Bitter Sweet Morality: An Investigation of the Role of Ethical Orientation on Workplace Necessary Evils

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy – Organizational Behaviour/ Human Resource Management

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2011

Abstract

In almost all types of work it is sometimes necessary to do harm as a means of doing good; as such, necessary evils are a wide spread phenomenon in work life. The present research furthers our understanding of necessary evils through exploring how one’s ethical orientation (measured in terms of idealism and relativism) affects one’s experience of performing such tasks. Molinsky and Margolis (2005) theorized that nine dimensions of necessary evil affect a person’s judgments, beliefs, and attitudes about the task they are required to perform, the self, and the impact of the necessary evil. When performing a necessary evil, individuals evaluate its dimensions -- this evaluation involves assessing the alternative actions one might take to carry out the necessary evil, and the possible consequences of each alternative course of action. Workers are thus faced with an ethical judgment as they realize that if the necessary evil is to be carried out, someone will be harmed.

Two studies were conducted to develop a better understanding of workers’ experience of necessary evils in general, and to explore whether people’s idealistic and relativistic values are related to how they experience performing necessary evils. In an effort to gain rich and contextualized information about peoples’ experiences, 30 individuals with experience...
performing necessary evils were interviewed for Study 1. Respondents were asked to comment on their experiences before, during and after they performed necessary evils, as well as whether they felt that such tasks were ethical or moral in nature. Study 2 presented necessary evil vignettes to 150 university students and used structural equation modeling to test hypotheses about the relationship between ethical orientation and the necessary evil experience. Two models of how necessary evils are performed fit the data. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.
Acknowledgments

I would like to sincerely thank all those who have offered academic and personal support over the course of this dissertation. First, I have been fortunate to have a committee of advisors who have been supportive and encouraging in a manner that has allowed me to greatly expand my knowledge and skills in this field. I appreciate their willingness to allow me to pursue my own interests both in terms of career and research, while offering advice and support whether I knew it was needed or not.

I would also like to acknowledge my family and friends who have remained supportive, understanding, and confident in my abilities. First on this long list are my parents, who have taught me the importance of following my dreams. Their encouragement, support, and example throughout all chapters of life has taught me perseverance, to believe in my own abilities, to grow from adversity, hold my head high, follow my own road and to always do what I believe is right. Thank you for being there always to lift me up or cut me down as necessary. I am who I am because of you and I hope that you are proud of your accomplishment.

In addition to my parents, I have had the benefit of a close and supportive circle of extended family and close friends. Aunt June and Uncle Dave in particular deserve recognition for their undying support. They have been grandparents, parents, cheerleaders, coaches, motivators and an overall shining example of how to live a life of grace and gratitude; their being with me throughout this journey has been nothing short of a blessing. Others who’ve remained steady and interested supporters include Uncle Geoff - who has refused to call me anything but Dr. Carter since my first year; Uncle Gary and Aunt Cindy – who set me off on the right foot during undergrad; Aunt Phyllis (aka AP/AD) who has always been there looking over my shoulder urging me on; Bob and Linda – who have welcomed me whole-heartedly into their home, families, and lives and truly treated me as one of their own; and Kaireen – a mentor, friend, confidante, career advisor, co-author and champion, who along with Doug and Isaac always encouraged me to get it done because the tassel is worth the hassle!

I would like to acknowledge the important role of my closest friends and say a special thank you to: Glenda, Kerri, Amanda and Serena—for never asking me about my dissertation work, and never letting me talk about it for more than 3 minutes when we got together; Dr. Shantz – for
always asking me about my dissertation and making me talk about it for hours; Holly – for taking
the time to chat, cry, curse, scream and/or laugh when I needed it - a more loyal friend there has
never been; Colin – for stress relief and for being the one who made me take the first step, then
staying with me (actually, one step ahead) throughout the entire journey; and to all the colleagues
and friends I’ve met throughout the course of my Ph.D. experience – Basak, Robin, Sue, and
many others - thank you for the lessons learned, encouragement, and advice along the way.

Finally, I offer my thanks (and my deepest apologies!) to my partner Danny, who has been there
through the good, the bad, the ugly, the downright horrible, and the utterly marvelous. I have
been so lucky to know the security and peace of sharing my life with someone who is loving,
adoring, faithful, compassionate and has always allowed me to be me, without ever trying to
change a thing. Only you could possibly know how wonderfully challenging this has been; you
more than anyone have had to adjust, follow, lead, step-up, step-back, and accommodate as
necessary. I am grateful that you have been strong enough to stand back and allow me to work
through this, all the while offering quiet and soothing support when it was tough, and then
celebrating whole-heartedly with every little accomplishment. Thank you for believing in me,
loving me, and trusting me.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“It may be necessary temporarily to accept a lesser evil, but one must never label a necessary evil as good.”

- Margaret Mead, 1978

In almost all types of work it is sometimes necessary to do harm as a means of doing good. Workers may need to impose physical or mental pain on another individual as a means of helping that person, someone else, a work group, an organization, or society at large (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005). It is important to understand how workers cope with performing these acts of necessary evil, which, as Mead states cannot be on the whole labeled “good,” but are in fact seen to be necessary. This dissertation was initiated with the intention of shedding light on this difficult work situation by investigating the role of an individual difference variable, ethical orientation, in explaining variation in how workers perceive and experience performing necessary evil tasks.

The term necessary evil has been used to describe “work related tasks in which an individual must, as part of his or her job, perform an act that causes emotional or physical harm to another human being in the service of achieving some perceived greater good or purpose” (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005, p.245). Molinsky and Margolis argue that how a performer perceives nine dimensions related to various aspects of a necessary evil dictate whether it is performed and whether it is performed with interpersonal sensitivity. However, they do not discuss causes of variation in performers’ individual perceptions of the necessary evil dimensions. The present dissertation proposes that one partial cause of such variation is distinctions in ethical orientation among individuals.

I argue that a person’s ethical orientation can partially explain how they respond when faced with a necessary evil task. In doing so, this dissertation first reviews whether necessary evils possess ethical content that requires performers to engage in ethical evaluations and decision making when faced with them. When performing a necessary evil, individuals evaluate its dimensions -- this evaluation involves assessing the alternative actions one might take to carry
out the necessary evil and the possible consequences of each alternative course of action. Workers are thus faced with an ethical judgment as they realize that if the necessary evil is to be carried out, someone will be harmed. It is then up to the individual to decide whether carrying out the act is morally justifiable. In this way, evaluation of the dimensions results in the performer making a judgment about the ethicality of performing a necessary evil. I further argue that it is in making these ethical evaluations and decisions that variation among performers’ perceptions of the dimensions emerges due to differing ethical orientations. This variation results in differing levels of experienced internal drama, which in turn leads to diversity in outcomes and experience for individuals faced with the exact same necessary evil.

According to Molinsky and Margolis (2005), various dimensions of a necessary evil influence performers’ perceptions of the task. Depending on how the task is perceived, performers will face varying levels of internal drama resulting from performing the necessary evil. The level of internal drama experienced will ultimately affect two important outcomes: 1) whether the person will perform the necessary evil, and 2) whether they will perform the task with interpersonal sensitivity towards the target of the resultant harm. The two outcomes are a function of the internal drama experienced in performing the necessary evil task (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005). Four outcomes are possible, argue Molinsky and Margolis, with the task being performed with a high level of interpersonal sensitivity considered the only optimal result. The present dissertation will investigate whether people’s positions on two dimensions of ethical orientation (idealism and relativism) are related to how they experience performing necessary evils. Molinsky and Margolis theorized that the dimensions of necessary evil determine a person’s judgment, beliefs, and attitudes about the task, the self, and the impact of the necessary evil. These judgments, beliefs and attitudes mediate how the dimensions affect internal drama. It is reasonable to expect that one’s ethical orientation would influence a person’s judgments, beliefs and attitudes about necessary evils and thereby affect experienced internal drama. I will also theorize about how internal drama might provide motivation for performing a necessary evil with interpersonal sensitivity for some people, while a barrier to interpersonally sensitive action to others depending on their ethical orientation.

While many of the dimensions of a necessary evil are objectively observable and definable (e.g., frequency of the task, the performer’s involvement in causing the necessary evil, the identity of the target), others are more subjective in nature (e.g., perceived complexity of the task, perceived
legitimacy of the necessary evil, and salience of harm and benefit) and thus open to influence by a variety of factors, including personal disposition. The present research will assess whether idealistic and relativistic values are related to how some of these subjective dimensions are evaluated by the person performing the necessary evil task. It is theorized that variation in evaluation of the dimensions results in variation in the psychological states of different people faced with the same task and in turn will affect variation in the internal drama experienced by the performer. Finally, internal drama is expected to influence two important outcomes: 1) whether the task is performed and 2) the level of interpersonal sensitivity toward the target.

In summary, this dissertation will assess a model of necessary evil that proposes that ethical orientation (as determined by a person’s stance toward idealism and relativism) is related to the evaluation of some of the subjective necessary evil dimensions. Specific predictions about how the extremes of these two continua will affect the evaluation of some of the subjective dimensions of necessary evil are theorized.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

There is currently little research literature on necessary evils in the workplace that investigates the perspective of the individual performing the necessary evil task. This chapter reviews the extant literature and explains the theoretical philosophy underlying the present research.

Review of necessary evil literature

A theory of necessary evil

While the concept of necessary evil is not a new one, the use of the term in the organizational behaviour literature, and a formal model explaining it as a psychological construct, is. Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) theory of necessary evils and interpersonal sensitivity in organizations presents a model of necessary evils and how they are performed. In their seminal article, they provide a definition of the construct and develop a model of necessary evils that includes nine dimensions that impact how a necessary evil is perceived by the performer. They define necessary evil as “a work-related task in which an individual must, as part of his or her job, perform an act that causes emotional or physical harm to another human being in the service of achieving some perceived greater good or purpose” (Molinsky & Margolis, p.247). They further their definition by noting three characteristics of necessary evils that distinguish them from other sorts of work tasks: “1) a valued objective requires that they be done, hence making them necessary; 2) they inflict ineradicable harm and they therefore entail evil; and 3) they are integral to the role the performer occupies, thus making them mandatory” (Molinsky & Margolis, p. 247). In terms of the first distinguishing characteristic, Molinsky and Margolis clarify that it is not a requirement that the valued objective be universally considered to be of greater value than the harm resulting from the necessary evil; it is only important that the objective be recognized as valued in general. Similarly, the second distinguishing component, lasting harm, must be only generally considered evil. Thus, universal agreement that the task is necessary and evil is not a prerequisite for identifying a task as a necessary evil. This caveat is important for the present research. I propose that ethical orientation likely plays an important role in determining whether the task is perceived as necessary or evil, as will be elaborated upon later. The third distinguishing characteristic highlights the context in which necessary evils are being theorized –
the professional role of the performer. As such, the motives for performing necessary evils are thought to be professional in nature and not personal from Molinsky and Margolis’ perspective.

Molinsky and Margolis (2005) describe how necessary evils present a unique situation for the person performing them: while bringing about good through performing the task, they find themselves involved in bringing about harm as well. Furthermore, they find themselves in a position of both witnessing the harm, and being a potential aid to the person suffering the harm. Thus, the individual is faced with four roles to play when performing a necessary evil: “[1] catalyst of good, [2] source of harm, [3] witness, and [4] potential source of aid” (p.247). These roles further highlight the need to consider one’s ethical orientation in understanding how a performer experiences being faced with a necessary evil task. The performer is faced with considering what is acceptable behaviour in each of these roles, and I propose that this is an ethical decision that must be made based on the performer’s evaluation of the dimensions of the necessary evil scenario and their personal beliefs about how one should behave in each role. The performer may take on any one role at different stages of the necessary evil task or may find themselves immersed in multiple roles simultaneously. Furthermore, each role has a distinctly ethical or moral dimension to it. To explain, as a potential ‘catalyst of good’ one’s ethical orientation may dictate how great the inherent good is in light of the inherent harm. To elaborate, the idealism sub-component of ethical orientation determines how an individual interprets outcomes and consequences of an action taken; depending on their stance on idealism the ‘catalyst for good’ role may be more or less salient to the performer (the idealism sub-component is explained in further detail below). As a source of harm the performer must assess how the harm will be inflicted and whether the harm is indeed necessary in light of their assessment of the aforementioned inherent good; as witness to the harm and benefit the performer must cope with their personal emotional response to the harm and benefit resulting from their actions; and finally, as a potential (though not necessary) source of aid to the individual being harmed the performer must decide how much aid is appropriate. The remainder of Molinsky and Margolis’ theoretical account of necessary evil in the workplace is based on describing the causes and consequences of the psychological ambivalence that navigating these four roles creates. Figure 1 illustrates Molinsky and Margolis’ model of necessary evil.
Molinsky and Margolis (2005) describe necessary evils as having an inherent duality in that they are both a “task that must be performed, and an act that is infused with meaning” (p. 247). As a work performance task, necessary evils require proficient performance for the valued objective to be achieved. As acts, such tasks have dual meaning for the performer as they are a mechanism for both ineffaceable harm and a greater good. It is as acts that cause both harm and benefit simultaneously that necessary evils possess ethical content, and thus should be considered in light of individual ethical orientations. It is my intention to show that the psychological tension of causing lasting harm, in spite of the ‘greater good’ that is also achieved, can be understood by considering one’s ethical beliefs. The performer will simultaneously experience the task and the act dimensions of necessary evil; however, the specific nature of how the necessary evil is experienced is dependent on nine dimensions of the necessary evil construct (Molinsky & Margolis). My research links ethical orientation to these dimensions and explores how these dimensions can be assessed and experienced differently based on individual variation in ethical perspective. According to their theory, these nine dimensions stimulate both systematic cognitive processing and emotional responses. In other words, the dimensions are important for understanding the extent to which a necessary evil is experienced as a complicated performance task and an intensely meaningful and emotional act.

Molinsky and Margolis (2005) theorize that the manner in which the dimensions complicate the task and emphasize the meaning of the act is by impacting “(1) the conscious skill and effort the task requires, (2) the performer’s own agency – his or her active, volitional contribution – in bringing about the necessary evil and its effects, and (3) the impact of the necessary evil” (p.248). Therefore, they organize the dimensions into three categories: dimensions of the task, dimensions of agency, and dimensions of the impact.
Dimensions of the task

The first dimension of task is complexity. This dimension refers to the range of technical, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills necessary to perform the task. Complexity of the task is increased as the skills required to perform the task increase. I will argue that complexity is partially dependent on one’s ethical orientation as certain ethical perspectives struggle with performing necessary evils more so than others. Those who struggle more will encounter the necessary evil task as more complex than those for whom the ethical content of a necessary evil scenario is less salient.

The other dimension of the task is the frequency with which a necessary evil is encountered within a given professional role. When a task is encountered infrequently the task element of performing the necessary evil is more difficult.

Dimensions of agency

Dimensions of agency are those which are related to the degree of “active, volitional agency the performer exercises in selecting and executing the necessary evil” (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005, p.248). The first dimension is the causal role of the performer and the target. In cases where the performer has played a large role in bringing about the necessary evil their agency in bringing about the harm is salient, thus affecting the meaning of the act. In other instances, the target of the necessary evil has had a great deal of agency in bringing about the necessary evil, which also affects the meaning of the act. It is noteworthy that factors outside the control of both the target and the performer may also play a causal role. The experience of the necessary evil is affected by the causal role played by the performer themselves, the target, and external factors.

The second dimension of agency is the depth and breadth of the performer’s involvement in the necessary evil. This refers to the extent to which the performer is involved in the necessary evil event from its conception to execution. For example, in some cases the performer may be delivering the task by following directions from others (e.g. a change consultant who performs layoffs as directed by an organization’s senior management team, or a nurse who carries out a painful medical procedure based on doctor’s direction); in other cases the performer may have been involved in the necessary evil from its conception and will ultimately perform the task itself.
(e.g. a manager who has identified people to layoff in his department and will also conduct the actual layoffs). This impacts how the individual experiences the necessary evil they perform.

The final dimension of agency is the *legitimacy* of the necessary evil. In their use of the term, legitimacy is the justification for performing a necessary evil based on the extent to which the action is desirable and deemed appropriate based on societal norms, values and beliefs. To the extent that the necessary evil is seen by society as a legitimate and integral part of the professional role, the less is the agency required by the performer to carry out the necessary evil. I will show that the extent to which the performer perceives the necessary evil task to be legitimate is partially a factor of their ethical orientation. As noted above Molinsky and Margolis (2005) have argued that legitimacy is a function of societal norms, values and beliefs. I agree that this is an important aspect of how a performer determines the legitimacy of the act; however, I intend to show that the performer’s personal norms, values and beliefs comprise another important aspect of this necessary evil dimension.

**Dimensions of the impact**

Every necessary evil, by definition, has a good and bad impact, that is to say, there is always benefit and harm resulting from a necessary evil being performed. Dimensions of impact are those that are related to the outcome in terms of the harm and benefit and the performer’s interpretation or experience of the outcome. It is easy to imagine how one’s ethical beliefs would have an impact on how the harm and benefit inherent in necessary evils is perceived. In this way, the dimensions of impact further point to the importance of understanding the experience of performing necessary evils through an ethical lens. The first dimension is the *magnitude of the harm and benefit*. According to Molinsky and Margolis (2005) “magnitude is a function of both the amount and intensity of the negative and positive impact, reflecting the number of people affected, the extent of the damage or gain, and the type of impact” (p.249). The magnitude of the harm and benefit perceived by the performer will impact their experience of performing the necessary evil.

The second dimension of impact is the *ratio of harm to benefit*. This dimension is related to the magnitude of the harm and benefit described above, as well as the likelihood that the harm and benefit will materialize as expected. To further explain, imagine a doctor who is faced with performing a medically risky and difficult procedure which is extremely painful and could
possibly result in death or permanent disability of the patient; however, if the procedure goes well, the patient’s life will be saved and she will be cured of a debilitating ailment whereas not performing the procedure will likely result in the patient’s death. The doctor in this scenario must consider the magnitude of the benefit of performing the procedure (saved life) as well as the harm of performing the procedure (possible death or permanent disability), while also considering the likelihood that the possible benefits and harms of performing the procedure will materialize (i.e., the likelihood that the procedure will result in death or disability vs. the likelihood that the procedure will result in a saved life). In doing so the doctor is considering the ratio of the harm to benefit of a necessary evil.

A third dimension of impact is salience of the harm and benefit. This dimension is related to the extent to which the performer will vividly and immediately experience the harm and benefit of the necessary evil. For example, when a social worker must observe the cries of a fearful child as they remove them from the family home for their own protection, when a police officer must witness the reaction of a person being told their loved one has been in a fatal accident, or when a manager must endure the fear and outrage of an employee being laid off, the harm is very salient. Likewise, when a doctor observes a patient’s joy at their sight being restored following a painful surgery, when a manager observes renewed confidence and productivity in an employee following a negative performance review, and when a social worker watches a child flourish after being removed from a dangerous and limiting home environment, the benefit is very salient.

The final dimension of impact is the identity of the target in terms of two important elements: 1) the extent to which the performer identifies with the target through a personal relationship or shared characteristics and experiences, and 2) the extent to which the target will be a beneficiary of the necessary evil being performed.

**Psychological states and internal drama**

Molinsky and Margolis (2005) theorize that the dimensions of the construct and the ensuing internal drama (a combination of feelings of guilt, sympathy, cognitive load, and performance anxiety) felt in response to performing the necessary evil are mediated by four psychological states (responsibility, justifiability, task difficulty and palpability), which reflect the performer’s
judgment, beliefs and attitudes about the task, the self and the impact of the necessary evil\textsuperscript{1}. The manner in which ethical orientation affects how internal drama is experienced by the performer will be explored in this dissertation. Clearly, how one assesses the dimensions of necessary evil discussed above will affect how they feel as the individual responsible for performing the necessary evil task. As noted throughout, one’s ethical beliefs and values play an important role in determining how the dimensions are evaluated and thus in determining the level of internal drama for the performer. As is discussed in the next section, the level of internal drama plays a role in determining how the necessary evil is ultimately performed in terms of two important outcomes. As a result of its influence on internal drama, I argue that ethical orientation also has an indirect influence on necessary evil outcomes.

\textit{Necessary evil outcomes}

Two outcomes of interest for Molinsky and Margolis (2005) are whether the necessary evil is performed and whether it is performed with interpersonal sensitivity. Four distinct outcomes are thus possible: (1) the task is performed with interpersonal sensitivity, (2) the task is performed without interpersonal sensitivity, (3) the task is not performed with interpersonal sensitivity, and (4) the task is not performed without interpersonal sensitivity. They further propose that whether the optimal outcome (performed with interpersonal sensitivity) is achieved is a function of the performer’s \textit{motivation} and \textit{capacity} to perform the task with interpersonal sensitivity.

In terms of motivation, on the one hand guilt and sympathy for the target may enact prosocial motivation to be interpersonally sensitive in carrying out a necessary evil task; on the other hand, at very high levels guilt and sympathy may cause personal distress that results in the performer taking a self-protective stance rather than a prosocial one, which results in increased performance anxiety and ultimately avoidance or exit from the situation (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005). I will argue that differences in motivation to perform the task with interpersonal sensitivity can partially be explained by differences in two components of ethical orientation. Briefly, for some individuals causing harm to another creates a great deal of internal discord regardless of the

\textsuperscript{1}I do not elaborate on the psychological states in the present dissertation as this aspect of the model is not central to the development of the present research. The interested reader is directed to Molinsky and Margolis (2005) for more in depth discussion on the four psychological states.
magnitude of the benefit. This discord could plausibly motivate the individual to search for an interpersonally sensitive approach to performing the task. For others, there is less internal tension associated with harming another and thus the motivation to carry out the task in an interpersonally sensitive manner is reduced.

The elements of internal drama may also affect the performer’s capacity to perform necessary evils optimally. Molinsky and Margolis (2005) take the position that psychological resources required to perform complex tasks are finite and can therefore be depleted by competing demands that arise from the complex situation of performing a necessary evil act. As such, they argue that even if a performer is highly motivated to perform a necessary evil in an interpersonally sensitive manner they also must have adequate levels of psychological capacity to execute the task in the prosocial way intended. As internal drama increases, the psychological capacity necessary for being interpersonally sensitive may be depleted as the individual’s psychological resources are directed towards addressing the heightened emotional state being experienced by the performer. As explained by Molinsky and Margolis in order for the optimal outcome to be achieved:

“an individual performing a necessary evil must experience sufficient guilt and sympathy to result in prosocial motivation. However, guilt and sympathy must not be so intense that, in combination with performance anxiety, self-protective motivation outweighs prosocial motivation. In addition, the cumulative psychological demands of cognitive load, on the one hand, and the personal distress caused by guilt, sympathy and performance anxiety, on the other, must not exhaust psychological capacity. In short, although performers may intend to produce behaviour that achieves the dual outcomes of task completion and interpersonal sensitivity, the very experience of performing a necessary evil may limit their ability to do so” (p. 256).

Nevertheless, we know that there are instances when the optimal outcome of a necessary evil is achieved. In fact, the optimal outcome – the necessary evil being performed in an interpersonally sensitive manner - seems to be achieved with greater frequency than would be expected (Margolis and Molinsky, 2008). Investigation into the nature of interpersonal sensitivity and how it is achieved in the unique situation of performing necessary evils was the subject of subsequent qualitative research conducted by Margolis and Molinsky (2008), which is reviewed below.
There has been little published research on Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) theory of necessary evils to date. A search for related published articles that test, expand or comment on the theory produced one dissertation and subsequent research by Margolis and Molinsky. Di Paolo Foster (2008) offers a partial test of Molinsky and Margolis’ model by using structural equation modeling to examine the proposed relationships between the dimensions, the four psychological states and experienced internal drama. The key variables of interest were operationalized and 1300 “Senior Managers and Senior Executives of a large, global professional services firm” (p. 79) were surveyed about their subjective experience with a recently performed necessary evil task. DiPaolo Foster’s findings largely support the model theorized by Molinsky and Margolis (2005); however, more research is needed to confirm the generalizability of the model to other professions and situations, and to further investigate some of the specific relationships between the variables that did not support Molinsky and Margolis’ theory. Furthermore, the relationship between the final elements of the model (i.e., between internal drama and necessary evil outcomes) has not been tested to date.

Investigation of the interpersonal sensitivity outcome

In their second published article on the topic, Margolis and Molinsky (2008) used a grounded theory approach to further investigate the cognitive and emotional response of individuals who perform necessary evils in the workplace. They posed the following research questions:

(1) How do performers of necessary evils respond psychologically to the act of causing harm to another human being?

(2) How do these psychological responses relate to the form of interpersonally sensitive behaviour that they produce?

Taking a qualitative approach to investigating the research questions posed, Margolis and Molinsky (2008) conducted interviews with 111 performers of necessary evils. In an effort to enhance breadth, the interviewees were employed in four different professions which commonly encounter necessary evils: (1) managers, (2) doctors, (3) police officers, and (4) addictions counselors. This approach is consistent with that taken for Study 1 of the present dissertation.

Their findings diverged from prior research on harm doing, which has shown psychological disengagement to be the response of choice when faced with causing harm to others. The conventional finding of harm doing research is that individuals disengage by becoming
uninvolved and distanced emotionally from the experience (Margolis & Molinsky, 2008). This generally results in the task being carried out quickly and with little interpersonal sensitivity on the part of the performer. In contrast, Margolis and Molinsky found many performers of necessary evils took the opposite approach – they became deeply engaged in the task by remaining in touch with their emotions, their own humanity, and the experience of the target. In some cases, these engaged individuals not only carried out the task in accordance with the interpersonal sensitivity that was organizationally scripted, but also went above and beyond required sensitivities to “produce customized acts of interpersonal sensitivity, independent of – and occasionally in direct conflict with – mandated organizational routines, norms, and protocol” (Margolis & Molinsky, p.848).

Margolis and Molinsky (2008) did find evidence of the conventional sort – some performers disengaged from the experience and were not interpersonally sensitive in their performance; however, the majority of their respondents in fact carried out the necessary evil in a manner that was interpersonally sensitive toward the target. Two processes emerged as important factors in determining interpersonal sensitivity: (1) whether the performer engaged or disengaged in their own subjective experience of the task (response to self), and (2) how they responded to the target (response to target). This study was published after data collection was complete for the present research and therefore the role of ethical orientation on these processes is not explicitly explored here. However, I will collect evidence that explores whether ethical orientation is an important factor for understanding how the necessary evil is experienced by the performer, and how the performer regards and thus interacts with the target of the harm. Exploring the relationship between ethical orientation and these processes would be a worthwhile endeavor for future research.

Response to the self

Margolis and Molinsky (2008) identified a number of indicators of engagement and disengagement as they relate to the ‘response to self’ aspect of interpersonal sensitivity. The first indicator of engagement is the experience of prosocial emotions such as sympathy, sadness, or guilt. A second indicator that respondents are engaged is that they attune themselves to the experience of the target by being aware of the toll the harm takes on the target. A final indicator
that a performer is engaged, is identification with their own humanity and the need to perform the task in a humane way, as opposed to automatic or mechanistic performance of the task.

Margolis and Molinsky also identified three indicators of disengagement. The first indicator is detachment from any emotion about the task. A second is denying the target’s humanity by not thinking of them as a person and ignoring the harm they experience. Finally, a third indicator of disengagement is becoming detached from one’s own humanity by detaching from one’s self and blocking out any emotion about one’s own actions.

**Response to the target**

As with the ‘response to self’ process, two dimensions of the response to the target as it pertains to interpersonal sensitivity were identified. These dimensions are described by Margolis and Molinsky (2008) as representing what the performer does (i.e., the content of their actions) and how the interpersonally sensitive behaviour is devised (i.e., whether the behaviour is scripted by organizational protocol or personalized by the performer).

Content of the interpersonal sensitivity is categorized as two types: (1) offers for assistance (e.g., material or physical help, resources and connections, opportunities), and (2) the manner of interaction (e.g., verbal expressions of interpersonal sensitivity, using a compassionate or empathetic tone, support through listening and answering questions, using discretion and restraint, and being direct to expedite the process and minimize duration of the harm).

Personalization of the interpersonally sensitive behaviour occurs when a performer goes beyond (or in some cases ignores) organizational protocols or scripts in favour of customizing their response to the target. The customized response is often unplanned by the performer and therefore improvised (Margolis & Molinsky, 2008).

**Four interpersonal sensitivity response styles**

Margolis and Molinsky’s (2008) findings indicated that engagement was more likely to lead to interpersonally sensitive behaviour when performing necessary evils; however, disengaged performers also behaved in interpersonally sensitive ways, even personalizing their responses in some cases. This led them to develop a typology of four response styles representing those who
engaged and those who disengaged in terms of whether their interpersonal sensitivity was personalized or non-personalized.

The first response style is referred to as *Integrated* and represents performers who were engaged and who personalized their interpersonally sensitive behaviour. This was the most common response style observed accounting for 65% of interpersonally sensitive cases observed.

A second response style is the *Mechanical* response and is the opposite of the integrated response. In this instance the performer disengages and displays interpersonally sensitive behaviour only to the extent that is required by organizational protocol. Margolis and Molinsky note, “To be clear, a mechanical style still entails delivering interpersonal sensitivity. However, that interpersonal sensitivity does not sprout from the professionals’ psychological engagement with their subjective experience of the task” (p. 863).

A third response style is the *Guarded* response, which occurred when a performer engaged but offered interpersonally sensitive action only to the extent required by organizational protocol. The guarded response style is indicative of much emotional engagement, however, this emotionality does not transfer into personalized action and thus routine interpersonal sensitivity is offered to the target.

The final response style is termed *Detached Concern* by Margolis and Molinsky (2008) and includes those who disengage from the task, but who personalize their interpersonally sensitive response. Performers who display this response type report little feeling associated with performing the task and remain detached from the subjective experience while tailoring the response to the target’s needs.

In conclusion, Margolis and Molinsky (2008) describe three ways in which performers are able to perform necessary evils in an interpersonally sensitive manner:

“First, they respond to their own subjective experience of performing a necessary evil by engaging with or disengaging from that experience. Second, they fashion the content of interpersonally sensitive treatment of victims in diverse and flexible ways, offering resources of value and modifying their manner of interaction. Finally, performers express interpersonal sensitivity through their personalization of behavior. They tailor their actions in creative ways
that reflect their own sensibilities and efforts to meet the unfolding demands of the task and reactions of the target." (p. 865).

Establishing ethical content of necessary evils

Understanding how individuals interpret ethical situations has been studied extensively by ethical theorists (Alder, Schminke & Noel, 2007). In the field of organizational behaviour, ethics is broadly defined as the study of the moral codes, principles, and values that guide human behaviour with respect to what is believed to be right or wrong (Daft & Armstrong, 2009; Langton & Robbins, 2007; Johns & Saks, 2005). An ethical issue exists when a decision presents one or more alternatives for action that are inconsistent with formal or informal ethical rules, codes or norms (Hunt & Hansen, 2007). It is widely accepted that the two major ethical principles of ethical theory are found in the distinction between formalism and utilitarian reasoning (Alder et al., 2007). Formalism is generally associated with Kantian ethics and takes the deontological perspective that a set of rules or principles should guide behaviour, regardless of the outcomes associated with following those rules. An act itself is considered ethical or unethical by formalists and an act is deemed ethical only if it adheres to the set of ethical rules. In comparison, Utilitarian ethics is associated with teleology; Utilitarians are more concerned with the outcome of an action taken because for them it is the consequence of the action that is evaluated as being ethical or unethical, as opposed to the action itself. “With utilitarian ethics, actions are ethical if they produce the greatest good” (Alder et al., p. 205).

The present research is based on my theory that ethical orientation plays a role in how individuals respond to necessary evils. I theorized that necessary evils might be viewed as a sort of ethical issue. According to Molinsky & Margolis’ (2005) definition, a necessary evil involves doing harm for the purpose of a greater good. If we accept ‘doing harm to another individual’ as being inconsistent with an informal (if not formal) ethical code, principle, norm or rule, then we can accept that necessary evils hold ethical content. Casual observation within North American society corroborates this assumption. From a very young age we are taught ‘the golden rule’ by religious institutions, teachers, and in many cases our parents. Our justice system is rife with punishments for people who inflict physical, mental or emotional pain on others, and laws clearly dictate ways in which harm must not be inflicted on others. Even academic ethics review boards exist largely to ensure that any harm done to participants is minimized if not eliminated.
completely. However, whether an issue possesses ethical content is separate from an individual’s perception of an ethical *problem*, which exists only if it is perceived as ethics-related by the individual (Sparks & Hunt, 1998). An ethical *issue* exists objectively according to societal norms, rules, and ethical codes, and is therefore not simply in the ‘eye of the beholder’; an ethical *problem* exists only when perceived by the individual faced with the ethical issue (Sparks & Hunt). Ethical norms, rules, and codes may vary from one society to the next. Within a given society, it is by no means necessarily the case that ethical issues always give rise to ethical problems. For example, few would disagree that causing irrevocable harm to another individual is an ethical *issue*; however, when the irrevocable harm is amputation of a limb to save a person’s life, many may not perceive an ethical *problem*. Therefore, while some people may not perceive an ethical problem when faced with a necessary evil, our society deems an ethical issue to be inherent in such situations based on violation of the norm of “do not harm others.”

Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) theory of necessary evil captured many of the construct’s important characteristics and the impact of necessary evils on those who must manage them; however, their theory does not address the ethical issue inherent in necessary evils. Their theory delineates how dimensions of 1) the necessary evil task itself, 2) the agency of the performer, and 3) the impact of the task on stakeholders affect whether the task is performed and whether it is performed with interpersonal sensitivity. While some of their dimensions imply a moral component, the theory does not take in to account how one’s ethicality might influence outcomes of necessary evils. For example, the legitimacy dimension is described as pertaining to an action’s appropriateness based on societal norms, values, beliefs and definitions; however, Molinsky & Margolis do not explicitly theorize about individual differences that might impact one’s perception of legitimacy.

It is my belief that investigating individual differences as potential predictors of the experience of performing necessary evils is worthwhile for further unraveling of the complexities of this phenomenon. The present research aims to make both theoretical and practical contributions to the field by investigating how an individual difference variable – ethical orientation - impacts how necessary evils are experienced by performers. It is proposed that ethical orientation impacts the performer’s perception of some of the nine dimensions of necessary evils, which results in variation in experience as those who perceive the necessary evil to have low ethicality
experience greater internal drama. Finally, as proposed by Molinsky and Margolis (2005), the level of internal drama experienced will partially determine the outcomes of the necessary evil.

To test my theory about whether necessary evils contain an ethical component I designed and carried out a qualitative study aimed at understanding the experience of workers who encounter necessary evils on an ongoing basis. The next section presents that study and is then followed by the development of several hypotheses based on the findings of study 1 in and the existing literature on the necessary evil phenomenon. To clarify, Study 1 was designed for the purpose of gathering data that informs the development of hypotheses to be tested by a second study. Study 1 also served as a means of gathering information on real life necessary evil scenarios that were subsequently used to develop the vignettes to be used in gathering data in the second study.

Problem statement

Molinsky and Margolis (2005) describe a model of necessary evil that theorizes the impact of nine dimensions of necessary evils on the performer’s experienced internal drama, psychological state, and subsequent behaviour in terms of two outcomes: 1) whether the task is performed, and 2) whether the necessary evil is addressed in an interpersonally sensitive manner. The present research uses mixed methods to operationalize some of the key variables described by Molinsky and Margolis, partially test the model they describe and investigate whether an individual difference variable (ethical orientation) might be useful for further understanding how workers experience performing necessary evil tasks. In other words, the dissertation investigates whether variation in how workers experience necessary evils can be at least partially explained by individual differences in ethical orientation. Hypotheses regarding the relationships between ethical orientation and some of the subjective dimensions of necessary evils, as well as indirect effects of ethical orientation on internal drama are tested.
Chapter 3: A Qualitative Investigation of Necessary Evils in the Workplace

Method

Study 1 employs qualitative research methods to gather preliminary information about the experience of workers in various occupational fields who have experience in performing necessary evils at work. An attempt was made to cover a broad range of occupational groups who might experience necessary evil as part of their job. This study will serve in further theorizing about the role of ethical orientation in the experience of necessary evils by providing the researcher with rich and context based information. Qualitative research of this kind can be particularly valuable during early stages of theory development. As there is little prior research on necessary evils, such a study was thought to be a prudent way to begin investigating this topic. To elaborate, the purpose of Study 1 is threefold and mirrors the common purposes of qualitative research in general. First, this study is exploratory and will investigate whether respondents feel that necessary evils contain an ethical component. Secondly, this study is explanatory in terms of offering insight into patterns of behaviour and contextual factors that might shape the experience of workers who perform necessary evils. Finally, this study will describe how necessary evils are experienced from the worker’s perspective which will reveal important aspects of workers’ beliefs, preferences, feelings, attitudes and behaviour in response to being faced with necessary evil situations in their work. The rich qualitative data obtained from Study 1 aims to support theorizing about the relationship between ethical orientation and necessary evil outcomes. At the time this study was designed and carried out, it was the first of its kind; However, prior to completion of the dissertation Margolis and Molinsky (2008) published their qualitative study of workplace necessary evils.

Participation in Study 1 required that respondents consent to participate in an interview concerning their experience with workplace necessary evils (See the appendix for interview questions). The semi-structured interviews lasted from one hour to more than two hours. All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the respondent. Audio recordings were analyzed using Atlas.ti software. Following initial thematic analysis, key findings were transcribed by the author for further analysis. A grounded theory approach to analysis was used whereby the audio recordings were analyzed and coded for emerging themes. Once the main
themes had been identified the audio codes were transcribed and organized by thematic category. The resulting transcriptions were further analyzed and coded for sub-categories within each broad theme.

This results section begins with a brief summary of findings from interviews with individuals who experience necessary evils as part of their work. Following this summary, the thematic analysis is presented in which emergent themes are discussed in greater depth, using quotes from the respondents to support the discussion.

The Participants

Nine managers, 12 police officers, and nine workers from other professions in which necessary evils are commonly experienced participated. “Other” workers interviewed included lawyers, correction workers, a social worker, nurse, rehabilitation worker, and change agent (an individual hired by banks to assist in transforming the internal audit department by developing and redefining the job title and tasks of workers in that department, which results in many of the current staff being laid off). There were 30 participants in total and fourteen (48.4%) were female. More than 60% of the sample was over 46 years of age, with 24 of the 30 participants falling between 36 and 55 years of age; four participants were younger than 35 and three were older than 55. Respondents varied in terms of how long they’d been in their current position, which ranged from 6 weeks to 40 years. The average years in their current position was 10.43 years (SD 9.29). Participants also varied broadly in terms of how long they’d been with their current employer from just six weeks to 32 years with an average of 14.15 (SD = 10.38).

Snowball sampling was used to select participants, which resulted in multiple managers and police officers participating in the research. This allowed these two occupational groups to be analyzed as distinct units to some extent; thus, comparisons and contrast noted between these groups are highlighted throughout the results section. The “other” group is comprised of workers from various occupations, and while some may be similar to each other (e.g., correctional officer and open custody group home worker and rehabilitation counselor) they cannot be analyzed as a distinct group of workers; however, the results section is organized based on responses by the three groups with “others” results generally presented together. The reader is cautioned that results of the “other” group are presented together solely for ease of presentation and not because
it is thought the individuals who comprise this group signify a distinct occupational subset that should be analyzed as such in the future.

Results Section – An overview of findings

An Ethical Component of Necessary Evils

A key component of this study was to assess whether individuals perceive that necessary evils contain an ethical component. In other words, is being faced with a necessary evil in any way like being faced with an ethical issue or moral dilemma? Responses were mixed regarding this aspect of necessary evils; however, a majority of respondents felt that there is in fact an ethical or moral component inherent in performing necessary evils. Most often when respondents said there was not an ethical component they noted that this was because the task was justified and/or the ethical considerations had all been decided upon ahead of time by rules or laws governing the work. For example, for police officers laws are in place to make clear what is right and wrong and by extension what constitutes breaking the law. As such, when they are faced with a necessary evil task, there is no decision to be made on their part regarding whether they should or should not arrest someone, they simply follow the law. Several respondents felt that whether there was an ethical component to the necessary evil task depended on the nature of the necessary evil. To elaborate, respondents explained that while they sometimes felt personally opposed to the necessary evil action, ultimately performing the job according to rules of the organization meant putting their personal opinions aside and simply following rules and procedures established by the profession or organization. It was also suggested that while following the rules was appropriate for most necessary evils, there were situations where the rules might be less clear and those necessary evil scenarios in particular made issues of ethics and morality salient.

The Necessary Evils

Participants were asked to describe the necessary evils they experience as part of their work. Following is a list of responses:

1. Making an arrest
2. Denial of privileges
3. Removal of rights and freedoms
4. Signing arrest warrants
5. Interrogation
6. Rule or law enforcement
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Removal of children from home</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Termination of employment</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Death notification</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Disciplining subordinates</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Traffic stops</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Painful medical procedures</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Critical incident stress debriefing</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Collection of monies from employees for unacceptable charges made to company credit cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Delivery of bad news</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Use of force by police officers and corrections workers</td>
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</table>

**Necessary Evil Outcomes**

In this study there were two key outcomes of interest: 1) whether the task is performed at all and 2) Whether it’s performed with interpersonal sensitivity. Although not a planned interview question, almost all participants were asked to comment on these two outcomes throughout the course of the interview.

**Performing the task**

When asked whether they could think of a time when they had chosen to not perform a necessary evil or a time when they had passed it off to someone else, the vast majority of respondents noted they could not think of such a time. Those who noted that they may have used some discretion generally indicated that the reason for not performing the task was not because they could not bring themselves to do so, rather it was due to a practical issue or a conflict of interest. For example, at the end of a shift a police officer noted that a driver found to be intoxicated might have their license suspended for a 24 hour period rather than formal charges being laid, because the officer was too tired to go through the process of laying charges. It was further explained that in such non-criminal matters, depending on the circumstances of the incident, officers have freedom to use discretion in addressing the matter. Another example of a necessary evil not being performed comes from the bail supervisor who noted in some cases they try to work with a client to get them to comply with bail conditions that had already been violated, as opposed to signing a warrant for arrest right away. In sum, interviewees generally agreed necessary evils were for the most part unavoidable and indeed necessary.
Interpersonal sensitivity

Interpersonal sensitivity is a very important aspect of performing necessary evils (Molinsky & Margolis, 2008). Its importance is based in the fact that while interpersonal sensitivity is extremely important for improving the experience for the target of the necessary evil, it is a difficult behaviour for the performer to evoke. Performers of necessary evils may experience a wide variety of emotions and cognitions regarding the task, which takes focus away from acting in a interpersonally sensitive manner. Most respondents noted that they tried to portray interpersonal sensitivity to targets when performing necessary evils, however some noted behaving in a personally sensitive manner was not always their first priority. Police officers in particular offered mixed responses to this question; while for the most part their comments were indicative of knowing the value of being interpersonally sensitive and of being empathetic to the plight of the victim, they explained that safety and concern for self, other officers and innocent bystanders, as well as controlling the situation, was more salient to them at the time the necessary evil was being performed. To clarify, some officers noted that in the moment they were not thinking about the victim of the necessary evil (who is usually the accused), they were thinking about what was required of them legally to get their job done and make sure safety was upheld for all involved. For respondents belonging to other occupational groups interpersonal sensitivity was generally thought to be important; however, there was variation in terms of why it was thought to be important. Lawyers, for example, noted that behaving in an interpersonally sensitive manner toward a witness could be beneficial in winning jury votes or approval from the judge overseeing the case. This suggests that the motivation for behaving in an interpersonally sensitive manner may not always be humanitarian, but rather an instrumental approach to achieving a self-serving objective. Furthermore, it may be difficult to discern the nature of the motivation for any given necessary evil situation.

Molinsky and Margolis (2008) collected and analyzed qualitative data and found evidence of interpersonally sensitive behaviour. They too observed variation in the manner in which performers induce interpersonally sensitive behaviour when performing necessary evils. In particular, there were two primary dimensions on which their participants varied: the extent to which they emotionally engaged in the task, and the extent to which they personalized their response to the target. Evidence of these dimensions emerged in the present study as well. For example, some respondents indicated that they engaged emotionally in the necessary evil task
and they believed this helped them to better perform the task; others noted the importance of remaining emotionally detached from the task to ensure optimal performance. Likewise, some of the present respondents used a personalized response to necessary evils while others simply followed a script and ensured that they did what was required by their organization for such situations. For example, many police officers noted the importance of treating targets of necessary evils with dignity and respect, and going so far as to offer the target food, advice, and spiritual guidance when making an arrest; Managers noted carefully considering the time of day or week and location that would provide the most privacy and comfort to the target when performing layoffs or administering disciplinary action.

Justification

The theme of justification emerged as a very important dimension of performing necessary evils and is discussed in much greater detail below; however, the major components of the theme are summarized here. Respondents reported feeling little stress or anxiety about performing necessary evils as long as they perceived their actions as justified. A number of forms of this dimension emerged from respondents’ comments including legal justification (when a necessary evil is justified because it is within the bounds of written national law, or when avoiding such action would result in behaving in an unlawful manner, or would result in the law not being upheld); professional justification (when a necessary evil is justified because it is part of the person’s job, in line with codes of conduct associated with the profession, and/or consistent with written protocol surrounding necessary evils in the particular workplace); peer or expert justification (obtaining justification for one’s actions in performing a necessary evil or for uncomfortable feelings resulting from experiencing a necessary evil by seeking confirmation from peers or supervisors that the actions or feelings are appropriate); and social, divine or righteous justification (feeling justified because one’s actions are morally righteous or justified by a higher power and/or feeling justified because one’s actions were for the betterment of society as a whole).

Internal Drama

Interviewees were asked a number of questions that required a response based on a 7-point Likert scale. These questions were designed to collect information on the internal drama variables described by Molinsky and Margolis (2005). They proposed that when performing
necessary evils, workers will experience varying levels of guilt, sympathy for the target, cognitive load and performance anxiety and referred to the combination of these feelings as “internal drama” experienced by the performer. They theorized that greater levels of internal drama would make performing the necessary evil more difficult and could possibly result in lower levels of interpersonal sensitivity amongst performers. While it is not possible to test this theory with the qualitative methods proposed for this study, it was deemed important to inquire about internal drama experienced by study participants\(^2\). As such, respondents were asked to report to what extent they generally experienced guilt, sympathy for the target, cognitive load and performance anxiety when performing a necessary evil task. A score of 1 indicated not experiencing the construct in question at all, and a score of 7 indicated experiencing the construct a great deal. A sum of scores on each item was calculated for each respondent to indicate overall level of internal drama.

Descriptive statistics for each of the Likert items and the global measure of internal drama are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Descriptive statistics for Likert questions*</th>
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<tr>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>30</td>
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</table>

*Data was collected using a 7-point Likert scale where higher responses indicated greater levels of the construct in question

\(^2\) Some respondents did not answer all of these questions as they found it difficult to recall the amount of guilt, sympathy, cognitive load or performance anxiety experienced, so no score was recorded.
Analysis of variance revealed group differences for Internal Drama (F(2,27) = 6.59, p = .005); Guilt (F(2,24) = 8.03, p = .002); and Performance Anxiety (F(2, 17) = 6.70, p = .007). Post Hoc tests revealed that group means for the Manager group differed significantly from those of both the Police and Others groups in terms of guilt, and performance anxiety. For internal drama Managers differed significantly from Police Officers but not the Other group, though the mean difference between Managers and Others approached significance. Group means for Police and Others did not differ significantly from each other. The post hoc test results are summarized in Table 2. Mean differences presented in Table 2 indicate the difference between group means for managers and the comparison group (either Others or Police) for each internal drama variable and the global internal drama variable. A positive mean difference indicates the mean for Managers is greater than that of the comparison group while a negative mean difference indicates the mean for Managers was less than that of the comparison group; for all variables included in the analysis the mean difference is positive indicating greater levels of internal drama amongst Managers than the comparison group in all instances.

Table 2 Summary of Post Hoc Comparisons for Managers as Compared to Police and 'Others'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Comparison group</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal Drama</td>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive load</td>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Anxiety</td>
<td>Managers</td>
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The findings of this analysis indicate that Managers experience the necessary evils they perform in a different manner than other occupational groups interviewed. The differences between Police and Managers in particular are explored in greater detail in the following subsections that discuss emergent themes. The findings suggest that the nature of the necessary evils experienced by managers is very different than those experienced by police officers. Perhaps one reason for this is that managers are generally dealing with a target that is known to them and with whom the manager can identify, whereas officers deal with targets who they do not know personally. Furthermore, for officers the targets of necessary evils are generally responsible for bringing the harm upon themselves and to not perform the necessary evil would result in an innocent person being victimized; for the managers interviewed, the targets of necessary evils may not have intentionally brought the harm upon themselves, and the benefactor is often the organization. Those in the “other” group for the present study frequently experienced necessary evils that are more similar to the necessary evils experienced by officers than those of managers with regard to these aspects of the necessary evil scenario (e.g., corrections officers, lawyers, bail supervisors, and rehabilitation counselors are likely to encounter targets who are responsible for bringing harm upon themselves). This might explain why differences were found between the managerial participants and all others (police and others combined) while no significant differences were observed between police and other occupations.

It is also possible to interpret the above findings as an indication that the types of people who become Managers respond differently to necessary evils than those of other occupational groups. However, it is arguably more plausible that individuals who become police officers are as a group distinct from others in that they are less prone to internal drama than others. Given the rigorous psychological testing to which police officers are subjected during recruitment it is entirely possible that the ‘type’ of individual who is interested in pursuing such a career and makes it through the rigorous testing and training of police college is prone to lower levels of internal drama. Pre-employment assessments for police officers are designed to eliminate unfit candidates and to select those who are most likely to maintain psychological well-being given the nature of their work (Twersky-Glasner, 2005). While police screening has been common since the early 20th century, there has been a shift in focus on cognitive ability to personality.
traits (Twersky-Glasner). While a variety of personality traits have been shown to be associated with persistence and success in policing (e.g., dominance, authoritarianism, suspicion, cynicism, self-acceptance, and a need for autonomous achievement) perhaps of greatest relevance for the present findings is that successful police recruits possess a high level of social acuity (empathy) as compared to unsuccessful recruits (Hogan & Kurtines, 1975). Given the obvious role experienced empathy for the target plays in determining levels of internal drama experienced by the performer, this trait in particular may help explain observed differences between the experience of police officers and managers. Molinsky and Margolis (2005) theorized that high levels of guilt and sympathy result in higher levels of internal drama for the performer; as such it would be expected that high levels of empathy might also be associated with higher internal drama, which is not consistent with the findings presented here. Perhaps then empathy for others actually decreases internal drama for some individuals and these are the type of individuals who pursue policing. Investigating the role of empathy in experienced internal drama associated with necessary evil is needed to clarify exactly what the true relationship is. Indeed, further research is necessary to further understand the variation observed between occupational groups.

**Additional Findings of Interest**

The interviews elicited a great deal of rich and informative material regarding the experience of performing necessary evils, not all of which is directly relevant to this present research. I have chosen to include this information as it makes a useful contribution to the necessary evil literature more generally. As a relatively new area of research in the field of management there is great benefit in qualitative findings for the purpose of stimulating new ideas and research. The following two sections pertaining to salient issues, and policies and resources are included for this purpose.

**Salient Issues (Harm vs. Benefit; Task vs. Outcome)**

Another issue of interest is what is salient to workers as they perform necessary evils. This includes the saliency of the inherent harm and the inherent benefit implicated by necessary evil tasks, and whether respondents focused on the process of performing the task itself or the outcome intended to be achieved by performing a necessary evil.
Participants were asked to reflect on whether the harm or the benefit was of greater salience to them as they performed a task of necessary evil. The majority of respondents were most focused on the benefit, though some said that they were focused on both to some degree, or that while they were aware of the harm they were mostly focused on the benefit. Managers in particular (as compared to police officers and ‘others’) were more likely to be focused on the harm than the benefit or on both equally.

In general, respondents felt they were focused on both the task and the outcome, however, many police officers noted that in certain circumstances they do not have the luxury of focusing on the outcome as the task is all consuming in the moment the necessary evil is being performed. Others noted that in some cases the outcome is decided long before the necessary evil is carried out, so the focus is on the task. As a group, managers in particular felt both the task and outcome were important considerations for them, but at different times in the process of addressing a necessary evil.

Policies and Resources

Respondents were asked whether there are policies, resources and support systems put forth by their organization to assist them in performing necessary evil tasks. Most respondents noted there being policy manuals outlining proper procedures for these types of tasks and employee assistance programs (EAPs) that provide assistance in the event that a worker is feeling overwhelmed or unable to cope with aspects of their work.

Police officers in particular pointed out the plethora of policies in place to guide their work behaviour including statutes that are national, provincial, regional, and even local to a specific police service. Officers indicated that if they were unsure how to proceed when faced with a necessary evil, they could simply look it up in a rule or policy book, which they reported to be helpful for gaining confidence and ensuring harm is minimized. Police officers further noted the value of peer support for dealing with necessary evil scenarios and indicated that this was available informally (e.g., talking with colleagues and ‘shooting the breeze’) and formally (e.g., peer mentoring programs and critical incident debriefing). Police officers also highlighted the importance of their training for addressing necessary evils. Several officers noted that they receive extensive training on use of force options both as young recruits and on a regular basis throughout their career via refresher training courses. Officers indicated that they didn’t feel that
there was anything missing in terms of support systems and noted that generally the supports in place were effective and helpful. That being said, it was noted that there exists some stigma regarding seeking out formal help through EAPs but this stigma was much less than in the past as officers have come to realize the importance of getting help from professionals to deal with the extensive trauma and violence they encounter in the line of duty. Few officers who I interviewed had actually availed themselves of the services offered by EAPs, but those who had generally felt it was worthwhile.

When asked about support systems, managers pointed to extensive policy and procedure manuals to guide their daily work, including layoffs and taking disciplinary action. EAPs are in place for managers who need them, though none of the participants in the present study indicated having turned to an EAP to help cope with a necessary evil. Like officers, managers relied on peer support and supervisor support to guide them when they were unsure what to do, or simply needed to talk about their feelings about performing a necessary evil. Managers also indicated that having access to professionals for guidance and support (e.g., human resource professionals when conducting layoffs or taking disciplinary action, or lawyers when someone needed to be fired with cause), was generally felt to be quite helpful in ensuring that they were justified in their actions. Training was noted to be helpful for managers. Most managers did not feel additional support systems were needed.

Like managers and police officers, the majority of individuals in the “other” occupational group noted the importance of peer or supervisor support, policies and guidelines, and the existence of EAPs for extremely difficult cases. One corrections officer felt there was much more training needed in their line of work for dealing with difficult situations and they would like to see a full time psychologist on staff and compulsory mental health assessments on a regular basis. This corrections officer noted that the use of EAPs is stigmatized and if regular assessments or counselling were mandatory, the ill effects of such stigma could be reduced or avoided completely. Another corrections worker recalled a time when a team of professional counsellors were provided to staff members who had been involved in a particularly traumatic experience and that this intervention was helpful as it ensured staff received help and were protected from any stigma they might feel about seeking help on their own. Lawyers pointed to professional law associations and their related policies and guidelines as a source of support when dealing with difficult scenarios that caused them to question what might be acceptable or not acceptable in a
given scenario. The change agent also pointed to the value of external professionals (e.g., communication or project management experts) and the internal HR team as extremely helpful in dealing with necessary evils.

This concludes the overall summary of findings for this study. The following sections expand on each of the sections in this summary and present emergent themes from the data that more fully describe the experience of individuals who perform necessary evils as part of their work. As above, findings are organized by occupational group (i.e., Managers, Police officers, and Others) when possible and distinctions are made between findings that are directly relevant for this dissertation and those that are included for the purpose of expanding the necessary evil literature in general. A general discussion of Study 1 findings follows the detailed results section.

**Thematic analysis of Study 1 findings**

**Perception of an ethical or moral component to necessary evils**

As the purpose of the present dissertation is to investigate a relationship between one’s ethical orientation and the experience of necessary evils, participants were asked directly about whether they perceived necessary evils to comprise an ethical or moral component. There were no obvious differences between occupational groups in terms of how interviewees responded to this particular inquiry, so the results are not presented by occupational group as in other sections.

Relating to the previous theme of justification, several respondents justified performing necessary evils by describing them as the morally righteous thing to do. Surprisingly, several respondents felt it was their duty to God to perform necessary evils they faced on the job. This sort of divine justification was evident when individuals noted that their actions in carrying out a necessary evil were justified by God. Several police officers in particular noted that they were duty bound to carry out necessary evils (professional Justification) and that performing necessary evils is the morally righteous thing to do. They justified carrying out necessary evils by pointing out that to not perform them would be letting down society, which had entrusted them with policing.

“I believe that in a spiritual way societies are granted this power by our creators to have things run according to rule of law so I have no ethical qualms; it’s not personal I’m doing it as a
sworn duty to my society and I try to make that sink in – sometimes it does and sometimes it
doesn’t but I always feel it’s worth a try.” (Police officer)

“I have predetermined my stance on those ethical dilemmas and I know where my authority
comes from or my spiritual justification or the righteous justification for my actions.” (Police
officer)

“I believe I’m acting in good faith and morality and ethics don’t play a role in it for me. If
you’re standing there thinking of the moral or ethical issues in this job, you’re probably in the
wrong vocation... In these acts I felt not only that I was legally justified but also duty bound and
morally righteous in my opinion only.” (Police officer)

“...if I had to take a life I would feel very bad about that, but I know I could do it and I just have
to leave that in God’s hands, he knows what’s going on and maybe for that reason I’ve never
had to take a life.” (Police officer)

The bail supervisor that was interviewed touched on this subject as well. It was noted by the
interviewee that sometimes there are gray areas and room for discretion but that you had to keep
in mind what should be done for the better of society. If the individual was a threat to society for
example, then a warrant had to be signed for their arrest even if there was some wiggle room on
paper. The change agent also felt morally justified in his actions. This person spoke of
struggling with delivering a painful message to a person who would not keep their job through
the change process and noted that it was often tempting to tell white lies or offer encouragement
that the person might keep their job, even though you know that there is little to no chance that
this will in fact be the case. In this way, the right thing to do is perform the necessary evil
because to not do so would be offering false hope to the individual and that would be even worse
than the harm caused by the necessary evil.

“I think sometimes even though you know that you’re going to hurt someone emotionally but for
a better good, you might be tempted to fall into the trap of little white lies to try to make people
feel less harmed. Yet the straight up truth is the far better route to go. So the easiest thing when
you know someone will not make the cut might be to give the person encouragement that they
have a good chance of making it, when you know there’s little to no chance. So it’s tempting not
to deliver bad news because you think that you’re hurting them less, when in the long run you
probably hurt them more. It’s better to give them the time and respect to talk them through it so they come to the conclusion themselves that they will not make the cut. That’s actually a harder message to deliver. Trying to paint a better picture than is there and thinking you’re doing it for compassionate reasons, when you’re actually harming them more. That’s the ethical part of it—we ethically owe as much candor as possible and as much transparency as possible. They might not take it as you would hope they would, but at least you were honest.” (Change agent)

The majority of respondents felt there was indeed an ethical component to performing necessary evils; however, many respondents also noted that there was not an ethical component to be considered. That being said, of those who indicated not feeling ethically or morally conflicted most felt this was because any ethical conflict they might experience was mitigated by rules and policies that justified performing the necessary evil act. To elaborate, respondents indicated that there is not an ethical component because what is the right or wrong thing to do in these situations is decided ahead of time by law or common business practice and enforced and supported by policy and procedure. One police officer summed this up well with the following quote:

“I don’t think there’s an ethical component in that with policing and the nature of the job is that you do it because it’s the right thing to do. It’s the right thing to do because it’s lawful, you’re helping people. Even if they can’t see it’s the right thing to do because they’re in it, you know it’s the right thing to do – it’s lawful and there are consequences for their actions. Sometimes you’re the person who initiates those consequences, you’re not the final judge on things, but you’re the one that calls them to task initially and then the judicial system takes over from there. You wouldn’t be stepping in if it wasn’t the right thing to do. People have decisions to make but in policing there is not so many decisions.”

Several respondents felt that performing the job was their duty and any personal conflict they might experience was easily solved by simply following the rules. Although they sometimes disagreed with the laws, procedures, or policies they had to follow, there still is no ethical decision to be made as they are confident that the ‘right thing to do’ is to follow the rules and procedures. It was noted that those personal conflicts simply had to be put aside in order to perform their job.
“Yeah, necessary evils have an ethical component. But I guess the way that you get hardened with the job you don’t see the ethical dilemma; it’s almost as if morals and ethics are put aside on that. In another part of life you might behave completely differently because the morals and ethics would not be put aside. A person suited for this job has to be a little hardcore – they need to be able to put everything else aside and be able to change your tone on an instant. A person who’s not good in this job, their morals come more into it and a suspect could pick up on it and then you can’t get the job done.” (Police officer referring to the necessary evil of interrogating a suspect)

“The thing is, if you hold an opinion on whether the necessary evil had to be performed in the first place or how did it come to be. Now you have [an emergency] that occurs, and you go deal with it, but sometimes you hold an opinion about what’s causing this to happen. That might cause stress; I have no problem rolling around with an inmate on the ground or whatever, but I have a problem if it happens because the nurse forgot to give him the medication.” (Corrections officer)

Some respondents noted that the ethical decision was made when they chose their career because they knew that they would face such complicated issues and therefore felt that they decided on what they were and were not willing to do at that point. As explained by a correctional officer:

“I wouldn’t call them ethical dilemmas per se – I think the ethical component comes from you choosing in the first place to work in that field knowing that you might face these issues. Once you’ve chosen the career, I don’t really see an ethical dilemma. When you perform necessary evils you are responding to situations, events and circumstances and they just have to be done.” (Police officer)

Others who felt that there was little or no ethical decision qualified their response by noting that while many of the necessary evils they perform are decided by rules or laws and therefore basically black and white in terms of how they should respond, there are situations that may be vague or unclear and those necessary evils might contain an ethical component. The following quote from an interview with a bail supervisor exemplifies this response:

“Normally no [there is no ethical component] because there are standards and it’s our job to stand by those standards. But there are some gray areas that require some subjectivity and then
that can become an ethical dilemma. When you can make a case either way – for putting off a warrant for a while and trying to solve the problem or not putting it off; especially when it’s dealing with people that may not have the capacity to deal with things in the way a normal individual does. I guess then the main focus becomes is the person a threat to the public, and if yes, we have to issue the warrant.”

Of those who believe there is an ethical component to be considered in performing necessary evils, most said the ethical issue is not generally concerning whether the necessary evil should be carried out or not, but pertains rather to how the necessary evil is carried out. This is an important distinction given findings regarding interpersonal sensitivity, which suggest interpersonally sensitive behaviour is important for lessening the harm inherent in the necessary evil (see section on interpersonal sensitivity below for further discussion on this aspect of performing necessary evils).

“I took this question two-fold. I don’t think that the issue itself, the reason the necessary evil is happening is ethical or moral – it’s not subjective, it’s not arbitrary, something has happened and its black and white. So I don’t think that’s a moral issue at all. However, I think the approach you take can be an ethical or moral issue and the code of ethics you follow.”

(Manager)

Finally, one manager in particular described deep personal conflict regarding their view of performing necessary evils and justifying doing so in terms of their own personal beliefs. While this deep level of philosophizing was not the norm, the internal conflict expressed through the following quote is likely not uncommon amongst individuals faced with performing necessary evils:

“I think all of it comes down to ethics and morals. How much profit is enough at the detriment of people not working or working too much? However, if I have shares in the company then I have no right to complain about not getting enough return on the investment if the company fires me for not making enough profit. So the ethical part is how much is enough? I think based on how I see the company run, that it quite often is a moral or ethical dilemma that brings the necessary evil about. If the person who put me in this position of having to perform a necessary evil were moral and ethical, I probably wouldn’t be in this position. I do believe that my own personal moral values come into how I will deal with it, and that’s part of why I find it so hard. I can’t
always find a way to explain it to myself in a way that justifies my own morals, but I can explain it from the company’s perspective which may have no morals. But that’s when I struggle with myself – when I do it because I need to keep my job, I’m selling myself out for that. So I think there’s a huge ethical implication. I think those who don’t consider this, their morals suck. If you’re morals are aligned with the company’s morals then you are always putting the company first not people first, and doing that there’s no morals – it’s just business as they say.”

Justification theme

“If there was no justification, why would you be making that decision? It’s just an evil decision then.” (Manager)

“I like to be able to look in the mirror and decide that I’ve done the right things for the right reasons.” (Manager)

“You’re more accountable than the average profession and it has to be that way – we have the ability to take somebody’s life. We have to be accountable, know what we’re doing and be fair and justified in our actions.” (Police officer)

One of the most prominent themes to emerge from the interviews surrounded the issue of justification. This is not at all surprising given the nature of the task; indeed my initial interest in necessary evil was related to this theme as I questioned how ‘good people’ were able to carry out ‘bad tasks’ without damaging their own self image. That being said, I wasn’t quite prepared for the extent to which justification of the necessary evil would be prominent or the breadth of justifications used amongst the workers I interviewed. The following sections discuss various types of justifications that were used by workers interviewed when addressing necessary evils; the manner in which type of justification varied between occupations is also discussed.

Legal justification

A common form of justification that emerged from the data was legal justification. An operational definition of this form of justification is: when an action is justified because it is within the bounds of written national law, or because to avoid taking such action would result in behaving in an unlawful manner, or would result in the law not being upheld. This form of
justification was understandably most prominent among police officers but was also sought out by other occupational groups to justify necessary evil actions.

**Police**

Police noted that legal justification for their actions was of the utmost importance when they were faced with performing necessary evils and it was often cited as the first thing assessed before engaging in necessary evil action. It seems in many cases that as long as the required action was legal, police officers felt justified in performing the necessary evil and noted that if the action was not justified legally they may be held liable for their actions. Some said that while they often searched for legal justification for action, they felt it necessary to ignore their personal morals in doing so, especially if their morals conflicted with what the law dictated for a particular situation. This led to a discussion of professional obligation to uphold the law regardless of moral values (see section below on professional justification for actions).

In many of the situations of necessary evil that they face, officers are unaware of what is going on in the situation until they arrive on the scene. In such contexts there is little time to deliberate whether what they do is justifiable, so they rely on what the law states is right. They are trained to act in accordance with the law and to know what is and is not in accordance with law without having to stop to think about it. It seems that skills for making quick decisions for action becomes honed with experience on the job; one officer even said that what to do becomes almost automatic. Police officers felt they often had to perform the necessary evil and ask questions later, as the consequences of not performing a necessary evil would generally outweigh the harm associated with performing the action. The following quotes highlight police officers’ views on legal justification.

“...I’d like to think that my decision about necessary evils is one that others would agree with. Because there is injury that occurs with use of force, I want to make sure that I’m legally justified and that I’m not committing an act that would not be justified by law. I was always thinking about that – am I legally justified to be doing this, pulling a gun on somebody, striking them with a baton, punching them or throwing them to the ground; am I legally justified?”

“What’s on my mind when I’m faced with a necessary evil is ‘what is my professional/legal obligation in the situation’, which should be clear cut. Either I’m acting in a lawful manner or I
shouldn’t be doing something. ...The justification gets to be automatic ...well, it won’t be automatic for everything, but the longer you’re in the job it should become more automatic about what are you going to do, what should you do, what do you need to do, what’s going to have to happen.”

One of the questions asked of interview participants was whether they could think of a time when they had not performed a necessary evil task required of them. Police officers generally indicated that they always performed the necessary evil without question largely due to the professional and legal obligation to uphold the law. However, when the necessary evil they were facing was not well defined by the law, officers indicated they had more discretion for what action to take, and thus when time allowed it they would spend some time considering the situation and in some cases would choose to avoid the necessary evil as a whole or deliver a version of the necessary evil that resulted in less harm on the target.

“There is more discretion for us in dealing with non-criminal than criminal matters. For example, stop a family with a couple of kids in the back and I can tell they are from a lower economic status group, I would perhaps be more inclined to exercise discretion by issuing a warning rather than a ticket.”

“There are some times when you might use discretion. I find it hard to give Joe Blow a ticket for not wearing their seatbelt when the cost of the ticket will make a huge impact on the individual. Is it my job to give the guy a ticket? Yes. But I also have a brain and can use some discretion.”

I include this point in the section on legal justification because it indicates how decisions about whether the necessary evil should be performed become more complex when legal justification is not present or is vague, thus highlighting the importance of legal justification for performing necessary evil tasks.

**Managers**

Though not as widespread amongst managers as with police officers, this group also looked to legally justify necessary evil tasks they performed. Unlike police officers, who generally felt there was little if any opportunity to prepare for actions of necessary evils, managers noted that they usually spent a great deal of time thinking about how they would perform the task. This preparation time included ensuring their actions would be justified legally when such
justification was relevant. Participants said much of this time was also spent ensuring they had all the facts straight, as it was important for them to be accurate. This may act as a form of legal justification that is substituted when actual laws are not applicable as managers treat the rules or policies of the organization as a form of law to follow in guiding their actions.

“The first thing [you think about] is whether you’re within your rights to follow through on the action of dismissing someone. Legally too, I will call human rights and the labour board if I’m concerned. I want to make sure that what I’m doing is legal and appropriate...I make sure that I’ve reviewed everything and everything is documented the right way so if it came to court I would have notes to refer to.”

“With staff discipline to some extent there were policies and resources, which is good sometimes so I don’t have to think about things, you just follow the policies.”

Others

Participants from the “others” group also noted looking to the law for justification for their actions. The following quotes exemplify this group’s perspective; the occupational group to which the respondent belongs and the nature of the necessary evil discussed follows each quote in parentheses.

“For the removal of a child I would want to hear all the facts, and then I might consult with someone who knew the situation better or had more experience than I did. That’s about it. I would talk to a lawyer or HR personnel if there was someone available.” (Social worker talking about the removal of a child from their home).

“In law we have rules of professional conduct so generally my first port of call is to refer to the rule book and then I’ll make a decision myself about what I think is the right thing to do.” (Lawyer)

“In my situation you work from a set of policies and guidelines; if the rules are broken the consequences are dealt out [to the clients]. Whether I believe in the rules or not, it’s my job to enforce them.” (Addictions rehabilitation worker discussing reprimanding/punishing clients after they’ve broken rules of the program).
Professional justification

An operational definition of professional justification is: *when a necessary evil action is justified because it is a) part of the person’s job, b) in line with codes of conduct associated with the profession, and/or c) in line with written protocol surrounding necessary evils in the particular workplace.*

**Police officers**

For police officers this form of validation for necessary evil action was common. Police officers said they considered necessary evils as just part of their job, and in some cases participants noted that they didn’t really think of their jobs in terms of necessary evils. Police often referred to the fact that they’d taken an oath to do what was necessary to protect society and uphold the law, and based on this oath they feel the necessary evils that come along with their job are indeed quite necessary.

“There are times that I do something I don’t necessarily want to do, but I’ve taken an oath that I’ll uphold the law and I’ll make sure that people enjoy the rights and liberties they have here in Canada.”

“I never considered that this is a necessary evil; this is just part of my job and there are just some things you don’t feel good about doing.”

The importance of professional justification was also evident when participants were asked about whether they thought there was an ethical component to the necessary evils that they performed. Some felt there was no ethical component because these actions are simply part of the job they do. In responding to this question, participants showed a strong faith in policing and the law system, which meant ethical considerations were removed and therefore not necessary to think about in the moment. They said that if they were following the rules of the job then they must assume that they are behaving ethically because these rules and policies of policing are meant to be ethical by definition. Taking time to consider ethical aspects of their work was not a luxury many officers felt they had, and thus they noted that such considerations should be put aside to perform this job, and because of the nature of the job overlooking such aspects is justified and perhaps essential. That being said, several officers pointed out that after the act had been
performed, there was sometimes reflection on the ethical nature of what they’d done and in many cases a debriefing session to discuss these aspects of their work.

“If I believe that what I’m doing is right and I think in policing that’s the foundation for it, if what I do on the job is in conflict with my own personal beliefs I remember that I’m not paid for my personal beliefs.”

“Sometimes we have to as police see things in black and white – a wrong has been done and our role is to protect society so we have to make an arrest. There is no difficulty in choosing that.”

The prevalence of justifying actions of necessary evils based on the nature of the work was also apparent when officers were asked about the policies, resources, and support systems available to aid in performing tasks of necessary evil. Officers noted that there were extensive policy and procedure manuals to govern their behaviour, and that if those procedures were followed the officer is confident they are doing the right thing.

“There’s no real handbook or instruction that you can get on how to deal with necessary evils. But there are policies on how it should be done so you can go back to that policy handbook and assess how you do it. So I guess the policies are your backup and guidelines. We had a director one time who when the recruits come in on the first day would say to them ‘if you want to change laws you’re in the wrong job – go become a politician. You’re here to enforce them whether you like them or not.’”

**Managers**

Professional justification was common among all groups interviewed; however, managers in particular focused on this sort of justification in performing necessary evils. Similar to police officers who noted that personal justification sometimes had to be ignored for them to behave in accordance with law, managers said that although they might feel personally conflicted about their actions that this was a personal struggle and their behaviour should be in line with what is justified by the profession and not their personal moral standards.

“I don’t think I would pass off [performing a necessary evil] even if given the opportunity to do so because I see it as a task or function of the position I’m in...”
“Normally [I don’t feel bad about performing necessary evils] because it’s part of the job, but there are times when there’s a certain amount of guilt involved.”

As noted previously, managers stressed the importance of being aware of all the facts before proceeding with a necessary evil action as accuracy was deemed vital to the task. While this is revealing of the need for legal justification, this fact also speaks to managers’ need for professional justification. To elaborate, in reviewing the data there is a sense that managers are concerned about accuracy and following policy partly because doing so means they have performed the necessary evil in a manner that ensures they are in fact justified by the organization. While the organization may require that its managers engage in tasks of necessary evil, it is unlikely that any organization would support a manager engaging in an evil that wasn’t necessary or one that was not carried out in accordance to company procedure. Therefore, for the worker to receive professional justification for their actions, they must be sure to perform the action in the manner specified by the organization’s procedures and policies.

“It’s not something you enjoy but it’s unavoidable, so you do things as well as possible. You try to...do things as correctly as possible following the letter of the collective agreement or policies. So you make sure you do it properly and correctly without causing any more harm than is necessary.”

Others

Lawyers spoke to the issue of professional justification when they were asked about salient issues that come to mind when they perform necessary evils, whether they felt necessary evils contain an ethical component and their general feelings about performing necessary evils. The lawyers interviewed noted that when performing a necessary evil they relied heavily on their faith in the system and the ethical code of conduct to which they subscribe.

“You work within the system and you can kind of divorce yourself from the actions because you can see how it’s not really you that is doing this because there’s always a judge mediating and the final decision is up to them. If we do our job properly we are just part of the overall equation – there are other players that are involved in the overall sphere who are acting either against us or as a mediator – like a judge. That’s what I keep in mind when I’m faced with these kinds of issues...if a lawyer is defending someone...and has to attack a witness, that ethical issue is
answered by the code of ethics for lawyers. So there really is no debate so the lawyer can’t weigh in on whether it’s the right thing to do.”

“I don’t have a problem with [performing necessary evils]...but in my field of law, if the system is broken, it’s the system’s fault and we tend to use that as our get out clause. And I don’t think the system is broken in our case, and normally it’s a fair fight.”

The change agent interviewed seemed to rely heavily on professional justification for his actions. He said there were times when he struggled with whether the tasks he performs are indeed necessary evils; when this is the case he directs his own attention back to the task that he has been hired to perform as opposed to the outcome.

“There are times I look in the mirror and say ‘is the end game really a bigger positive than the harm being done to the people on the way through?’ Then I quickly give myself a big slap and say ‘look you’re hired to get to that end goal the best you can’ “

Those working in the field of corrections (corrections officers, group home & rehab workers, bail supervisors) also justified their partaking in necessary evils in terms of professional justification. They noted that there were policies in place that required them to perform necessary evils and they generally did so without thinking about the harm that would be done to the target. They noted that the policies being in place justified what they had to do and that they simply followed the rules and regulations.

“I think it’s just part of the job where these people don’t follow through, some don’t have the capacity to follow through, and yet they are agreeing to follow through and it’s my job to make sure that if they don’t follow through we use enforcement” – bail supervisor

“There’s a lot that goes on there that I don’t believe in or buy into, and for me I have to look at whether this is a breach of my values, and I conclude that it’s not because my purpose in being there is to earn a living. If my main purpose for being there was to save lives, then I might have a problem with it because I don’t have faith in their model.” – Rehabilitation worker
Peer and/or Expert justification

Another type of justification observed in the data is what can be referred to as peer justification. Peer justification is operationally defined as justification for one’s 1) actions in performing a necessary evil or 2) uncomfortable feelings resulting from experiencing a necessary evil by seeking confirmation from peers or supervisors that the actions or feelings are appropriate.

Police officers

Peer support was very important for police officers – especially for those who did not have an employee assistance program (EAP) that could be easily accessed. It was noted that there are formal and informal peer support mechanisms in place in most police services, and when asked about policies, programs, or support systems in place to help officers cope with difficult situations, many cited informal peer support and critical incident debriefing to be among the most valuable support systems available. To elaborate, police officers described the critical incident debriefing process as required for any sort of potentially traumatizing or disturbing incident an officer encounters in the line of duty – not just for instances of necessary evil. During critical incident debriefing officers involved in the incident are brought together to discuss what happened, how it happened, what went well, what could be improved in the future, how the improvements could be ensured, and general feelings about having experienced the incident. Many officers noted that these debriefings were very important for helping them cope with a range of difficult feelings, emotions, or thoughts related to their work.

Some officers noted that in addition to such debriefing, some police services offered mentoring type programs that allowed officers facing difficult issues that are common in policing to seek out fellow officers who have experience with those issues. Officers noted that with necessary evils in particular, there were individuals who had experience with use of force and even taking a life in the line of duty, who could be approached for mentorship. In addition to such formal systems, officers often simply talked to each other about any emotional difficulties they were experiencing when faced with necessary evils. For officers, such difficulties were reported to generally occur after the necessary evil had taken place because in the moments before and during the act there was generally little or no time to consider these issues. It was felt by many officers that just discussing what had happened with peers who were present or had been in a similar situation helped them feel that they had behaved appropriately and were justified in their
actions. The officers consider the peers who had faced similar events to be experts regarding these complex scenarios. Talking to a senior officer or supervisor to confirm appropriate actions or emotions related to one’s actions was also helpful – both for justifying actions taken and seeking advice on how a situation could be better handled in the future.

“Talking to your buddies and working things out a bit is the informal, but there are more formal sources of peer support as well. It depends on the size of the service a bit, but some of the organizations have a formal peer support team and they are officers who have been identified by the organization and have received training and they act as a sounding board for the officers. Often these peer support officers have been through such situations themselves – a shooting, an injury, a motor vehicle collision with fatality, they may have had substance abuse issues themselves where they had to get counseling, some have been through marital problems or breakups. So because they have those experiences they act as a sounding board and can offer suggestions on how to handle such situations.”

“...we relied on one another so to speak...We didn’t have a formal EAP in place and it would have been helpful if we’d had one, but I just spoke to my supervisor and other colleagues and that’s how we got through it.”

“I’d play devil’s advocate with myself at the time I’m making the decision to act. Make sure that if I were scrutinized on my actions others would come to the same conclusion. Afterwards I would probably want to be part of a debriefing with others – my peers or others who’ve had to answer to the same call to see what they would’ve done and make me feel good about my decision, or give me the training to make a different decision next time. I might talk to friends at work, talk to my wife, sometimes you just stop somewhere and cry because the sadness of it all was more than you could comprehend. Sometimes you just dealt with it in your own way – there are EAPs etc. that I’ve never used – they’ve become much more utilized over the years. But I think that personally I wanted to justify my actions and be supported by people I think are the experts on the job. I would look for corroboration of my decision to act basically.”

Managers

Managers also noted the value of peer support in dealing with necessary evils at work. Unlike police officers, however, managers often looked for peer support prior to or during the time they
were performing the necessary evil. Sometimes this was exemplified by managers who said they would seek out advice from peers, supervisors, or experts to make decisions regarding what should be done; at other times it was apparent in the fact that some interviewees would enlist another person to be present while the necessary evil was performed. A more subtle exemplification of the need for peer support and approval to justify one’s actions is apparent in statements that referred to an agreed upon action or discussion of making decisions in plural form (e.g., we make the decision; collectively we agree upon a course of action). Still others noted that they would specifically seek out confirmation that their actions were appropriate in much the same ways described by police officers.

“Specifically, what I do to cope with those feelings is I punish myself. I binge eat, talk to one of my peers and explain that I think I’ve screwed up, that I’ve probably damaged them, probably caused a problem. I’ve always been lucky to find at least one individual that I can relate to on my level in any group that I have. I seem to find them quickly and that’s who I would go to vent or to find out if I did the right thing – confirmation – that I had no choice, that what I did was appropriate and I’m hoping the person I’ve gone to is comfortable enough to tell me when I’ve screwed up. I don’t want a ‘yes person’ I want someone who’ll say something. Then ok, what would be another way of doing it next time. For the 3 years that I had the staff, I had an HR person assigned to me; I kiss the ground she walked on. She’s someone I could talk to, she was nice about it, if I made a mistake she’d tell me I made a mistake, but she was very nice about it. That’s how I dealt with it. I would bring it home to my wife and maybe discuss it with her to get her perspective. She works in a different environment, it’s smaller, and sometimes the situations are different because of that but she works with a lot of individuals in larger companies, so she’s heard of this stuff and hopefully she has ways of dealing with things. If I’m around [another family member who works in the same job], I go to [that person]. Basically going to someone who’s a mentor and saying “this is what I’m up against’ and get their perspective on things..., it gives you a core of what’s appropriate and what’s not.”

“...because we’re such a large company there are in our HR department people available if you have a situation that you need to run by... There’s certainly enough managers and people I deal with, because of the nature of what I do I know a lot of managers and higher that I feel comfortable with and I could actually go to sit down and run the situation by... I think having
that kind of support system is what gets me through for sure. I think the peer supports have been most helpful to me."

While peer justification was most predominant among police officers and managers, some interviewees from other occupational groups also noted the value of talking to peers, supervisors or HR personnel when carrying out acts of necessary evil.

“In the group home there was certainly lots of informal stuff – my best friend and a bottle of wine (laughs); but there was lots of getting together at the end of the day for a drink or dinner or something.” – Youth home worker.

“usually after something happens in an emergency department there is some down time during the shift or the next day, the staff that were on do talk about it amongst themselves and that’s a form of grief counselling as far as I’m concerned because these are the people that you were involved with during the incident and you all get to say how you feel.” – Nurse

“I think throughout the day to just get through the day we’re always sharing our concerns with other staff or with our colleagues, that’s very important because a lot of my concerns would be shared by my colleagues. It’s just nice to know that someone else is sharing the same kinds of problems and having the same kinds of concerns maybe. So peer support is helpful.” – Bail supervisor

Interpersonal Sensitivity

In their initial paper on this topic, Molinsky and Margolis (2005) identified interpersonal sensitivity as a key outcome variable to be considered. The present study supports Margolis and Molinsky’s (2008) finding that performers of necessary evils often act in an interpersonally sensitive manner through engaging in the task and personalizing their response to the necessary evil. Further, there is evidence that while some engage emotionally in the act, others disengage, and that while some personalize the response others act in a more scripted manner, thus replicating Margolis and Molinsky’s (2008) findings regarding interpersonal sensitivity response types. Table 4 provides evidence of engagement and disengagement and Table 5 summarizes some of the personalized acts of sensitive interpersonal treatment by occupation.

Table 3 Evidence of Engagement and Disengagement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of engagement or disengagement</th>
<th>Illustrative example</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENGAGEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prosocial emotion</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td><em>Some of these staff I had a relationship with outside the workforce – I knew a lot about their personal lives in terms of financial situations etc. When I was faced with issues about having to fire or discipline somebody that was really painful.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td><em>With the [removal of] kids [from their home] it can be quite sad. Sometimes I’d sit in my office and I could hear them wailing in the next room – it was very sad. I think if I was faced with the reaction of the kid it was much more difficult.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Police officer</td>
<td><em>I just wanted to always maintain control and show dignity for those people I was arresting or maybe worse, hurting in the process. You go through all kinds of emotions, but I was glad for my training and glad I was part of an organization that was supportive of training, and self-betterment. I guess to answer the question you go through all the emotions but with training and experience you became better at it, I hate to use the word callous but a lot of these tasks were repetitive. And although the task remained the same the people in front of you changed and their personalities came through greatly but you made a judgment call of what was in front of you and acted with spontaneity and hoped it turned out well and for the most part it did but it was not without emotion that’s for sure – over the years there was tons of emotion.</em></td>
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Nurse  When the realization is that the person has passed away, everyone as a group feels a sudden sadness and a feeling of, ‘I wish we could have done more’ but you usually know and are sure that we’ve done everything that we could. So that feeling of “we did what we could, it wasn’t meant to be, and now we have to deal with the next step” which, is letting the family know. And of course you feel very sad about this, but you also know that they are waiting for some kind of word and you can’t put that off; you have to go do it right away because that’s the fairest thing you can do right now. You have a lump in your throat, you wish you didn’t have to do this, but you go out and usually it’s a doctor that breaks the news and I always went with the doctor. Sometimes the doctor can’t go and I would go by myself, but I think it’s important for a nurse to be there too either way, because the doctor will give the medical ‘why’ and the nurse can help with the emotional – accepting it.

Attunement to target’s experience

Manager  No matter what the situation they’re still human – they’re still people so I think it’s important to maintain some element of treating them with dignity. There’s a way to terminate somebody and have them leave and still feel good about themselves.

Police officer  Later on, given time to reflect, I would feel empathy for people – I felt bad if injury had occurred. Feel bad that people are taken from their comfort zone – lost their rights and freedom; I wasn’t unsympathetic to their plight.

Police officer  You have to realize that what you’re seeing is a snapshot of the person and everyone has issues. But when I first started in policing I didn’t see it that way – I thought: you’re just a
criminal, I’ve arrested you and you’re going to jail. But with your own life experiences you start to consider why that person is the way they are. Really there may have been no other outcome – from the minute they’re born they have 2 strikes against them and you can’t expect that they will be a positive contribution to society – it’s just not going to happen. When I started to really look at that; well they all know better, but there are some things that are beyond their control behaviour wise – they just haven’t had the same structure as you or I. So especially in the latter part of my career, I find I really want to treat people with dignity anytime I’m arresting them.

**Embracing own humanity**

Nurse

If you feel like crying then I think ‘let it come’ because you’re only human and I think it helps because they see you are with them in their loss.

Police officer

But as a human you could not help being sympathetic to people involved in these situations – including sometimes the accused in many situations. I think that was a constant in every call, you were always aware of it and you approach this with tact and understanding rather than looking at everyone as being a criminal.

Police officer

I think we go into the profession knowing/ having a good sense of what you’ll be dealing with and you accept that is the job and you are always thinking about the bigger picture. I think we learn from our experience perhaps to be more understanding and approach things with that human element

Manager

(Discussing reporting poor performance of a colleague and friend) My concern was that if I reported him, he was
going to lose his job and I’d lose a friend and I knew he had three kids to support; none of that should affect your job or decision, but it did obviously because you are a human being and those things are important.

**DISENGAGEMENT**

| Detaching from emotion |  |
|------------------------|  |
| **Corrections officer** | *I don’t feel bad. It’s a part of the job you know, the only bad thing is that sometimes you have a person who just doesn’t understand, and you get into a whole thing where its one restraint after another and that can become boring or irritating.* |
| **Lawyer** | *With regards to any feelings I experience I completely block them out – I just focus, in my case on a witness, and I just ask the questions, and so I don’t deal with them in any sense, so blocking them out while you’re dealing with them. I turn toward the person, look them in the eye, I don’t look down or make notes, I just talk to the person, I don’t look around – that’s the way I have to do it, I have to do it very directly. And all I do is ask and answer, ask and answer – I don’t go slowly – I go at my normal pace, and it’s actually physically directly.* |
| **Change agent** | *I don’t concern myself with the harm. I have to have some clinicalness to how I do my work, if I allow myself to worry about feelings to the point it distracts me from my goal, then I’m letting the board down and I’m distracting myself from the greater good.* |

**Dissociating from target’s experience**

| **Police officer** | *There are times that I do something I don’t necessarily want to do, but again I’ve taken an oath that I’ll uphold the* |
law and I’ll make sure people enjoy the rights and liberties they have here in Canada, and if that means I have to use force on somebody to allow innocent other to enjoy life then that’s what I’ll do. I think less about the individual I’m dealing with and more about the people I’m doing it for.

Bail supervisor (Commenting on signing a warrant for a client’s arrest) I try to stay focused on why it’s an absolute necessity and less the harm that’s coming to the client and more the good that’s going to the entire population. Remind myself that this is something we NEED to do because this person could be a real threat to the population.

Police officer Sometimes you think that someone is a nice person – but I still believe that they have to be accountable. Just because someone is a nice person doesn’t mean that you can be let off with a crime. Sometimes it’s good for someone to have to go through the system. There still has to be a consequence for actions.

Subjugating own humanity

Change agent I stayed with my script, I stayed high level and didn’t lie to them, I showed them warmth and compassion (I know this must be hard, I know you understand the process...etc.). So I was happy with how I handled it, and I didn’t once flinch or cave in – and it’s not like I lost any sleep that night. I was able to stay focused on the task. Part of me wonders if maybe I’m creating an illusion to the individuals that I really care about them, when in fact I care about the task probably more. I wish I could say I cared more about them, but I’m not sure that if that were the case I’d be able to get where I need to go.
Manager: Normally what I do is I completely separate myself from it, and just choose to view it as a process... I told the person that I was sympathetic, but remained ignorant of the details and specifics. Sometimes I have to tell people that I can listen to their concerns but I can’t comment on it or intervene on their behalf because it’s not appropriate for me to do so. So you remove yourself but still remain supportive... I think it’s important not to dwell on the happenings of the day, just to take a few minutes, rationalize why you’re where you’re to, look at it more as a role as opposed to me personally.

Police officer: If you’re making an arrest you’ve already formed in your mind what you’re doing and why you’re doing it. So it’s a follow through. There may be a little autopilot in the sense that you know what you’re doing and why you do it
### Table 4 Personalized Acts of Sensitive Interpersonal Treatment by Occupation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personalized Act by Occupation</th>
<th>Illustrative Examples</th>
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<td><strong>Offers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Police Officers</td>
<td>So especially in the latter part of my career, I find I really want to treat people with dignity anytime I’m arresting them... No one likes to be treated crappy, and I’ve found they are human and you might not like them but treat them professionally. You know, if I’m transporting them and I’m stopping for coffee, I’ll ask if they would like a coffee or something to eat. It’s not much for me to pay $3.00 for a sandwich – I’ll never see them again, but I don’t know, it might have a big impact. It’s important to me. And it took about ten years for me to come to that realization.</td>
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<td>Others:</td>
<td>There’s also been cases where we put out the warrant but then call the person and try to convince them to turn themselves in because we know if they do the police will be less tough on them and less determined to get convictions and keep them incarcerated. (Bail supervisor)</td>
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<td>You really can’t say this is how to do it until you are doing it. You have to be calm and sure of your information and sure of how you will help them in dealing with it... Sometimes they want to see the person and I go with them for that, give them the time they need and whatever else they need – then you feel like you’re helping them then. (Nurse)</td>
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<td>Managers</td>
<td>Try to do what you can to support those individuals and make sure you’re comfortable that you’ve provided people with whatever available options might be there, guidance for future employment opportunities; you’ve indicated what to do from here, make counselling available. That’s all stuff you do ahead of time – as long as I’m aware that I’ve done what I can to diminish that a layoff would</td>
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result in, then when I leave in the evening you deal with the stress, but you rationalize that this was a business decision that was unfortunate but as a HR manager I’ve provided what I can post layoff

Manner of interaction

Police Officers

I have a different perspective on this because of my religious beliefs. I think no one is beyond help... One instance was when I had to conduct a security escort of a guy who’d been charged with raping and killing the 13 year old daughter of a police officer... Despite the horrible nature of the act he committed, when I was alone with him I tried to engage him in conversation and I tried to talk to him about getting things right with God – to seek forgiveness for his actions before he dies. There may or may not have been any positive impact. That’s my own personal thing – not part of policing duties. Even drunk drivers I’ll try to engage in a positive way, and on a number of occasions I’ve received letters addressed to my supervisor thanking me for the respectful manner in which they were treated when being arrested. But I think it’s unique – I don’t think many officers take that approach. I try to encourage students I’ve instructed to take that perspective – I think we can still do our jobs and treat people with respect and dignity.

Others:

I have a good rapport with most of my caseload so if I pull them aside they are ok with it, and I don’t have an attitude of “well, you’re getting what you deserve” – it’s more like, well, this is what’s happening – suck it up. Also I don’t say things to people in front of others; I try to find a private setting. (Rehabilitation Counsellor)

I guess there are times that you put more emphasis on trying to coax someone, for example, into taking meds they don’t want to avoid having to sign a warrant for their arrest. But I guess the end result is that we have standards that require the person to comply or you must
put out a warrant for their arrest. Another example, you get an alcoholic, who is ordered as a bail condition not to drink, then they come in and you can smell alcohol and suspect they’ve been drinking. So you could issue a warrant right away, but instead you might say something like, “you realize if I knew for sure today that you’ve been drinking, you could go right back to jail. So have you been drinking?” and if they’re smart enough they’ll say no, so you can make a case note that says you suspect drinking but the client denies it. So they might not get arrested right away, but if it happens again you have no choice – you have to sign the warrant. (Bail supervisor)

Managers

You make sure you do it properly and correctly without causing any more harm than is necessary... I try not to come out and make statements that will make the person feel uncomfortable or you don’t make judgments, you stick to the facts and avoid giving opinions and talk about the situation as it actually occurred.

Even when firing someone you may have to do so for the greater good of the company but that’s not at the expense of insulting and belittling people so that those who are left are not wondering if that’s what will happen to them. I think reducing the harm you end up with a more positive workforce. I think it’s the psychological damage because people don’t recover from that as easily as they did in the past. I don’t think today’s worker recovers from that as easily. It used to be if you were disciplined or fired you sucked it up and moved on. Today people need to be almost coached on how to fail.

Additional Themes of Interest

As noted in the previous section, some of the emergent themes were not directly relevant to the hypotheses proposed for this dissertation. As in the previous findings section, I have included the theme titled Preparing or Planning for Necessary Evils, Focus on Process vs. Outcome, and Focus on Harm vs. Benefit because they contribute to the general necessary evil literature. Additionally, some of these themes informed my theorizing about the models of necessary evil
presented in Study 2. I also refer to these themes throughout the general discussion section of this dissertation.

Preparing or Planning for Necessary Evils

Another prominent theme that emerged from interviews was the ability and need to prepare for the necessary evil. While nearly all respondents noted that planning how to perform the necessary evil was desirable, doing so was not possible in all necessary evil situations experienced by interviewees. For example, the nature of many of the necessary evils performed by police officers (e.g., arrests, intervening in fights or assault situations) meant they did not have the requisite time to prepare or think ahead about how they would perform the task. This was evident when participants were asked about their approach to necessary evils and what they do to prepare for performing such a task. This issue was also touched upon in response to questions about how performing a necessary evil impacts other aspects of their work.

Many officers noted that they generally had little time to prepare - only a few minutes as they were on their way to respond to a call - but that they would rely on their training to guide their actions. They attempted to think ahead to what they might encounter upon arrival on the scene and discussed how they would respond with their partner. However, for the most part officers had to simply react to what was happening with little chance to plan for the event in advance. The same was true of corrections officers dealing with an emergency situation in a prison, and for group home workers dealing with clients on an ongoing basis.

“There’s a lot of preparation, but when you don’t have the time to prepare those are probably the most stressful. This morning for example my wife says “so what do you have planned today?” and I never know. That’s a huge part of policing – you never know what it’ll be. I enjoy that, so I actually get an adrenaline charge out of that, so I guess then you rely on your past experience, so the more experience you’ve had the quicker you deal with it.” (Police officer)

“With the group home every day, every minute it was unpredictable. You could go for stretches of time where things would run smoothly and then all hell would break loose and chaos would ensue and it was constant phone calls, etc. ... you’d get phone calls at 2 am and you could not predict those (Open custody group home worker)
“I think a lot as a police officer it depends on the situation. If it’s a confrontations kind of arrest you’re focused on the moment, whereas if it’s a criminal investigation and you’ve finally caught someone who’s committed murder, well then you’re looking at both the outcome and the momentary task – how will we get there and make the arrest, you are thinking about what is the nature of the crime and what are the potential harms... If you’re doing your job the reality is that sometimes you’re so focused on the task that you don’t see anything else, but sometimes the nature of the task is such that you have the time to look at everything and weigh everything. It would depend on how you come upon the task and whether you have the opportunity to reflect on anything.” (Police officer)

Managers’ experiences and the experiences of many of those in other occupations who were interviewed were quite different than those described above. As discussed previously, respondents in these groups indicated there was a great deal of preparation involved in carrying out a necessary evil task. For most managers and those in the “other” group, the greatest stress, anxiety and effort associated with performing the necessary evil came in advance of the task being performed. Respondents noted that this period of preparation was very stressful and preoccupied their work and, in many cases, home life. Respondents said that in the few days or weeks leading up to the necessary evil they would think of little else and often found it difficult to perform other duties and tasks during that time. On the day the task was to be performed, many managers tried to schedule nothing else for that particular day. This is because they required time to complete last minute preparation and to cope with the anticipated outcomes of the task.

This can be contrasted to the experience of many police officers who noted that the stress, anxiety and negative feelings associated with performing necessary evils generally followed performing the task itself. For police officers, there was little emotion associated with performing the task itself as they were acting somewhat automatically based on their training or past experience. There was little thought associated with ethics or morals at the time of performance because they did not have the requisite time to contemplate the act. However, as evidenced in several of the quotes above, police officers explained that after a necessary evil was performed they often took time to think about these aspects of the task, assess whether they had performed appropriately, and deliberate about what they might do differently the next time they were faced with a similar situation. It was reported that the time for doing this often occurred
during writing up the paperwork required following such an event. The officers said that for extreme situations (e.g., exercising use of force options resulting in injury or death; being involved in a particularly horrific accident or crime scene) they were required to attend a “Critical Incident Stress Debriefing” where all those involved in the incident were gathered together to talk about all aspects of what had happened with a supervisor or sergeant including their feelings, concerns or reservations about how the incident had transpired. This was generally noted to be helpful in dealing with anxieties or stressors related to performing necessary evils. As noted in the section on peer justification above, in addition to such formal measures required by the police service, several officers noted that following a necessary evil situation they would sometimes merely informally discuss the event with their partner who had been on the scene or other co-workers, colleagues or close friends. Those who might have been involved in a similar situation in the past were seen to be particularly helpful for providing such reassurance and justification to officers (see the discussion of peer justification for elaboration on this topic).

“The reality of it is that they understand and they just don’t have the competencies needed – some will take issue with scoring of competencies or something but usually not, it’s done openly fairly, transparently and everyone understands the process. This is why it takes time – it could take a year and half, people have bought into it at this stage – they understand the process and why competencies are being tested. And if at the end of the day they don’t make it, that’s not my fault – I’ve done my job you know? Also, the objections are so common that I rarely run into an objection that makes me think ‘oh. I never heard that one before.’ I’ve done it now six times and you get good at dealing with objections – you sit with HR people and go through what the top 10 objections might be when they don’t get in and how do we deal with that.” (Change agent discussing planning for the necessary evil of mass layoffs).

“To my mind there’s a couple of different ways; sometimes a necessary evil comes at you suddenly, I’ve had experiences where two staff were in heightened verbal conflict when I come into the office and you have to react very quickly – draw on any experience and level headedness that you might have, and get it to where you can calm the situation enough to get to the facts. Those situations are generally more difficult. The ones where you’re giving dismissal with cause there is a formal program you follow here – it can be hairy and drawn out and could take 6 months, but generally we’ve all come to a common conclusion so that’s a little easier.” (Manager)
“I spend a lot of time thinking about things like that – which means I don’t only think about it at work; I think about it at home, when trying to sleep, driving, showering, everything I do when I have time to think about things will be totally consumed by this impending task and once I’ve made the decision to move forward I think a lot about how it will happen and how it’ll be executed, which is why it can be such a relief once you perform the necessary evil.” (Manager)

“I’d be completely preoccupied by looking forward – not in a positive way – to what I had to do. I’d be thinking about it because it would be quite anxiety provoking. After I’d done the task there would be some relief and you would feel better but I’m sure I’d be second guessing and rehashing my actions, I’d be wondering if I did the right thing in terms of the task.” (Child welfare/social worker)

“…when I’m going to [perform a necessary evil] I like to be very well prepared. So I guess I prepare better for something like that… If I have a witness that is very important for me to, sometimes I use the term ‘break the witness’ and that may mean to expose them in a lie or fallacies in their testimony, I will often have a script of questions to ask them and that’s not often how I work, I often work unscripted, but if it’s a witness that it’s important for me to expose then I will usually prepare a script.” (Lawyer)

For most managers (and for many respondents classified under ‘other’ occupations) once the task was performed they felt a great deal of relief and were able to move on from the emotional labour associated with the task. While some noted they might think about the reaction of the target or the particulars of the situation, for the most part performing the task was the climax of a period of anxiety. Because of the time spent preparing for the task ahead of time, after it was performed the worker was able to ‘lay it to rest’ so to speak. Some police officers interviewed also mentioned feeling a certain amount of relief or other positive feelings after performing a necessary evil, though this sentiment was much less prominent among this occupational group than others. It is reasonable to conclude that the reason this feeling of relief was less prominent among officers is because the necessary evil task did not follow a period of intense focus on the task. Police officers have to endure the emotional labour associated with justifying and coping with performing necessary evils after they perform the task, therefore, for officers, completion of a necessary evil task seems to mark the start of a stressful period rather than the conclusion of one; only after they’ve gone through this period which involves thinking through what happened,
justifying their actions, can they experience the same relief described by managers. The fact that officers note how valuable debriefing and justifying one’s actions are for coping with such issues corroborates this interpretation.

“I was happy, and relieved at times, angry at times. I went through all the emotions I guess. I just wanted to always maintain control and show dignity for those people I was arresting or maybe worse, hurting in the process.” (Police officer)

“I think it’s the job in general that is a bit high strung and I think in that setting the necessary evil was actually my release. It was finally a resolution to a stressful situation.” (Open custody group home worker)

“I usually feel better once I’ve got it over with and I feel more positive throughout the day. It’s almost like a public speaking engagement – you’ve got to go and do this thing so it’s better to go and do it and get it out of the way. And usually it goes well for me, I don’t have many problems – but it can get ugly for some people, maybe I’ve just been lucky with the clients I have.” (Rehabilitation counsellor)

“Pretty much once the task is done I’m done. I remember my mom used to say to me to put a time limit on things. If you’re upset with someone or whatever, you put a time limit on how long you stay upset. And at that point I’m probably upset with myself. I wonder afterwards why I put myself through that because it’s never as bad as you think it’s going to be. I put a time limit on it, and within five minutes of having done it, I’m done and I move on – back to the work I haven’t done in the previous two days.” (Manager)

Focus on Process vs. Outcome

Participants were asked directly whether they were generally more focused on performing the task itself when faced with a necessary evil, or on the outcome/what would be the result of performing the necessary evil task. Many respondents noted they were focused on both the task and the outcome at the same time and equally (i.e., both the process and outcome were considered when performing the necessary evil, and neither was considered to be of greater importance than the other); however, this response was often qualified with an explanation that the focus changed at various stages of performing the necessary evil. Most noted that the focus
was on the task itself while it was actually being executed, though there was variation amongst occupational groups interviewed in terms of when the outcome was considered. Consistent with the previous discussion on planning, police officers tended to consider outcomes after the task was performed, while other occupational groups considered outcomes before performing the task itself and often during the time they were performing the task.

To explain why these differences might exist, consider that police officers noted the intended outcome of many of the necessary evils they encounter in their work is predetermined by law or the job itself – to protect citizens, to stop a threat, to uphold the law, to protect themselves and other officers. This means police officers don’t need to sit around debating possible outcomes of the necessary evil tasks they must perform because a fully justified, reasonable and necessary outcome is provided to them: Arresting someone, breaking up a fight, interrogating a criminal all have predetermined intended outcomes that are prescribed by the law and approved by society in general. Therefore, the focus for these individuals is on performing the task in the correct manner that ensures everyone gets through the task safely and in a way that upholds the law (and thus bringing the intended positive outcome to fruition). However, sometimes outcomes are different from what is intended (e.g., there is more harm than was expected, a third party was victimized in the process) and the particular outcomes of a necessary evil task were often considered by officers after the task was completed. This supports evidence presented in the preparation theme that there is little time (and perhaps need) for considering outcomes for officers before and during the time the task is performed, however, after the task is complete the officers tend to spend time working through the outcomes and considering whether they were satisfied with what had happened. It appears as if officers are looking at what actually happened and comparing that to the ideal and intended outcome provided to them by the law. This was also evident in the responses from corrections workers and group home workers, which are also occupations in which the experienced necessary evils often cannot be planned for ahead of time.

“I’m more on the task and hopefully that will allow for a favorable outcome. The outcome at the time is not even at the forefront of my imagination at the time. It’s winning for sure, because if you lose your use of force will maybe be at the hands of the attacker – so at the time you focus on the task and that will hopefully result in a favorable outcome.” (Police officer)
“All you’re thinking is “what am I going to do to get out of this” you get so focused on the event. You won’t even notice 200 people who have gathered to watch. Afterward, you have more adrenaline than you know what to do and then you think about other things. You’re sort of nervous and you think about what went on. You then have a debriefing about what went right and what went wrong and that’s really helpful. On the other hand, when working on something long term, you constantly assess what you’re doing and have you done it right and what more can I do... Constant thinking and questioning yourself. I think you get more concerned about it then, because it’s not the task, it’s figuring out what you’ll do. The in the moment ones are easier in that way. A long term operation you have more time to think about it, and if you’re a manager you have even more to be concerned about because you’re worried about how the process is affecting your team – are they getting burnt out? Will they be able to perform at the end? ”
(Police officer)

“I’m just focused 100% on what I have to do. Control the inmate and do what I have to do. As you’re running to a code you are assessing the situation as you run – there’s probably about 20 guys there so some will restrain and if the inmate is restrained you look around to see that everything else is under control. So it’s focused on the task itself. You’re assessing the situation before you get there, but once you arrive you are looking at what you have to do in terms of the task.”(Correctional officer)

Managers and others (excepting those noted above) reported being focused on both the task and the outcome when performing the necessary evil and explained that the task was for the purpose of a decided outcome, and you had to think about both to ensure that the predetermined outcome came to be realized. For this group of respondents it was their own planning (as opposed to law or society) that allowed the outcomes to be decided before the task was performed. It is an important distinction that this predetermination is carried out on a case by case basis by the managers themselves while for police officers predetermined outcomes are supplied by laws and societal norms and applied across a broad set of scenarios. When it comes time to perform the task neither group is thinking much about the potential outcome but rather are focused on carrying out the task. However for managers, performing the task is typically the final step in the whole process of performing a necessary evil, whereas for other occupational groups carrying out the task is followed by a period of exploring and considering outcomes. Managers frequently noted a focus on the task, but for the purpose of achieving the outcome that they were hoping for.
They noted that both aspects were in their mind but, like officers, during the time they were carrying out the necessary evil they were especially focused on doing the task correctly so the intended outcome would occur. Again, this is supportive of the findings presented in the planning and preparation section above.

“I'm thinking about the best way to facilitate the consequence – the easiest way – without escalating the client or something like that – getting the idea across and WHY it’s being put into place... There has to be a reason for it; after that it's just how are you going to deliver the message?” (Rehabilitation worker)

“I guess both, but I'm not sure it's both equally; how you perform the task impacts the outcome. So you want to perform the task to the best of your ability because you don’t want the outcome to be any more drastic then it has to be. With necessary evil it’s usually a disciplinary matter and it affects someone’s life, so you want to be sure in how you perform the task so there’ll be no detriment to the outcome. So I’d say both. So you have to focus on the task, but that’s for the purpose of making sure the outcome is as positive as it can be.” (Manager)

Focus on Harm vs. Benefit

By definition there is always some harm and some benefit present in an act of necessary evil. Necessary evils are about inflicting some sort of pain (either physical or emotional) on another person, which means that there is some harm being done to the target of the necessary evil. However, the necessary aspect of the term implies that doing so is for a greater good. Therefore, there is a benefit to inflicting such harm and the beneficiary might be the target of the necessary evil, the performer of the necessary evil, society in general, an organization, some other third party, or a combination of several of these stakeholders.

Participants were asked directly whether they tended to focus more on the harm or benefit when performing a necessary evil act. An interesting finding is that, in response to this question, police officers, correction workers and rehabilitation workers primarily focused on the benefit of the necessary evils they performed, while managers were more likely to report being focused on the harm and trying to minimize it.
Evidence for Focus on benefit

“The benefit might not be right now at this moment, it’s down the line. The benefit is that the individual will be responsible for their actions and that gives them the opportunity to make changes before the consequences become greater than they already are. If I think of society being the victim I think ‘ok, if they continue with this it’s going to cost a life – theirs or someone else’s’. I always thought in terms of the benefit.” (Police officer)

“I’d be more concerned about the ... I think how can I stop this so others can enjoy what they’re lawfully entitled to enjoy?” (Police officer)

“I’m more focused on the benefit but there are times when there’s a lot of guilt involved, especially when it’s a psychiatric patient. For example, one client was a psychiatric patient who was charged with eating candy out of a bin in a supermarket. He was forced to take medication as part of the bail order - medications that he didn’t want to take. So I had to put out a warrant for that guy because he’s not taking the medications, but there was a lot of guilt because you have to question why you would force someone to take medications when they’d been wandering around for 20 years just fine causing no harm to anyone and the only incident he had was eating candy out of a bin at a supermarket. So there are some ethical and moral issues we have to struggle with. I try to stay focused on why it’s an absolute necessity and less the harm that’s coming to the client and more the good that’s going to the entire population. Remind myself that this is something we NEED to do because this person could be a real threat to the population... I guess I concentrate on the benefits and how the necessary evil is something that’s required in order to achieve the result that is good to the general public.” (Bail supervisor)

“Sometimes it’s really difficult if harm won’t have a benefit later. With these sorts of situations I always want to make sure that there is benefit to the employee and the organization. I’m here to represent the organization, but certainly have concern for the employee. The harm is something I like to look at as being short term and the benefit is more the long term goal. Especially disciplining someone about a situation that needs to change; that can be harmful initially, but through the developmental process there will be benefit. You have to make sure there’s a benefit, otherwise there’s no purpose to the harm and then I would not prefer that choice of action.” (Manager)
Evidence for Focus on harm

“I think when actually performing the task you are thinking about the harm, but before then you’ve already made your decision. Once the decision is made you try to do it as tactfully as possible with as little harm as possible. On most cases it’s not just one person that is affected – so you have to make sure that you’ve thought of all aspects of the situation. You’ve thought about the harm and the benefit during that time, but when you’re actually there performing the task I think it’s the harm to the person that is at the forefront of your mind.” (Manager)

“When faced with the task I’m very concerned with the harm to the individual [more] than the benefits to the business.” (Manager)

“I’m more focused on the harm but certainly the benefit is in the background and helps me get through it all.” (Manager)

“Harm. Always. The benefit can only come if the harm is minimized. Even when firing someone you may have to do so for the greater good of the company but that’s not at the expense of insulting and belittling people so that those who are left are not wondering if that’s what will happen to them. I think reducing the harm you end up with a more positive workforce. I think it’s the psychological damage because people don’t recover from that as easily as in the past. I don’t think today’s worker recovers from that as easily. It used to be if you were disciplined or fired you sucked it up and moved on. Today people need to be almost coached on how to fail.” (Manager)

It is not clear from the present study why the benefit is more salient for some while the harm is more salient for others. I propose that the beneficiary of the necessary evil has something to do with whether harm or benefit is salient. For police officers, corrections workers, and bail supervisors for example, performing the necessary evil is often intended to protect other people or society in general from being harmed. The beneficiary for the necessary evil tasks managers perform might not always be quite as clear cut and identifiable. To elaborate, for managers who discussed the necessary evil task of laying off workers the beneficiary is generally spread amongst the organization as a whole. While this in turn may result in benefits for other employees, the employee as beneficiary may not be readily apparent to managers performing the necessary evil task as the target of the necessary evil is also an employee. It is reasonable that
because the particular employee who is being harmed, and not those who might benefit from that harm, is face to face with the manager at the time the task is being performed, the harm being done to that employee is more salient than the benefit to other employees. While salience of harm is one of the things that makes performing a necessary evil difficult, when harm is salient it may also increase the level of interpersonal sensitivity employed in carrying out the task.

It is interesting that comments from the change agent (who performs layoffs on a more frequent and large scale basis than other managers interviewed) indicate they focus on the benefit to other employees in justifying the necessary evil tasks performed as part of their work. Perhaps the frequency with which the change agent has performed such tasks resulted in them finding ways to come to terms with the harm being caused by focusing on the benefits. The same explanation could be given for differences between police officers and managers. In all likelihood necessary evils are more frequent in policing than in managerial work; therefore, the frequency of the task might be an alternative explanation to manager’s tendency to focus on harm more than police officers.

It is also noteworthy that the change agent was buffered from the experience to some degree by only addressing large groups without getting personal. In the change agent’s own words:

_First of all it’s easier to perform when you’re doing it with a lot of people. The messages are easier to deliver in front of 300 than 3 people, because it allows me to look at a mass of people and not get tied up with emotions, rather I can deal with process and the excitement and get them fired up about what the future could hold for those of us who will remain. You can’t get down to the emotional level because you have too many in front of you. Whereas if someone shows up at your door who is being impacted it would be more difficult for me to stay at a higher level with them and not get bogged down in how this will affect them emotionally. Then you become a counselor – they are asking you what they should do if they don’t make it. You’re forced then because you don’t want to lie or give them false hope and that’s where it becomes more difficult and would be harder for me because you deal with the emotional side and harming the individual. The smaller groups and these situations are taken care of for me by HR people. So I’m once removed from those micro individual level experiences._

It is also likely that the role of the target in bringing about the necessary evil contributes to the observed differences. Molinsky and Margolis (2004) theorized about the importance of the role
of the target on how workers feel about performing necessary evils and this was supported by the present study. For example, managers noted that performing a necessary evil task such as disciplining or laying off someone was much easier if the individual had done something clearly unacceptable (e.g., abuse of power, company theft). Correctional workers also noted that the necessary evil task bothered them more if it was caused by someone other than the target of the necessary evil; for example, if staff had forgotten to administer medications to the target resulting in the target becoming violent and thus requiring discipline.

For the types of necessary evils encountered by police officers, corrections workers and bail supervisors, the target of the task would typically have some involvement in bringing about the necessary evil. Thus, sympathy and guilt for the target might be lessened and the harm being caused to the target is of little concern to the performer as that harm is of their own doing. It is easy to see how the benefit to others becomes more salient than the harm in such a scenario. For managers on the other hand, some of the layoffs they perform may be due to poor company performance and budget cuts rather than poor individual performance. Thus, the target is not responsible for bringing about the necessary evil and therefore there is greater sympathy for the target and greater awareness of the harm being done to that person. It is interesting to note in light of this discussion that the change agent made some comments about the workers they would be charged with firing that present them in a less than appealing light. For example, the change agent noted the inferior intellect and motivation of those who would be fired, essentially justifying the lay off and in a way, placing at least some of the blame for the lay off on the workers themselves. Such a manner of thinking is also a way for the change agent to remain detached from the target of the necessary evil, another aspect of performing necessary evils which is discussed in greater detail in the section on interpersonal sensitivity.

“\textit{I don’t nurture or bring along people who are intellectually stretched; I function much better with highly motivated and intelligent people. If you look at the people who remain after the cuts compared to the old staff the biggest change you see is in the grey matter and that’s because of me because I believe that the brain is one of the most important tools in the tool kit. Keep in mind too in the old audit days auditors had to use a checklist – anyone could do that. Those who performed well in that environment is someone with little intellectual curiosity and that’s not what the new organization will look like. To the extent that I can show patience and empathy is good, but others know and can see that a client like that will not be a good fit.}”(Change agent)
Several comments made by the change agent are indicative of the need to remain detached from the target and the necessary evil task. This might be more difficult for managers who identify with the target as part of the same department and organization. This is likely part of the reason that a change agent is required in organizations that are undergoing a great deal of change and subsequent mass layoffs; by hiring someone external to the organization, managers are protected from the emotional strain of making the decision to fire colleagues with whom they strongly identify (e.g., other auditors).

The following excerpts from the interview with the change agent further demonstrate their approach to necessary evils in a manner that allows the benefits to be more salient than harms, thus allowing completion of the task without becoming emotionally overwhelmed in the process.

“The thing about a change agent is that you can’t focus on the harm you’re doing. You’ve got to do the best you can to get people through the change safely, but your focus has to be on one thing and one thing only: getting to your goal; and the goal is not ‘to harm as few people as little as possible’, the goal is to ‘give the board an effective audit department’. You keep your eye on the goal from beginning to end – there is nothing to stop me from meeting that goal – that’s how I make money, I don’t audit, I fix audit departments. If I see a people issue is taking me off that goal then I quickly bring myself back online. I don’t concern myself with the harm. I have to have some ‘clinicalness’ to how I do my work, if I allow myself to worry about feelings to the point it distracts me from my goal, then I’m letting the board down and I’m distracting myself from the greater good. I don’t care at the end of the day, if I know I’ve done the best I can to communicate and be honest, give reasonable process, and time and if at the end of the day that harms people that's part of the process and there’s not a thing I can do about it. At the end of the day you will always emotionally harm people – even those that stay with the company will feel emotional harm. Everybody is emotionally harmed. If I got bogged down in that stuff I’d be dead; it’s why very few people do what I do. If I worried about harming people I couldn’t get them fired up, and enthused about the journey. So I can’t be bogged down with worrying about how people will be impacted. All I can do is get the process in place and do the best we can, but knowing that the best we can do is still going to harm people.” (Change agent)

“I know when I walk in there that there will be a great amount of emotional pain done onto many of the people that are there. The key is to get all the people engaged, get them fired up
about the process, but you know down deep that only one in four will probably survive. In a unionized environment you have to be careful about how you go about instigating the change process. It’s very emotional and it doesn’t matter their background – they are all harmed; believe me, even those who are resilient to change will not walk away thinking this is fun – no one wants to do something like this more than once in their career... There are times I look in the mirror and I say ‘is the end game really a bigger positive than the harm being done to the people on the way through?’ then I quickly give myself a big slap and say ‘look you’re hired to get to that end goal the best you can, you have HR professionals advising and supporting – helping you get to that end goal’. I have no doubt in my mind that what I’m doing is right and it is tried tested and true and without it we’re just prolonging the agony by having a dysfunctional part of the organization – especially a part of the organization that is becoming more and more important – especially in banks. When I’m brought in it’s because something major has happened and I can use that as a way to convince people if they’re unconvinced about why we have to bring about change... At the end of the day if you have 100 people are you better off with 25 people keeping their jobs or no jobs? That’s the way I approach it – banks today have the option of outsourcing their internal audit service somewhere else, so we’ve got a choice: all of us lose our jobs or we get the act together and give this bank the best internal audit department in the world – and I speak in those terms to sell them on it.” (Change agent)

Discussion: Study 1

Study 1 was intended to gather rich data on necessary evils in a variety of occupational settings from the perspective of the workers who perform them. A semi-structured interview approach proved quite useful as it allowed data to be gathered on information both directly relevant for the hypotheses proposed, while allowing for unanticipated issues related to the experience of performing necessary evil to emerge.

It was anticipated that justification would prove to play an important role in the experience of performing necessary evils, and this was supported by Study 1 findings. The rich nature of the data collected allowed the identification of multiple types of justification that performers use to legitimate the act of performing a necessary evil. These varying forms were apparent across all occupational groups and included legal justification, professional justification, peer justification, and expert justification.
One of the key purposes of Study 1 was to investigate whether those who perform necessary evils perceive an ethical component to the task. Establishing that ethicality plays a role in necessary evils is fundamental to the dissertation as if there is no ethical component, ethical orientation is unlikely to play a role in determining variation in the experience of individual performers. Study 1 provided evidence that ethical orientation would be worth investigating in relation to necessary evils as the majority of respondents believed there is indeed an ethical component to consider when performing necessary evils. Some believed that performing necessary evils was morally righteous and justified by their belief in a higher power; others believed that performing necessary evils was a social obligation rather than a spiritual one. An interesting and unanticipated piece of evidence that emerged from Study 1 was that participants indicated the ethical component they perceived was not as relevant for deciding whether or not the necessary evil should be performed, but is a consideration in terms of how the necessary evil is carried out. This finding suggests that while ethical orientation might not be useful in explaining variation in whether the necessary evil is performed or not, it may be quite useful for understanding whether the task is carried out in an interpersonally sensitive manner.

Those who indicated they did not perceive an ethical component in performing necessary evils believed they were protected from such a struggle because the necessary evils they faced were guided by clear rules and procedures to shape their response. While some might disagree with the rules or guidelines, they deferred to their belief that following the rules is the ‘right thing to do’ and ethical conflicts have to be put aside to perform their job. Thus it is plausible that those who do not perceive an ethical component might actually be unaware of this aspect of necessary evils due to their particular stance on the relativism construct. The relationship between the two sub-constructs of ethical orientation and whether necessary evils are perceived as possessing an ethical component is worthy of further investigation. Such research would contribute to better understanding the role of idealism and relativism in interpreting necessary evils.

For the present study, it was not possible to investigate ethical orientation using the four part typology Forsyth (1980) developed by combining the extremes of idealism and relativism; rather the influence of the two sub-constructs of idealism and relativism were analyzed separately. However, based on my understanding of these constructs, I suspect that those who do not feel any ethical conflict as a result of performing necessary evils would fall into Forsyth’s Exceptionist category of ethical orientation (low relativist/low idealist). Such an individual is
described as taking a utilitarian perspective by following ethical rules while being open to exceptions to these standards. It is likely that by deferring to moral rules to decide whether the action is necessary (low relativist) and expecting some harm as inevitable and therefore acceptable (low idealist), this ethical orientation may allow the performer to carry out the task unaware of the ethical problem that others might perceive in the same situation.

Study 1 findings support previous research that indicates many people perform necessary evils in a manner that is interpersonally sensitive. The results support Margolis and Molinski’s (2008) findings regarding different approaches to behaving in an interpersonally sensitive manner, including engagement, disengagement and personalization of the response. All these forms of interpersonal sensitivity were observed across all occupational groups in the present study and there is also evidence of the various subtypes of engagement, disengagement and personalization described in Margolis and Molinsky’s research. Such replication provides further validation of the typology of interpersonal sensitivity proposed by Margolis and Molinsky.

In addition to themes directly associated with the present research questions, some themes emerged that contribute to the necessary evil literature more generally. One prominent theme emerging from the interviews was that planning and preparing for necessary evil tasks is important for those who perform them. While generally desirable, it was found that in certain types of necessary evil situations planning and preparing before responding is not possible. For those necessary evils that allowed for planning and preparation, respondents reported that the greatest levels of stress and anxiety regarding the task came prior to actually performing the task; when planning ahead was not possible, the greatest stress generally came after the task had been performed. This distinction also meant that workers who do not have the opportunity to plan for necessary evils tended to rely heavily on their training to make decisions quickly. This finding has important implications for the support that organizations offer to employees who perform necessary evils. For necessary evils that allow planning and preparation prior to performing the task itself, organizations might do well to focus on offering support and guidance during the time leading up to the necessary evil coming to fruition. In contrast, when the necessary evils faced by workers do not allow for preparation, organizations could best assist their employees by providing workers with support in the time following the necessary evil task.
Relatedly, Study 1 results show that while both the task itself and the outcomes of the task are considered by those performing necessary evils, there is variation in terms of when the task and the outcome are the key focal point. In situations that did not allow for planning and preparation, outcomes were generally described as being of greater concern after the task was performed. When planning was possible, considering alternative outcomes to the necessary evil was a key aspect of the preparation exercise. Again, solid training was thought to be paramount for those situations where there was no time to plan and in such necessary evil scenarios workers were focused on the task and performing it according to their training. When planning and preparation were possible, respondents reported being focused on both the task itself and the intended outcomes simultaneously during the planning stage, but at the time of execution the task is the primary focus. This finding implies that regardless of whether there is a planning period or not, when workers are actually performing the necessary evil task they are primarily focused on the task or process rather than outcomes.

Finally, Study 1 revealed variation in whether the harm or the benefit was the primary focus of the worker. While the current research was unable to distinguish why this might be the case, I have provided a number of plausible explanations regarding the various dimensions of necessary evil including the frequency of the necessary evil, the role of the target in causing the necessary evil, and the identity of the target. The present dissertation was unable to investigate these dimensions and others related to the harm and benefit (e.g., saliency and magnitude of harm and benefit). Investigating the roles these necessary evil dimensions play through future research would contribute to understanding variation in the experience of the necessary evil performer.

**Concluding comments: Study 1**

The findings of this research have shed light on how workers from a variety of occupational groups experience and cope with performing necessary evils. While necessary evils are a part of life for many workers and might be expected to pose little difficulty to those who perform them, Study 1 indicates that a great deal of emotional effort, comparable to that experienced when faced with an ethical dilemma, is involved in performing tasks of necessary evil. This research supports prior research findings that indicate many workers manage to perform these difficult tasks with interpersonal sensitivity toward the target of the necessary evil, despite the emotional difficulties inherent in doing so. Recent mass layoffs resulting from the world-wide economic
recession has made understanding necessary evils and how they are carried out all the more important. It is hoped that the findings of the present study will enhance understanding of how employees experience performing such necessary evils so that the proper considerations and supports necessary to ensure an optimal outcome for workers are in place.

While qualitative research is a valuable and worthwhile endeavor for researchers who are interested in theory development, theory validation often benefits from a more quantitative approach. For instance, qualitative methods of the sort used in Study 1 do not allow for hypothesis testing in the sense that is commonly associated with quantitative research methodologies. As such, the findings of Study 1 have been used to inform the development of a second study, which tests the five hypotheses by proposing and testing several models of the role of ethical orientation plays in determining the experience of performing necessary evils.
Chapter 4: Theorizing the influence of ethical orientation on dimensions of necessary evil

Study 1 was designed to gather rich contextual data about the experience of workers who perform necessary evils. In the present chapter, the findings of this study are used in combination with existing research on necessary evils and Forsyth’s (1980) ethical orientation framework to develop hypotheses that are tested in a second study. Having established that necessary evils do in fact hold ethical content, I start this chapter by theorizing about the role of ethical orientation in predicting how workers will experience necessary evils.

Ethical orientation is operationally defined here as a description of how a person assesses two factors, namely idealism and relativism, which are espoused by Forsyth (1980) to be the basic components necessary for describing individual differences in approaches to ethical judgment. As noted previously, formalism and utilitarian reasoning are widely established ethical principles (Alder et al., 2007); these principles are captured in Forsyth’s classification of ethical orientation and are relevant for the two basic components of his typology. The principle of formalism is relevant for Forsyth’s relativism factor as level of relativism is related to the extent to which one uses moral rules to guide their behavior. Utilitarian ethics are relevant to the idealism factor as both espouse the importance of consequences of actions for making moral judgments.

Idealism, as used to by Forsyth (1980), describes a person who is idealistic in their approach to ethical dilemmas. Those who are considered to be highly idealistic believe that the best way to respond to an ethical situation is by doing so in a manner that is motivated by love and respect for those involved and aspires to produce desirable consequences. According to Forsyth, the high idealist “idealistically assumes that desirable consequences can with the ‘right’ action, always be obtained. Those with a less idealistic orientation, on the other hand, admit that undesirable consequences will often be mixed in with desired ones” (p. 176). As it relates to decisions that affect other people, idealism has been associated with the motivation for selfless, unconditional love towards others. High idealists will therefore search for a solution to an ethical issue that allows the issue to be addressed in a manner that is loving towards all involved. The low idealist believes that ideal outcomes are rarely achievable and in fact pretty unlikely, regardless of what action is taken. Low idealists expect some negative consequences will be
associated with any action taken and therefore may spend less time than high idealists looking for a solution to a problem that results in positive outcomes for all stakeholders. As such, the inherent harm of a necessary evil is either in conflict with the highly idealistic performer’s expectations for desirable outcomes for all, or the harm is aligned with their expectation of a non-idealist that undesirable consequences will often be mixed with desirable ones. I theorize that this difference in perspective will affect how the performer experiences the necessary evil task.

Relativism describes the extent to which an individual rejects the existence and utility of moral rules. The high relativist believes moral rules that govern all behaviour do not exist. For the high relativist, whether an action is morally correct does not depend on universal rules, rather the right action to take varies from situation to situation. The context of the specific situation must be considered when appraising the most appropriate action, as for the relativist no rules to govern behavior exist that can be universally applied to all situations, and breaking any moral principle is of less concern than the context. The low relativist on the other hand believes that if an action is consistent with moral rules/absolutes then it is correct. Thus, the decision to perform the necessary evil may be based on either a belief that moral rules should be adhered to (as in the case of the low relativist), or based on a belief that the expected consequences of performing the necessary evil are favourable to the expected consequences of not performing the necessary evil (as in the case of the high relativist). Again, I expect that the differing motivations for performing the necessary evil will affect the experience of the person tasked with carrying out the necessary evil.

To provide a concrete example of how idealism and relativism might influence ethical decisions, consider a woman working in a small organization who discovers that her colleague has been stealing from the company. She knows that this colleague is going through a time of personal financial distress as a result of a recent stream of unfortunate personal circumstances; that being said, she also knows that the company is struggling due to the recent economic crisis. The company owners are aware that someone has been stealing inventory from the company but are unable to identify the guilty party. They are conducting individual interviews with each employee to try to identify the culprit and the woman is trying to decide what to do when the owners ask if she knows who has been stealing from the company. The reaction a worker might have to this situation will vary according to their personal ethical orientation.
For the high idealist, reporting the theft to the company would present a moral problem, as doing so would mean her co-worker would lose her job; however, by not reporting the theft the woman is not behaving in a manner that is respectful and loving toward the company owners. The high idealist will struggle with deciding on the right action as neither action (reporting the theft or not reporting the theft) will produce desirable consequences for all the stakeholders. For a low idealist on the other hand, it is expected that there will be some undesirable consequence of either action, so the decision to act one way or the other may be less problematic as the woman would not struggle with searching for an action that results in desirable outcomes for both the owners and her colleague.

Idealism alone will not dictate the ultimate action the woman takes - her orientation in terms of relativism will also come into play. If she is a high idealist and a low relativist, the right action to produce desirable outcomes will also be decided based on the moral rules to which she subscribes. If ‘tell the truth’ is one of these moral rules, she may ultimately decide to solve the dilemma by reporting the theft. She cannot resolve the conflict present in this dilemma in terms of her stance on idealism, and thus may defer to her stance on relativism to decide what she should do. However, if the woman is a high idealist and a low relativist, she will base her actions on the consequences of each alternative course of action and the situation may be more complex for her as she weighs the outcome of the colleague being fired or the owners continuing to be deceived. It is likely she would search for some other course of action that better fits her highly idealistic and low relativist ethical orientation.

On the other hand, if the woman is a low idealist and therefore less concerned with desirable outcomes for all stakeholders, and if she is also a low relativist who subscribes to the moral rule ‘tell the truth’, the decision to report the theft is likely to seem to be the clear best choice. If she is low on idealism and a high relativist, she is likely to consider both alternatives in a utilitarian manner and decide to act based on which choice will result in the least amount of harm or the greatest benefit overall.

To summarize, the relativism construct essentially reflects an individual’s beliefs regarding whether an action is right or wrong, while the idealism construct reflects the extent to which an individual believes desirable consequences are attainable and likely through taking a the right course of action.
Figure 2 illustrates the proposed influence of ethical orientation on necessary evils.

**Figure 2 Illustration of ethical orientation's proposed influence on necessary evils**

While it could be argued that all of the nine dimensions might be influenced in some way by the sub-components of ethical orientation it was decided that a subset of the dimensions would be investigated; this decision was made for several reasons. First, some dimensions are more clearly identifiable as logically open to influence of idealism and relativism. In the following sections I clearly describe these dimensions and elaborate on the connection between how they are subjective in nature and also likely to be impacted by ethical orientation. Secondly, some dimensions (such as frequency) that are noted as objective in nature based on Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) definitions could not be incorporated into the planned research. In keeping with the frequency example, while idealism and relativism might have an impact on the frequency with which a performer recognizes a work task as a necessary evil, it was not possible to assess this dimension using the proposed study design. To elaborate, the hypotheses that are developed are tested using a vignette approach and the necessary evil scenarios presented in these vignettes were expected to be novel to the study participants who were undergraduate university students. The occupations that are depicted in the vignettes were generally of the sort that this population was unlikely to have experience with and therefore the scenarios are not something the participants would be expected to have experienced outside the present task. Therefore, it was
not reasonable to collect information on the number of times the participant has encountered the types of situations that were described in the vignettes. Had the vignettes been designed to reflect the sorts of necessary evils that undergraduate students commonly encountered, or had the participants been representative of the occupational groups represented by the scenarios then investigation of other dimensions would have been possible. Future researchers might consider this if using the vignette approach to study necessary evils.

The first step in theorizing about the impact of relativism and idealism on how one experiences necessary evil tasks is to identify which of the nine dimensions are both subjective in nature and logically open to the influence of the two ethical orientation variables. As noted, Molinsky and Margolis (2005) divide the nine dimensions relevant to how necessary evils are experienced by the performer into three categories: 1) dimensions of the task itself, 2) dimensions of agency, and 3) dimensions of impact. The next sections identify the dimensions that are subjective in nature and open to influence of idealism and relativism for the first two categories; dimensions of impact are not hypothesized about for the present study.

**Dimensions of the task itself**

With regard to the two dimensions relevant to the task itself, complexity is subjective while frequency is objective; as such frequency of performing the necessary evil will not be considered further in the present research.

Task complexity refers to the range of skills (technical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal) required to perform the task (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005). The range of skills required to perform a task is arguably an objective variable; we could count how many skills a person must have to perform the necessary evil. However, there are differences in the skills needed to simply perform the task and the skills needed to perform the task with interpersonal sensitivity. For example, for a doctor to perform a painful surgery on a patient there are clearly specific technical skills required, and for some doctors those technical skills may be perceived as the only skills necessary for performing this sort of necessary evil. Other doctors might be very aware of an ethical issue of causing pain to another person and subsequently perceive an ethical problem that requires a high level of intrapersonal or interpersonal skills to be addressed. In other words, some doctors would surely feel the need to enact interpersonal skills in an attempt to minimize the pain for the patient and intrapersonal skills to deal with their own emotion in response to witnessing and causing
pain in another person. Others may see the situation as requiring only technical skills, or technical skills combined with routine interpersonal skills if they perceive no ethical problem and therefore do not experience intense emotion that requires intrapersonal skills. Thus some performers may see the task as more complex than others and in this way the complexity dimension is subjective in nature. As such, the present research will investigate the relationship between *perceived* complexity and ethical orientation variables.

Individual differences in idealism and relativism could conceivably have an impact on the extent to which an individual perceives the necessary evil to be complex. I theorize that a high idealist might view interpersonal skills as very important for achieving the idealistic outcome that he or she strives for, as idealistic persons believe in the power of right action for creating the best consequences, and for the idealist, it is expected that once the right action is identified and performed, the result is a good outcome for everyone. The idealist fully expects positive outcomes for all involved and therefore feels internal drama when this expectation is not realized, as is the case for necessary evil tasks where harm to someone is by definition of the construct inevitable. Such an individual would be prone to searching for the right action and ensuring they behave in a manner that is consistent with producing an ideal outcome (Forsyth, 1980). Logically, behaving in an interpersonally sensitive manner would contribute to acting in accordance with this important value of high idealists, as doing so would be expected to result in an a more favourable outcome as harm is reduced. A low idealist on the other hand may perceive interpersonal sensitivity to be less of a necessity as he or she does not expect idealistic outcomes; as such, the low idealist would be less likely to consider interpersonal skills such an integral part of the necessary evil because they believe that at least some harm to someone is essentially inevitable. Because the low idealist expects that some harm may result from any action taken they feel less internal drama about the harm that comes to the target of the necessary evil. The low idealist understands the harm as being in accordance with their expectations and is thus less likely to experience emotional anxiety in the form of guilt, sympathy and cognitive load, which results in less internal drama. As such, the low idealist is less inclined to exert effort on reducing the harm through interpersonal sensitivity and therefore the perception of what is required of them in response to the necessary evil situation is seen as less complex (i.e., requiring fewer skills) by the low idealist than the high idealist.

**Hypothesis 1:** Idealism is positively related to perceived complexity of the necessary evil.
It is theorized that a high relativist will perceive interpersonal skills to be relatively unimportant for performing a necessary evil as compared to a low relativist because he or she will feel less emotional burden resulting from the harm being done. Interpersonal skills are not only enacted as a humanitarian gesture, but are also self-serving. To further explain, behaving in an interpersonally sensitive manner may alleviate some of the internal drama the performer experiences in carrying out the necessary evil. Thus it is reasonable to expect that the greater the level of internal drama experienced by the performer, the more motivated the performer is to behave in an interpersonally sensitive manner.

The high relativist does not subscribe to moral rules but rather evaluates the context of the necessary evil situation to decide on an appropriate course of action to take in response to the necessary evil. If a high relativist has decided to perform the necessary evil then they are of the belief that they have assessed the situation and identified a course of action that is appropriate for the situation. The highly relativistic approach means that any action taken is done so with consideration of the context; thus once a decision to act has been reached the high relativist is confident that she is acting based on what is deemed necessary for the situation, and can therefore be expected to feel little internal drama about performing the task. For high relativists, inflicting harm as part of a necessary evil is truly a necessary and acceptable action. The harm is not being inflicted blindly or by simply following someone else’s rules but rather is based on their own evaluation of the specific context in which they are faced with the necessary evil. The high relativist who performs the necessary evil does so because they have weighed various aspects of the situation and have come to a conclusion that performing the task is indeed necessary. As a result, they experience less emotional anxiety about the harm committed as they believe that they have responded in a manner that is fair and proper given the situation and in accordance with their personal values and belief system. Once the decision to act has been made by the high relativist, there is little concern about behaving in an interpersonally sensitive manner as she takes a pragmatic approach to the situation. While it is true that she may behave in an interpersonally sensitive way for humanitarian reasons, she is unlikely to feel the need to do so in the same way as someone who is experiencing greater emotional anxiety about their actions.

Low relativists on the other hand feel they must adhere to moral rules and principles. It is logical that when faced with a necessary evil, low relativists might feel conflicted about the harm they
must inflict on the target as they are breaking a moral rule (causing harm to another) by following another moral rule (achieve a greater good) that dictates they should perform the necessary evil. As such, it is expected that low relativists will be motivated to use interpersonal skills to alleviate the emotional anxiety they feel about performing the task. In this way, the low relativist’s interpersonal skills are of the utmost importance for dealing with the emotional labour they experience as a result of breaking the ‘do not harm others’ moral rule. The need for interpersonal skills contributes to greater perceived complexity amongst low relativists who perform the necessary evil, as compared to high relativists. Additionally, it is reasonable to expect that low relativists would require greater interpersonal skills to cope with the resulting emotional labour they experience based on breaking a moral rule.

**Hypothesis 2: Relativism is negatively related to perceived complexity of the necessary evil.**

**Dimensions of agency**

Of the three dimensions of agency, causal role and involvement are the most objectively definable and hence predicted to be unaffected by idealism and relativism\(^3\). Legitimacy, or justification, on the other hand, is subjective and clearly linked to the factors of interest. Justification refers to “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions” (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005, p.248). Based on the definition, it is logical that this dimension of necessary evils be related to the extent to which the performer is relativistic. However, I expect that in fact there will be no direct relationship between justification and relativism. To explain, regardless of how high or low an individual is on relativism the performer will seek to justify their behaviour; however, the nature of the justification for their behaviour may vary. For the high relativist, the action they take in response to the necessary evil situation will be justified based on their assessment of the situation. The low relativist on the other hand will feel justified in their response based on their adherence to moral rules and principles. Based on the definition above, whether an action is deemed ‘desirable,

\(^3\) It is recognized that individuals may vary in terms of which actions and behaviours they view as contributing to the necessary evil (causal role) and what they would call involvement. However, such variation in opinion regarding classification of behaviour as causal or involved are unlikely to be influenced by individual values of idealism and relativism.
proper, or appropriate' influences whether the necessary evil is deemed legitimate; it is expected that both high and low relativists will deem their responses desirable, proper and appropriate based on their respective value systems. As noted, relativism may account for differences in terms of psychological state, but is not expected to have a direct relationship with justification.

Idealism, on the other hand, is expected to be related to the extent to which one feels the necessary evil is justified. High idealists expect positive consequences to be achievable and therefore deem negative outcomes as less desirable, proper and appropriate (and by extension less justifiable) than low idealists who expect that any action will result in some sort of negative outcome. As such high idealists will perceive necessary evils to be less justifiable than low idealists.

**Hypothesis 3: Idealism is negatively related to perceived justification of the necessary evil.**

Molinsky and Margolis (2005) theorized that complexity has a positive relationship with internal drama and that justification has a negative relationship with internal drama. For the present research internal drama is operationalized by measures of guilt, sympathy, cognitive load and performance anxiety. As such, the following hypotheses will be tested:

**Hypothesis 4: Perceived complexity of the necessary evil is positively related to guilt, sympathy, cognitive load and performance anxiety associated with performing a necessary evil task.**

**Hypothesis 5: Perceived justification of the necessary evil is negatively related to guilt, sympathy, cognitive load and performance anxiety associated with a necessary evil task.**

The above hypotheses imply that individuals who are highly idealistic should experience greater levels of internal drama than low idealists. Furthermore, highly relativistic individuals might be expected to experience lower levels of internal drama in comparison to low relativists.
Chapter 5: An Analysis of Necessary Evils Using Structural Equation Modeling

Introduction

The qualitative analysis of necessary evils in Study 1 has revealed interesting results and contributed to understanding about the nature of the experience for those who perform necessary evils. This sort of rich and detailed account of individual experience is useful for developing theories about a construct and providing context and meaning to empirical research. While useful for developing theory, such an approach is generally considered only one piece of evidence that contributes to our understanding of a phenomenon; additional research evidence of a more quantitative nature furthers our understanding and provides greater clarity around such complex constructs. There has been little research on necessary evils in the workplace to date, and at the time this dissertation was proposed Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) theoretical account of the construct was the only published research on the subject. Study 1 was therefore intended to help me better understand the construct and the role of ethical orientation before attempting to model the influence of idealism and relativism on how a performer experiences necessary evil situations. Study 2 is an exercise in developing and testing models of the role of ethical orientation in the experience of those faced with performing a necessary evil. This study was based on the findings of Study 1 as well as Molinsky and Margolis’ theoretical account of the necessary evil construct.

To elaborate, Study 2 was designed to further investigate the role of ethical orientation on how necessary evils are performed, by employing a vignette approach to data collection and by using path analysis to analyze the results. As in Study 1, an attempt was made to cover a broad range of necessary evil scenarios as is reflected in the diverse nature of the vignettes used for Study 2. That being said, by using the vignette approach, and in contrast to Study 1, Study 2 was designed to hold the necessary evil task constant for all participants. By holding this factor constant, Study 2 allows for more clear comparison and understanding of the aspects of the necessary evil that play an important role in shaping the performer’s experience, than is possible to discern from Study 1 findings. The intent is to model the experience of performing necessary evils and the role of ethical orientation on key aspects of the necessary evil experience using Study 1 findings to inform model construction and to explain findings of this study.
In Chapter 4 I laid out five hypotheses to be tested in Study 2. The hypotheses are based on my analysis of Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) dimensions of task and agency that are both subjective in nature and open to influence of idealism and relativism; dimensions of impact are not hypothesized about for the purposes of the present research.

The first dimension hypothesized about is that of complexity. Hypotheses are proposed around the relationships between idealism and perceived complexity and relativism and perceived complexity. Specifically, I hypothesize a positive relationship between idealism and perceived complexity of the necessary evil, and a negative relationship between relativism and perceived complexity:

**Hypothesis 1: Idealism is positively related to perceived complexity of the necessary evil.**

**Hypothesis 2: Relativism is negatively related to perceived complexity of the necessary evil.**

For dimensions of agency, only one of the three dimensions – justification – can be considered to meet the criteria of being both subjective in nature and logically open to influence by the individual ethical orientation sub-components idealism and relativism. Justification refers to “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions” (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005, p.248). Based on the definition, I propose that it is logical that this dimension of necessary evils be related to the extent to which the performer is relativistic. That being said, I further argue that there is no direct relationship between relativism and justification for the necessary evil. Idealism, on the other hand, is expected to be related to the extent to which one feels the necessary evil is justified and I hypothesize that high idealists perceive necessary evils to be less justifiable than low idealists. To elaborate, high idealists expect positive consequences to be achievable and therefore deem negative outcomes as less desirable, proper and appropriate (and by extension less justifiable) than low idealists who expect that any action will result in some sort of negative outcome.

**Hypothesis 3: Idealism is negatively related to perceived justification of the necessary evil.**

The final two hypotheses that will be tested in Study 2 are based on Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) theorizing about the relationships between complexity and justification with internal
drama. They theorized that complexity has a positive relationship with internal drama and that justification has a negative relationship with internal drama. For the present research internal drama is operationalized by measures of guilt, sympathy, cognitive load and performance anxiety. As such, the following hypotheses will be tested in this study:

**Hypothesis 4:** Perceived complexity of the necessary evil is positively related to guilt, sympathy, cognitive load and performance anxiety associated with performing a necessary evil task.

**Hypothesis 5:** Perceived justification of the necessary evil is negatively related to guilt, sympathy, cognitive load and performance anxiety associated with a necessary evil task.

These hypotheses, as well as a sixth hypothesis that emerged during analysis are tested using the methods outlined in the following section.
Method

Participants

A total of 150 undergraduate commerce students from a large Canadian university participated in the study for course credit, however only some of the participants chose to provide demographic information; 125 indicated their gender and 86 indicated their age. Of those who reported gender 39 were male; the average reported age was 21 years. No effects of gender or age were found for any of the variables investigated in the present study.

Procedure and Analysis

Participants were required to complete a survey online. The survey presented participants with a measure of ethical orientation followed by four vignettes containing a necessary evil scenario that might be experienced in a workplace. Respondents were asked to indicate what they would do if faced with such a scenario followed by multiple choice questions about how they would feel if they were faced with such a scenario in real life. Following each vignette, participants were asked to write a short essay-style response commenting on their thoughts and feelings related to making a decision choice for each scenario presented.

Findings were analyzed using path analysis – a form of structural equation modeling. It is important to note that theory is a key component of causal modeling. As path analysis is based on correlational data proof of causal relationships between variables cannot be established with this approach (Mueller, 1997). An infinite number of alternative structures could be proposed and result in the same model fit as those presented in the findings of this study. As such structural equation modeling is only useful if based on theory such as is developed in the previous sections, which is based on the findings of Study 1 and theoretical work of Molinsky and Margolis (2005) and the qualitative work of Margolis and Molinsky (2008).

Materials and Measures

Measure of ethical orientation

Forsyth’s (1980) Ethical Position Questionnaire (EPQ) was used to assess ethical orientation. The EPQ is a 20 item self-report measure that uses a 5-point Likert response scale and contains
subscales for relativism and idealism. Forsyth reported alphas of .80 for the idealism scale and .73 for the relativism scale. Alpha levels for the subscales for the present study were .82 for idealism and .71 for relativism.

**Measure of locus of control**

Spector's Work Locus of Control Scale (WLCS) was used to measure locus of control. Locus of control is used as a control variable as it has been shown to be related to ethical judgments and decision making (Hunt & Hansen, 2007). The WLCS is a 16 item self-report measure that uses a 6 point Likert response scale. Spector (1988) reported alphas ranging from .75 - .85 for this scale. Alpha was .77 for the present study. Higher scores indicate externality while lower scores indicate internality of work locus of control.

**Vignettes**

This study presented participants with four vignette scenarios. Three of the four vignettes were developed by the researcher based on examples of necessary evil scenarios relayed as part of the interviews conducted in Study 1 of the dissertation. The fourth vignette is based on a vignette posted on the Institute for Global Ethics’ website - an “independent, nonsectarian, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting ethical action in a global context” (Institute for Global Ethics, 2010). The website provides a variety of sample dilemmas suitable for teaching tools and classroom or workshop exercises for teaching ethical decision making in organizations. According to the website the dilemmas are based on real life scenarios relayed to the institute by participants in ethical issues seminars.

The vignettes (and the entire survey) were piloted with 40 individuals who were given a definition of necessary evils and asked to indicate whether they felt the scenarios described in each vignette contained a necessary evil, whether it seemed realistic for real organizations and occupational groups, their perceived likelihood of a worker being faced with a similar situation, and their general thoughts and impressions about the scenarios and surveys. Any suggestions made by pilot participants to improve the survey and the vignettes were considered by the researcher in cooperation with the dissertation co-supervisors and when deemed appropriate,

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4 [http://www.globalethics.org/dilemmas/Giving-Chase/33/]
those suggestions were incorporated in the final vignettes. The four vignettes are presented in the appendix; throughout the remainder of this research the vignettes are referred to as follows: 1) Warrant vignette, 2) Inflatable vignette, 3) Account vignette and 4) Ticket vignette.

The Warrant vignette presents a situation where the participant assumes the role of a bail supervisor who is faced with a client who has admitted to breaking the terms of their bail agreement by drinking alcohol while celebrating their birthday. Protocol states that the supervisor should prepare a warrant for the client’s arrest and advise the client to turn himself in and return to jail to await their upcoming trial. The participant is asked what they would do in this situation – sign the warrant or not sign the warrant. This vignette was developed based on comments made by a bail supervisor who participated in Study 1. The respondent discussed how there are generally many specific conditions of a client’s bail release and the job states that it is the supervisor’s role to ensure that the client adheres to the conditions of their bail. However, the participant described how there are times when they might give a client a second chance if the breach were mild or if the client is making good progress and to sign a warrant for their arrest might be detrimental to that process. While each dimension is present in any necessary evil, each vignette used also represents either a situation in which a decision must be made immediately with little opportunity for planning or one in which there is a time delay between when the decision is taken and when the act is carried out – thus allowing the opportunity to plan and prepare for performing the necessary evil. The bail supervisor in this scenario is faced with an immediate decision to make and there is relatively little time to weigh the pros and cons. For the Inflatable vignette the participant assumes the role of captain of a US Coast Guard ship charged with patrolling an area commonly used by illegal immigrants to pass into the US. The participant is instructed to intercept a small boat filled with grandparents and children headed for US soil, where their family members await their arrival so they may be reunited. The participant must decide whether they will intercept the boat or let them pass and is offered little time to plan for how the response will be carried out.

The Account vignette describes a necessary evil faced by an advertising manager of a local newspaper who has received a request from a highly valued client that a staff member be removed from handling the prestigious account. The participant must decide whether they will do as the client requests, thus ruining an employee’s chances for an upcoming promotion, or risk losing this client’s business by allowing he worker to keep the account. This vignette was
developed based on a situation described during an interview with a study 1 participant who was a manager and encountered a similar situation. Especially prevalent in this vignette is the dimension of role of the target, who in the scenario described appears to have done nothing to bring about the necessary evil situation and is essentially an innocent victim. When the notion of planning is considered, this particular scenario depicts a situation that allows for a more delayed response; the manager described in the scenario is faced with deciding whether to honor the client’s request. However, the sense is that there is time to weigh options before a decision is made and there is time to plan for how the task might be carried out. To elaborate, while a decision must be made there is time for the manager to consider how and when they will actually carry out the task.

Finally, the Ticket vignette puts the participant in the role of a police officer who pulls over a speeding vehicle and must decide whether they will give a ticket to the driver or let him off with a warning. This vignette was also based on descriptions of necessary evils offered by police officers who were participants in Study 1. In terms of time to plan, this scenario would provide little time for preparing or planning how the necessary evil is to be carried out – the car has been pulled over, a decision must be made quickly and the decision is acted upon immediately.

**Measures of internal drama**

This study did not require participants to actually engage in a task of necessary evil, rather it asked them to visualize themselves engaged in such a scenario. Therefore, while it would make little sense to measure internal drama variables (guilt, sympathy, cognitive load, and performance anxiety) directly, it is useful to assess how the participants believe they would feel if they were actually faced with these scenarios in real life. Therefore, measures of guilt, sympathy, cognitive load, and performance anxiety were modified or developed in a manner that allowed data to be collected on participants’ beliefs rather than their actual experience. When combined, guilt, sympathy, cognitive load and performance anxiety comprise Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) construct of internal drama. Scores on these measures for each vignette were to be combined to produce a measure of internal drama for each of the four vignettes; the internal drama scores for each vignette would then be used to produce a global score of internal drama for each participant.
**Guilt.** Guilt was assessed using a modified version of the state subscale of the revised Guilt Inventory (Jones, Schratter, & Kugler, 2000). This scale consists of three subscales: trait guilt (20 items, coefficient alpha = .89, mean interitem correlation = .29), state guilt (10 items, coefficient alpha = .84, mean interitem correlation = .34) and moral standards (15 items, coefficient alpha = .88, mean interitem correlation = .33) (Kugler & Jones, 1992). The trait and moral standards subscales were presented only one time, without modification, following completion of all four vignettes; the modified version of the state subscale was presented following each scenario to assess guilt associated with each necessary evil vignette. Alpha levels for state guilt ranged from .504 - .838; alpha level for the trait guilt score was .885 for the present study.

**Sympathy.** Sympathy for each vignette was measured with two items developed by the author. The items asked about the level of sympathy the participant felt for the person(s) who would experience harm as a result of their actions and were modified slightly for each vignette to fit the specific necessary evil scenario presented. The two items took the general form of “I don’t feel much sympathy at all for [the person(s) being harmed]” and “I feel very badly for [the person(s) being harmed].” The questions were answered on a 5-point Likert response scale. Scores on these two items were combined to produce a sympathy score for each vignette; sympathy scores from all vignettes were subsequently averaged to produce an average score of sympathy for the each participant across all vignette scenarios. Alpha levels for sympathy ranged from .620-.820 for the individual vignettes.

**Cognitive Load.** Cognitive load for each vignette was measured using a two-item subjective rating scale of the sort developed by Paas (1992). This type of scale asks the performer to indicate on a 9-point scale how much mental effort was required to complete a task or answer a question. For this study the question was modified to ask participants how much mental effort they believe would be required to complete such a task. This approach to measuring cognitive load has been shown to be “reliable, highly correlated with objective measures, valid, nonintrusive, and, most important, sensitive to relatively small differences in cognitive load” (Hogg, 2007). The subjective measure has been recommended as superior to secondary task measures whereby a participant is given a secondary task along with the primary task and performance on the secondary task is measured as an indication of cognitive load occupied by the primary task. The two items were developed by the author based on Paas’ approach. The
items asked how hard the participant had to think about what they would do if faced with the scenario and how difficult it was to decide how they would carry out the task. Again, the items were modified slightly for each vignette to be appropriate to the specific necessary evil scenario. The two items took the general form of “I would have to think very hard about going through with [performing this task]” and “I had to think very hard in order to explain how I made the decision I made and how it would be carried out when asked to do so in the essay question above.” The questions were answered on a 5-point Likert response scale. Scores on the two items were combined to produce a cognitive load score for each vignette; cognitive load scores from all vignettes were subsequently averaged to produce a global score of cognitive load. Alpha levels for the individual vignettes ranged from .661 to .843.

Performance anxiety. Performance anxiety was measured using a modification of the performance anxiety subscale of The Measure of Anxiety in Selection Interviews (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004). This is a self-report measure of performance anxiety that contains 6 items and uses a 5-point Likert response scale. Alpha levels for this scale ranged from .633 - .904.

Outcome measures

As noted previously, because participants are not engaging in an actual necessary evil, necessary evil outcomes cannot be measured directly. Rather, participants were asked to provide a detailed plan of action for carrying out the task for each vignette. To elaborate, participants were asked to explain what factors they considered in making a decision about the vignette and to specifically comment on: 1) how they felt about the task and the decision they took, 2) exactly how they would carry out the action including what would be said to individuals involved, how it would be said, and the factors considered in deciding how to interact with the target in general. The qualitative data resulting from these questions were analyzed for evidence of whether the target felt they were performing a necessary evil and any interpersonal sensitivity they might demonstrate in carrying out the task. These responses were specifically coded for evidence of personalization and engagement - two indicators of interpersonal sensitivity as described by Molinsky & Margolis (2008).
Measures of other dimensions of necessary evil

Other dimensions of necessary evils that were proposed by Molinsky & Margolis (2005) to be important for understanding how workers experience necessary evil were also measured. Specifically, the survey included author-developed measures of complexity, legitimacy/justification, saliency of harm and benefit, and the ratio of harm to benefit. Each dimension was measured for each vignette; Details of each measure are presented below:

**Complexity.** Complexity was measured with three items: 1) “How complex is this scenario?” 2) “How difficult was it to make a decision about what you would do in this situation?” And 3) “To what extent do you feel there were many factors to consider before making a decision about how to respond to the scenario?” Items were scored on a 5-point Likert response scale. Item scores were combined to produce a complexity score for each vignette and alpha levels ranged from .794-.885.

**Justification.** This dimension was measured with three items: 1) “How justified do you feel in your decision?” 2) “How certain are you that the decision you made was the ‘right thing to do’ in this situation?” And 3) “To what extent do you think it is likely the decision you took for this scenario was a bad one?” (reverse scored). Items were scored on a 5-point Likert response scale. Items scores were combined to produce a justification score for each vignette; Alpha levels ranged from .671 -.800.

**Saliency and magnitude of harm and benefit.** These dimensions were intended to be assessed using a 2 item scale, however, during analysis problems with the measurement scale for one item were identified, requiring it be excluded from analyses related to magnitude and saliency of harm and benefit. The result was that the saliency of harm and the saliency of benefit were measured using single-item measures and the magnitude of harm and benefit could not be assessed. The single item used for saliency was: “When making your decision to what extent did you consider potential harm/potential benefit to others?” The items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale and an overall score for saliency of harm and for saliency of benefit was calculated for each participant by summing scores on the items for all vignettes. The alpha levels for the overall responses to the harm and benefit items were .571 and .623 respectively.
Harm benefit ratio. This dimension was assessed using a single-item measure that asked respondents “for the decision you took, to what extent do you think the benefits outweigh the harm?” A 7-point Likert response scale ranging from ‘harm outweighs benefit a great deal’ to ‘benefit outweighs harm a great deal’ plus an ‘I don’t know’ option was used.

Study 2 results and discussion

Initially, the intent for Study 2 was to combine data from all four vignettes to create overall or global scores on key variables of interest, allowing for a model of necessary evil to be theorized and tested based on global responses to a variety of necessary evil scenarios. Preliminary exploration of the data revealed a number of barriers to the originally proposed approach to exploring necessary evils in the workplace. First, while coefficient alpha scores ranged between acceptable and very good for the key variables on each individual vignette, when responses from the four vignettes were combined to create global scores many of the coefficient alphas for the global variables indicated low reliability. As is alluded to in the measures section above, it is suspected that this was due to wide variation in the content of the necessary evil vignettes used to collect data. The vignettes were developed in an effort to present a broad range of necessary evil scenarios that captured the dimensions of necessary evil proposed by Molinsky and Margolis (2005). As research on necessary evils is currently in its early stages it was thought that breadth would be the most valuable approach to contributing to this area of investigation. What became apparent was there were many confounds to interpreting the differences that emerged between responses to the scenarios because of the variation in the nine dimensions across the vignettes. As such, it was deemed necessary to carry out analyses for each vignette individually, with comparisons between the vignettes made when deemed possible and reasonable.

Secondly, exploration of qualitative responses to the Inflatable vignette revealed it to be unclear, resulting in a great deal of misinterpretation of the scenario. Although each vignette had been piloted prior to implementation with no apparent problems, the confusion created by this vignette suggested that the responses may not be reliable as the scenario was not interpreted by participants as intended by the researcher. As such, the data for this vignette was not used in the present study.
Due to this uncertainty in reliability of the data required for the original study, a new study was proposed and accepted by the dissertation committee. The revised Study 2 involved the use of path analysis to test the five hypotheses described above.

Theoretical models that would allow these hypotheses to be tested were proposed based on Study 1 findings that indicated differences between how Managers and Police officers experience necessary evils and the literature on necessary evils in the workplace (i.e., Molinsky and Margolis, 2005; Margolis and Molinsky, 2008). The manner in which the models were theorized, designed, tested and reformulated based on modification indices and critical ratio values is described in detail below. AMOS software was used to test path models proposed for three vignettes: 1) the Ticket vignette, 2) the Account vignette, and 3) the Warrant vignette. Before presenting the results of the path analyses conducted on each vignette, findings from factor analyses of the internal drama variables (guilt, sympathy, cognitive load and performance anxiety) are presented.

**Factor analyses of internal drama variables**

Preliminary investigation of the data indicated the four internal drama variables identified by Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) suggested two distinct factors of internal drama when global scores for these variables were factor analyzed. Essentially, factor analysis revealed that the global scores for the guilt and sympathy variables loaded on one factor while global scores for cognitive load and performance anxiety loaded on a second factor. Knowing this, it was deemed prudent to conduct factor analysis on the internal drama variables for each vignette as well. Details of the factor analyses for each of the three vignettes can be found in the appendix. The analysis was meant to investigate whether the two factor structure identified by preliminary data analysis of global internal drama variables was relevant for the individual vignettes as well. The factor analyses carried out on each vignette indicates a two-factor solution as appropriate for each vignette. As such, the models proposed for hypothesis testing below operationalize internal drama as two variables – emotional anxiety and performance anxiety. The interested reader should consult the appendix for detailed discussion of the factor loadings. Essentially, emotional anxiety was comprised of the guilt, sympathy and cognitive load variables and performance anxiety stood alone as its own factor. All hypotheses relating to internal drama remain the same
despite this re-formulation in operationalization of the variables composing the internal drama construct.

Path Analysis of the Ticket Vignette

The original hypotheses and premise for the proposed dissertation was that the subcomponents of ethical orientation (idealism and relativism) would influence one’s response to and experience of performing a necessary evil task. Based on the Study 1 findings, which identified justification as an essential factor in responding to a necessary evil and prior theorizing about the relationship between ethical orientation and justification, a relationship between this key variable and the idealism variable were proposed, allowing for hypothesis 3 to be tested.

**Hypothesis 3: Idealism is negatively related to perceived justification of the necessary evil.**

Although it was theorized that relativism would not influence justification, a relationship between these two variables was included in the model to test whether this null hypothesis would be supported by the data.

Based on Study 1 findings that indicated that the manner in which justification occurs depends on complexity, relationships between the ethical orientation variables and complexity were also proposed. To elaborate, Study 1 respondents indicated that in some necessary evil situations legal justification was readily apparent and responses to the necessary evil situation were carried out based solely on this type of justification. However, it was noted that for scenarios such as the Ticket scenario, when there might be a gray area or room for discretion, workers might be inclined to not perform the necessary evil or to deliver a version of the necessary evil that is intended to result in less harm being inflicted on the target. Given the necessary evil described in the Ticket scenario could be considered to fall within this gray area, it was hypothesized that there might be a relationship between the ethical orientation variables and complexity as well. This allowed for testing hypotheses 1 and 2:

**Hypothesis 1: Idealism is positively related to perceived complexity of the necessary evil.**

**Hypothesis 2: Relativism is negatively related to perceived complexity of the necessary evil.**
It was hypothesized that idealism and relativism would affect complexity and justification such that idealism would have a positive relationship with perceived complexity and a negative relationship with perceived justifiability. Relativism was expected to have a positive relationship with complexity and to have no significant relationship with justifiability.

It was also hypothesized that complexity would have a positive relationship with both Emotional anxiety and Performance anxiety; justification was hypothesized to have a negative relationship with both internal drama variables (Emotional anxiety and Performance anxiety). This relationship was supported by correlations between Justification and Emotional anxiety (r = -.383, p = .000) and Justification and Performance anxiety (r = -.376, p = .000). Furthermore, these relationships make intuitive sense as feeling less justification about an action you perform reasonably would cause greater internal anxiety in terms of guilt, sympathy and cognitive load, resulting in greater levels of Performance anxiety when carrying out the task. This would also allow for testing hypotheses 4 and 5:

**Hypothesis 4:** Perceived complexity of the necessary evil is positively related to guilt, sympathy, cognitive load and performance anxiety associated with performing the necessary evil task.

**Hypothesis 5:** Perceived justification of the necessary evil is negatively related to guilt, sympathy, cognitive load and performance anxiety associated with the necessary evil task.

Based on these hypotheses the model below was proposed and tested using AMOS software.
Before assessing model fit, the path estimates were examined. Only four of the eight paths hypothesized were significant as indicated by p-values <.05 and t-values (also referred to as the critical ratio or C.R.) > than +/- 1.96. The findings are summarized in Table 5 below:

**Table 5 Path estimated for proposed model – Ticket vignette**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>T-value (C.R.)</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complexity &lt;- Relativism</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>1.093</td>
<td>.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification &lt;- Idealism</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>-0.453</td>
<td>.651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity &lt;- Idealism</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification &lt;- Relativism</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>0.372</td>
<td>.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional anxiety &lt;- Complexity</td>
<td>0.576</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>4.879 ***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety &lt;- Justification</td>
<td>-0.529</td>
<td>0.194</td>
<td>-2.732 .006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety &lt;- Complexity</td>
<td>0.692</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>4.990 ***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional anxiety &lt;- Justification</td>
<td>-0.477</td>
<td>0.165</td>
<td>-2.892 .004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, model fit was examined using the model chi-square, the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). If the
model chi-square statistic is significant, then the model is not a good fit to the data. With respect to the GFI, TLI, and CFI, a good fit is indicated by a value close to .95 (Shumacker & Lomax, 2004). As for the RMSEA, a good fit is indicated by a value less than or equal to .05 and an adequate fit is indicated by a value less than or equal to .08 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Still, others have suggested that a value less than or equal to .06 represents a good fit to the data for the RAMSEA statistic (Hu & Bentler, 1999). For the SRMR, a value less than .05 is widely considered good fit and below .08 indicates an adequate fit of the model to the data.

The hypothesized model did not have a good fit as indicated by fit statistics summarized in Table 6 below. A Chi-square value of 0 corresponds to a perfect fit between the model and data. In this hypothesized model, the chi-square statistic is significant, and other fit statistics are not within what is generally considered good or even adequate range.

Table 6 Fit statistics for proposed model - Ticket vignette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td>44.122 ; p = .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRMR</td>
<td>.1264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>-.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the model was not found to be a good fit to the data, modification indices and critical ratios (CRs) of path estimates were consulted in proposing an alternative model. Of the four paths that were not significant, the CRs indicated that paths from idealism to complexity, idealism to justification, and relativism to justification should be removed. The CR for the path from relativism to complexity was not significant but was rather high (1.09, where > 1.96 indicates significance) and as such was left in the alternative model. The modification indices suggested a path from complexity to justification would also improve the fit of the model.

Again, before assessing fit of the alternative model (depicted in Figure 4 below) the path estimates were examined. For the alternative model five of the six paths were significant (see Table 7) with the exception of the path from relativism to complexity. Model fit was assessed and found to be extremely good as illustrated by the summarized fit statistics presented in Table 8 below.
Figure 13 Modified proposed model - Ticket vignette

Table 7 Path estimates for modified proposed model - Ticket Vignette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complexity --- Relativism</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>1.094</td>
<td>.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification --- Complexity</td>
<td>-.356</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>-6.913</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional anxiety --- Complexity</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>4.235</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety --- Complexity</td>
<td>.692</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>4.331</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional anxiety --- Justification</td>
<td>-.477</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>-2.511</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety --- Justification</td>
<td>-.529</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>-2.371</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 Fit statistics for modified proposed model - Ticket vignette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td>1.842 ; p = .606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRMR</td>
<td>.0290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>1.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the course of writing this dissertation Molinsky and Margolis (2008) published a paper that identified two components of interpersonal sensitivity – engagement and personalization. In reading this paper I realized that the components of interpersonal sensitivity were reflective of what many of the participants in my study were describing when asked to comment on how they would go about addressing the various necessary evil scenarios described in the vignettes. As such, qualitative data gathered for the present study was analyzed and coded for evidence of these two components, according to the operational definitions of these variables provided by Margolis and Molinsky’s qualitative study. Margolis and Molinsky (2008) describe a number of forms of engagement and disengagement. Engagement is evident when: 1) a performer indicates feeling prosocial emotion such as sympathy, empathy, sadness or guilt, 2) a performer is attuned to the target’s experience and the negative impact of the necessary evil on another human being, and 3) when the performer embraces their own humanity and reflects on it as part of performing the necessary evil. Disengagement, on the other hand, was evident when the performer “denied experiencing prosocial emotion, described active efforts to dissociate from the harmed target’s experience, or displaced their own humanity (Margolis & Molinsky, 2008, p. 857).

Margolis and Molinsky (2008) also found evidence that some performers of necessary evils not only behaved in an interpersonally sensitive manner, but also personalized the manner in which they did so. This means that “rather than simply consisting of a mandated protocol or organizationally supplied script, these personalized behaviours involved some degree of customization, a personal effort to shape the treatment to fit the situation or reflect the performer’s own touch. These personalized acts were often improvised and independent of – and occasionally in direct conflict with – mandated organizational routines and norms” (p. 860). Specifically, Margolis and Molinsky described two forms that personalization evident in their participants’ behaviour: 1) offers for help in dealing with the harm resultant from the necessary evil, and 2) the manner in which they interacted with the target of the harm.

Using these definitions and descriptions I read through the qualitative data and coded each participant’s response as either engaging or disengaging and personalized or non-personalized. I did not qualify specific forms of each component as described by Margolis and Molinsky (2008); instead two variables were created to indicate: 1) whether the participant’s description indicated any form of engagement or disengagement and, 2) whether the participant’s description indicated any form of personalization or non-personalization.
It was theorized that the interpersonal sensitivity variables might be related to the ethical orientation variables of interest in the present dissertation. Analyses of the correlations between the ethical orientation subcomponents idealism and relativism with the interpersonal sensitivity variables revealed a significant negative correlation between relativism and engagement ($r = -0.220$, $p = 0.008$). Based on this finding an alternative Ticket model was proposed which included the relationship between relativism and the engagement variable. This alternative model is illustrated in Figure 5.

**Figure 14 Re-modified model - Ticket vignette**

Again path estimates were examined prior to assessing model fit. All proposed paths were found to be significant as indicated by p-values for the critical ratios presented in Table 9.
The model was also found to be a very good fit to the data. As noted previously, good fit is indicated if chi-square is not significant and when GFI, TLI and CFI are close to or exceed .95; for this model these fit statistics all exceeded their requirements. Good fit of the model to the data is further exemplified by SRMR and RMSEA values less than or equal to .05, which is the case for the current model. The fit statistics are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10 Model fit statistics for re-modified model - Ticket vignette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td>9.159 ; p = .241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRMR</td>
<td>.0434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modification indices suggested no new paths; as such this model will be retained as a suitable model for explaining necessary evil experience for the Ticket vignette.

According to this model, when faced with the sort of necessary evil scenario presented in the Ticket vignette, one’s level of relativism is associated with the extent to which one engages in the necessary evil, as described by Margolis and Molinsky (2008). The more relativistic one is the less likely they are to engage in the task. This is somewhat unexpected in that we may think that individuals who believe in assessing each case on an individual basis would wish to engage deeply in the task to understand all aspects of the scenario. However, one explanation for this
In this model engagement is positively related to complexity, indicating that those who engage perceive the necessary evil scenario to be more complex than those who do not engage. This is reasonable as engaging means delving more deeply into the various dimensions of the scenario and understanding various stakeholder perspectives – this is certainly more complex than simply ignoring these aspects of the necessary evil situation as is done by those who do not engage. Additionally, it is reasonable that engagement in the task would require increased interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to complete the task. As complexity is defined as the extent to which skills are required to perform the task, this finding makes sense logically.

According to the analysis, the more complex a necessary evil is perceived, the less justified the performer feels in their response to the scenario, as would be expected based on Study 1 findings indicating that some necessary evils are very easy to deal with and thus easily justifiable. To elaborate, Study 1 participants indicated that when there is room for interpretation or a gray area the situation is more complex and legitimizing one’s actions might be a more difficult process. As noted previously, the necessary evil presented in this vignette was designed to include some room for discretion.

In turn, justification is negatively related to both emotional and performance anxiety such that those who feel less justified experience greater levels of internal drama. Complexity, on the other hand, shares a positive relationship with the internal drama variables such that emotional and performance anxiety was greater for those who perceived the vignette as more complex.

The analyses above offer partial support for hypothesis 2; while the direct relationship between relativism and complexity proposed was not significant, the final model included an indirect relationship between these variables with engagement acting as a mediating variable. Hypotheses
4 and 5 are supported by this analysis as well. The relationship tested between relativism and justification was non-significant as expected. This model did not support hypotheses 1 and 3 as idealism was not related to either of the necessary evil dimensions included in the model (i.e., complexity and justification).

Path analysis of the Account vignette

First, the account data was fit to the model identified above in Figure 5 for the Ticket vignette. This model was a poor fit to the data, and as such it was concluded that the two vignettes could not be explained by a common model of necessary evil. Next, as with the Ticket vignette, a model intended to test the hypotheses was theorized based on findings of Study 1 and the extant literature on necessary evils. As the relativism variable was not found to be related to engagement or complexity when the Account data was fit to the Ticket model, this relationship was not explored further for this vignette. Because hypotheses 1 and 3 were not supported by the Ticket model, an attempt was made to find support for these hypotheses using the Account data. As such a model was tested that included a relationship between idealism and complexity and idealism and justification:

Hypothesis 1: Idealism is positively related to perceived complexity of the necessary evil.

Hypothesis 3: Idealism is negatively related to perceived justification of the necessary evil.

Justification was hypothesized to be related to the level of internal drama a person feels. A factor analysis of the internal drama variables for this vignette indicated that guilt, sympathy and cognitive load all loaded on a single factor while the performance anxiety items loaded on a second factor. The more justified the person feels in performing the necessary evil, the less internal drama they should feel as represented by guilt, sympathy, and cognitive load. Less internal drama on these variables should result in decreased performance anxiety and according to Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) theorizing about necessary evil, this should result in greater ability to respond to the scenario in a manner that is interpersonally sensitive. Initial testing of the Account data using the re-modified Ticket model in Figure 5 indicated no direct relationships between complexity and the internal drama factors, as such hypothesis 4 was not tested by this model and a path from complexity to internal drama factors was not included.
Hypothesis 5: Perceived justification of the necessary evil is negatively related to guilt, sympathy, cognitive load and performance anxiety associated with the necessary evil task.

For this model, an attempt was made to test relationships between performance anxiety and interpersonal sensitivity. Interpersonal sensitivity was represented by the variables engagement and personalization as constructed based on qualitative data provided by respondents. As noted above these variables were categorical in nature and coded by the researcher based on Margolis and Molinsky’s (2008) descriptions of these constructs. Molinsky and Margolis (2005) theorized that internal drama would influence interpersonal sensitivity displayed in performing necessary evils. Study 1 findings indicate that the work of analyzing the dimensions and feelings of internal drama occur prior to performing the necessary evil for Managers. The Account scenario represents one type of necessary evil that might be experienced by managers and as such, an attempt was made to design the model in a way that reflected this distinction between Managers and Police officers. For the Ticket vignette, which clearly represents the type of scenario a police officer might experience, the interpersonal sensitivity variable of engagement was found to influence how the dimensions were evaluated. According to the ticket model whether a respondent engages is explained by their level of relativism and the dimensions of necessary evil are subsequently evaluated leading to experienced levels of internal drama. Police officers interviewed in Study 1 indicated that quite often they are faced with necessary evils which do not afford the opportunity to respond by systematically following the steps theorized by Molinsky and Margolis. Rather, they must act and consider their actions after the necessary evil has already been performed.

In contrast, for the type of necessary evil experienced by Managers the decision to behave in an interpersonally sensitive manner might be made consciously following assessment of the dimensions and based on internal drama resulting from the evaluation of the dimensions. Thus, for the type of scenario described by the Account vignette it is possible that participants would more closely follow the steps of addressing a necessary evil theorized by prior researchers.

The model below was proposed, which follows Molinsky and Margolis’ theorizing quite closely: evaluation of the dimensions of complexity and justification lead to experienced internal drama, which subsequently affects the extent to which the task is performed in an interpersonally sensitive manner.
As with the Ticket Vignette, path estimates were checked prior to model fit statistics. Four of the six hypothesized paths were significant; the paths from performance anxiety to engagement and personalization were not significant; however, they were in the direction predicted by Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) theorizing about capacity for internal drama: as performance anxiety increased interpersonal sensitivity was decreased. The path estimates are summarized in Table 11 below.

**Table 11 Path estimates for original proposed model - Account vignette**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justification --&gt; Idealism</td>
<td>-.125</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>-3.468</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional anxiety --&gt; Justification</td>
<td>-1.591</td>
<td>.369</td>
<td>-4.311</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The hypothesized model did not have a good fit as is indicated by Table 12, which summarizes the fit statistics. Chi-square value of 0 corresponds to a perfect fit between the model and data. In this hypothesized model, the chi-square statistic is significant, and other fit statistics are not within what is generally considered good or even adequate ranges.

**Table 12 Fit statistics for original proposed model - Account vignette**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td>89.062 ; p = .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRMR</td>
<td>.1523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modification indices were consulted and a path was added from justification to complexity. Adding this path made the previously significant path from idealism to complexity non-significant, as such this path was removed and path analysis was performed on the model. The modification indices of this revised model suggested a path from complexity to the internal drama variable emotional anxiety, which was subsequently added. With these changes the path from justification to the internal drama variables were no longer significant and were thus removed. The revised model is depicted below.
Four of the six paths in the model were significant, with the paths from performance anxiety to personalization and engagement remaining non-significant; however model fit had been improved (See tables 13 & 14 below).

**Table 13 Path estimates of revised model - Account vignette**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justification &lt;- Idealism</td>
<td>-.125</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>-3.468</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity &lt;- Justification</td>
<td>-.835</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>-8.945</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional anxiety &lt;- Complexity</td>
<td>1.521</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>5.707</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety &lt;- Emotional anxiety</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>13.437</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement &lt;- Performance anxiety</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>-1.240</td>
<td>.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalization &lt;- Performance anxiety</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>-1.637</td>
<td>.102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 Fit statistics for revised model - Account vignette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td>24.204; p = .043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRMR</td>
<td>.0574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>.938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.078</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the Chi-square statistic remained significant, other fit statistics are now generally in the range considered indicative of an adequate fit of the model to the data. At this point there were no suggestions from the modification indices; however, a look at the critical ratios suggested that the paths from performance anxiety to engagement and personalization should be removed from the model. As such this model was not able to support internal drama variables having a direct influence on interpersonal sensitivity.

The resulting model had a very good fit to the data and is depicted below, along with tables presenting path estimates (Table 15) and fit statistics (Table 16).

Table 15 Path estimates revised model 2 - Account vignette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justification &lt;- Idealism</td>
<td>-.125</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>-3.468</td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity &lt;- Justification</td>
<td>-.835</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>-8.945</td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional anxiety &lt;- Complexity</td>
<td>1.521</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>5.707</td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety &lt;- Emotional anxiety</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>13.437</td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 Fit statistics for revised model 2 - Account vignette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td>10.195; p = .117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRMR</td>
<td>.0435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although most of the fit statistics were good, the RMSEA statistic fell in the adequate range. Further theorizing about the relationships between the variables and the Study 1 findings led to attempting to incorporate the “perform” variable into the model. As noted previously, Study 1 findings indicated that the work of necessary evil was generally carried out by managers prior to engaging in the necessary evil, while for police officers, much of the cognitive and emotional labour associated with necessary evils is carried out after the task had been performed. As such, a model was tested that included the variable of whether the necessary evil was performed, as depicted below.
Figure 18 Revised model 3 - Account vignette

Analysis of the path estimates indicated that the path from performance anxiety to perform was not significant, and modification indices suggested a path from Emotional anxiety to the Perform variable. The resulting model was analyzed and modification indices indicated that including a path from perform to Performance anxiety would improve model fit. This path was added and the resulting model is depicted in Figure 10.
For this model, all the paths are significant and the fit is quite good; the RMSEA statistic is improved, although still slightly above what is generally considered a good fit, it is now well within the adequate fit range and closer to a good fit. The modification indices and residual covariance did not suggest further modification and the model makes good sense theoretically.

**Table 17 Path estimates for revised model 4 - Account vignette**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justification &lt;-- Idealism</td>
<td>-.125</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>-3.468</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity &lt;-- Justification</td>
<td>-.835</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>-8.945</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional anxiety &lt;-- Complexity</td>
<td>1.521</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>5.707</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform &lt;-- Emotional anxiety</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-2.020</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety &lt;-- Perform</td>
<td>7.608</td>
<td>2.872</td>
<td>2.649</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety &lt;-- Emotional anxiety</td>
<td>.654</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>14.076</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18 Fit statistics for revised model 4 - Account vignette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td>12.637; p = .180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRMR</td>
<td>.0508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>.972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the fit statistics for this model are all within good or adequate range and the estimates are all significant this model will be retained as a final model to explain the experience of the Account necessary evil scenario.

According to this model, one’s level of idealism is negatively related to justification in support of hypothesis 3; As was found to be the case for the Ticket vignette, complexity and justification were negatively related such that the less justified a person felt in responding to the necessary evil, the more complex the necessary evil was perceived to be. Qualitative evidence further supports this relationship in the Account vignette: managers interviewed for Study 1 reported that some of the necessary evils they perform were very straightforward and easy to justify. For example, if an employee had caused clear and direct harm to another employee or the organization itself, knowing what to do when faced with that sort of necessary evil was quite easy. However, in some instances justifying one’s response took more work and was therefore more complex. In these fuzzy situations managers reported conducting an informal investigation into the matter, collecting evidence to support their response, and working out the details of how the necessary evil will be carried out – when, where, what would be said, etc. This would certainly require the use of more technical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills than would be required when the necessary evil was easily justified and obvious. As such it is reasonable that perceived justification for the situation might influence the level of perceived complexity such that less perceived justification is related to greater perceived complexity.

Complexity is positively related to emotional anxiety in this model. The respondent’s level of emotional anxiety was negatively associated with whether the necessary evil was performed or not, which was positively related to performance anxiety. Finally, emotional anxiety was positively related to performance anxiety as well.
This model illustrates how in a managerial-type of necessary evil the pattern of relationships between key variables is quite different than it is for the Ticket scenario. There are a number of differences between these two scenarios, including variation in the role of the target in bringing about the necessary evil, and variation in the type of justification available to respondents for each scenario. Because of confounding it is impossible to make inferences about how these variations come into play in explaining the differences between the two models.

**Path analysis of the Warrant vignette**

An attempt was made to fit the Warrant vignette data to the two models described above for the Ticket and Account scenarios. The Warrant vignette represents a necessary evil scenario that would be classified under the ‘other’ category for Study 1. As such, it was hypothesized that the warrant vignette would better fit the Ticket model than the account model, as the experience of interviewees in the ‘other’ group in Study 1 were found to be significantly different from the experience of Managers, but not statistically different from Police on internal drama variables.

**Hypothesis 6: The Ticket vignette model will be a better fit to the Warrant data than the Account model.**

In support of this hypothesis, the analyses below indicate the Ticket vignette model was a good fit to the Warrant Vignette data, while the Account Vignette model was a very poor fit to the Warrant data. The path estimates and model fit statistics for the Account Vignette model’s fit to the Warrant Vignette data are presented in Tables 19 and 20 below, followed by the path estimates and model fit statistics for the Ticket Vignette model’s fit to the Warrant Vignette data (Tables 21 & 22).

**Table 19 Path estimates of Account model fit to Warrant data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justification &lt;--- Idealism</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>-1.103</td>
<td>.270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity &lt;--- Justification</td>
<td>-.446</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>-3.998</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional anxiety &lt;--- Complexity</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>7.098</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform &lt;--- Emotional anxiety</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>1.647</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety &lt;--- Perform</td>
<td>1.445</td>
<td>.827</td>
<td>1.747</td>
<td>.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety &lt;--- Emotional anxiety</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>2.792</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 20 Fit statistics for Account model fit to Warrant data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td>72.004; p = .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRMR</td>
<td>.1455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 21 Path estimates of Ticket model fit to Warrant data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage &lt;--- Relativism</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>-1.481</td>
<td>.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity &lt;--- Engage</td>
<td>1.687</td>
<td>.488</td>
<td>3.456</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification &lt;--- Complexity</td>
<td>-.217</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>-3.998</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional anxiety &lt;--- Justification</td>
<td>-.261</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>-2.041</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety &lt;--- Justification</td>
<td>-.867</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>-5.145</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional anxiety &lt;--- Complexity</td>
<td>.553</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>6.204</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety &lt;--- Complexity</td>
<td>.631</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>5.366</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 22 Fit statistics for Ticket model fit to Warrant data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td>5.450 ; p = .605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRMR</td>
<td>.0425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLI</td>
<td>1.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 6 was supported; the “other” scenario and the Police scenario were responded to in a manner that was quite similar to each other, but significantly different from the managerial scenario. This finding supports similar findings from Study 1 that indicate differences between how managers and police officers experience necessary evils. The fact that differences were found in within subjects responses suggests that the variation observed in Study 1 between managers and police officers may be a result of the type of necessary evils experienced by individuals in each occupational group as opposed to inherent differences between the sort of
individual who becomes a police officer and the sort of person who becomes a manager. Based on the Study 2 findings we might expect that were police officers faced with the types of necessary evils experienced by managers, their response to such situations would mirror that of the Managers in Study 1.

Discussion Study 2

Study 2 was designed to further investigate the role of ethical orientation in performing workplace necessary evils by using vignettes to better understand the experience of the performer. By holding the necessary evil scenarios constant for all participants, Study 2 was designed to remove the confounds inherent in previous necessary evil research that relied on participant’s discussing their experience with reference to individual experiences that varied in terms of context, organization, the target, and a myriad of other environmental factors. In essence, this approach was intended to provide the opportunity to compare apples to apples thus allowing the influence of key variables of interest to be more clearly interpreted.

Using path analysis five hypotheses were tested. Initial proposed models that did not prove to be a good fit to the data were modified using modification indices and critical ratios, which resulted in two models that were a good fit to the data being developed.

The focus of the current discussion is on implications for the main concern of this dissertation: implications of the findings for understanding the role of ethical orientation on the experience of performing necessary evils.

Implications for the role of ethical orientation from the Ticket and Warrant model

The first model fit the data collected on participants’ responses to the Ticket Vignette. This model indicates that relativism is negatively associated with an engagement approach to interpersonal sensitivity when performing necessary evils. Margolis and Molinsky (2008) showed that engagement in the task was a common approach to performing necessary evils in an interpersonally sensitive manner. The Study 2 findings suggest that the low relativist, who believes there are rules that govern ethical behaviour, is more likely to use this approach to interpersonal sensitivity than high relativists.
One explanation for this finding is that for the low relativist, engaging in the task is necessary to evoke an interpersonally sensitive approach when faced with a necessary evil. For a person who believes moral rules exist that must be followed in all situations, one can imagine how it might be easy to justify one’s own behaviour through awareness that the rules are being followed. A focus on the rules as justification for the behaviour might make it easy to become somewhat automatic in performing necessary evils and to do so without interpersonal sensitivity. However, if the performer is aware that interpersonal sensitivity is desirable when performing necessary evils the low relativist may use engagement in the experience as a means of evoking the appropriate psychological state that allows for interpersonal sensitivity in such situations. In contrast, the high relativist may feel less need to engage in the task to evoke an interpersonally sensitive approach to carrying out the necessary evil task. As noted, perhaps the high relativist feels they have already given due consideration to the situation; because they have acted in a manner that is in alignment with their relativistic stance they may be comfortable that their ethical orientation offers an interpersonally sensitive approach without the need for further engagement to ensure they treat the target with interpersonal sensitivity.

Of interest is that fact that while this model of necessary evil also fit the data for the Warrant vignette very well, the one path that was not significant for the Warrant vignette was the path from relativism to engagement. That being said, a look at the critical ratio of this path reveals that it is quite high (-1.48) where a value greater than 1.96 is indicative of significance; the relationships is also in the same direction for the Warrant data as it is for the Ticket data. Further investigation into whether level of relativism is related to engagement as an approach to interpersonal sensitivity when performing necessary evils would be a worthwhile endeavor to better understand the nature of this relationship.

Implications for the role of ethical orientation from the Account model

The model that best fit the data for the Account vignette looked quite different from the model that best fit the data for the other two vignettes. Of key interest for the current discussion is that the role of ethical orientation for this model is based on the idealism sub-construct and not on relativism. Idealism was found to be negatively related to justification, thus supporting hypothesis 3. As the nature of this relationship is discussed in great detail elsewhere in this dissertation (see section on the Dimensions of Agency above) it is not necessary to offer further
explanation of this relationship here. What does warrant further explanation is the fact that the role of ethical orientation on the experience of necessary evil is quite different for the two models supported by Study 2 data.

**Implications for the role of ethical orientation from comparing the two models**

While idealism had a significant role in the experience of performing the necessary evil described in the Account scenario, this variable was not included in the final model for the Ticket and Warrant vignettes. In contrast, while relativism seems to have a role to play for the Ticket and Warrant vignettes, it was not included as a variable in the final model for the Account vignette. What might this imply about the role of ethical orientation in performing necessary evil? To answer this question, it is important to consider the differences between the type of necessary evil scenarios that fit each model.

Study 1 results are useful for informing one plausible explanation for this difference. Study 1 found that whether or not there was time to plan ahead for dealing with a necessary evil is important for determining how the necessary evil is experienced by the person performing it. This was a prevalent theme that was also related to workers’ experience in terms of whether they focus on the process or the outcome. The vignettes in question clearly differ in this regard, with the Ticket and Warrant providing little or no time for preparation and planning, while this is not the case for the Account vignette. For ease of discussion, throughout the remainder of this explanation I will refer to the models as the *Immediate Action* model, and the *Delayed Action* model for the Ticket/Warrant model and the Account model respectively.

Given that Study 1 participants placed great emphasis on the difference in the experience of performing an Immediate Action necessary evil as compared to a Delayed Action necessary evil, it is quite plausible that the influence of ethical orientation differs for these two types of necessary evil scenarios. Study 2 findings show that for the Immediate Action model, it is the relativism sub-component of ethical orientation that plays a significant role in the performers response; for the Delayed Action model idealism, but not relativism, is found to be significant. This seems to imply that when faced with Immediate Action in response to a necessary evil, the role of ethical orientation is largely a reflection of where the performer stands in terms of relativism. However, when the necessary evil action can be delayed and there is time for
preparation and planning to occur, it seems that the idealism sub-component may play a more significant role.

Furthermore, Study1 respondents reported that whether they felt focused on the process of how a necessary evil is carried out, or on the outcome resulting from the task being carried out, changed over various stages of performing the necessary evil. At the moment of execution, the focus is on the task itself, while the outcome was considered during other stages of the necessary evil. In particular, police officers who generally experienced Immediate Action necessary evils, focused on the outcome after the task had already been performed. Managers and others who experienced more Delayed Action necessary evils focused on the outcome during the planning and preparation stage. Further, while those who described Delayed Action necessary evils reported focusing on the task and process during the action stage, they also reported that focus on the outcome was present at that time as well. Based on this evidence it is reasonable to theorize that relativism is a key variable when the performer of the necessary evil is focused on the task or process, but it is less influential on the experience of a performer who is focused primarily on outcomes of the necessary evil. While further research is necessary to confirm any possible relationship between whether the necessary evil task requires immediate action and the influence of the two sub-constructs of ethical orientation, the findings from Studies 1 and 2 suggest this is a very plausible explanation and one worthy of further exploration.
Chapter 6: General Discussion and Conclusions

Implications

This dissertation makes two key contributions to the field of organizational behavior. Firstly, the findings of my research have revealed an important dimension of necessary evil tasks that was not theorized previously, namely the importance of the immediacy of the action required. In Study 1 participants spoke of the importance of being able to plan for performing necessary evils. Respondents expressed their desire to think through and plan out the manner in which they would respond to the necessary evil task. Study 1 revealed that when planning for necessary evils is possible the experience is quite different than when a necessary evil task must be responded to immediately without time to prepare a response. Study 2 also pointed to the immediacy of the required response as a key factor in determining how the necessary evil is experienced by the performer. The two models identified were framed as delayed action and immediate action models and revealed that the subcomponents of ethical orientation may play differing roles in predicting performers’ behavior for each of the two types of necessary evils described by the models. The fact that relativism plays a key role in predicting responses to immediate action necessary evils is consistent with theorizing about relativism as being related to making decisions about the right \textit{action} to take when faced with an ethical issue. It makes sense that when a worker must act immediately in response to a necessary evil task their stance on relativism would be influential as they rely on formed scripts and schemas about the best action to guide their response. Likewise, when faced with a delayed action necessary evil that affords the performer the time to plan and prepare their response to the situation it makes sense that they might use that time to consider the \textit{consequence} or outcome that they are aiming to manifest with their actions. As such, idealism with its focus on consequences of behavior becomes the predominant predictor for how the task is experienced and the subsequent response of the performer.

Thus, Study 2 offers two testable models of necessary evil to guide future research on this subject. While the results of the present research are correlational in nature, at such an early phase of theoretical development these findings can be extremely helpful for building and testing theory about necessary evils. I labeled the two models Immediate Action and Delayed Action to distinguish between necessary evil tasks that require immediate action and those that offer the
opportunity to plan and prepare for taking action to carry out the task. The models suggest that for Immediate Action necessary evils the relativism sub-component of ethical orientation plays a greater role in determining the performer’s response than the idealism sub-component; for Delayed Action necessary evils the opposite is true. Further research concerning Delayed and Immediate Action necessary evils would be worthwhile to better understand the influence of these sub-components of ethical orientation on performer’s experience of necessary evils. A distinction in terms of focus of the performer for Delayed and Immediate Action types of necessary evils was also revealed. As discussed in the previous section, this finding may mean that a performer’s level of relativism is key during times when the task itself is the main focus of the performer, while idealism becomes more influential as the outcome of the necessary evil task becomes more salient to the performer.

One possible explanation for the difference observed between Delayed and Immediate Action models of necessary evils is that when there is time for planning and preparing for the necessary evil the performer thinks about the consequences of their actions to a greater extent. The idealism sub-component of ethical orientation pertains to individual expectations about the consequences of taking a specific action. Thus, when time allows for planning and preparation before action must be taken, the performer is afforded the opportunity to consider the outcomes of various alternatives. In doing so, one’s stance on idealism becomes a determining factor of how the necessary evil is experienced by the performer.

In contrast, when immediate action is required of the performer relativism becomes a determining factor in how the necessary evil is experienced. The relativism sub-component of ethical orientation pertains to how the individual takes action in response to an ethically laden task. In other words, the relativism sub component is about justifying the act itself whereas idealism is about the outcome of the act (as described in the previous paragraph). Thus, when there is not time to consider consequences of action, the performer defers to their predetermined stance on relativism to decide what they should do and the performer’s relativistic tendencies become a deciding factor for how they experience and thereby respond to the necessary evil.

This explanation is further corroborated by qualitative evidence from Study 1 that indicates that those who generally experience Immediate Action types of necessary evils (i.e., police officers) tend to focus more on the task itself than outcomes when performing the necessary evil.
Participants reported that for such situations they generally did not consider consequences until after the task had been performed and there was time to reflect on the outcome. On the other hand, for those who generally experience Delayed Action necessary evil scenarios in their line of work (i.e., managers) both the task itself and outcomes of the task were in focus during the planning stage. However, when the time to actually perform the task arrived, these participants also reported being primarily focused on performing the task.

While further research is required to properly assess these theorized relationships and to rule out alternative explanations, the models presented in Study 2 can be used as a starting point and tested against other models, modified to include additional variables, and applied to a multiplicity of necessary evil situations. This would also allow assessment of the extent to which the models explain necessary evil phenomena and are generalizable to other populations and job types.

A second key contribution of this dissertation is the theoretical contribution to the broader literature on ethical decision making and ethical orientation by being among the first to investigate how these theories apply to a common workplace event. A key purpose for my dissertation work was to establish that necessary evils contain an ethical component and as such might benefit from being studied within an ethical framework. Necessary evils offer a unique context for studying ethical decision making because by definition necessary evils require an individual to engage in activities that could by some be considered unethical to achieve a greater good. While past research has commented on how individuals focus on a greater good when faced with ethical problems, or re-frame a harmful task as a beneficial one (see Johns, 1999 and Ashforth & Anand, 2003 for examples) necessary evils offer a distinct opportunity to study the effect of ethical orientation on decision making when greater benefits are inherent to the situation. Furthermore, necessary evil is a fairly new construct in the organizational behaviour literature and the ethical aspects of this domain have yet to be explored.

In addition to these two key contributions to the literature on necessary evils, the two studies presented in this dissertation make several additional theoretical and practical contributions to knowledge of necessary evils in the workplace. First, this dissertation contributes theoretically to the emerging literature on workplace necessary evil. When the dissertation was proposed, Molinsky and Margolis (2005) offered the sole contribution on necessary evil to the
organizational behaviour literature. Since that time Margolis and Molinsky have published a second study on necessary evil (2008) and Di Paolo-Foster (2008) also conducted an empirical investigation of Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) model by studying managers for her dissertation research.

The present research further unravels the complexities of necessary evil as it applies to organizations by investigating the influence of idealism and relativism on how people behave when faced with such difficult tasks. At the time it was conducted, Study 1 was the only formal qualitative investigation into how workers experience necessary evils. During the course of the dissertation being completed, Margolis and Molinsky (2008) published a qualitative investigation of the interpersonal sensitivity aspect of necessary evils. They identified two approaches performers might take to interpersonal sensitivity: 1) engagement, and 2) personalization. By analyzing qualitative data collected through interviews in Study 1 and responses to open ended questions in Study 2 the present research supports Margolis and Molinsky’s qualitative findings. For example, participants in Study 1 discussed both engagement and personalization at length during interviews. While some respondents indicated the only way they could address necessary evils was to disengage from the target, others indicated engaging in the harm as critical to performing the necessary evil in an acceptable manner. This offers further support to Margolis and Molinsky’s theorizing about the importance of interpersonal sensitivity for workers who perform necessary evils. Engagement and personalization were also evident in responses from Study 2 participants; when asked to describe their thought process and explain how they would carry out the necessary evil, many participants described thinking about the target of the harm or offering assistance, support, or advice outside the realm of what was required by the role and job. So the first contribution made by this dissertation is replication of and support of Margolis and Molinsky’s findings that performing a necessary evil in an interpersonally sensitive manner is both possible and commonly carried out through the use of engagement and personalization.

Another contribution is that this dissertation assessed the utility of vignette methods for studying necessary evils. While necessary evils are an important and broad reaching organizational issue, it remains an under-researched phenomenon in the organizational behaviour literature. One of the greatest barriers faced by academics interested in studying this phenomenon is the difficulty in collecting reliable and valid data on the experience of an individual performing a necessary
evil task. Because of the sensitive nature of necessary evils, collecting observational data can be unethical, unlawful, or plain uncomfortable. Thus, until now most prior research on this topic has relied on self-report data that participants provide based on their memory of what is generally deemed a difficult and disturbing task by the performer. Study 2 provides evidence that the vignette method offers a means of studying necessary evils in a laboratory setting. While there are limitations to the vignette approach (see limitations section below), the utility of this method for simulating the experience of performing necessary evils for the further development of theory, and thus building a body of knowledge on this important aspect of work life is an important contribution to the field at this stage of theoretical development.

Another benefit of the vignette approach is that it allows study participants to respond to a constant necessary evil scenario. Given the broad and varying nature of necessary evils that occur in the field, it can be difficult to find performers that have experienced the exact same type of necessary evil. Even those who perform them in the same professional role are unlikely to be faced with necessary evils that contain the exact same dimensions. For example, layoffs may occur with varying levels of performer causal role; arrests may vary in terms of the salience of the harm and benefit; and the magnitude harms and benefits of medical procedures may vary with each individual patient. DiPaolo Foster’s (2008) findings demonstrate the problem this may create in interpreting findings. Her research revealed significant differences in psychological states depending on the type of necessary evil being referenced by participants in her field study of necessary evils. She suggests studying specific types of necessary evil scenarios “in isolation from one another in order to more fully investigate the distinctions that have emerged” (p.171). Using vignettes affords greater control to the researcher in terms of the specifics of the necessary evil scenario and allows controlled manipulation of various aspects of the construct. In addition to the approach I have taken to using vignettes as a means of studying necessary evils, future research could employ such an approach to investigate how manipulating levels of the nine dimensions affect the general experience of the performer and related outcomes.

Study 1 identifies several key themes that are important for explaining variability in response to necessary evil situations. While justification or legitimacy was theorized by Molinsky and Margolis (2005) to be an important dimension of necessary evil behaviour, the present research offers evidence that there are varying forms of justification that might be employed by workers faced with a necessary evil. Study 1 also gives evidence of an ethical component inherent in
necessary evils, thus suggesting that the literature on ethical decision making might offer insight into how workers address these situations. As noted previously, preparation and planning was also revealed by Study 1 respondents to be a key aspect for carrying out necessary evils. Interview findings indicate that whenever possible workers dedicate a great deal of time and effort into preparing how they will perform a necessary evil task; when time does not permit such planning, a great deal of time and effort is dedicated to analyzing, and especially, to justifying necessary evil actions after the fact.

Study 1 also provides evidence of variation in focus depending on the nature of the necessary evil. Whether the performer is focused on performing the task itself, or on the impact the necessary evil will have, is subject to variation. While the data in this study does not allow for conclusions to be drawn about the variables relevant for a process or outcome focus, future research should further examine the contributing factors. Similarly, whether the performer is focused more on the inherent harm or inherent benefit of the necessary evil task is worthy of future study.

Study 2 also presents evidence that internal drama as described by Molinsky and Margolis (2005) is composed of two distinct factors identified in the present study as Emotional anxiety and Performance anxiety. The two factors were evident for all three of the scenarios presented in Study 2, however, the items composing the emotional anxiety factor varied slightly amongst vignettes. Future research should investigate whether there exist identifiable patterns in the contributing factors of Emotional anxiety affiliated with performing the necessary evil as various necessary evil dimensions are manipulated. This also allows for testing of a simplified version of Molinsky and Margolis’ model, thus allowing a more parsimonious approach to investigating the construct in the future.

Study 2 further demonstrates the influence of ethical orientation on one’s response to necessary evil scenarios. Study2 findings suggest that relativism may have a strong influence on how a worker responds to necessary evils in some situations while idealism may be more influential for other necessary evil scenarios. Future research should further investigate the role of these subcomponents of ethical orientation as well as investigate how the two dimensions might interact to influence responses to necessary evils.
Finally, Study 2 also exemplifies the utility of structural equation modeling (SEM) for studying necessary evils. Di Paolo - Foster (2008) also used path analysis to test Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) model of necessary evils for her dissertation work. She studied the necessary evil behaviour of managers in a large organization using a survey method; however, while that research employed path analysis to investigate a working sample of participants, the present research tests the utility of these methods for vignette research in a lab setting. Furthermore, the current research allowed for all participants to respond to survey questions by making reference to the same necessary evil scenarios by using the vignette approach. Di Paolo – Foster’s work required participants to respond to questions with reference to their own specific necessary evil experiences. The current methods allow the researcher to remove some confounds of her approach by holding the necessary evil scenario being referenced as constant.

Practically, the present research contributes to understanding of how employees address necessary evils they face as a part of their work. This is an important due to the pervasiveness of necessary evils in the workplace. For example, the recent economic downturn has resulted in mass layoffs of workers who played little or no part in bringing about the necessary evils of which they are targets. An understanding of the issues managers face when carrying out these layoffs is beneficial in obtaining optimal outcomes for all stakeholders. Such understanding is also useful for informing the development of training programs and support systems to guide managers and leaders as they address issues of necessary evil in their workplace. For example, by understanding the importance of various modes of justification for performing necessary evils, employers can ensure that when assigning workers to perform such tasks they are provided with clear justification for why the task must be carried out. Likewise, by understanding how performers focus on different aspects of necessary evils (i.e., harm vs. benefit, process vs. outcomes) at different stages of performing a necessary evil task, employers can ensure the right type of support is available as needed.

The practical contributions of the present research can be applied to necessary evils faced by occupational groups other than managers as well. For instance, police officers well know the importance of ‘debriefing’ in response to necessary evils they perform in the line of duty. It is hoped that the present research might contribute to improving debriefing sessions by clarifying the experience of officers who perform necessary evils and their subsequent needs of at the time of the debrief session. Likewise, the present research could inform interventions intended to help
rehabilitation counselors, social workers, nurses and others who might experience emotional fatigue or burnout as a result of performing necessary evils.

Clarifying the nature of the internal drama associated with necessary evils by offering evidence for two distinct factors comprising the construct (i.e., emotional anxiety and performance anxiety) also sheds light on the tools and resources workers might need to ensure optimal responses and ability to cope with the necessary evil situations they face in their jobs. Employers can offer workers training or other forms of support and intervention to reduce the Emotional and Performance anxieties they experience when performing necessary evils.

Finally, by further illustrating the importance of engagement and personalization for ensuring necessary evils are conducted in an interpersonally sensitive manner, the present research provides knowledge to employers wishing to enhance the level of interpersonal sensitivity employed by workers performing necessary evils. In preparing workers to perform necessary evils such as use of force by police officers, or layoffs by managers, it may be beneficial to coach workers on using engagement and personalization as techniques that will foster an interpersonally sensitive approach. The benefits of interpersonally sensitive behaviour when performing tasks such as necessary evils are well known. Thus, the ability to enhance this skill in employees who perform necessary evils is of great value to employers.

Limitations

The present research has a number of limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. One of the strengths of Study 2 is that participants were required to respond to a number of very different necessary evil situations. This is a strength in design in that the findings of this study offer insight into necessary evils across a breadth of occupational groups and types of necessary evils rather than limiting the applicability of findings to only one type of occupation as others have done (e.g., Di Paolo – Foster, 2008, who studied Manager type necessary evils only). While this is valuable in some respects, it created problems in drawing conclusions about what dimensions of the necessary evil scenario contributed to observed variation in outcomes. Two different models were identified by Study 2, thus implying that people respond differently to different types of necessary evils; however, because the scenarios were not systematically manipulated, the study did not allow conclusions to be drawn about what specific variations between the vignettes contributed to variation in responses. For example, one explanation is that
the role of the target in bringing about the necessary evil is significant. In both the Ticket and Warrant vignettes the target of the harm was responsible for bringing the necessary evil upon themselves by breaking some sort of rule or law; in contrast, in the Account scenario the target has clearly committed no crime and has not done anything overt to bring about the necessary evil situation. An alternative explanation is that the potential harm that could come from the Warrant and Ticket scenarios is perceived to be greater in magnitude or salience than that of the account (or vice versa); likewise the magnitude or salience of the benefit being greater in one type of scenario as compared to the others might also explain outcomes. Alternatively, the type of justification or legitimizing information available to participants may be the reason for two different models emerging; in the Warrant and Ticket scenarios legal justification could be used as the target in both vignettes had broken some sort of rule or agreement, while in the Account scenario there was no evidence that a rule or law had been broken by the target. Or each of the explanations might have some merit as all these aspects of the context play a role. We cannot know for sure based on the current study design.

Finally, the generalizability to real life necessary evil experiences of Study 2 findings is questionable. The use of scenario research allowed for exploration of this difficult-to-study phenomenon in a laboratory setting; however, there are classic limitations associated with the use of such research methods. For example, there is the problem of desirability bias if participants perceive that there is a ‘right’ answer that will support the study outcome that the researcher is hoping to find. Also, self report data is prone to other types of participant bias that may result in questionable validity and reliability.

**General concluding comments**

The two studies comprising this dissertation broaden our understanding of the complex and difficult task of performing necessary evils at work and make a key contribution to the literature on ethical orientation and decision making. Study 1 provides rich, context specific information that is useful for understanding the experience of individuals who perform necessary evils. Themes emerging from the analysis both support prior theorizing about the necessary evil construct and offer insight into previously unanticipated aspects of how these situations are dealt with. For example, it is hoped that Study 1 findings regarding differences in the point at which dimensions of necessary evil are evaluated and at what point internal drama might come into
play for performers will spark the interest of necessary evil researchers interested in further theorizing models of necessary evil. It seems that the model proposed by Molinsky and Margolis (2005) that theorizes the decision to perform and interpersonal sensitivity as outcomes dependent on evaluation of the dimensions, psychological states and internal drama may not readily apply to necessary evils which require a worker to ‘act now and think later’, such as those experienced by police officers, lawyers, and doctors. Study 1 also offered important insight into how and when aspects of harm and benefit become salient throughout the course of performing a necessary evil for different occupational groups.

Study 2 supported Study 1 findings that indicate varying behaviour in response to different types of necessary evils. Furthermore, because this is a within subjects design Study 2 suggests that differences observed between occupational groups are more likely a result of the type of necessary evil commonly encountered than due to differences in the type of person who chooses to become a police officer versus those who become a manager. It is hoped that future research on necessary evils will further analyze whether this is indeed the case.
References


Appendices

Necessary Evil Interview Guide – Study 1

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study of necessary evils in the workplace. Your views on this subject are greatly appreciated and valuable for understanding this important topic. The interview should last approximately 45 minutes and will be conducted by Nancy Carter, a Ph.D. student at University of Toronto. Following are the interview questions that you will be asked by the researcher. Please be advised that the interviewer may ask additional questions as necessary. Your responses are both anonymous and confidential; your name and other identifying information will not be associated with your responses. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Nancy Carter at 416.944.0983, Nancy.Carter04@rotman.utoronto.ca.

1. How long have you been with your current employer?

2. What is your position with the company?

3. How long have you been in that position?

I’m now going to read you a definition of necessary evil as it pertains to work:

Necessary evil in the workplace refers to work related tasks in which an individual must, as part of his or her job, perform an act that causes emotional or physical harm to another human being in the service of achieving some perceived greater good or purpose.

4. In your opinion, does your job require that you perform necessary evils?

5. If so, what necessary evil(s) do you perform as part of your job (in general)? Please elaborate on the task(s) itself and why you feel that it constitutes a necessary evil.

6. How frequently are you faced with necessary evils in your workplace?

7. What issues are salient to you when you’re faced with a necessary evil task? (probe about whether you will be more focused on the harm or the benefit)

8. How do you feel when you are faced with these sorts of difficult issues?
The next four questions will ask about specific feelings you may or may not experience when faced with performing a necessary evil. Please respond to these questions based on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 indicates that you do not experience this feeling at all and 7 indicates that you experience this feeling a great deal.

9. To what extent do you feel guilty about performing necessary evils?

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<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
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10. To what extent do you feel sympathy towards the person being harmed?

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<th>7</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

11. To what extent do you feel that performing a necessary evil taxes your cognitive resources?

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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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12. To what extent do you experience performance anxiety (anxiety about how you are performing your job/task, similar to stage fright) when you are faced with a necessary evil?

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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

13. How do you approach this type of situation? In other words, take me through what you do to deal with the necessary evil and any related feelings you experience.

14. Are there policies, resources, and/or support systems put forth by your organization to aid you when performing necessary evils? If so, please explain what they are and how helpful
they are; if not, can you think of any policies, resources or support systems that you would like to have in place to assist in such tasks? (Please explain)

15. When you are faced with a necessary evil, do you feel you are more focused on the task itself, the final outcome of the necessary evil, or both the task and the outcome equally?

16. How does facing a necessary evil affect other aspects of your work including before the necessary evil is performed, during the time you are addressing the necessary evil and after it has been completed?

17. Based both on the definition I have provided to you, and your own personal experience of these sorts of tasks, do you feel that necessary evils contain an ethical component? In other words, do you feel that being faced with a necessary evil is in any way like being faced with a moral or ethical dilemma or issue?

18. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about this topic and your experience with performing tasks of necessary evil?

Thank you for your participation
Detailed factor analyses of internal drama variables

Preliminary investigation of the data indicated the four internal drama variables identified by Molinsky and Margolis’ (2005) suggested two distinct factors of internal drama when global scores for these variables were factor analyzed. Essentially, factor analysis revealed that the global scores for the guilt and sympathy variables loaded on one factor while global scores for cognitive load and performance anxiety loaded on a second factor. Knowing this, it was deemed prudent to conduct factor analysis on the internal drama variables for each vignette as well. Coefficient alphas for each of the internal drama variables are presented followed by findings of the factor analyses for each scenario. The factor analyses were conducted using the maximum likelihood extraction method and direct oblimin rotation. Factor analyses were run first allowing SPSS to suggest the number of factors based on eigenvalues greater than one, and then with a forced two factor structure based on findings of the preliminary analyses of global variables of internal drama. The pattern matrix was used for interpretation of the data. There is debate in the literature regarding whether the structural matrix or pattern matrix should be used for interpreting factor analysis, with sound arguments for both approaches to analysis. The present research uses the pattern matrix based on a position presented by Pett, Lackey & Sullivan (2003). Their position is that “because the factor structure matrix does not control for correlations among the factors in an oblique rotation, it is more difficult to use the factor structure matrix to determine which items load uniquely on each factor; therefore, the factor pattern matrix should be the focus of factor interpretation, especially when the factors are highly correlated” (p.152)

**Factor analysis of Ticket vignette**

Coefficient alphas for the internal drama variables for the Ticket vignette are presented in Table 23; All alpha levels exceeded the commonly accepted .70 or greater cut off point for Chronbach’s Alpha.

**Table 23 Reliability of internal drama variables for the Ticket vignette**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Chronbach’s alpha</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>.751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td>.783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>.724</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Load Performance Anxiety .899

For the Ticket vignette, allowing SPSS to suggest the appropriate number of factors based on eigenvalues greater than one produced a 3-factor solution. It has been suggested that relying on this method to decide on the appropriate number of factors to be retained may be unreliable and that instead, factors should be retained based on the extent to which the factors have item loadings that are above .30, indicate few cross – loadings, and with no factor having less than three items (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The second factor of the three factor structure had only two factor loadings (the two sympathy items) and three cross loadings. The forced two factor structure produced more favourable results in that each factor had more than three loadings, however, the number of cross-loaded items remained the same. The items and factor loadings are presented in the pattern matrix table below, followed by the correlation matrix.

Table 24 Pattern matrix for forced two-factor solution of internal drama variables - Ticket vignette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would feel good about myself and what I had done (G1)</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This action would be something I would deeply regret (G2)</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This situation would be easy to deal with (G3)</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>.695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dealing with this would leave me calm and worry free (G4)</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td>.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not feel particularly guilty about this (G5)</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't feel much sympathy at all for the target (S1)</td>
<td>-.170</td>
<td>.543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel very badly for the target (S2)</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would have to think hard about going through with this (CL1)</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td>.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had to think hard to explain how I made the decisions to act (CL2)</td>
<td>.395</td>
<td>.315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be nervous about whether my performance was good enough (PA1)</td>
<td>.786</td>
<td>-.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be overwhelmed by thoughts of doing poorly (PA2)</td>
<td>.863</td>
<td>-.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would worry that my job performance would be low (PA3)</td>
<td>.838</td>
<td>-.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be so troubled by thoughts of doing poorly that my performance would be reduced (PA4)</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would worry about what would happen if I don't perform well (PA5)</td>
<td>.715</td>
<td>-.078</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
I would worry about whether I was a good person for the job (PA6)  

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.  
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
a.  Rotation converged in 5 iterations.  
b.  G = guilt; S = sympathy; CL = cognitive load; PA = performance anxiety; number indicates scale item number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Correlation Matrix</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

The factor analysis indicates that internal drama variables fit a two factor structure with the first factor comprised of the performance anxiety items and the second factor comprised of the items from guilt and sympathy. The cognitive load items do not load well on either factor. Cognitive load can be a difficult construct to measure. The attempt to measure this construct using two items which asked participants to self report on the difficulty they experienced in making a decision may not have been successful. As such, the cognitive load variable will not be used in developing a model of necessary evil for this scenario. Internal drama will be represented in the proposed model by two variables: 1) Emotional Anxiety - a variable that combines the guilt and sympathy items that load onto the second factor, and 2) Performance Anxiety as measured by the six items that load on the first factor.

Factor analysis of the Account Vignette

Coefficient alphas for the internal drama variables for the Account vignette are presented in Table 25; All alpha levels well exceeded the commonly accepted .70 or greater cut off point for Chronbach’s Alpha.
For the Account vignette, allowing SPSS to suggest the appropriate number of factors based on eigenvalues greater than one produced a 2-factor solution. As noted previously, factors should be retained based on the extent to which the factors have item loadings are above .30, with few cross – loadings, and no factor having less than three items (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Based on these criteria the two-factor structure for the internal drama variables of the Account vignette will be retained. Interestingly, cognitive load loaded well on the same factor as guilt and sympathy for this vignette. This was unanticipated as when global factor analysis was conducted during preliminary analyses cognitive load was found to load on the same factor as performance anxiety rather than those identified as emotional anxiety. One possible explanation for this finding is that the emotional anxiety experienced in this vignette is more extreme than in other vignettes, thus resulting in cognitive load being driven by extreme levels of guilt and sympathy. This explanation seems reasonable given the fact that unlike the other vignettes presented in this research, the Account vignette presents a necessary evil scenario where the target of the necessary evil has no involvement in bringing the situation to being. In other vignettes where the target plays a role in bringing about the necessary evil, cognitive load may be primarily a result of anxiety associated with carrying out a work task that is difficult rather than on the emotional anxiety resulting from experienced guilt and sympathy. This explanation is supported further by looking at the loadings for cognitive load for the Ticket vignette; although the items do not clearly load on one factor or the other, the stronger loading is on the performance anxiety factor. For the Warrant vignette we see that the first cognitive load item loads more strongly on the emotional anxiety factor and the second item loads more strongly on the performance anxiety factor. Essentially, the measure of cognitive load for the other two vignettes were generally interpretable, but for the Account vignette factor analysis indicates this variable is measuring in part the emotional anxiety associated with the necessary evil. The reliability score for cognitive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Chronbach’s alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>.908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td>.807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Load</td>
<td>.903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Anxiety</td>
<td>.959</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 25 Reliabilities of internal drama variables - Account vignette
load was also substantially higher for the Account vignette, further supporting the retention of this variable for analysis of this particular vignette.

The items and factor loadings for the two factor solution for the Account vignette are presented in Table 26 below, followed by the correlation matrix.

Table 26 Pattern matrix for two-factor solution of internal drama variables factor analysis - Account vignette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would feel good about myself and what I had done (G1)</td>
<td>-.124</td>
<td>.799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This action would be something I’d deeply regret (G2)</td>
<td>.396</td>
<td>.490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This would be very easy to deal with (G3)</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dealing with this would leave me feeling calm and worry free (G4)</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not feel particularly guilty about this (G5)</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't feel much sympathy at all for the target (S1)</td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel very badly for the target (S2)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would have to think very hard about going through with this (CL1)</td>
<td>.332</td>
<td>.591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had to think hard to explain how I made the decision to act (CL2)</td>
<td>.343</td>
<td>.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be nervous about whether my performance was good enough (PA1)</td>
<td>.755</td>
<td>.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be overwhelmed by thoughts of doing poorly (PA2)</td>
<td>.944</td>
<td>-.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would worry that my job performance would be low (PA3)</td>
<td>.996</td>
<td>-.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be so troubled by thoughts of doing poorly my performance would be reduced (PA4)</td>
<td>.923</td>
<td>-.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would worry about what will happen if I don't perform well (PA5)</td>
<td>.864</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would worry about whether I was a good person for the job (PA6)</td>
<td>.729</td>
<td>.150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.
b. G = guilt; S = sympathy; CL = cognitive load; PA = performance anxiety; number indicates scale item number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.581</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
The factor analysis indicates that internal drama variables for the Account vignette fit a two-factor structure with the first factor comprised of the performance anxiety items and the second factor comprised of the items for guilt, sympathy and cognitive load. As such, internal drama will also be represented in the proposed Account model by two variables: 1) Emotional Anxiety that combines the guilt, sympathy, and cognitive load items that load on the second factor, and 2) Performance Anxiety as measured by the six items that load on the first factor.

**Factor Analysis of the Warrant Vignette**

Coefficient alphas for the internal drama variables for the Warrant vignette are presented in Table 27; All alpha levels exceeded the commonly accepted .70 or greater cut off point for Chronbach’s Alpha.

**Table 27 Reliabilities for internal drama variables - Warrant vignette**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Chronbach’s alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td>.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Load</td>
<td>.716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Anxiety</td>
<td>.862</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the Warrant vignette, allowing SPSS to suggest the appropriate number of factors based on eigenvalues greater than one produced a 3-factor solution. As noted previously, it has been suggested that relying on this method to decide on the appropriate number of factors to be retained may be unreliable and that instead, factors should be retained based on the extent to which the factors have item loadings are above .30, few cross – loadings, and no factor has less than three items (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The third factor of the three factor structure had only two factor loadings (as with the Ticket vignette, the two sympathy items) and three cross loadings. As with the Ticket vignette, the forced two factor structure produced more favourable results in that each factor had more than three loadings, however, the number of cross-loaded items remained the same.

The items and factor loadings are presented in the pattern matrix table below, followed by the correlation matrix.
Table 28 Pattern matrix of forced two-factor solution for factor analysis - Warrant vignette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I would feel good about myself and what I had done (G1)</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This action would be something I would deeply regret (G2)</td>
<td>.412</td>
<td>.306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This would be very easy to deal with (G3)</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This would leave me feeling calm and worry free (G4)</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not feel particularly guilty about this (G5)</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t feel much sympathy at all for the target (S1)</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel very badly for the target (S2)</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would have to think hard about going through with this (CL1)</td>
<td>.421</td>
<td>.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had to think hard to explain how I made the decision to act (CL2)</td>
<td>.492</td>
<td>.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be nervous about whether my performance was good enough (PA1)</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be overwhelmed by thoughts of doing poorly (PA2)</td>
<td>.828</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would worry that my job performance would be low (PA3)</td>
<td>.829</td>
<td>.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be so troubled by thoughts of doing poorly that my performance would be reduced (PA4)</td>
<td>.795</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would worry about what will happen if I don’t perform well (PA5)</td>
<td>.591</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would worry about whether I was a good person for the job (PA6)</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.
b. G = guilt; S = sympathy; CL = cognitive load; PA = performance anxiety; number indicates scale item number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Correlation Matrix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The factor loadings for the Warrant vignette mirrored those of the Ticket vignette; Factor 1 was comprised of the performance anxiety items and Factor 2 was comprised of the guilt and sympathy items. Again cognitive load did not load well on either factor and will not be used in the analysis. Models proposed for the Warrant vignette will include two variables to represent internal drama: 1) Performance Anxiety as measured by the six items that load on the first factor, and 2) an Emotional Anxiety variable that combines the guilt and sympathy items that load on the second factor.

The preceding analysis was meant to investigate whether the two factor structure identified by preliminary data analysis of global internal drama variables was relevant for the individual vignettes as well. The factor analyses carried out on each vignette indicates a two-factor solution as appropriate for each vignette. As such, the models proposed for hypothesis testing below operationalize internal drama as two variables – emotional anxiety and performance anxiety. All hypotheses relating to internal drama remain the same despite this re-formulation in operationalization of the variables composing the internal drama construct.
Four vignettes

Account vignette

You are an advertising manager at a local newspaper with eight staff members that report
directly to you. You are responsible for managing these individuals as they handle the
advertising accounts for the newspaper’s wealthiest and most loyal sponsors. Three weeks ago
you received an e-mail complaint from Peter Fawn, who represents a long time client called
Avalon Electronics, about the service he has received from one of your workers. He claims that
Chris Parsons has been rude to him and has not responded to phone calls. This complaint
surprised you as Chris is an excellent worker who has only recently taken over Peter’s account,
which you assigned to him because the client is very important and prestigious. Furthermore,
handling this account would provide Chris with the means to set himself up for promotion -
something you feel he well deserves after 10 years of excellent service to the paper.

You questioned Chris on this, and he assured you that he’d done nothing wrong and you should
check the quality assurance recordings to hear how polite and professional he’s been. He showed
you the e-mail correspondence he had sent to Avalon Electronics each time they contacted him.
He explained that he thinks that Peter is just grumpy because he liked flirting with Hilary, the
agent who held the account before Chris had taken over. When you listened to the recordings of
Chris and Peter’s calls you found he had performed perfectly within guidelines and was
respectful of the client at all times. You responded to Avalon Electronics’ e-mail with a phone
call to Peter Fawn. You told him then that you had talked with Chris who is one of your best
workers and you assured him that Chris has Avalon Electronics’ best interest in mind. Peter was
quiet and did not say much during the phone call.

Today you received a phone call from an angry Peter Fawn who said he wants to work with
another agent within the department because he can no longer work with Chris. Peter was very
serious when he then told you that if you do not comply with this request, he will not be
advertising in your paper any longer. Peter suggested that he would like to work with Natasha
who he’d worked with in the past. You have no doubt that Natasha could handle the account and
it is clear that you will have to give her the account to keep the customer happy. However, you
know that taking this account from Chris is going to be crushing as he knows working with this
client will allow him to advance in his career. Furthermore, you feel that Chris does not deserve to have the account taken from him as he has done nothing wrong. You are now faced with deciding what you will do: re-assign the account to Natasha or risk losing Avalon Electronics’ business.

**Inflatable vignette**

As captain of a U. S. Coast Guard cutter, you are charged with patrolling the Mona Passage separating Puerto Rico from the Dominican Republic. Although not Hispanic, you and your partner are very fond of the warm, family-based culture you’ve found in San Juan, where you live.

While on patrol one day with your crew — many of whom are of Puerto Rican descent — an Immigration and Naturalization Service plane radioed a request that your cutter intercept a small boat crossing toward a deserted section of the Puerto Rican coast. You are not surprised. The passage, separating United States territory from an economically depressed nation, is a favoured crossing-point for refugees, drug-runners, and would-be illegal aliens.

Making for the boat, you can see that it is filled to the gunwales — not with terrorists or dealers, but with grandparents and infants. It is heading toward an isolated beach filled with brightly dressed people holding welcoming banners and carrying picnic hampers.

These are families seeking to reunite with their elderly and young. Knowing their keen sense of family, you find your heart going out to them. Yet your constitutional duty is clear: It is your job to prevent individuals from entering the United States illegally by stopping them and returning them to the Dominican Republic.

As you and your crew close in, the boat crosses a sand bar too shallow for the cutter. You do, however, have an outboard-powered inflatable on board that might stand a chance of catching the small boat. You are now faced with a decision: Should you launch the inflatable or turn away, citing the sand bar as the final impediment to the capture?

**Ticket vignette**

You are a police officer and are conducting traffic control on a Wednesday evening. You’re patrolling a highway and pull over a car travelling at 20Km over the posted speed limit. As you
approach the car you notice that it’s rather old and a taillight is missing. You also see that there are three children in the backseat, a middle aged man is driving, and a middle aged woman is in the passenger seat.

You ask the driver for his licence and registration and ask him if he is aware that he was speeding. The driver apologizes and says that he and his family were having an excited conversation about what they would order at the family restaurant where they are headed for dinner to celebrate the middle child’s 7th birthday.

From looking at the man’s driver’s licence, and the condition of the car you can tell that the $140.00 ticket and demerit points that he could be fined as a result of you issuing a speeding ticket will likely cause a fairly significant financial struggle for the family. However, last month your sergeant had warned you that your numbers were down in terms of the number of speeding tickets you’ve been issuing, and told you that this month your tickets would need to at least meet status quo, or you would face disciplinary action (which could include anything from a lengthy period of desk duty to a suspension or fine); it’s only three days until the end of the month and you know that you are getting close to the goal, but you are still a little ways off. You know that to avoid disciplinary action you need to issue this ticket. Further, you know that driving at such a speed puts the family in some considerable danger on the roads and could be a threat to other drivers. Now you have a decision to make, will you or will you not issue a ticket to the driver?

**Warrant vignette**

You are a case worker for the Metro City Bail Program. This program is aimed at helping people who have been arrested meet bail requirements. The clients of this program are individuals who have been granted bail by the courts but do not have the funds necessary to post bail and have no one who is able to do so, on their behalf. The program acts a surety (meaning it is responsible for insuring that the individual meets the terms of his or her bail conditions) for its clients. Common conditions of clients’ bail release are things like attending addictions programming (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous - AA) or other programming (e.g., anger management), refraining from contact with individuals associated with the crime of which they are accused (e.g., accomplices, victims) and securing employment and safe living conditions. Clients are required to report to your offices anywhere from one to three times weekly.
Michael Lear, one of your clients, is a 46 year old male who is shy, quiet, and suffers from anxiety issues. He was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol and is scheduled to appear in court in three weeks. He was released to the bail program the day after his arrest, and was very grateful for your services as he is very fearful of going to prison and promised he would do anything to avoid it. Conditions of his bail include not driving, not consuming alcohol or entering premises where alcohol is sold, attending AA meetings, and searching for employment. He has been on your case load for one week and has so far been compliant with all the bail terms. Today he has come to your office to check in as required but you observe a strong smell of alcohol on his breath and slurred speech. Clearly, Michael has been drinking. You ask whether he’s been drinking and he denies it. You tell him that you think he is lying and finally, he admits today is his birthday and one of his friends showed up at his house that morning with a bottle of liquor and he had several drinks before coming to your office. He apologizes and promises it will not happen again, and begs that you give him another chance and not send him to prison. He has been attending a local AA chapter since becoming a client of yours and says he plans to attend again tomorrow. You talked to his AA sponsor last week and he says Michael is doing ok, but is struggling with the first steps in overcoming the addiction he has to alcohol.

The mandate of the bail order and your duty as a bail officer is clear: if any bail conditions are violated, you are to sign an arrest warrant. That being said, you are familiar with the fact that addiction to alcohol can be extremely difficult to overcome and slip-ups are common during treatment. Furthermore, you know signing a warrant for his arrest means Michael will be sent to prison until his hearing, where his anxiety issues are likely to be exasperated by the harsh environment. What will you do?