Ethics and Innovation
- A SKMF forum discussion

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The questions for this forum

- **Does Ethics hamper or foster innovation?**

- **How might we resolve the dilemmas between ethics and innovation?**

- **Might responsible knowledge practices be the answer?**

Introduction – Outline

- Innovations and innovation management

- What do we understand by ethical dilemmas?

- Does ethics hamper or foster innovations?

- Ethics and morality and what is the real issue?

- Why does responsibility matter?

- Responsible innovations and knowledge management practices?

Innovation

- Innovation arises out of a need or necessity or even a change in the current mode of serving a societal need / purpose.

- Without innovations, it is not possible to improve our standard of living (please note there is a difference between quality of living vs standard of living) in many ways.

- However, there are many ethical dilemmas that we encounter on innovations.

- Innovations can sometimes overcome ethical concerns and some other times introduce ethical concerns and dilemmas

Ethical dilemmas of innovation – just to name a few

Swiss Knowledge Management Forum

- Embryonic stem cell research

- Nuclear power plant

- Condoms for birth control – family planning – and against sexually transmitted diseases vs Catholic norms

- GM (Genetically modified foods)

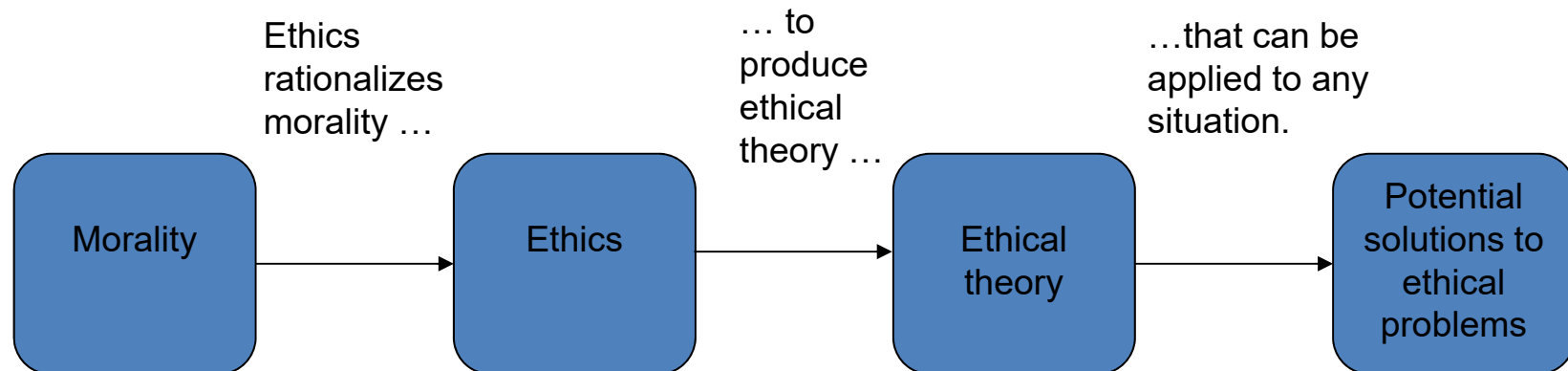# Ethical concerns also foster innovations – some examples

- Animal testing
  - Body shop?

- High mortality rates
  - New medicines

- Any others?

- These concerns raise a pertinent question what is an ethical concern or what do we understand ethical and morality.

Ethics and Morality

- In general, what is good is associated with ethics, and what is right is associated with morality.

- John Rawls (1971/1999), however, asserts the priority of right over good, and his theory of justice is a deontological ethic, whereas theories based on the priority of good over right are teleological (e.g. utilitarianism).

Source: Nathan, 2010

Relationship between morality, ethics and ethical theory

Ethics rationalizes morality …

… to produce ethical theory …

…that can be applied to any situation.

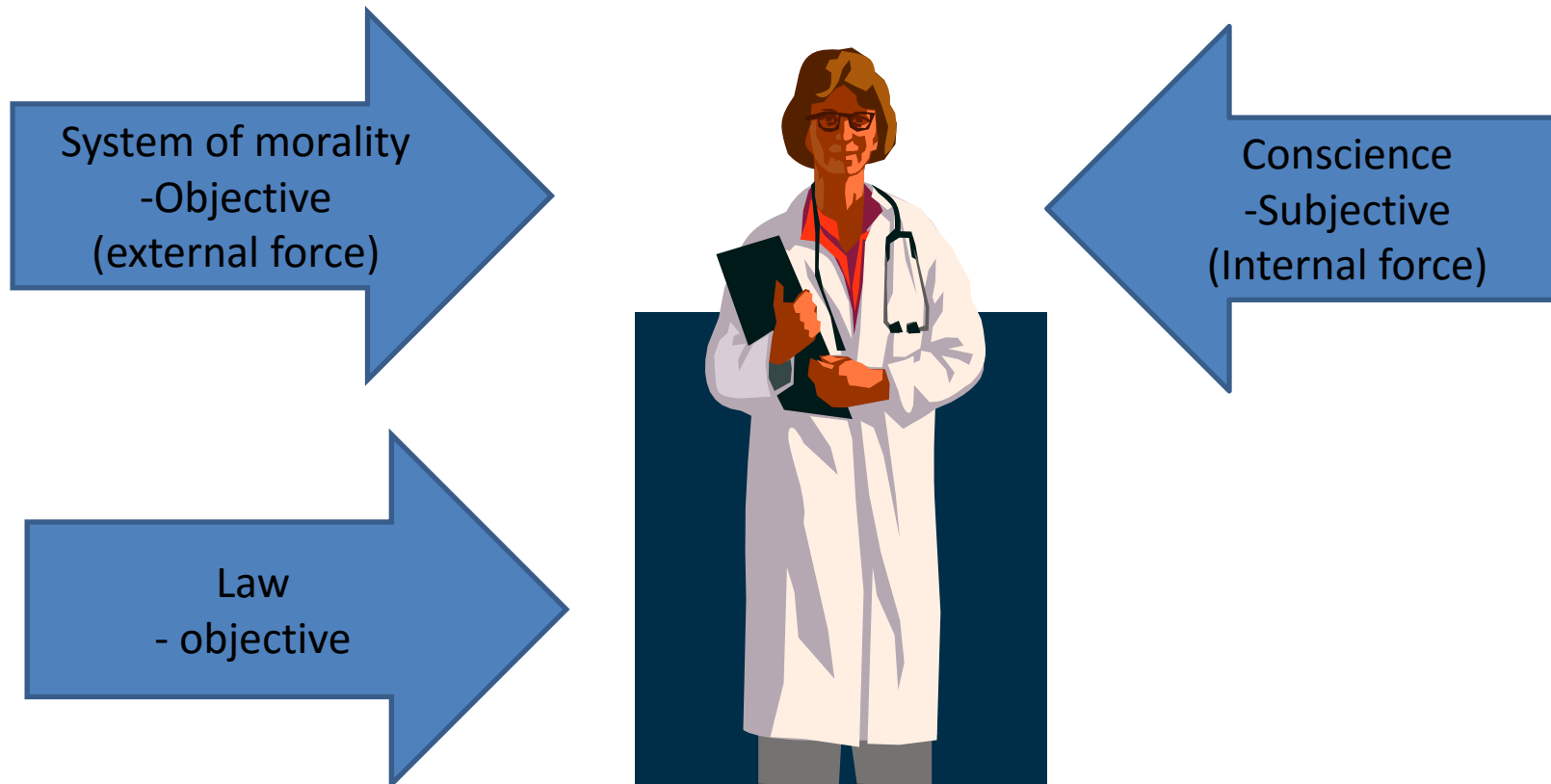| Morality | → | Ethics | → | Ethical theory | → | Potential solutions to ethical problems |

Reference: Crane and Matten, 2010, Chapter 1

What is the real issue?

- Whether what is right takes precedence over what is good is not really the issue. The real issue is one of **responsibility**!

- Ethical leadership or moral leadership should be concerned with responsibilities; i.e. we should be concerned **with responsible innovations.**

Source: Nathan, 2010; Cf. Kymlicka, 1989

Double-sided morality

System of morality
-Objective
(external force)

Conscience
-Subjective
(Internal force)

Law
- objective

Reference: Nathan 2010

How should we go about responsible innovations?

- Deliberation for social justice
  - Engage all stakeholders
  - It is not about what are our values rather it is about how to value; i.e. what kind of actions and attitudes are called for
    - (See Nathan 2010; cf. Scanlon

Value vs how to value

The more you look at the world, the more you recognise that what one person values may be different to the next.

freedom / status symbol / polluter

www.hsbc.com

HSBC
The world's local bank

The more you look at the world, the more you recognise that people value the same things but in different ways.

privilege / sacrifice / role model

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Courtesy of the pictures: Dr. D. Baumann, UNIL

Are there ethical concerns?
If so, what are they?

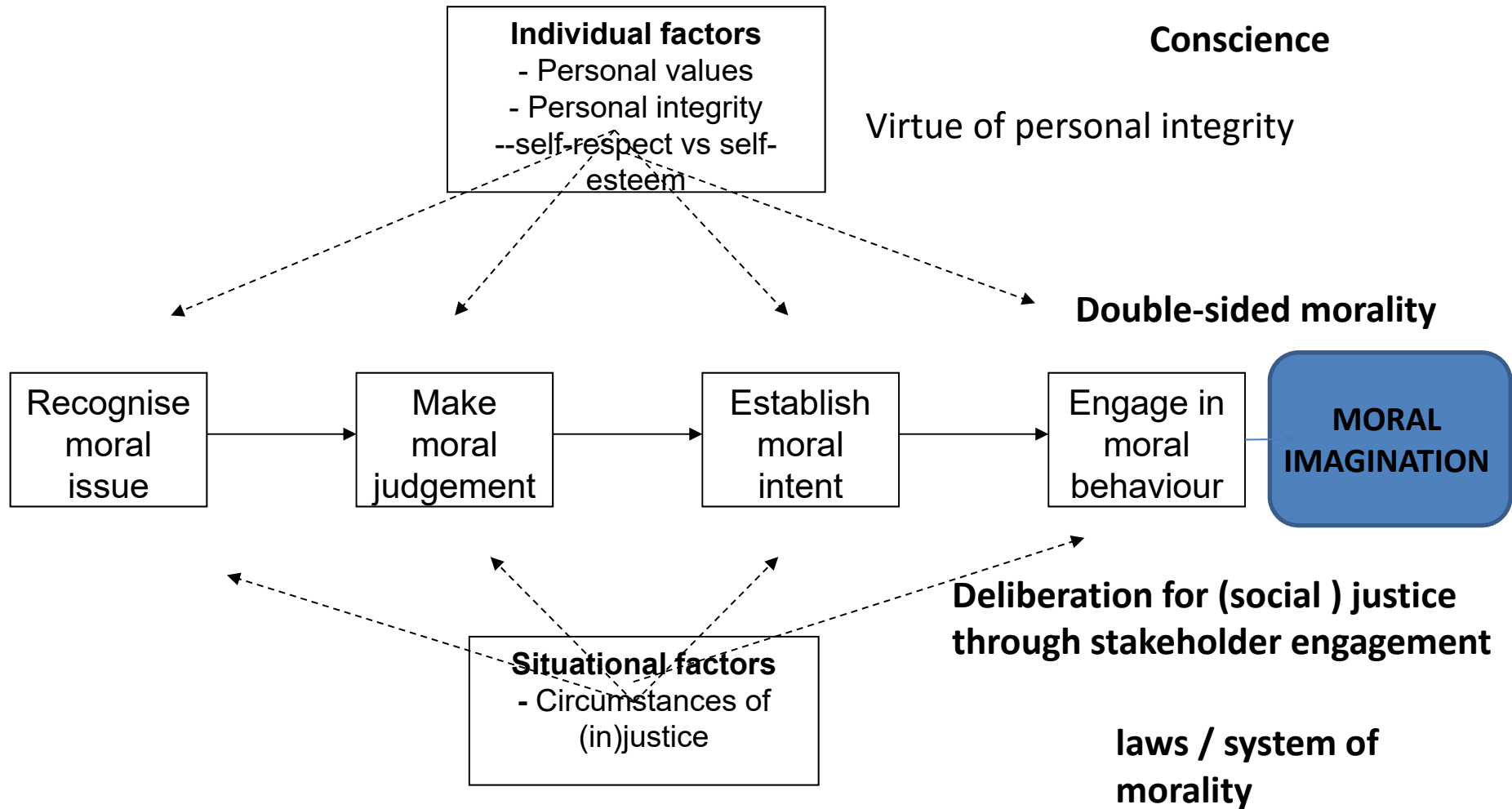Courtesy: Ghusoon Al Jamali , MIB Student, BSL

Moral Imagination

Moral imagination

Concerned with whether one has "a sense of the variety of possibilities and moral consequences of their decisions, the ability to imagine a wide range of possible issues, consequences, and solutions" (Werhane, 1998:76)

- see also Nathan 2010; cf. Maak & Pless 2006

Framework for understanding (un)ethical decision-making

S wiss
K nowledge
M anagement
F orum

Individual factors
- Personal values
- Personal integrity
--self-respect vs self-esteem

Conscience

Virtue of personal integrity

Double-sided morality

| Recognise moral issue | → | Make moral judgement | → | Establish moral intent | → | Engage in moral behaviour | **MORAL IMAGINATION** |

Situational factors
- Circumstances of (in)justice

Deliberation for (social) justice through stakeholder engagement

laws / system of morality

A few questions to be considered – Q1

- Should we support Internet censorship or not?
  - Internet is an innovation helps to foster innovations and knowledge transfer and exchange; however, some countries want to censor for political and ethical concerns (such as pornography and child sex abuse etc.)

A few questions
to be considered – Q2

- What is the best way to encourage the innovation that results in social progress?

- Who should own intellectual property (IP) when the greater public interest is at stake?

- Should we allow developing economies to copy patents on new drugs for cure? Is that ethical?

A few questions to be considered – Q3

- Should knowledge management practices go beyond legality such as privacy etc., in the cases of new social media?

- In other words, just because it is legal, is it ethical?

  – Legal but not ethical?

  – Illegal but ethical?

    - Which way you will go for?

Final Question:
On SKMF

- Should we manage knowledge for innovations or only manage the flow and exchange of knowledge? What is ethical and why?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION
ANY QUESTIONS?

References

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- Rawls, John. 1971/1999. *Theory of Justice, Revised edition (1999). MA: Harvard* University Press.

- Scanlon, T.M. 2000. *What We Owe to Each Other. USA: First Harvard University Press.*