consequences on a broader scale, which MM deals with. For example, one can presume with a high probability that fostering preconditions for love in the processes of MM fosters and that counteracting these preconditions is not conducive to love.

Consequently, MM can use the abductive method to set good practices, which increase the probability of love. However, situationists have reversed these rules and exceptions. Situationists consider ordinary and typical case exceptions. From this perspective, each situation is extraordinary. Therefore, situationists reject probabilistic knowledge's utility for MM. This stance leads to the treatment of moral standards as highly suspicious in every case.

38.2   Codes of Moral Conduct

There is a disparity between the symptoms of and preconditions for love. The symptoms of love may emerge without love. Therefore, the reasoning from symptoms to intentions of love is burdened by a high degree of uncertainty. Symptoms of love such as affectionate gestures or emotional attachment can occur without love being present. However, the preconditions for love allow for a higher degree of certainty in knowing what intentions and actions contradict love. The same applies to moral codes.

Suppose that some moral codes and their implementation coincided with the increased mutual respect between citizens in societies in the past. This historical knowledge does not assure us that this pattern will remain true

in the future, as a minor contextual peculiarity may engender a situation in which a practice that was good in the past is wrong in the present. However, suppose moral codes destroy the preconditions for love (e.g. moral codes require or permit the violation of human rights to freedom, life or information access). In this case, they are highly likely to be destructive to love in interhuman relationships.

Investigating the preconditions of love must not lead to the legalistic practice of codifying love. Such research could embrace the peculiarity and divergence of cultural codes that specify love relationships and situational circumstances. However, the case analysis of concrete situations should not divert researchers' attention from the preconditions for love that these cases exemplify. Therefore, researchers should be open to the possibility that some local norms and rules are so destructive to social bonds that they should be classified as *unloving* regardless of the circumstances and intentions of *value creators*.

38.3   Research on Intrinsic Values

Situationists rightly warn morality managers against fostering moral norms and rules without first investigating their social utility. Thus, the situationist critique of *bad* legalism is ever relevant. However, MM should not take this warning in the antinomian way that situationists criticise, fighting against all moral norms, rules and regulations. To minimise the risks of fanaticism specified in Section 32, MM should focus on fostering respect for the prerequisites of love and then devise methods to avoid bad practices of marginalising them. This tactic requires morality managers to first identify the prerequisites for love through rigorous and unbiased research. Only then can the teleological methods of MM have the data to investigate the social utility of moral norms and rules in their role of fostering love. In each case, the research should embrace the study of cultural context to minimise the risk of biased stereotypes.

Case studies can help identify prerequisites and symptoms of love. This has the potential to provide valuable insights into the probabilistic understanding of the concretisations of prerequisites for love in given cultural context.

Consequently, morality managers should investigate the past practices of MM and conduct empirical research that allows for predicting (with some probability and without certainty) whether a specific solution of MM will foster or hinder the prerequisites of love. Scientific investigations can accompany MM in search for the best method to safeguard the preconditions for love. This research should investigate the consequences of the solutions offered by MM. In addition to empirical knowledge, phenomenological studies may provide insights into broader patterns and variations highlighted in cultural anthropology.

As the preconditions of love may gain interpretation and concretisation in specific sets of socio-cultural circumstances, the study of the usefulness of norms and rules of conduct should take these circumstances into account. The interpretation data should be controlled to minimise the risk of over-interpretation and biased extrapolation. Therefore, one should avoid ex-trapolating the stereotypes of one culture to interpret meaning in another.

Within this framework, social and legal systems can be examined to assess the influence of different degrees of liberty on social connections and affection. This involves comparing societies with varying levels of personal freedom and analysing their effects on social connections and collectivity. For example, one can apply empirical psychology and statistical methods to investigate how standards regarding courtship and marriage relate to the quality of relationships in terms of satisfying preconditions for love. This approach may also be useful in future-oriented MM by investigating whether the projects of morality have a good chance to foster respect for these preconditions.

Situationists are right in asserting that moral norms and rules can only judge the *external outlook* of actions, while intentions may significantly differ from their expressions. Therefore, moral norms and rules should be carefully used when judging intentions. However, situationists are wrong in assuming that knowledge of the prerequisites for love is useless in designing morality and controlling MM.

39   Designing and Controlling Morality

As situationists notice, love is a free stance and one cannot directly cause it in another person. If love is a self-determination of the will, it can emerge or disappear without determination. There is no efficient causality between the codes of moral conduct and the intentions of love. Consequently, the preconditions for love are necessary but insufficient for love to occur. These prerequisites do not predestine anyone to love – they only facilitate the possibility of love. MM, which protects and fosters love in people, cannot do so directly. Forcing people to love one another is counterproductive. MM can only protect and foster the prerequisites for love. In defining this task, one may draw upon Aristotle's recommendations.

Aristotle noticed the role of the state in facilitating the circumstances that protect and promote friendship at the micro- and macro-levels of social bonds. The Stagirite observed that the state cannot impose friendships, as these cannot be forced. Nevertheless, he held that it is incumbent on the government to establish the circumstances that foster and sustain friendships within intimate interpersonal connections and wider societal networks. The state's function encompasses the establishment of legal frameworks, institutions and societal conventions that foster trust, collaboration and reciprocity

among individuals within a society. The state enhances the overall well-being and stability of society by creating a favourable atmosphere for friendship. Furthermore, Aristotle emphasised the significance of friendship as a means of attaining shared objectives and augmenting the overall standard of living for all of society. Hence, although the state lacks the authority to enforce friendship, it assumes a pivotal function in fostering the circumstances required for friendships to thrive (Aristotle, 2002; Kraut, 2002; Swanson, 1992). Therefore, it is challenging for MM to design a moral code that fosters love (friendship) between people. However, MM can design such circumstances that provide the best chances for love to occur.

39.1 *Normative Morality and Universal Prohibitions*

Situationists presume that normative morality consists of unique imperatives of love. While this is true, it is not the whole truth, as these imperatives are concretised through intentional prerequisites for love (see Section 23.2).

Traditionally, the preconditions for love have been identified by universal prohibitions, which specify the characteristics of decisions that cannot be benevolent (i.e. loving) because they deny the intentional prerequisites for love. Situationists are right to posit that universal prohibitions enrol moral dilemmas, where one cannot respect all prohibitions that apply to the situation. However, moral dilemmas may falsify universal prohibitions only under the assumption of practical idealism, which is the belief that one can perfectly meet all the requirements of love in each situation. Practical realism is the stance that acknowledges situations in which one cannot uphold all intrinsic values and therefore must sacrifice some to protect others. Consequently, Fletcher is right to point out that, in some cases, one must violate some prohibitions in moral dilemmas. However, this observation only describes the peculiarity of these situations and does not falsify universal prohibitions. The reason for universal prohibitions is not that one can always meet them perfectly. The reason is that these prohibitions specify intentional prerequisites for love. As the theory of double effect shows, the main purpose of universal prohibitions is protecting the principal good rather than imposing their literal meaning. For example, the prohibition "do not kill" means that murder is not the right way of problem-solving or loving people. This prohibition may apply differently both daily and during wars.

Consequently, situationists are right in criticising *bad* legalism for ignoring the affirmative sense (of protecting intrinsic values) of prohibitions and presenting only their literal meaning (in impugning some types of action). For example, some interpreters of Kant show that his position about lying is misleading without taking into account the fundamental value of truthfulness, which relates to human dignity in his theory. In this interpretation, the meaning of the prohibition against lying is affirmative and goes beyond its literal

sense. It regards truthfulness in communication, which may not necessitate answering all questions, satisfying the curiosity of whoever poses the question or telling the whole truth one knows. To explain the positive meaning of this prohibition, one must take into account the complex nature of communication and language, which allows for the deceptive use of logically true sentences and telling the truth using metaphors (Kucharski, 2014; Varden, 2010).

Situationists are right in stressing the cultural aspects of language when formulating moral norms and rules. However, situationists are wrong in maintaining that refuting universal prohibitions is necessary for fostering love. On the contrary, fittingly formulated prohibitions can help operationalise the principle of love and, this way, specify some general directions of MM. Moreover, these prohibitions may play a vital role in educating people about the intentional prerequisites of love.

As situationists correctly notice, universal prohibitions are fallible when evaluating intentions and actions. However, these norms and rules can serve as working criteria for evaluating social tendencies. For example, adhering to some prohibitions may be essential for preventing the dehumanisation and mistreatment of individuals or groups, which can occur under zealous regimes or ideologies that reject these core moral principles (Nussbaum, 2001, 2013). Respect for accepted norms and rules can strengthen social unity and encourage cooperation among individuals from divergent moral backgrounds (Sen, 2010). Rational communication requires respect for agreed-upon language rules that help people understand each other. Norms and rules can help people understand the outcomes of their actions and develop a sense of responsibility and empathy towards others (Habermas, 1984, 1990).

Prohibitions should be fitting in that they minimise the risk of ignoring cultural and situational circumstances of action in practice. Consequently, legal systems incorporate special standards that provide exceptions for legal conduct. However, these exceptions have reason in some universal norms or rules, which hierarchise the applicability of prohibitions in practice, which the principle of double effect standardises. For example:

- Necessity: Some legal doctrines grant people the authority to violate the law when it is imperative to avert substantial harm. An example is entering a building without permission to save someone from a fire. Although this action is typically considered as trespassing or causing property damage, it can be legally justified based on necessity. The reason for this exception is in the general norm to protect human life.
- Self-defence: Legislation frequently allows individuals to employ justifiable force to protect themselves or others from harm, even if such actions are ordinarily unlawful. For instance, employing physical coercion against an assailant may be deemed legal if it is indispensable for protecting oneself. The reason for this type of exception is the general norm

that allows for the choice of conflicting goods of the same rank in the situation of their unresolvable conflict.

- Consent: Under specific circumstances, actions that would otherwise be considered unlawful, such as conducting medical procedures, can be considered permissible if the individual involved provides informed consent. This solution is supported by the right to decide about oneself and the principle of health protection.
- (Lat.) *De minimis non curat lex:* The law does not consider insignificant matters. This implies that legal systems can disregard minor offences because they have limited societal consequences, such as minor traffic violations or transgressions. The justification for this exception is the norm of minimising social harm (when pursuing the right is more costly for society than the harm itself).

Despite exaggerating the prevalence of bad practices of legalism and their caricatured descriptions, situationists are right to warn morality managers against overtrusting morality rules and norms because reality is complex, and they can never embrace all possibilities and circumstances. Therefore, any code of moral conduct should leave space for human initiative and creativity, which are necessary for expressing mutual respect and developing the attitude of love. Some significant *niche* of freedom is always needed for benevolent intentions to emerge. Universal prohibitions can protect this *niche*.

39.2   *Fundaments for Antifundamentalism*

Any non-fanatical approach to MM presumes some elementary moral knowledge, which is open for discussion and further investigation but is first acknowledged. A shared foundation of moral knowledge enables rational communication to occur, embracing core ethical principles to encourage the evaluation of moral decisions within a broader ethical framework rather than following narrow cultural standards, ideologies or personal preferences (Habermas, 1984; Hildebrand & Hildebrand, 1966; Korsgaard, 1996; MacIntyre, 1985, 2007; Popper, 1945; Rawls, 1971; Raz, 1970; Spaemann, 2012).

Robert Spaemann lays the foundation for sceptical research on a knife's edge. He claims that radical antifundamentalism leads to fanatic fundamentalism, where principles are asserted arbitrarily and determined by particular group interests, hidden agendas or ignorance. Consequently, he proposes rational fundamentalism as a tactic for preventing fanatic fundamentalism (Spaemann n.d.).[2] He argues that human reason can find some principles of ethics through philosophical investigation. He proposes

rigorous research committed to dialogue and further research with respect for some fundamental values, such as human dignity and the autonomy of conscience. In his view, arbitrary decisions do not need to substitute reason in finding fundamental moral principles (Spaemann, 2001, 2005, 2012).

Situation ethics is not far from rational fundamentalism in ethics, as this stance presumes that love is the universal moral principle. Situationists may go one step further and investigate the intentional prerequisites for love to operationalise the principle. It is worth considering that if it is fittingly formulated and prudently applied knowledge about intentional prerequisites for love may specify MM's ethical foundation for situationist antifundamentalism in ethics.

39.3   Utility Research

The practice of testing innovations before their implementation, which is common in large companies, is not always applied in MM, unfortunately. MM innovations may be implemented under the impulse that something seems right or wrong without checking how norms and rules may function in society, which carries the risk of unforeseen and sometimes unpredictable consequences. Situationists warn against this practice and require testing moral codes before their implementation.

Without empirical research, MM decisions are risky because of a lack of information about their consequences (Argyrous, 2009; Cairney, 2016; Lewis, 2018):

- Lack of informed decision-making: Empirical research provides data and evidence that can inform decision-makers about their policies' potential outcomes and impacts. Without this information, decisions are made in a vacuum, lacking awareness of their potential consequences, both intended and unintended. This uncertainty can lead to unintended negative consequences, including ineffective or harmful policies.
- Potential for bias: Without empirical evidence, decisions are more likely to be influenced by ideology, personal biases or political pressure. This can lead to policies that are not aligned with public interests or that fail to address society's actual needs and challenges.
- Accountability: Without empirical benchmarks or data, evaluating the effectiveness of political decisions is challenging. This lack of accountability can result in the continuation of ineffective or harmful policies.
- Cultural paternalism: In globally scattered organisations or societies with various cultural backgrounds, MM that ignores these differences can be dangerous. Ethical principles that operate well in one cultural setting may be incorrect or objectionable in another. Without careful

analysis and adaptation to local norms, the implementation of such standards might result in misunderstandings and lower government effectiveness.

Empirical research is a valuable tool for morality managers, providing them with data-driven insights, historical context and a better understanding of the potential outcomes of their decisions. It helps predict consequences, evaluate moral theories, understand stakeholder perspectives and identify emerging ethical issues. This research can be a valuable tool for morality managers in several ways, as the following examples illustrate (Argyrous, 2009; Cairney, 2016; Lewis, 2018):

- Anticipating consequences: Empirical research improves data collecting and analysis. This allows morality managers to learn from previous achievements and failures. Empirical approaches can be used to investigate the outcomes of decisions in similar situations. By analysing patterns and trends, morality managers can improve their ability to make well-informed predictions about the consequences of their decisions.
- Utility assessment: Morality managers can do empirical research to determine the applicability and efficacy of various moral ideas in real circumstances. This technique can help to refine these ideas or select the best one for a certain situation.
- Identifying stakeholder perspectives: Empirical research methods such as surveys or interviews can help to better understand stakeholder perspectives by providing useful insights into the attitudes and values held by diverse stakeholders. Understanding this is vital for making ethical decisions that consider the interests of all those involved.
- Identifying issues: Keeping track of current empirical research helps morality managers stay updated on new or evolving ethical challenges, particularly in rapidly changing fields such as technology and medicine.

However, empirical research cannot work without the method of identifying the intrinsic goods. Consequently, philosophical research should accompany empirical investigations of MM.

40 Tolerant Paternalism

Suppose morality managers believe that some changes are needed, but the society does not accept them. In this case, managers can either abstain from these changes, impose these changes against the will of society or convince society to accept them. Situation ethics opts for the last solution. The repository of non-coercive persuasion techniques ranges from rational persuasion – which causes people to change their minds based

on their understanding of the situation – to manipulation – which limits people's ability to choose. Distinguishing between rational persuasion and manipulation can help clarify acceptable methods of persuasion in MM.

The postulate of rational persuasion is present in the idea of tolerant paternalism, which requires MM to focus on safeguarding the preconditions for rational preferences. For example, Luciano Floridi (2016) discusses the balance between autonomy and guidance in MM, suggesting that "a pro-ethical design… prompts individuals to make informed decisions while avoiding direct interference with their choices" (p. 1670). His concept of tolerant paternalism involves fostering informed decisions, rather than constraining actions directly. This tactic gives preference to rational persuasion and considers manipulation either impermissible or permissible in exceptional situations when there is no other way to protect a crucial social interest.

The tactic of tolerant paternalism presumes a dose of anti-relativism concerning human freedom. Namely, to consider this tactic reasonable, one should presume that human freedom (autonomy) is precious regardless of the preferences of value creators and profits that can result from violating human freedom. In this sense, John Rawls argues the following: "each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override" (Rawls, 1971, p. 3).

Situationism presents good reasons against manipulation in the principle of respect for human autonomy, which is implicit in the norm of love. However, situation ethics does not offer any methodology to avoid manipulation in MM, as Section 35 shows.

To avoid manipulation in the MM process, one should operationalise the difference between manipulation and rational persuasion. Demarcation criteria should be specified to distinguish these types of manipulation. In practice, the boundary between morally permissible persuasion and manipulation is not sharp and easily detected. The same communication tactic can be used to persuade or manipulate. It is the task of further investigations to devise criteria to distinguish between rational persuasion and manipulation to facilitate the ideal of tolerant paternalism in MM.

41   A Decision-Making Model

Situationists allude to Aristotle by emphasising the role of prudence. However, situationist intuitionism and decisionism do not present any intersubjective methods to control morality managers' or *value creators'* decisions about MM. This poses the risk of authoritarianism and fanaticism, in which these decisions are considered correct beyond any discussion for extraterritorial reasons of the power or position of the authority. Section 8 proposes

three aspects of rationality that situationists embrace in their decision-making analyses: Methodologically rational decisions regard available knowledge. Value-rational (authentic) decisions are consistent with the agent's existential commitment. Instrumentally rational decisions adopt means that are effective in attaining set goals. This section presents some requirements that can preserve the situational idea of rationality and responsibility without falling into fanaticism, which threatens situationism, as shown in .

41.1   *Prerequisites for Methodologically Rational Decisions*

Aristotle requires governors to be virtuous and prudent. In his view, the virtue of prudence (Gr. *φρόνησις*) is the capacity to recognise and promote good in concrete situations. Prudent decisions require knowledge and respect knowledge in decision-making. In this view, prudent moral managers investigate their beliefs, search for knowledge to gain the best available information and adopt this knowledge in decision-making (Kamtekar, 2004; Liu, 2012; Uhr, 2015; Veatch, 2003).

In contemporary literature, the idea of prudence may be substituted by the concept of responsibility, which is the quality of decisions and attitudes that protect and foster principal good(s). From this perspective, responsible morality managers should possess the virtue of prudence to find the best way to promote and protect this good in a given situation. This responsibility includes methodologically rational decisions, which reflect knowledge of the principal good, its requirements and concrete situations (Bertolini, 2019; Carroll, n.d.; Rudy-Hiller, 2018).

Search for available knowledge and respect for this knowledge in decision-making are markers of methodological rationality of decisions and agents. Thinkers from various philosophical backgrounds have noticed that the requirement of methodological rationality excludes fanatical assent to any opinions. Consequently, rational agents may control moral authorities' decisions using intersubjective sources of moral knowledge (Cahyandito, 2012; Carroll, 2008; Garriga & Melé, 2004; MacIntyre, 2007; Melé, 2008; Roa, 2007; Rudy-Hiller, 2018; Villiers, 2018).

Situation ethics marginalises general knowledge and accentuates information about concrete situations. In consequence, situation ethics weakens the requirement of methodological rationality by reducing it to the intuition of competent persons. This stance does not present any intersubjective method to investigate the rightness of decisions, leaving this assessment to intuition or arbitrary moral preferences.

However, situation ethics leaves room to be filled in its theory to include the preconditions of love. In this respect, situation ethics is composible with the approach of Aristotle, who shows that decisions cannot

be prudent when they do not contribute to the principal good, which is eudaimonia. In situation ethics, if a decision is detrimental to preconditions for love, it cannot be prudent. In this context, the requirement of methodological rationality embraces respecting knowledge about preconditions for love.

41.2 *Prerequisites for Value-Rational Decisions*

In existentialism, saying that a decision is arbitrary emphasises the lack of a preset essence or universal dictate influencing that decision. In this view, existential commitment does not logically follow any knowledge. However, existential commitments may represent *bad faith* and are inauthentic when denying available knowledge (Anderson, 2002; Bronner, 2021; Heter, 2006; Sartre, 1956, 1988). Consequently, if situationists adopt the existential ideal of authenticity, they may preserve the assumption that existential commitments are not deducible from any knowledge and still require that they do not contradict available knowledge. Making decisions that do not result from available knowledge is one thing, and decisions against this knowledge are another thing. Consequently, one can find a conjunction between the requirement of methodological and value rationality in situation ethics.

The requirement for value rationality refers primarily to the coherence of particular decisions and value preferences with the agent's existential commitment. Emphasising internal consistency can prevent blatant self-contradiction. However, it does not safeguard against absurd beliefs – against the agent's best knowledge, classified as fanaticism, for example, when she denies her sensual or moral experiences. A belief system can be internally coherent and consistent yet detached from values and moral experience. Consequently, the situationist idea of rational decision-making in MM may embrace the requirements of methodologically rational existential commitments.

Suppose that an agent makes the existential commitment to love. This existential commitment poses a moral duty of value rationality (authenticity) to make decisions according to love. However, this obligation also requires that the agent learns what love is and act according to this knowledge. It is the requirement of methodological rationality.

It is intuitively questionable if the agent can be committed to love and not interested in the needs of the beloved persons. In this case, her commitment is methodologically irrational. If she is methodologically rational in this commitment, she will search for available general about love and about the person who is the object of love. For example, she will learn that loving relationships involve dedication, empathy, compassion and respect. When one chooses love as the principal value, one must uphold certain standards, which it requires. However, one may investigate how they apply

to the concrete relationship and situations. Consequently, situation ethics can preserve its appreciation for the creativity of human freedom and the uniqueness of situations without presuming the radical stance that the agent creates all requirements of love by its existential commitment. In this interpretation, existential commitment is the source of moral obligations. However, only when it is searching and respecting some truth that is not a product of this commitment.

Various theories present the idea of methodologically rational existential commitment. For example, Kant used a priori analysis to specify the moral principle of the categorical imperative, which is the prerequisite for rational value preferences in his view (Dean, 2006; Dorrien, 2020; Hill, 2007, 2014; Kant, 2010; Reath, 2012). Some analytical philosophers show how ethical principles can be selected in a methodologically rational way as grounded in moral experience (Kotarbiński, 1958; Szostek, 1971; Woleński, 2006).

Metatheories do not need to presume any sources of knowledge about values to postulate that value choices can be methodologically rational or irrational. For example, David Hume and Adam Smith present the universal dimensions of rational emotions (sentiments) to specify the conditions for moral decisions (Cohon, 2018; Hume, 1739; Morris & Brown, 2016).

The idea of methodologically rational value preferences does not have to represent the naturalistic fallacy (first noted by David Hume). This stance does not assume that methodologically rational existential commitments (expressed in *ought to* statements) logically follow from knowledge about facts (expressed in *is* statements). The requirement for the methodological rationality of value preferences refers to the reasoning, in which value preferences should not contradict available knowledge. Moreover, as some thinkers have argued, existential commitments present gradual compatibility or incompatibility with available knowledge. Consequently, methodologically and value-rational agents abandon existential commitments that are in contradiction with and prefer commitments that are best compatible with available knowledge, with their life or moral experience, for example (Kotarbiński, 1958; Szostek, 2016; Woleński, 2006). This requirement contradicts the radical stance of scepticism, which requires the abandonment of beliefs that do not have proof (see Section 32.5). According to the ideal of methodologically rational value preferences, morality managers should research the principal good and make decisions according to their best knowledge.

41.3 Applied Conjunction Between Normative Relativism and Absolutism

This study has highlighted numerous differences between normative relativism and absolutism in the understanding of MM. However, these divergences tend to diminish in rationalist variants of these positions. From

this perspective, morality managers investigate normative assumptions and prefer those that are most compatible with the available knowledge. Their investigation can adopt all reliable (scientific, analytical and phenomenological) methods of investigation.

The premise of normative absolutism requires that the value preferences of existential commitment reflect intrinsic values that are precious and independent of human evaluation. Using this approach, one can investigate and discuss value choices in terms of their compatibility with the available knowledge (Brandt, 1967, pp. 75–76; Garnett, 1944; Gowans, 2012; Hollis & Lukes, 1982; Jarvie, 1983; Joyce, 2015; Rorty, 1991; Swoyer, 2014). Some phenomenologists show how moral experience can provide a common ground for discussing moral issues when rooted in a shared moral experience (Lévinas, 1996; Zank & Braiterman, 2014).

However, under the assumption of normative relativism, the requirement for methodological rationality regarding moral preferences may be similar in practice. Although these theories deny any values that are precious regardless of human preferences, these stances also may postulate the adoption of moral preferences to the available knowledge.

Proponents of the rationalistic wings of normative relativism and antirelativism advocate for critical thinking, respect for logic, open-mindedness and dedication to reasoned communication among people and collectives when engaging with moral dilemmas, instead of unquestioningly adhering to tradition or authority. Consequently, they require MM to focus on shaping methodologically rational attitudes in society (Habermas, 1984, 1990; Nussbaum, 2011, 2013; Sartre, 2004; Sunstein, 2009).

Notes

1 Abductive reasoning (from facts to their causes) in the context of probabilistic frameworks entails determining the best feasible explanation for a set of observed occurrences. In probabilistic terms, this entails assessing the likelihood of hypotheses based on available evidence and picking the hypothesis with the highest probability (Douven, 2021; Ghahramani, 2015; Hájek, 2012; Josephson & Josephson, 1994; Lake et al., 2017; Sutton & Barto, 2018).

2 Spaemann presents several meanings of *fundamentalism* (Spaemann, n.d., Wer ist ein Fundamentalist?):

   1 Historical meaning: Originally, the term referred to certain Protestant groups in the United States in the early 20th century. These groups adhered to a literal interpretation of the Bible and rejected scientific theories such as evolution, insisting on a traditional and conservative approach to Christian doctrine.

   2 Fundamentalism as a reformation movement: Spaemann notes that the Reformation itself initially had a fundamentalist character, seeking to return to the "foundations" of the Christian faith. The motto "sola scriptura" (scripture alone) encapsulated this return to the original biblical sources as the sole authority in Christianity. Situationists name this stance *Scripturalism*.

3 Fundamentalism as a pejorative label: In contemporary usage, "fundamental-ist" often serves as a derogatory term to discredit groups perceived as unable to adapt to the modern world, intolerant of differing views and desiring sim-plicity and conformity in a complex world.
4 Fundamentalism as a prerequisite for tolerance: Spaemann argues that hold-ing deep religious convictions and adhering to the foundations of one's faith does not necessarily equate with intolerance. He emphasises the possibility of maintaining strong religious beliefs while being open to scientific under-standing and diverse perspectives.
5 Fundamentalism as a synonym for orthodoxy: The text also suggests that if fundamentalism is understood as a synonym for orthodoxy and adherence to the core principles of Christianity, it could be seen in a positive light.

Concluding Remarks

The study assumes a distinction between ethics and morality management (MM). Ethics is the investigation of what is morally good and right, while MM is an activity that aims to protect and promote what is good and right. Situation ethics identifies ethics with MM, presenting ethics as MM through philosophising. In this approach, ethical theses and theories are considered true in the pragmatic sense – when they produce socially useful effects. This study presents the metatheory of this approach.

Some central ethical issues are marginal for MM, and some marginal ethical problems become essential for MM. For example, the practice of morally evaluating human actions is marginal in MM; it focuses on tendencies and probabilities in fostering desirable decisions. However, the issue of intrinsic goods is central to ethics and MM. Situation ethics identifies these goods with love.

This study distinguishes between the intentional prerequisites for benevolence (love) and the objectives of love itself. This distinction becomes particularly evident when comparing the objectives of law with those of MM.

The task of legal systems (in the utilitarian approach adopted by situationists) is to protect intrinsic values while promoting social security and well-being. For example, legal systems can be designed to protect human freedom, rationality and life, prevent harm and ensure justice, all of which are considered core or principal values. In contrast, the task of MM is to foster **respect** for these intrinsic values within a community or society. Therefore, MM does not merely protect intrinsic values themselves but aims to shape attitudes and social standards in a way that encourages individuals and groups to recognise, respect and uphold these values in their everyday lives. MM is about creating an environment where the importance of intrinsic values is acknowledged and integrated into the fabric of social interaction and decision-making.

This monograph is about the metatheory (metaethics) of MM from the perspective of situation ethics. Consequently, this investigation did not propose any specific theory of MM, and applied MM problems appear only

marginally as illustrations within this monograph. These are limitations determined by the goal of this investigation. However, this study goes beyond this perspective to discuss some fundamental problems of MM. The most important general findings about MM are as follows: This study:

a Presents the prerequisites of benevolence, which any MM should promote and protect,
b Discusses the role of universal prohibitions in safeguarding MM from arbitrariness, fanaticism and manipulation,
c Presents, within the framework of situation ethics, a tactic to avoid *bad* legalism in MM.

As love cannot be directly caused, one should not expect a moral code to *automatically* evoke love in people. The task of MM is different: It is to create a normative *niche* that provides the best chances for love to occur. Since normative regulations are unavoidable in the social sphere, the primary task of MM is to avoid and counteract regulations and practices that threaten the intentional prerequisites for love. This task is negative in the sense that it involves abstaining from and protecting society from practices and normative regulations that are destructive to these prerequisites. If these prerequisites are respect for human freedom, reason and life, MM should protect and foster them. However, this does not mean that MM should be reduced to a persuasion or legal campaign for these prerequisites. Rather, the job of MM is to create the *niche* mentioned above, which requires considering a more complex reality than just a simple cause-effect relationship between persuasion or legal restrictions and their immediate result.

This study, in line with situation ethics, warns against simplistic and legalistic views that reduce the planning function of MM to commands and prohibitions in the hope that they will suffice to change social reality in the expected direction. This study recognises that manipulation and repression are counterproductive in achieving the above goal of MM. Love is a free stance with intentional preconditions. Violating them is destructive to this objective. Therefore, the means of MM can be rational persuasion (or tolerant paternalism). However, this may not lead to the desired effect when society is uninterested in changing its egoistic lifestyle or when the structures of organisations (including states) foster powergaming (see Section 33). The role of MM is broader, potentially requiring the redesign of organisational structures to achieve its goal. For example, to foster the freedom of workers in some organisations, MM can suggest reducing the number of hierarchical layers if it does not hinder the organisation's efficiency. However, the role of MM is usually more modest and consists of counteracting changes in the organisation that pose a threat to the intentional prerequisites for benevolence as specified in Section 23.2.

As the study argues, MM does not need to multiply universal prohibitions to protect and promote benevolence in society. There should be neither more nor fewer normative regulations than necessary. The most important thing is that they are attuned to the intentional reality of love (its intentional preconditions) and the context in which they operate. This requires constant philosophical and scientific research to design a code of moral conduct that best promotes the prerequisites for benevolence.

This monograph takes a critical look at situation ethics, highlighting the significance of precise normative assumptions in ethical theory and practice. The study provides a detailed analysis of the issues faced by ambiguous normative premises of situation ethics, urging for a more deliberate and honest engagement with the ethical foundations of MM. By discussing pitfalls of situation ethics, this study advocates for a renewed commitment to ethical clarity and operationalisation of concepts.

The monograph's examination into situation ethics reveals the complicated dance between the model of reality and practice, emphasising the necessity of fitting normative assumptions in directing MM's goals and moral boundaries. It emphasises the importance of morality managers being aware of their normative beliefs in order to effectively appraise opportunities and dangers effectively, hence avoiding implicit value prioritisation, which can lead to inadvertent moral manipulations. Detailed research reveals that the lack of transparency in these assumptions might cloud MM's actions, resulting in counterproductive solutions that lead to practices against their original intentions. This study advocates for the articulation of normative principles in order to establish a foundational conversation and negotiation towards moral consensus in public morality.

The investigation calls into question the radical stance of normative relativism and absolutism, emphasising the dangers of limiting the discussion to some assumptions that are presented as indisputable, which could unintentionally foster arbitrariness, moral fanaticism and prejudices. This monograph calls for research and a dialogic approach in MM, demanding a more reflective research and engagement with the fundamental premises of moral theories.

This study highlights the heuristic utility of situation ethics in guiding persons across the enormous landscape of ethical theories. However, the study cautions against the dangers of situation ethics, emphasising the need for a more consistent framework to operationalise the intentional requirements for benevolence.

As this study demonstrates, situation ethics' most significant applied contributions are in promoting metaethical education and transparency. Metaethical education is morality managers' training that promotes understanding and sensitivity to ethical principles. This education may involve investigating diverse ethical ideas, emphasising critical thinking and

developing a reflective attitude to ethics. Metaethical transparency is the culture of communicating normative assumptions behind solutions and debating their explanations. This openness provides for different perspectives and minimises the chance of making decisions based on limited or self-serving interpretations.

The monograph argues for the operationalisation of moral principles to the level required to guide ethical decision-making while avoiding the traps of over-generalisation and oversimplification. It emphasises the need to create and uphold universal prohibitions that define the boundaries of moral conduct, avoiding the dangers of *bad* legalism.

The monograph advocates for further research into the intentional preconditions for benevolence (love) in a way that respects the complexities of moral quandaries, cultural and situational contexts while facilitating rational debate. Future studies should look into alternative ethical frameworks that answer the monograph's critiques, notably in terms of operationalising ethical principles.

Perhaps the most sound part of situation ethics is its critique of *bad* legalism. This critique is ever actual when morality managers hastily generalise some moral observations or impose their arbitrary moral views on others. It would be valuable to apply the situationist critique to other instances of *bad* legalism beyond those theoretical frameworks discussed by situationists.

The monograph concludes with a call to ethical action, pushing individuals and society to delve deeper into studying the ethical grounds of their decisions. It emphasises the significance of critical thought on normative assumptions, as well as the quest for ethical clarity, investigation and coherence in navigating today's moral difficulties. Doing so promotes ethical investigations in a dialogic approach to MM.

This study does not aim to provide ready-to-use solutions for MM actions. However, it outlines their direction: to protect and foster the prerequisites for benevolence.

San Juan, 9 April 2024

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