Moral Intelligence – A Framework for Understanding Moral Competences

Carmen Tanner, Markus Christen

While virtues, moral values and concerns have always been an inherent theme of philosophy, moral concerns in society appear to pace up and down. Mostly, there are particular events (such as military interventions, terror attacks, natural catastrophes, business scandals) or the development of new methods and technologies (such as cloning, stem cell research, biotechnology) that lead to publicly recognized moral crises or moral hazards. As such, they can induce "moral revolutions" that result in changes in social practices (as e.g., the abolition of Atlantic slavery; Appiah 2010). No doubt, what has given rise to a new wave of moral crisis more recently are the corporate ethical scandals and the financial crisis that have shocked the business world. Business practices are again heavily scrutinzed and many people are asking what can be done to promote moral behavior and to prevent similar transgressions in the future.

When discussing interventions, promoters of moral change typically refer to the content of moral standards or values. They often advertise new moral guidelines, codes of conduct or a set of virtues that individuals (e.g., business leaders) or institutions should adopt to enhance moral behavior. Indeed, moral change sometimes simply results from a change in the meaning of behaviors or practices during history. Some practices that were non-moral became heavily moralized (as with the example of slavery, Appiah 2010), whereas other behaviors that were considered "bad" lost their moral blemish (e.g., homosexuality). Some authors also argue that expanding the "moral circle" (Lecky 1869), i.e., the domain of entities or creatures that should be valued and become subject to moral consideration, is a prerequisite of moral progress (Singer 1981).

Such content-based approaches that rely on the semantics of moral terms rarely suffice to explain or to encourage moral transitions. Changes do not just require new moral content, they

also require agents who are skilled in how to deal with moral issues, once identified, and how to turn moral standards into actions. Of course, individuals are embedded in complex socio-cultural structures which facilitate or inhibit some developments. But humans are neither totally autonomous, nor passive in responding to the environment (Bandura 1991). They are active moral agents endowed with some capacity to control themselves and the environment. Scholars and practitioners alike have therefore agreed on the view that improvements in the propensities and abilities of moral agents to cope with moral contents are crucial in fostering moral transitions (Dane & Pratt 2007; Narvaez 2005; Pederson 2009; Reynolds 2006, Treviño & Brown 2004). Hence, efforts to which abilities are important and how to explain and measure individual differences in those abilities are essential.

Drawing from current literature and research, one goal of the present work is to specify the abilities that facilitate moral functioning. In doing this, we refer to the concept of Moral Intelligence. Moral Intelligence (MI) refers to the agent's capacity to process and manage moral problems. To our knowledge, Lennick and Kiel (2005) were the first to introduce this term. They referred to the business world and, based on case studies, concluded that mere strategic thinking is not sufficient for being a successful business leader. In addition, even though researchers and practitioners alike recognized in the past emotional intelligence as an encompassing, useful and advantageous capability, MI puts an emphasis on moral skills and heralds the examination of a new facet of intelligence. Recent approaches have provided compelling arguments that moral agents do require several abilities, but the approaches differ in terms of which skills and subskills are considered as relevant (Lennick & Kiel 2005; Luijk & Dubbink 2011; Narvaez 2010a; Rest 1996). Building on this work and our own perspectives, we will highlight a small but essential set of moral abilities.

In this chapter, we put forth a theoretical framework of MI that integrates moral decision-making with concepts and topics of social cognition and self-regulation theory. We start our work with defining MI and then present a moral process model that provides the foundation of the MI framework. Afterward, we introduce the elements and moral competences that we deem as essential for moral agents. Finally, we briefly present some ideas for how to enhance MI.

1. Defining Moral Intelligence

We define Moral Intelligence as the capability to process moral information and to manage self-regulation in any way that desirable moral ends can be attained. Our picture of a morally intelligent person is someone who is endowed with a desire to strive for moral goals and to use moral principles and self-regulatory skills to do what is good for society, other human or nonhuman beings, as a matter or practice. This definition expands Lennick and Kiel's (2005) initial conception, according to which MI refers to the capacity to apply universal moral standards to one's values, goals and actions. Despite Lennick and Kiel's seminal effort in stimulating attention to MI, their framework does not specify underlying processes and mechanism. If we want to understand, teach and encourage MI, we need an understanding of the basic mechanism involved in moral functioning.

To explore MI, we suggest making use of social cognition and self-regulation theory, which provide a theoretical basis for understanding individual differences in moral decision-making and conduct. Social cognitive theory adopts an interactions view of moral phenomena, whereby personal and environmental factors operate interactively in determining behavior (Bandura 1991). In addition, it acknowledges that human information processing is highly flexible and can be based on automatic and/or deliberative processing (e.g., Chaiken & Trope 1999; Epstein 1991; Sloman 2002). Self-regulation perspectives provide means of acknowledging that moral conduct is motivated and regulated by self-regulatory mechanisms, which are closely intertwined with cognitive and affective processes.

Although not stated explicitly, Lennick and Kiel's interest seems to be primarily focused on actions such as whether leaders are able to align their actions with moral beliefs; more specifically, whether they exhibit integrity, responsibility, compassion and forgiveness. Putting moral values into action is certainly one important skill. Yet, research and daily experiences alike suggest that more aspects have to be taken into account. Before acting on what is right, agents have first to recognize that a moral issue is at stake when it arises, and then to decide which course of action may be right (Narvaez 2005; Rest 1986; Reynolds 2008; Treviño & Brown 2004). Given that moral problems are often complex and involve conflicting values, identifying the best moral option is often far from simple (Treviño & Brown 2004). Apparently, individuals vary in their attentiveness to moral matters (Reynolds 2008) and in their rea-

soning and problem solving capacities. Thus, a MI framework should account for a more complete set of moral abilities.

Several researchers have proposed that individuals are agentic operators (moral agents) in their moral life course (e.g., Bandura,1991). Moral agency is based on multiple abilities, which have an evolutionary basis, but develop with individual and cultural experiences (Chambers 2011; Narvaez 2010b; Nichols 2004; Prinz 2007; Rest 1986; see also part II in this volume). A rich and detailed approach of moral expertise development has been provided by Narvaez (2005) that is grounded on Rest's (1986) multi-stage model of moral decision making. Narvaez suggests that moral agents need to develop distinct competences in moral sensitivity (paying attention to moral issues and being responsive to other needs), moral judgment (being skilled at moral reasoning and selecting which actions are most moral), moral motivation (prioritizing moral values and goals over other goals) and moral action (implementing behavior). A critical part of our model, which is clearly related to the framework set forth by Narvaez, is the idea that moral commitment is the central competence. It is governed by an appraisal of moral standards and values and affects all other stages.

In addition, our approach highlights the importance of agents referring to some (pre-established or newly constructed) moral standards, based upon which events or options can be evaluated and behavior regulated (Carver & Scheier 1990; Lennick & Kiel 2005). Such comparison processes between current states ("what is") and desired states ("what should be") are built in psychological mechanism and involved in each of the proposed competences. Along with Lennick and Kiel, we will call this moral reference system the moral compass. We view the moral compass as an important element of MI—not in the sense that a *specific* set of norms and values is required to be morally intelligent, but in the sense that a moral agent needs to have *some* moral standards available and accessible. Overall, building on previous work and our own perspectives, our MI framework will consist of the following five competences.

(1) *Moral Compass:* The reference system containing one's (either existing or newly formulated) moral standards, values or convictions which provide the basis for moral evaluation and regulation.
(2) *Moral Commitment:* The willigness and ability to prioritze and strive for moral goals.
(3) *Moral Sensitivity:* The ability to recognize and identify a moral issue.

(4) *Moral Problem Solving:* The ability to develop and determine a morally satisfactory course of action that resolves conflicting tendencies.
(5) *Moral Assertiveness:* The ability to build up moral behaviors by acting consistently and courageously upon moral standards, despite barriers.

Our main goal is to set forth essential moral competences. Here, we refrain, however, from taking a position on which specific moral norms, values, judgments and actions are normatively right or wrong in a defined context. For the following considerations, we define "morality" very broadly as a set of norms, principles, values, and virtues that are governed by an orientation towards the good. As such, they reflect a respect and concern for oneself and for other entities (persons, animals, environment) and are embedded in a justification structure. We are aware that understanding ones moral decision-making and behavior requires an analysis of the agent's lay understanding of morality and on what he or she considers as right or wrong. Yet, we do not mean to suggest that grounding moral intelligence in moral psychology makes normative reflection redundant. On the contrary, moral agents can and do use reflective, deliberate analysis for justifying which moral standards and judgments can reach normative authority (Kennett & Fine 2008). Deliberative reasoning is one element that is involved in constructing the moral compass of an agent, although not the only one.

2. Basic Mechanisms of Moral Functioning

2.1. Multi-Stage Model of Moral Decision Making

Contemporary models of moral decision-making reflect Rest's (1986) multi-stage model, whereby individuals move through a series of four interrelated steps: recognition of the moral issue (moral awareness), making a judgment (moral judgment), establishing an intention to act (moral motivation), and finally engaging in behavior (moral action). Moral motivation—described as reflecting a person's degree of commitment to take out a moral course of action—has been shown to mediate between moral choice and action (Blasi 1980; Hardy & Carlo 2005) which might explain why research has found only disappointing correspondence between moral judgment and behavior.

This view, however, has two essential limitations. First, to the extent that moral motivation is equated with setting up an intention to act, which is usually grounded on deliberate, conscious processes, this perspective does not adress the possibility that morality can be based on intuitive judgments and routinized responses to particular situations, rather than on thoughtful reasoning (Haidt 2001). As Blasi posited, moral desires can sometimes be so strong that moral actions follow from a "kind of spontaneous necessity" (Blasi 2005: 85). That is, the distinction between both judgment and motivation or motivation and behavior is often blurred. Second, positioning moral motivation only between choice and behavior, neglects the possible impetus of motivation on the other stages. Yet, moral desire may not only serve as a driving force for moral action, but is also likely to affect (consciously or non-consciously) moral perception and moral choice. More precisely, we expect individuals with a strong moral motivation also to be more attentive to moral topics (aspect which refers to moral perception), to be more likely to engage in reflection and to prioritize moral values when faced with conflicts (aspects which refer to moral decision-making), or to act persistently and courageous (aspects which refer to moral action).

We therefore advocate a model of moral functioning that differs from previous accounts by suggesting that moral motivation is an overarching component (see Figure 1).[1] By moral motivation, we generally mean the desire to bring current state of affairs into line with some valued moral standpoints. This view, with motivation linked to all three other components, acknowledges that attempts to meet moral goals do apply to overt behavior as well as to moral perception and judgment and that the related processes in each step can both be controlled or automatic. Because motivation works through its use of norms or values, it is also closely tied to the moral reference system (moral compass) which serves to direct our responses.

[1] We add at this point, that this construction is also more in line with the philosophical discussion with respect to moral externalism and internalism (Brink 1997; Simpson 1999)—i.e. the question whether a specific judgment, in order to be called a "moral judgment", motivates the corresponding action *necessarily* or only *contingently*. In our model, motivation moderates between the content (of the moral compass) and the three stages that turn a specified moral stimulus into a moral behavior and therefore demonstrates a close connection between a moral term and its motivational force, *whenever* the term may play a role in moral behavior. The model is neutral towards the conceptual question with respect to internalism and externalism in moral philosophy, but it takes into account that, from a psychological point of view, it makes sense to specify motivation as a distinct component in moral behavior that, however, has a distinguished role compared to the other components.

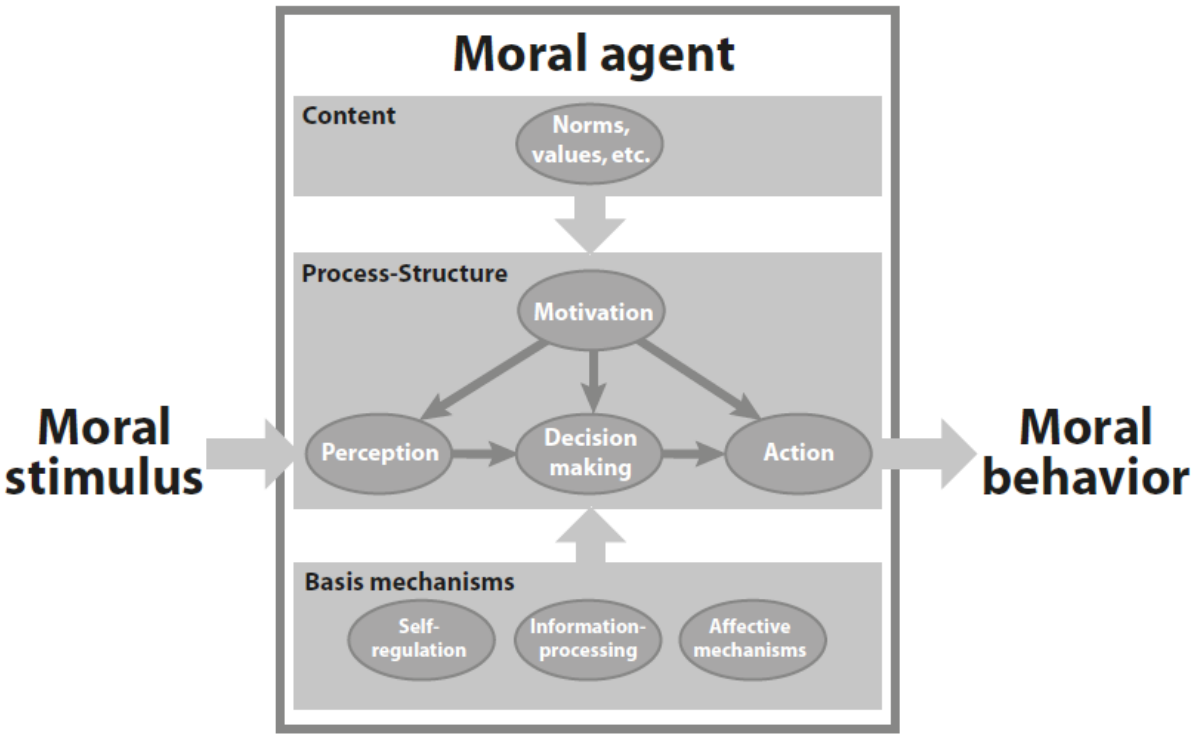

Figure 1: Overview of the of moral functioning and the influence of content and basic psychological mechanisms

2.2. Basic Mechanisms

Our theoretical model is grounded in self-regulation and social cognition theory which provides a basis for understanding individual differences in MI (Bandura 1991; Reynolds 2008). We briefly sketch the elementary concepts and mechanisms (see also Figure 1).

Self-regulation: A premise of our framework is that self-regulation is an important feature of moral agency (Bandura 1991; Baumeister 1998; Carver & Scheier 1981). Self-regulation is a highly adaptive process by which people control their attention, thoughts, feelings, impulses and performance so as to live up to social and moral standards in concert with situational factors (Baumeister et al. 2006).

Classic models consider self-regulation usually as a conscious and controlled process, whereby people typically monitor themselves and the environmental circumstances through a feedback loop. They compare and judge their actions in relation to their standards and goals. If they become aware of discrepancies between the current and desired end-states, they can then exert conscious self-control to reduce the discrepancies (Carver & Scheier 1981). In this cy-

bernetic system, emotions do also play a crucial role in that positive affect functions to sustain and negative affect functions to discourage specific goal strivings (Bandura 1991; Carver & Scheier 1990). Another prominent approach emphasizes the role of self-regulation to resist immediate temptations and undesired impulses (such as selfish tendencies) (Baumeister & Exline 1999). Since such forms of conscious self-control require mental resources, a state of mental fatigue or resource depletion can result in impaired self-control (Mead et al. 2009).

Although reflection and controlled processing play an important role in self-regulation, researchers have also started to emphasize that regulation also critically depends on non-conscious, automatic processes. It is argued that characteristics of the social environment can directly activate schemas and goals which in turn exert non-conscious effects on self-regulation (e.g., Fitzsimons & Bargh 2004). Repeated practice and goal pursuits are also likely to promote automatic self-regulation, while decreasing involvement of controlled processes. Fitzsimons and Bargh (2004: 152) propose that "due to the apparently quite limited capacity of conscious self-regulatory abilities…much of self regulation has to occur nonconsciously to be successful". Our framework advocated in this chapter sympathizes with this view that moral self-regulation operations are governed both by automatic and controlled processes. While conscious moral self-regulation occurs through wilful application of moral standards to moral processing, automatic regulation occurs as a result of learned orientations and responses (see also Sekerka & Bagozzi 2007).

Information Processing Mechanism: This conception of self-regulation is closely related to dual process or dual system models that have been advanced in cognitive and social psychology to account for the fact that human information processing is highly flexible (for reviews see: Lapsley & Hill 2008; Smith & DeCoster 2000). Virtually all models assume two systems which work interactively (e.g., Chaiken 1980; Epstein 1991; Petty & Cacioppo 1986). The operations of System 1 are usually described as automatic, intuitive, implicit, fast, effortless, often emotionally charged, evolving from associative learning, and working on a preconscious level (Bargh 1997). This system has been referred to as performing pattern-matching and pattern-completion functions (Smith & DeCoster 2000; Reynolds 2006). The operations of System 2, in comparison, are usually described as deliberate, controlled, explicit, slow, effortful, based on propositional thinking, and conscious. It enables individuals to monitor the quality of mental operations and overt conduct and to engage in reflection, reasoning and conscious self-control.

Though most dual-process models assume that both systems interact, there is a rich literature indicating that the prevalence of automatic or controlled processes is affected by situational and personal factors (Chaiken 1980; Fazio 1990). For instance, research has shown that expenditure of cognitive effort is more likely under conditions of high personal accountability (i.e., conditions were people need to justify one's decisions and actions to others; Lerner & Tetlock 1999), or among people who enjoy to engage in effortful analytic activity (high in need for cognition; Cacioppo et al. 1996). Opposingly, in conditions of low accountability, lack of motivation for extended reflection or lack of situational opportunities (such as time pressure, high mental workload) individuals are more likely to foster spontaneous processing (Fazio 1990). Obviously, it is of paramount importance to take into account this variability in processing when examining moral functioning in professional settings and daily life to better understand and support moral functioning.

One important (personal) factor that is proposed to facilitate automatic processing has to do with the accessibility of moral concepts. As Kahneman (2003) asserted, a core feature of intuition is that moral concepts pop up very easily and effortlessly. In order to explain why some ideas come to mind more easily, while others demand work, some authors have adopted the term “accessibility” from memory and social cognition research (e.g., Higgins 1996). It is proposed that mental representations vary in their activation potential, i.e., in terms of how easily they can be activated. Once activated, they guide information processing and allow the individual to interpret situations through the lens of the activated elements. Particular mental representations, such as strong attitudes, deeply held values or principles, beliefs or traits which are central to one’s identity or culture, are said to be “chronically accessible” in that they become habitually activated (Higgins 1996). Consistent with other researchers in the moral domain, we conceive moral standards and values as moral schemas that vary in their accessibility (Jordan 2009; Lapsley & Narvaez 2004; Narvaez et al. 2006). Hence, chronic accessible moral schemas are considered to foster automatic moral self-regulation.

Affective Mechanisms: Automatic and deliberate processes go along with emotions which also affect self-regulation. Moral theory and research has traditionally focused on the conscious and deliberate aspects of moral judgment (e.g., Kohlberg 1969). Meanwhile, many authors assert that emotions are important cues that provide information and motivational resources for judgment and decision making (e.g., Loewenstein & Lerner 2003), moral regu-

lation (e.g. Bandura, 1991) and the development of moral functioning (Narvaez 2010b). For example, it has been argued that our emotions reflect an inherent "moral sense" (see the contribution of Prinz in this volume), or that moral judgments are sometimes influenced, if not dominated, by „gut feelings", which tell us that something is right or wrong (Monin et al. 2007; Wheatley & Haidt 2005;). That is, emotion or affect is seen to play role in the intuition process itself, resulting in affect-laden judgments (Epstein 1991; Haidt 2001).

Generally, emotions are expected to disrupt cognitive control and deliberative processes when their arousal level is high (Janis & Mann 1977; Luce et al. 1997). However, when emotions are on a moderate level, they are considered to serve informational and motivational functions. In terms of informational functions, emotions are considered to impact cognitive processing as they signal where to focus attention (Forgas 1995) or help to evaluate and select options, as they provide vital information about aspects of the current situation or about past experiences with similar situations (Damasio 1994; Schwarz & Clore 1983; Slovic et al. 2002).

As to the motivational functions, some approaches consider affective self-reactions in the form of anticipatory self-satisfaction (e.g., pride) or self-sanctions (e.g., guilt) to provide the mechanisms by which standards motivate and regulate moral conduct (Bandura 1991; Carver & Scheier 1990), and which reinforce people's commitment to moral values (Tangey 2007). According to Hoffman (2000), emotions transform abstract moral principles and „cool" reasons into hot cognitions, thereby energizing moral goals. Frank (1988) has argued that moral emotions (such as guilt, shame) work as "commitment devices" that help individuals to overcome immediate rewards in order to pursue long-term strategies.

3. The Framework of Moral Intelligence

We now turn to the prerequisties of MI. As depicted in Figure 2, we suggest that effective moral regulation depends on having a moral compass and a set of four specific moral abilities.

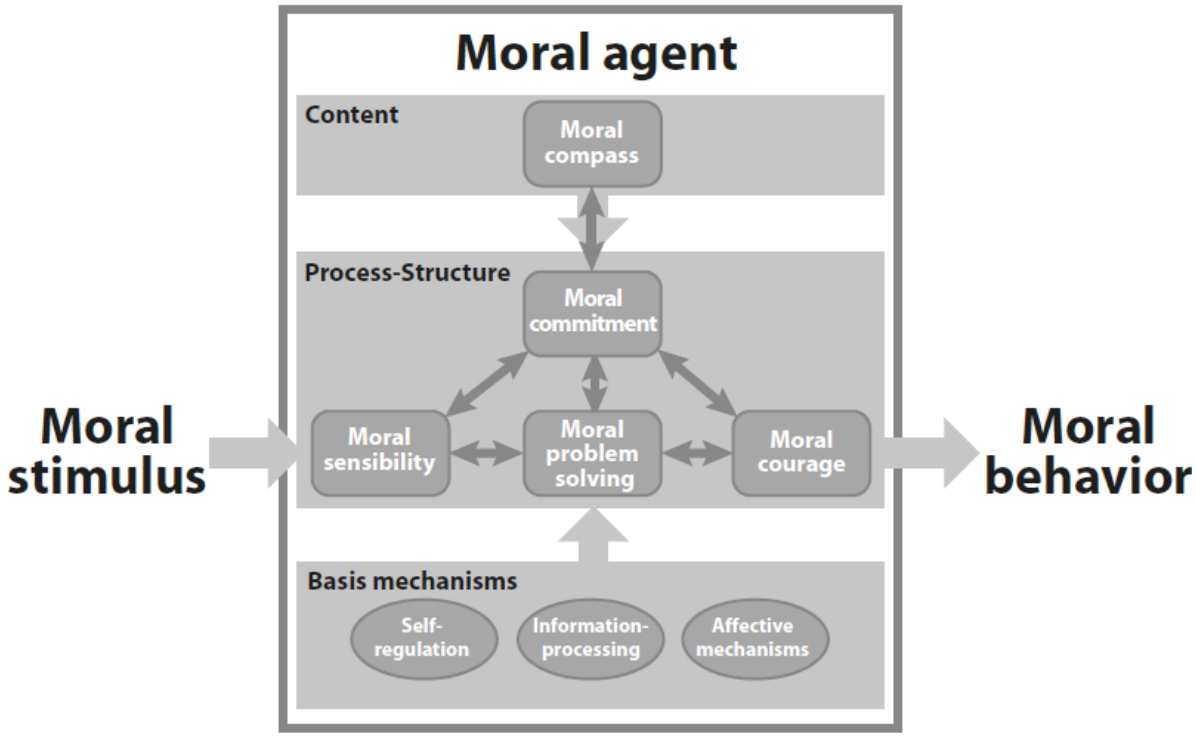

Figure 2: The five building blocks of moral intelligence in relation to the multi-stage model of moral functioning.

3.1. The Moral Compass

The first prerequisite of MI is to have—as Lennick and Kiel (2005) posited—a "navigation tool" or a "moral compass" for one's life. The moral compass refers to some pre-established or newly formulated moral standards and norms, which direct the agent's reactions. It serves as a reference, based upon which events, options and conduct are cognitively and affectively evaluated and regulated (Carver & Scheier 1981; Baumeister & Exline 1999), and it sets the occasion for affective self-reactive influences (Bandura 1991).

The content of the moral compass is multifaceted. Moral values, moral convictions, ethical principles, religious beliefs, personal goals, self-related beliefs as well as behavioral skripts, etc., form such ingredients. In the following, we will exemplify how elements (or a structurized set of elements) of the moral compass may interact with the abilitites that constitute MI.

Formally, we conceive the single elements of the moral compass as moral schemas (Jordan 2009; Lapsely & Narvaez 2004; Narvaez 2005). Since such schemas are acquired by practice

and shaped by iterative learning and social and cultural factors, the content and structure of the moral compass will vary across agents (Aquino & Reed 2002; Lapsely & Narvaez 2004). For moral schemas to become operative as standards of comparison in moral regulation, it is inevitable that they are accessible. As mentioned earlier, frequently or recently activated mental structures (e.g., through repeated practice or priming) are more accessible. Therefore, deeply held values and beliefs that are chronically accessible (Higgins 1996) are very likely to affect subsequent processes.

Our model suggests that the moral compass of individuals high in MI differs in at least two respects from individuals low in MI. First, they have more complex moral schemas. As Narvaez and other scholars posited, moral experts are similar to experts in other fields (but see the contribution of Musschenga in this volume). They differ from novices in that they have more complex, domain relevant and chronically accessible mental structures, which trigger effective responses (Dane & Pratt 2007; Narvaez 2005; Lapsely & Narvaez 2005). Second, individuals are likely to differ in how important moral values are for them, which is represented in the structure of the elements that form the moral compass (e.g. in the sense that they are more coherent; Thagard 1998). High-MI agents are likely to have strong internalized moral standards that penetrate their self-understanding. Since strong and central moral values represent highly accessible structures, high-MI individuals are more likely to make use of moral schemas in guiding responses.

Despite the relevance of the moral compass as a navigation tool, standards alone do not instigate action. In the following, moral commitment is proposed to represent the focal competence that invokes and enhances moral regulation.

3.2. Basic Moral Competences

Moral Commitment: Moral failures are often not the result of lack of knowledge about what should be done, but the result of a weak motivation to strive for moral goals (Monin et al. 2007). This observation justifies, from a psychological point-of-view, the specification of motivation as a distinct but overarching component in the multi-stage model of moral decision-making, with implications for all other components (see 2.1.). Empirical data and daily observations also suggest that agents strongly vary in their adherence to moral goals and their

desire to comply with moral standards. In our framework, moral commitment accounts for this variability. Narvaez has asserted that experts in moral motivation are capable of cultivating moral identity and moral regulation that lead them to prioritize moral goals and foster habitued moral concerns (Lapsley & Narvaez 2005; Narvaez 2005). Similarly, we posit that moral commitment consists of an implicit or explicit committing of oneself to moral goals that instigates an enduring striving for moral ends. We define moral commitment as the ability to selectively focus on moral goals and strive for desirable ends. This is not always a simple task. As individuals proceed from perception to action, effective moral regulation often requires one to keep track of internal and external cues, reflect upon process and outcomes, and alter one's operations (e.g., Bandura 1991; Baumeister & Exline 1999). Hence, moral commitment requires self-monitoring, self-reflective and self-influencing capabilities.

Moral commitment has a privileged position in our framework (see Figure 2). Being linked to the moral compass that helps to define which goals and ends may be desirable, moral commitment carries with it the urge to comply with those goals, which affects moral perception, choice and action. Since morally committed agents have a heightend sense of obligation and responsibility, they make morality part of their life and self-understanding, which in turn further contributes to the evolvement of (chronically accessible) moral schemas (Narvaez 2005; Schlenker 2008).

Strong expressions of moral commitment are, e.g., "protected values" and "moral identity". Protected values refer to non-instrumental values that involve strong moral convictions about the impermissibility of trading specific values in exchange for other good, in particular monetary benefits. For example, if people consider human life, nature, honor or honesty as protected values, empirical evidence indicates that those people are reluctant to sacrifice or to trade off such values (Atran et al. 2007; Baron & Spranca 1997; Skitka et al. 2005; Tanner 2008; Tanner et al. 2009; Tetlock et al. 2000). Moral identity, on the other hand, reflects the degree to which a set of moral beliefs and values are central to one's self-understanding (Aquino & Reed 2002, Blasi 1983; Colby & Damon 1992; Hardy & Carlo 2005).

Morally committed individuals are endowed with willpower (strength of self-control). In moral research, the study of willpower has only recently become more prominent. One influential model (Baumeister 1998) has advanced the idea that reality is filled with passion and selfish temptations (e.g., striving for short-term benefits instead of long-term collective bene-

fits) which render moral behavior less likely. For example, a characteristic of many business situations is that people are provided with the opportunity to profit from dishonest acts (e.g., by deceiving or cheating on others). Such opportunities may present a conflict between taking selfish gains vs. acting in virtuous ways. Hence, one's moral strength relies on the ability to resist selfish temptations by exerting conscious self-control. In general, there is much evidence of individual differences in such self-control skills (Baumeister et al. 2006). Baumeister and colleagues also posited that self-control is a resource that fluctuates and can, like a muscle, be depleted (Baumeister & Exline 1999). Following this metaphor, it was hypothesized that people would be more likely to behave dishonestly when their self-control resources were depleted. Indeed, empirical studies have demonstrated that people were more likely to cheat under conditions of mental fatigue (Mead et al. 2009).

This approach of selfish temptations typically focuses on controlled exertion of willpower that is required to resist such temptations enablying a delay of reward. Such a view, however, tends to neglect the possibility of automatic regulatory processes and the possibility that not all individuals are tempted when faced with the opportunity to profit from unethical behavior. Specifically, from morally highly committed individuals we would expect that their moral self-regulation is more automatized. Since they have strong internalized moral values, they are less tempted by opportunities for unethical gains. They therefore do not have to rely on conscious and active self-control. Consistent with this assumption, very recent studies referring to (dis)honest behaviors have revealed that people who routinely behave honestly, who endorse honesty as a protected value, or who consider morality central for their self-concept are less tempted and less likely to engage in controlled activities (Gino et al., in press; Greene & Paxton 2009; Gibson et al., 2013). We generally believe that highly committed individuals, as long as the tasks are not demanding, will accomplish much of their moral self-regulation by automatic processes, since they can rely on highly accessible moral schemas and habits that maintain moral conduct. However, due to their heightened commitment to moral goals, they should also be more willing to mobilize willpower when faced with highly demanding tasks.

In sum, moral commitment is pivotal for the strength of moral regulation. We expect high-MI individuals to have a strong and enduring desire to strive for moral ends that leads them to engage in automatic or controlled self-regulatory processes (depending on task demands). Due to their strong moral motivation, they are more likely to monitor internal and external

states in terms of how they meet moral standards, to reflect on the process and outcome, and to sanction their misconduct (by feeling shame or guilt).

Moral Sensitivity: Moral sensitivity refers to the key issue that individuals must first recognize that they may be facing a moral problem. If no moral issue is perceived, no moral judgment or decision-making process occurs (Clakeburn 2002; Rest 1986; Sparks & Hunt 1998). Yet, moral aspects are rarely immediately obvious in daily life. Individuals are confronted with situations of great variety and complexity, making it necessary for people to attend to some stimuli while ignoring others (Fiske & Taylor 1991). While some individuals are endowed with an intuitive sense of concern for others, fairness or apprehension of what is right or wrong and rapidly detect that a moral standard, norm or code may be violated in a situation, others are "morally blind" (Pederson 2009). Therefore, moral sensitivity refers to the ability to recognize and conceive of moral features when they arise in practice. This includes envisaging whether a given set of actions can harm or help other parties or, more generally, violate internalized moral standards or codes that govern professional conduct. It also entails the capacity to understand a situation from a number of different perspectives. As such, moral sensitivity involves empathy and perspective-taking skills (Narvaez 2005, 2010a).

A dual process conceptualization of moral sensitivity suggests that it includes automatic and controlled processes. As an inherently perceptional process, it involves non-conscious matching of patterns according to which individuals automatically compare their observations with their standards (e.g., Reynolds 2006). The outcome of such a comparison may be rapidly arising intuitions that the perceived situation or the behavior of another person is "wrong" in the moral sense (e.g., other people might be harmed, human rights might be violated). Such reactions can be associated with more or less strong emotions which serve as additional signals that moral issues are at stake. For example, outrage or anger illuminates moral infractions of others, guilt or shame accompanies one's own wrongdoing. An individual, however, may also intentionally search and reflect on the potentially moral implications of an event.

Researchers have only recently begun to study the phenomenon of moral sensitivity (also referred to as moral awareness or ethical sensitivity). Jones (1991) pointed out that specific characteristics of the issue under consideration (such as the magnitude of the consequences, the immediacy or proximity of the moral issue) can attract attention and therefore affect moral sensitivity. Other research suggests that individuals largely differ in their ability to identify

the moral implications of a given situation. In a recent study, Jordan (2009) compared business managers with academics. She argued that business managers have business rather than moral schemas more dominant, because they have more experience with strategy- and industry-related problems (such as maintaining financial profitability) than with moral-related problems (such as protecting the interests of stakeholders, employees). Because schemas guide information processing and attention, it was expected that individuals with a dominant (i.e., chronic accessible) moral scheme would direct more attention to moral issues than an individual with other dominant schemas. In line with this, Jordan found that business managers were (compared to academics) less likely to detect moral-related issues than business-related issues in morally ambiguous vignettes.

There is also evidence that people holding or not holding protected values are attentive to different aspects. Some authors have claimed that people endorsing protected values are often prone to deontological thinking as opposed to consequentialism (Baron & Spranca, 1997; Tanner & Medin, 2004). That is, the focus is more on the inherent rightness and wrongness of actions themselves rather than on the magnitude of the consequences associated with the actions. One implication of a deontological focus is that it should make a difference whether outcomes derive from an act or an omission, whereas from a consequentialist perspective, this difference should be irrelevant. Consistent with this, Tanner and colleagues (Tanner 2009; Tanner & Medin 2004; Tanner et al. 2008) found that people endorsing protected values and a deontological orientation paid more attention to the distinction between acts and omissions, while for individuals not endorsing protected values and with a predominantly consequentialist focus it did not matter whether the consequences were an outcome of an act or omission.

Overall, these investigations demonstrate individual differences in the capability to identify moral issues, thereby individuals with dominant moral schemas (which should be especially the case for agents with strong moral commitments) show higher levels of moral alertness. From agents high in MI, we expect that they are more likely to detect moral aspects and that they are also quick and accurate in „reading“ a moral situation. This follows from the idea that these individuals have highly accessible moral schemas, which in turn support automatic and fast detection of moral components. Yet, complex situations sometimes require deliberate processing. Because moral problems become only apparent to those who are interested in them, we would furthermore expect that individuals high in MI be generally more motivated to detect the moral implications of an event which can involve both automatic and deliberate

processes. Finally, as noted earlier, the capabilities of taking another's perspective as well as empathy are other elements that are seen to help in envisaging potential harm to other parties and thus support moral sensitivity (Narvaez 2005, 2010a). Agents high in MI should be more endowed with such skills than individuals low in MI.

Moral Problem Solving: Once a moral problem and the involved key parties have been identified, the next challenge consists of finding viable ways of coping with it. Moral decision-making is about finding out „what ought to be done", while dealing with competing pressures and generating and evaluating different options with moral and other (e.g., economic) consequences. Such problems can be emotionally distressing as they put fundamental issues at risk and involve trade-offs between conflicting values with unwanted or threatening consequences (e.g., other people may be harmed) (Hanselmann & Tanner 2008; Luce et al. 1997). Furthermore, moral problems are often complex and ill-defined, leaving the decision-maker uncertain about the range of alternatives and their short- and long-term consequences. Since such situations do hardly offer obvious solutions about which course of action is most ethical, a substantial part of the problem solving process consists of constructing options which are then evaluated.

Because many decisions are complex and ill-defined and individuals face limitations in cognitive capacity and time, researchers generally assert that decision-makers are not fully rational. Instead of considering all alternatives and consequences to identify the objectively „best possible" course of action, decision-makers cope with limited information by searching for options that are „good enough". That is, people can rarely "maximize", they have to "satisfice" (Gigerenzer 2010; Simon 1955). Consistent with this, our conception of MI posits that the goal is to create the solution that at best meets moral standards, while reconciling conflicting value systems. Such a search for morally viable solutions requires taking the various objections and divergent values into account without loosing the moral direction. We define moral problem solving as the ability to generate morally satisfactory and reconciliary solutions.

Yet, the decisions that a person makes are shaped by their moral standards, external demands and his or her conscience. This process entails specific steps, such as (1) value clarification, (2) generating and evaluating different courses of actions, and (3) resolution. As noted earlier, decision-making does not only involve explicit reasoning but also current or anticipated emotions (e.g., regret, guilt, shame) that are used as inputs in the decision process (Haidt 2001;

Loewenstein & Lerner 2003; Schwarz & Clore 1983). In addition, since agents may be required to generate or construct new options, effective moral problem solving also entails the capacity of creative imagination skills. We agree with Keeney (1992) that clarifying the values at the beginning rather than in subsequent steps of the choice process can help to promote creativity. He demonstrated that focusing early and deeply on the values, encourages people to search for new alternatives, which, in turn, may lead to more desirable outcomes. In a similar vein, we propose that individuals with an implicit or explicit focus on moral values (moral commitment) search more extensively for integrative and morally acceptable solutions.

As with the other competences, moral problem solving can be deliberately or automatically directed. As noted above, while traditional paradigms have largely emphasized cognitive reasoning models (e.g., Kohlberg, 1969; Piaget, 1965), recent research has started to recognize the importance of automatic processes which reflect implicit associations between concepts and normative and affective valences (Haidt 2001; Reynolds 2006). Whether decision-making involves more spontaneous or more deliberate processes is a function of various conditions. For example, empirical evidence suggests that intuitive processes take precedence over deliberate thinking under situational conditions of high time pressure, high mental workload or high levels of uncertainty (Fazio 1990).

No final conclusion can be made about the question of whether people should better rely on intuitions or deliberations when making decisions. However, a growing body of research suggests that intuitive processing is sometimes superior to analytical processing. Gigerenzer and colleagues, for example, have shown that with regard to measurable critera (e.g., decision accuracy, success at stock market) simple, fast and frugal heuristics can perform as well or even better than rational decision-making models (Gigerenzer et al. 1999). Recent studies have demonstrated that under certain circumstances, choices based on unconscious processes outperform conscious decision-making (Dijksterhuis et al. 2006). Others suggest that intuitive judgments result in more accurate decisions when they are based on knowledge that reflects prior experiences with the same or similar tasks and match the demands of the given decision task (Plessner & Czenna 2008).

Of course, to the extent that the task forces automatic responses (e.g., under high time pressure conditions), the more important it is that people have—as some researchers pointed out—expert-like, well educated intuitions (Lapsley & Narvaez 2005; Narvaez 2005, 2010a).

Experts differ from novices in that they have organized knowledge and highly automatic and effortless skills. Klein and colleagues have extensively studied professional's strategies (e.g., firefighters, military leaders, jurors or airline pilots), when they had to make rapid but tough decisions under difficult conditions (for a review see Klein 2008). They found that experienced decision-makers use their background knowledge to rapidly categorize the situation and to retrieve the most typical course of action. They evaluate this course of action by using mental simulations in order to analyze whether it will work or not. Interestingly, Klein and associates also found support for the hypothesis that the first option considered by experienced decision-maker is usually the most satisfactory one (Klein et al. 1995). In a similar vein, we argue that moral problem solving under conditions that promote automatic responses requires decision-makers to have proper and highly accessible moral structures which entails associations between moral standards, declarative knowledge and a repertoire of procedural patterns.

Clearly, individuals will vary in the extent to which they have proper moral schemas available and chronically accessible. From individuals high in MI, we generally expect that they will behave „more expert-like" and will quickly come up with integrative and morally satisfactory solutions (under conditions that trigger automatic processes) or to engage in creative imagination to develop new options (in particular under conditions that better allow reflection and reasoning).

Moral Assertiveness: Once a decision has been made, the next step is to implement moral goals into visible action. In their moral intelligence approach that they applied to the business context, Lennick & Kiel (2005) suggested that morally competent leaders are those who exhibit integrity (e.g., telling the truth, acting consistently with principles, values and beliefs; keeping promises), responsibility (e.g., taking responsibility for personal choices), compassion and forgiveness (e.g., caring about others; letting go of ones own and others mistakes). These may be examples of desirable and virtuous behaviors, yet, the straight path to virtue can be often very difficult. Acting upon moral standards that are considered as right can be hard, e.g., when individuals are faced with threats and dangers that are associated with moral behavior or when social norms are not congruent with moral actions. Other situational barriers, such as lack of money or time, risks of own career survival, social pressures, or the prevalence of unethical norms and practices in an organization (i.e., lack of an ethical work climate and culture; Treviño et al. 1998; Victor & Cullen 1987) are factors that may inhibit people from acting morally.

We propose moral assertiveness to be the competence that enables people to overcome external obstacles, to face dangers and threats to self, and to have stamina when pursuing moral actions. Moral assertiveness refers to the ability to act consistently and persistently upon moral standards, despite pressures. Agents with moral assertiveness are expected to stand up for their deeply held moral principles even in the face of adversity. They convey moral standards reliably through visible actions and consistently across time and situations. Moral assertiveness therefore entails resistance, courage, consistency and persevarance (Blasi 2005; Sekerka & Bagozzi 2007; Tanner et al. 2010).

As with the other components, moral assertiveness can be subject to automatic and controlled self-regulation. Moral behavior can be based on routinized, well-learned responses triggered in the situation. Because behavior in such situations is performed on an automatic level and under less self-control, proper moral reactions heavily depend on having the "right" mental schemas entailing strong associations between moral standards and procedural patterns. However, many other, more demanding and difficult situations, require a more controlled, wilful application of one's standard of behavior. Furthermore, moral assertiveness may be facilitated by emotional responses. Positive emotions in anticipation of performing moral acts, or negative emotions in anticipation of moral failures are likely to support moral courage and continued moral engagement (Carver & Scheier 1990; Sekerka & Bagozzi 2007; Tangey et al. 2007).

Individuals clearly differ in their courage and persistence to act upon their moral standards, even when it is costly. Milgram's famous experiments (1963) on the role of obedience to authority are examples of how easy it is to make people harm others. These studies demonstrated that many people were willing to give electric shocks to another person, simply because a scientific authority commanded them to do so. Nevertheless, there were also a few people who resisted the authority. Again, we deem moral commitment as an additional factor that functions to promote moral assertiveness. Strong moral commitments have been found to be negatively correlated with corruption in business (Fine 2010), negatively with (self-reported) antisocial behaviors (such as lying, stealing or cheating), but positively with (self-reported) prosocial behaviors (such as helping or volunteering) (Schlenker 2008).

Strong moral convictions and moral identity which reflect strong moral commitments seem to also serve to promote application of moral standards into behavior. Gibson, Tanner and Wagner, for instance, have examined the role of individual's conviction that honesty is a value that is "not for sale" and therefore ought to be „protected" from trade-offs against monetary benefits. In experiments simulating realistic business settings, people were provided with the opportunity to gain (real) money by misleading others. The results confirmed that people with higher levels of protected values for honesty were more likely to sacrifice money to maintain honesty, some of them even displayed absolute resistance to trade off honesty for money (Gibson et al., 2013)). Other empirical studies suggest that people with high levels of moral identity are more likely to engage in moral behavior (Hardy & Carlo 2005). Having a strong moral identity was also found to weaken the effect of moral disengagement (Aquino et al. 2007)—a common dissonance-reducing rationalization mechanism that allows people to shield themselves from moral self-condemnations when acting immorally (Bandura et al. 2001).

Consequently, we expect individuals high in MI to demonstrate moral assertiveness. This manifests in more consistency between words and deeds and more persistence and courage to overcome barriers. High-MI individuals are expected to be more efficacious and engaged in automatic or controlled self-regulation to act upon moral standards and principles.

4. Enhancing Moral Intelligence

We close this chapter with brief remarks about the practical value of the advocated model and the question of how to enhance MI. Our goal was to suggest a model that depicts the main elements and features of moral intelligence. In doing so, we considered having a moral compass (beliefs about what is the right thing do to) and a set of four main compentences (moral commitment, moral sensibility, moral problem solving and moral assertiveness) as requirements of moral intelligence. Individuals are likely to vary with respect to each of those skills. Some may have excellent moral sensitivity, but have poor in moral assertiveness. Some may have low moral commitment, but in the few situations where they indeed care about morality, they perform well in all three remaining competences. One of our next goals is to build upon this model to develop valid measurements of those competences that help to detect one's own moral strengths and weaknesses. In this vein, we hope that our framework can serve as an important platform for researchers and practitioners alike, for future research, intervention and education.

In line with a long tradition within moral philosophy and moral psychology, moral competences are acquired and enhanced by moral practice. Learning is conceptualized as a reiterative cycle between moral competence and moral action (Narvaez 2010a, Pederson 2009). We note that moral performance is not just influenced by personal factors, but also by cultural and contextual factors (such as ethical climate, law or political structures, incentives, etc.). Early experiences establish trajectories for intuitions and reasoning but are then shaped by culture, education and experience (Narvaez 2010a). Therefore, promoting moral intelligence implies the creation of structures that allow people to cultivate and practice skills (Hogarth 2001). Narvaez and collegues (e.g., Narvaez et al., 2006) describe the development of a moral personality as a construction of moral schemas. Applying a novice-to-expert approach, the education toward moral expertise is seen as a process of evolving moral schemas that is based on extensive practice and learning. Practice and repeated experience foster the development of percepts and concepts that become chronically accessible (Narvaez et al. 2006). In this vein, we see MI developing with practice and experience that continuously shapes the agent's mental structures. As with other capacities, moral competence is developed through explicit and implicit learning (i.e., conscious and non-conscious forms of knowledge acquisition), vicarious learning (i.e., learning by observing the behavior of others and its consequences), reflec-

tion and conscious self-regulation by which individuals instigate behavioral changes (Bandura 1963; Dane & Pratt 2007, Hogarth 2001; Pedersen 2009).

In conclusion, this contribution was designed to highlight main features and processes involved in moral functioning, and to discover the main abilities of Moral Intelligence. Certainly, more work is needed to further develop the framework, to define what the normatively proper standards, values and reactions should be, to develop useful and valid assessments of Moral Intelligence, or to ascertain how environment, education and training should be designed to facilitate and cultivate the development of Moral Intelligence.

Change in reference list:

Delete: Tanner, Gibson, Wagner und Berkowitsch (2011). How much for your honesty.....

Include: Gibson R, Tanner C, Wagner A (2013). Preferences for truthfulness: Heterogenity among and within individuals. American Economic Review.