



Leadership and the three faces of integrity

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ABSTRACT

Recent scholarship in business and leadership strongly suggests that integrity is not fundamentally a moral concept. This paper presents an account of leadership integrity that defends its ethical meaning while identifying important cognitive structures that clarify the confusion surrounding integrity attributions. The paper begins with a brief review of historical, philosophical, and business discussions of integrity. Using the insights from these discussions, I argue that integrity is fundamentally, but not exclusively, a moral concept that supports the ethical claims of leadership theories. I then review current leadership theories and derive a definition of integrity as a moral concept. Using this definition, I explain how a leader's integrity is founded on identity-conferring commitments to values and then describe three types of leadership integrity to better understand these constructs. I conclude with a few research questions that seek to advance leadership integrity research with the goal of advancing our understanding of ethical leadership.

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Any discussion of the moral character and behavior of leaders must eventually discuss the concept of integrity. One problem those who desire to discuss leadership and integrity confront is the lack of agreement on a definition of integrity (Palanski & Yammarino, 2009). The conceptual analysis of integrity from philosophy and business literature presents us with various definitions. Integrity can mean being morally trustworthy, honest, fully integrated and whole, true to oneself, and/or acting in accordance with one's statements. Each of these definitions captures an important aspect of integrity, but their disparities challenge anyone seeking to present an accurate account of *leadership integrity*. Another complicating factor is that some definitions describe integrity as an ethically neutral term that can refer to a tyrant as well as an ethical leader (Audi & Murphy, 2006; Palanski & Yammarino, 2009). Contrary to this view, integrity is often presented by practitioners as an ethical trait that could never be attributed to a tyrant (George, 2003; George & Sims, 2007). When we consider academic discussions of authentic leadership and authentic transformational leadership, authors have assumed or directly linked ethics and integrity to leadership effectiveness (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Brown & Trevino, 2006). We are now at a point in leadership research in which conflicting definitions of integrity and the uncertainty regarding its moral status needs to be resolved.

The purpose of this paper is to present an account of leadership integrity that defends its ethical meaning while analyzing the cognitive structures that explain the confusion surrounding integrity attributions. In order to present an accurate account of leadership integrity, we must first determine whether or not integrity is an ethical concept. The paper begins with a brief review of historical, philosophical, and business discussions of integrity. Using the insights from these discussions, I argue that integrity is fundamentally, but not exclusively, a moral concept that supports the ethical claims of leadership theories and fits with common usage. I then review current leadership theories and derive a definition of integrity that aligns with ethical leadership constructs. Using this definition, I explain how a leader's identity and deepest commitments form the foundation of their integrity and describe three closely related types of leadership integrity. I conclude with a few research questions that seek to advance our understanding of leadership integrity.

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1. Integrity in history, philosophy and business

1.1. A brief history

The word *integrity* literally means the state of being untouched. John Beebe states, “*Tag*, its Sanskrit root, as the game we still call by this name implies, means to touch or handle. Out of this root come words like tact, taste, tax, and contaminate. *Integ* means *not* touched or handled” (Beebe, 1992). The earliest use of the Latin form of *integer* meant fresh, unimpaired, virgin, as well as whole and complete. Eventually the abstraction *integritas* as a moral term entered the Latin language.

The Greeks do not list integrity as a virtue like courage, justice, temperance or prudence, but some Roman philosophers developed it as a moral notion. Cicero, in about 70 BCE, was prosecuting Gaius Verres, the governor of Sicily, for embezzling. In a speech calling for ethical leadership, Cicero states, “nor can a greater disaster come upon us all than a conviction, on the part of the Roman people, that the Senatorial Order has cast aside all respect for truth and integrity, for honesty and duty [... rationem veritatis, integratatis, fidei, religionis ab hoc ordine abiudicari]” (Cicero, 1928). Later, Seneca writing in the 60s CE uses *integritum* as a moral quality in *De Beneficiis*. When considering likely candidates for his patronage, Seneca states, “I shall choose a man who is upright [*integritum*], sincere, mindful, grateful, who keeps his hands from another man's property, who is not greedily attached to his own, who is kind to others” (Seneca, 1989).

Over the centuries, integrity was used in many contexts while still retaining its core meanings of purity of character as well as wholeness. In the 1913 edition of *Webster's* dictionary, integrity is defined as:

- 1) the state or quality of being complete; wholeness; entireness; unbroken state; 2) Moral soundness; honesty; freedom from corrupting influence or motive;—used especially with reference to the fulfillment of contracts, the discharge of agencies, trusts, and the like; uprightness; rectitude. 3) Unimpaired, unadulterated, or genuine state; entire correspondence with an original condition; purity.(*Integrity*, [Webster's 1913], n.d.).

The 1913 definitions follow almost verbatim from the 1828 edition of *Webster's* dictionary. In the 1828 edition, the example for integrity as “wholeness” refers to a state's integrity as guaranteed by the US constitution. The 1828 description of “moral soundness” includes the following: “Integrity comprehends the whole moral character, but has a special reference to uprightness in mutual dealings, transfers of property, and agencies for others” (Webster, n.d.). In this sense, integrity is a term that specifically indicates a moral trustworthiness in human interactions more than a general evaluation of a person's moral character.

The main adjustment in contemporary usage of integrity is that the moral concept has become more prominent. According to the *2005 New Oxford American Dictionary*, in order of usage, integrity is “1) The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness; 2) The state of being whole and undivided; the condition of being unified, unimpaired, or sound in construction” (2005). The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines integrity as “1) steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code, 2) the state of being unimpaired; soundness, 3) the quality or condition of being whole or undivided; completeness” (*Integrity*, [American Heritage], n.d.).

The moral meaning of integrity, in particular “moral uprightness,” appears to have surpassed the non-moral notion of wholeness which is not surprising. Words with the same root as integrity are used in other languages to identify people who are morally uncorrupted or who resist compromising their moral commitments. The German word *integrität* means honesty and wholeness, though the word *einheit* specifically means wholeness. Ancient Hebrew has a similar word derivation for integrity. One ancient Hebrew word for innocence and uprightness is *tôm* which comes from the word *táman* which means “to complete...come to an end” (Blue Letter Bible, 2013). In this case, the word for uprightness comes from a morally neutral word for complete.

When applied to people, integrity as “wholeness” points to a broader notion of maintaining a complete and coherent self. As mentioned above, integrity can be derived from the Latin root *integritas* which can mean unity, wholeness, and unbroken completeness, from *integer* meaning whole or intact. Both the moral and non-moral definitions of integrity rely on a notion of completeness, but the moral meaning specifically describes a person's uncorrupted *moral* character.

We see then that integrity has a general meaning of moral uprightness and/or wholeness. In the vast literature on integrity from philosophy, we find that each of these general definitions has attracted supporters and detractors. As we will see, the effects of this conceptual tug-of-war influence the discussions of integrity in business and leadership.

1.2. Review of integrity in modern philosophy

Confronted with the two possible definitions of moral uprightness and wholeness, some philosophers argue that integrity primarily picks out the “wholeness” or self-integration of a person rather than her moral uprightness (Blustein, 1991; McFall, 1987; Rawls, 1999; Taylor, 1981; Taylor, 1985; Williams, 1981; Williams & Smart, 1973). A leader's unwillingness to compromise her values or statements, whether moral, non-moral or immoral, displays *personal integrity* which is distinct from *moral integrity*. On this view, a person cannot have integrity unless she maintains her wholeness. In her analysis of integrity, McFall (1987) claims that, “There are conceivable cases in which we would want to grant that someone had personal integrity even if we were to find his ideal morally abhorrent; if moral justification is what we are after, moral integrity is the place to look” (p. 14). McFall gives the example of a person who is committed to stopping radicals who are burning books by burning a few of the radicals as a deterrent. According to McFall, while we may attribute personal integrity to the killer, we would not say she is a person of moral integrity.

Blustein (1991) similarly concludes that personal integrity can be had by tyrants if they act in accordance with their deeply held commitments (p. 123). One can imagine a leader who promises to crush his foes and then does so with great force. On Blustein's account, the leader has personal integrity but not moral integrity. Taylor (1985) agrees when she argues that a person of integrity must have deep commitments, but not necessarily to moral values. She states, "The person of integrity need not be a morally good person, she may not be much, or possibly not be at all, moved by other-regarding reasons" (p. 128). Rand (1997) based much of her account of morality on personal integrity (i.e. wholeness) and not moral integrity (i.e. commitment to moral values). She wrote in one of her journals, "Integrity—the first, greatest and noblest of all virtues—is a synonym for independence. Integrity is that quality in man which gives him the courage to hold his own convictions against all influences, against the opinions and desires of other men; the courage to remain whole, unbroken, untouched, to remain true to himself" (p. 260). According to these philosophers, integrity can apply to tyrannical as well as ethical leaders.

Pulling in the opposite direction are philosophers who argue that integrity is fundamentally a moral concept that includes wholeness, but never for immoral leaders. Graham (2001) argues that merely being committed to certain values and then acting on them does not justify an attribution of integrity. She uses the example of the 1930s Tuskegee Study in which several hundred African American men from Alabama were diagnosed with syphilis and purposely not treated. The group of doctors and scientists responsible for this study observed the disease as it progressed and the study was reviewed up into the early 1960s with the results published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. Graham observes that a group of highly educated medical and scientific leaders agreed to use these subjects for over 30 years as part of their commitment to "medicine and science", but the immorality of the path they chose disqualifies them from having integrity. She states,

Unfortunately, the collective decision-making failed morally, and my intuition is that none of the participants were persons of integrity; they were not persons of integrity for the very reason that they were unable to see the disrespect paid to the Tuskegee men participating in the study...All, individually and most certainly collectively, failed to take the lives of the subjects seriously, and without this moral compass, no one can be said to be deserving of the admiration that is signaled by justified attributions of integrity (2001, p. 245).

Graham's intuition is that we are not justified in attributing integrity to someone unless she is committed to ethical values. For example, the Tuskegee physicians appear to have some *form* of integrity because their commitments, knowledge and actions demonstrate their wholeness and consistency. But the physicians were lacking *moral trustworthiness* because they could not be trusted to respect the humanity within each individual. According to Graham, our intuitions confirm that most attributions of integrity presuppose moral trustworthiness and the Tuskegee physicians lack integrity for this reason. The implication of this conclusion is that because tyrannical leaders are not morally trustworthy, they are not candidates for integrity attributions.

The integrity discussion in philosophy leaves us then with two general notions of integrity. The personal integrity camp argues that integrity attributions are justified by personal commitments that can be immoral, non-moral, or moral as long as they are related to a person's wholeness. The determining factor is that a person consistently acts on these commitments, regardless of their ethical content. The moral integrity camp disagrees. Like Graham, they argue that integrity is fundamentally ascribed to a person who lives out her deep commitments to ethical values. For example, a leader who consistently harms innocent people does not have integrity because she is not morally trustworthy. On the other hand, a leader who has a deep commitment to respect other people and consistently behaves respectfully has integrity. In the next section I discuss how business literature discussions of integrity divide along the same lines.

1.3. Review of integrity in business literature

The business literature, both scholarly and popular, uses the term integrity in many different ways to describe different leadership traits. An example of integrity's multifaceted and misunderstood nature is provided by Bill George who is one of the most influential practitioner/writers on leadership today. Former CEO of Medtronic Corporation and current Harvard Business School professor, George has written two books about authentic leadership which he defines as leading from your genuine identity and not imitating other leaders. In both books George defines integrity, but he uses three distinct definitions (George, 2003; George & Sims, 2007). In his book *Authentic Leadership* George writes,

"While the development of fundamental values is crucial, integrity is the one value that is required in every authentic leader. Integrity is not just the absence of lying, but telling the whole truth, as painful as it may be. If you don't exercise complete integrity in your interactions, no one will trust you" (2003, p. 20).

In this passage, George identifies integrity as a moral concept that means to tell the whole truth. Nineteen pages later, however, George defines integrity differently. In reference to ethical leadership, he tells the story of a young fraternity president who discovered on his first day that the fraternity was \$6000 short for the year. Without funds the fraternity could not afford meals or social events for the rest of the year. The new treasurer recommended that the fraternity use \$6000 that was raised to care for orphans. All the officers agreed that they would use the money and pay it back later. The young president struggled with the decision afterwards because he did not believe it was ethical to borrow from charity funds to have parties. He convened another meeting and asked the three other officers to visit a bank with him to secure four \$1500 loans to cover their operating expenses. George (2003) ends the story by exclaiming, "That is integrity in action" (p. 39).

George presents two different definitions of leadership integrity in the same book. One definition is to be honest by not lying and actively telling the truth, and the second is to act on one's deepest commitment to fulfilling one's obligation to others even when tempted to compromise. We could attempt to reconcile these two definitions, but we need to consider a third definition. In their book *True North*, George and Sims (2007) state, "What does it mean to live your life with integrity? Real integrity results from integrating all aspects of your life so that you are true to yourself in all settings" (p. 148). They go on to say, "When you act the same in each setting, you are well on your way to living your life with genuine integrity. Living that way, you will be an authentic leader who leads a fulfilling life" (2007, p. 148). In summary, George presents his readers with three distinct definitions of integrity: honesty, commitment to ethical standards, and wholeness. George's writings provide a window into the fluid nature of integrity, especially in leadership discussions.

George is not alone in his struggle to define integrity, and specifically integrity as a moral or non-moral concept. The definition varies in business literature. In a recent review of leadership and philosophical literature, Audi and Murphy (2006) found that while integrity is not mentioned by Plato and Aristotle in their lists of virtues, the virtue of honesty seems to capture many modern uses of the word. Modern business authors have used the word to refer to good character, but Audi & Murphy are concerned that such a generic definition has little usefulness in applied ethics. Business ethics authors use the term to refer to moral courage (Solomon, 1992), moral conscientiousness, moral accountability, moral coherence (Paine, 1994), honesty (Dalla Costa, 1998; Trevino & Nelson, 1999), and being whole and complete (Trevino & Nelson, 1999). We once again see the division between integrity as wholeness and integrity as moral uprightness.

In an attempt to resolve the uncertainty, Audi & Murphy conclude that integrity is a virtue or trait that integrates other traits and behaviors (i.e. integrity from the Latin root *integer* which can mean "wholeness"). The notion of integrity as integration captures the wholeness aspect as well as virtues such as honesty because a person who is honest has coherence between her words and actions. An unfortunate result of their definition is that the Tuskegee physicians once again become men of integrity.

In a similar and much more extensive review of business literature uses of integrity, Palanski and Yammarino (2007) uncover a plethora of definitions and usages. They group the most common usages of integrity under five headings: wholeness, consistency of words and actions, consistency in adversity, being true to oneself, and ethical behavior (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). Palanski & Yammarino eventually follow Audi & Murphy's categorization of integrity as a non-moral virtue. They suggest that integrity is a virtue like courage that can apply to both an ethically good or ethically bad leader. On their account, integrity is necessary but not sufficient to be virtuous or ethical.

Palanski and Yammarino (2007) define integrity as "*consistency of an acting entity's words and actions*" (p. 178). The definition, like Audi & Murphy's description, emphasizes the consistency of words and behavior and not the ethical commitments of the leader. The other usages of integrity are then placed under separate virtues such as character (wholeness), courage (consistency in adversity), and authenticity (being true to oneself). Any *ethical* references to integrity are classified under the more specific virtue terms of honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, and compassion. While a person of good character will most likely have the virtue of integrity, other virtues found in a good character provide the moral limits on the agent's actions. A leader of integrity as wholeness is not guaranteed to be an ethical leader and may even be evil (Palanski & Yammarino, 2009).

Much like the philosophical discussions of integrity presented above, convincing arguments exist for defining integrity as a non-moral term that means wholeness (Audi & Murphy, 2006) and consistency (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). Two possible reasons for reducing integrity to a non-moral concept are that it resolves the confusion among definitions and it also operationalizes the term to an empirical measurement of *behavioral integrity* or the perceived alignment between a person's words and deeds (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007; Simons, 1999, 2002). While these two reasons offer some benefits, my concern with an exclusively non-moral account of integrity is that it distills a rich ethical concept into a single, non-ethical trait. There are at least three reasons why we should not abandon the moral form of integrity.

First, common usage strongly supports a moral integrity definition. For example, billionaire and business leader Warren Buffet is quoted as saying, "In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if they don't have the first, the other two will kill you" (Integrity, n.d.). When non-scholars like Buffet talk of integrity they are often using it to identify the quality of being morally trustworthy. Consider the meaning of the following sentence: "Mary is a leader with integrity". Without knowing Mary, most English speakers understand that the speaker is indicating that Mary is a morally trustworthy leader. Similarly, to say that "Mary lacks integrity" is to say that she is not morally trustworthy.

Another case makes the common usage argument even clearer. Imagine Leader Jones has decided to market widgets to the people in Big City. He tells his subordinates that he is fully funding the project. Two weeks later, Leader Jones learns that widgets may cause serious injuries to children. Because Jones is morally committed to not harming people, he withdraws all widget funding even at great cost to the company. If integrity means consistency of words and actions, then Jones *is not* a leader of integrity because he went back on his word. However, if integrity fundamentally means that a person is morally trustworthy, then Jones *is* a leader of integrity. My concern with the first definition is that it focuses only on Jones' words and actions while excluding his morally admirable act. The second definition, however, presents a moral evaluation that is relevant and important to followers and society.

Those who argue for a strictly non-moral definition may respond that other virtues can take the place of the integrity attribution. Jones can be labeled compassionate, honest, and courageous. While this is true, none of these adequately replaces the sense conveyed by saying, "Jones is a person of integrity," which means he is morally trustworthy. My observations about language are not intended to exclude integrity from meaning wholeness or consistency, but rather to emphasize that defining integrity as something close to moral trustworthiness is a fundamental feature of our language and culture.

The second reason integrity should not be limited to a non-moral definition is that books and scholarly literature consistently rely on its ethical meaning. My brief review of Bill George's leadership books indicate that two of his three integrity definitions are

related to moral content. Also consider Palanski and Yammarino's review of business literature in which they found twenty separate business literature sources that use integrity to indicate some moral virtue (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). Brown and Trevino (2006) found that three leadership theories all have an integrity component that is based on moral commitments. Even though integrity is used by authors to indicate a variety of ethical virtues, a lack of clarity should not lead us to abandon moral integrity, especially if it can be operationalized in the leadership context without losing its moral content.

One study has found integrity closely linked with our concept of a morally just person. Walker and Hennig (2004) undertook a study examining people's conceptions of moral exemplarity, in particular their conceptions of the prototypical just person. They asked 131 participants to rank the attributes that most accurately describe a just exemplar on a scale from (1) (*extremely inaccurate*) to (8) (*extremely accurate*). Out of 113 attributes that were ranked, the attribute "has integrity" scored a 7.15 on the 8-point scale and was the 7th highest descriptor of a just person. While not conclusive, this data shows a strong tendency for people to associate integrity with just people and not only "whole" or "consistent" people (Walker & Hennig, 2004).

The third reason to not abandon integrity as a moral concept is because moral integrity is used in important research about ethical commitments. For example, Craig and Gustafson (1998) developed the *Perceived Leadership Integrity Scale* (PLIS) that measures subordinate perceptions of their leader's lack of unethical behavior. Parry and Proctor-Thomson (2002) use a revised version of the PLIS to evaluate the connection between moral integrity and transformational leadership. In their research they use Becker's (1998) definition that, "integrity is commitment in action to a morally justifiable set of principles and values ..." (p. 157–158). Additional integrity research is being conducted to determine how a person's moral commitments determine their personal and moral identity. Schlenker has developed an Integrity Scale to measure the strengths of a person's principled or ethical ideology as opposed to an expedient ideology that is far less committed to ethical principles (Schlenker, 2008; Schlenker, Miller, & Johnson, 2009). Other studies demonstrate that integrity tests that evaluate a job candidate's ethical behavior predict their ethical behavior on the job. One study found that a large hotel that screened candidates with an integrity test had much lower workers compensation claims than hotels that did not screen their candidates (Sturman & Sherwyn, 2007).

Given these three reasons for maintaining integrity as a moral concept (common usage, literature support, research programs), I suggest avoiding a single, non-moral definition of integrity. The result would be the loss of important ethical aspects of integrity that dominate the term's meaning in most contexts. A more fruitful and less contradictory path would be to continue using the concept of personal integrity or *behavioral integrity* to research the consistency/wholeness aspect of integrity. Simons and others have produced important research findings using this concept (Leroy, Palanski, & Sims, 2012; Simons, 2002). Meanwhile, identifying the central features of *moral integrity* will allow researchers to determine how these can be used for leadership research and development. In the next section I bridge the gap between discussions of integrity and leadership theory to determine the core features of integrity. I then define three types of leadership integrity based on these features that could guide moral integrity research.

2. Leadership and moral integrity

The leadership literature's use of integrity varies. Some discussions of integrity define it as a general moral concept while others define it as honesty, trustworthiness, and authenticity. Other discussions claim that "moral character" is an important trait of effective leaders and do not use the word "integrity." Including discussions of ethics and morality when developing a leadership theory, however, is usually unquestioned. What leadership research must do is seek to understand the values behind moral integrity and leadership without moving to a value-free social science (Ciulla, 2004). In this section I survey three leadership theories and their use of moral concepts such as integrity. Using these theories and the research upon which they stand, I derive a definition of integrity and the cognitive constructs that support it.

2.1. Leadership theories and integrity

Linking leadership with morality is a consistent theme in modern leadership theories. An excellent overview of leadership ethics and leadership theories is provided by Brown and Trevino (2006). They begin by describing ethical leadership as, "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (p. 595). They go on to explain that personal traits such as integrity are linked to perceived leader effectiveness, though they use integrity as a general moral term. The specific traits noted in interviews about ethical leaders were honesty, being trustworthy, and behaving ethically. In another survey, the perception of ethical leadership was positively related to affective trust in the leader. They summarize their ethical leadership surveys by noting that ethical leaders are, "characterized as honest, caring, and principled individuals who make fair and balanced decisions," and "do not just talk a good game—they practice what they preach and are proactive role models for ethical conduct" (2006, p. 597).

Brown and Trevino (2006) use the ethical leadership construct to compare and contrast three leadership theories. The first leadership theory is *transformational leadership*. Burns (1978) argues that transformational leaders have strong moral commitments and then leverage them to elevate and influence their followers. Following in his steps, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) develop a more directly ethical version of this theory and describe authentic transformational leaders and pseudo-transformational leaders. They propose that authentic transformational leaders have a strong ethical core. They state that authentic transformational leaders differ from imposters by their "virtues of authenticity, integrity, truthfulness, and credibility" (1999, p. 197). The authentic transformational leader is also altruistic and seeks to help others (Price, 2003). In their

analysis, Brown and Trevino (2006) note that transformational leadership is positively related to perceived leader integrity, defined as a “commitment in action to a morally justifiable set of principles and values” (Becker, 1998, p. 157–158). Both transformational leaders and ethical leaders overlap on the personal characteristic of acting “consistently with their moral principles (i.e. integrity)” (Brown & Trevino, 2006, p. 599). Notice that ethical leadership surveys and transformational leadership research define integrity as having and then acting in accord with moral principles.

The second leadership theory is *authentic leadership* which describes those leaders who achieve authenticity through “self-awareness, self-acceptance, and authentic actions and relationships” (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). Authentic leaders have been described as having core moral beliefs and values (Brown & Trevino, 2006; Luthans & Avolio, 2003), but others have avoided associating ethical values with authentic leadership because of operationalization concerns (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Brown and Trevino (2006) and Gardner et al. (2005) argue that authentic leaders, like ethical leaders, have core moral values upon which they act consistently (i.e. integrity). The “authenticity” aspect of personal self-regulation combines with moral values to produce consistent moral action across circumstances. “Authentic behavior refers to actions that are guided by the leader’s true self as reflected by core values, beliefs, thoughts and feelings, as opposed to environmental contingencies or pressures from others” (Gardner et al., 2005, pp. 347). Once again integrity is defined as a person having moral principles and consistently acting upon them. The authentic leadership theory adds to this the idea that a leader’s self-concept or identity is the origin of moral action.

Brown and Trevino (2006) next compare *spiritual leadership* to their ethical leadership construct. Spiritual leadership involves using one’s values and behaviors to intrinsically motivate followers and oneself to experience “spiritual survival” through being called or being a member of a greater whole (Fry, 2003). Reave (2005) explains that spiritual leadership requires a leader to embody spiritual values which include integrity. Setting a positive example of a trustworthy person is the purpose of living out these values. One overlap of spiritual leadership and the ethical leadership construct is integrity defined as consistency among actions and moral values.

In light of these three theories and the ethical leadership construct, we can identify the central features of moral integrity. Leaders who have moral integrity consistently act from their moral principles or values, therefore moral integrity can be defined as *acting consistently from moral values*. Because the leader consistently avoids violating moral values, we can attribute integrity to the leader which means the leader is *morally trustworthy*. If we go one step further and ask what cognitive structure within the leader justifies an attribution of integrity, I propose that leaders with moral integrity have identity-conferring commitments to moral values. Table 1 presents a breakdown of my definition of moral integrity, the result of demonstrating moral integrity, and the cognitive structure that produces consistent behavior across situations.

Now that we have a working definition and construct for moral integrity, we can take a step back and re-analyze a general notion of integrity that can include different types of integrity such as moral integrity and personal integrity. On my account, any type of integrity requires the cognitive structures of identity-conferring commitments to values, but the types of values can vary from person to person. The reason the attribution of “integrity” requires identity-conferring commitments (i.e. the strength of the commitment) and values (i.e. the object of the commitment) is because integrity attributions require reliable and consistent actions in accordance with values across situations. These cognitive constructs produce this situation-resistant reliability. Below I provide details and research on the identity-conferring commitments and values that produce different types of integrity.

2.1.1. Identity and identity-conferring commitments

(Williams & Smart, 1973) claims that a person’s integrity is constituted by those commitments to values, principles, and life projects that confer an identity on oneself. These specific *identity-conferring commitments* are ones with which a person is “deeply and extensively involved and identified” (Williams & Smart, 1973, p. 116). McFall (1987) argues that it is a conceptual truth that, “personal integrity requires unconditional commitments” that confer an identity to the person (p. 16). The central thesis that these philosophers agree on is that in order to have integrity, a person must identify with some values to such an extent that it makes losing her integrity possible, or to quote McFall (1987), “In order to sell one’s soul, one must have something to sell” (p. 10).

I broadly define *identity* as who the person believes she is as well as who she wants to be. To have an identity is to have a self-concept of who one is and is not. For example, a leader who greatly values honesty and wants it to define her self-concept makes honesty a more fundamental part of her identity than a leader who minimally wants to be honest. A leader who greatly values predictability will make controlling things and people a more fundamental part of her identity. The strength of these particular commitments to values makes them identity-conferring commitments, or those commitments that define a self.

In the realm of moral integrity, social cognitivists and personality psychologists have conducted numerous experiments to determine if people actually have a *moral identity* that emerges from their identity-conferring commitments to moral values.

Table 1

Breakdown of integrity as a moral concept.

Moral integrity defined	Result of observing the consistent moral action	What cognitive structure produces integrity?
A leader has moral integrity if he or she consistently actson moral values across situations.	To say a leader has “moral integrity” is to say that the leader is “morally trustworthy”.	Identity-conferring commitments to moral values.

Recent research programs have revealed individual cognitive structures that have been labeled moral identity. These findings demonstrate that some people have internalized moral principles to a great degree and that their *working self-concept* (i.e. an identity that is accessible to one's memory at a particular time) can easily access these principles across situations.

Researchers have found that these people typically demonstrate more pro-social behaviors and social responsibility than those with a less accessible moral identity (Aquino, Reed, Thau, & Freeman, 2007). In one experiment that incentivized subjects to lie, individuals with strongly internalized moral principles lied less often than individuals with weakly internalized moral principles (Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, & Felps, 2009). A similar experiment found that individuals with strongly internalized moral principles cooperated more often during an investment game which incentivized subjects to defect from other players (Aquino et al., 2009). While these two experiments involved priming some subjects with moral content before the experiments began, the researchers found that individuals with strongly internalized moral principles responded consistently to these primes more than those with weakly internalized moral principles. In other words, a person's moral identity moderates her behavior, especially when brought to the attention of her working self-concept.

In other moral identity research, Schlenker et al. (2009) propose that a person of moral integrity *commits* to certain principles and that this changes her identity. Schlenker et al. note that, "Commitment crystallizes and strengthens corresponding attitudes, making them more accessible in memory, more resistant to subsequent change, and more likely to guide future behavior" (p. 318). Commitments can be to goals, principles, people, organizations, or a set of ideas. For example, a person who commits to be an honest person can access this standard easily from her memory, is more likely to endure difficulty rather than act dishonestly, and will behave honestly across a variety of situations. Commitments also make alternative actions less appealing and unjustifiable.

The upshot of this conceptualization is that when a leader commits to particular values or principles, the leader is motivated to act on those principles. In Schlenker et al.'s words, "When there is a strong linkage between self and principles, represented by feelings of duty or personal obligation to follow the principles, the principles have been both internalized and appropriated as part of one's identity" (2009, p. 319). The hypothesis put forward is that consistent behavior results from having an identity based on identity-conferring commitments to values. In the case of moral integrity, internalized moral principles and values form a moral identity that produces consistent moral behaviors.

To test these conceptual frameworks, Schlenker (2008) developed an Integrity Scale to assess the strengths of subject commitments to principles. The items evaluate three characteristics of a person's commitments: the inherent value of principled conduct, the strength of their commitment to principles, and their unwillingness to rationalize unprincipled behavior. Instrument items included, "Integrity is more important than financial gain;" "The true test of character is a willingness to stand by one's principles, no matter what one has to pay;" and "Some actions are wrong no matter what the consequences or justification" (Schlenker et al., 2009, p. 322–323). Aquino and Freeman (2009); Aquino and Reed (2002) developed a similar measure of the centrality of moral identity. Both Freeman's instruments have good internal consistency and test-retest reliability.

Recalling the discussion of leadership integrity, it appears that leaders with moral integrity most likely have identity-conferring commitments to moral values. The research also suggests that leaders with moral integrity have a moral identity that is easily accessible to their working self-concept. The research on moral identity also provides a well established and growing operationalization of moral integrity that leadership researchers can build on in the future.

2.1.2. Moral values and personal values

The leadership literature reviewed above offers some specific moral values that leaders are expected to have based on surveys, interviews, and the claims of leadership scholars. Some of the moral values include honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, and being principled and altruistic (Brown & Trevino, 2006). As ethicists know, listing and justifying a particular list of values as "moral" is a controversial exercise because moral values confront us with questions about their origins and their claims on our behaviors. If moral values are relative to a person or society, then they have little claim to our attention unless they are instrumentally useful. If moral values actually exist outside of human opinion, then they claim our attention because of their universal status.

The moral values listed in the leadership literature appear to be *normative* because the claim is made that these values should guide appropriate conduct without grounding the particular values in one community or another. In other words, ethical leaders are expected to live by a set of moral values even though they may not match the values of their followers. While I acknowledge the relativist, instrumentalist, and universalist tensions that surround the justification of moral values, it is beyond the scope of this paper to resolve these issues fully. For the purpose of understanding integrity, however, I do attempt to ground moral values using a normative approach. I base my conception of moral values such as honesty and fairness on some uncontroversial moral expectations that humans have toward each other. For example, the moral value of honesty is different from the personal value of becoming a chess Grandmaster because in general humans have a right to expect honesty from each other, but have no right to expect others to become a Grandmaster. Consider the following two cases in this regard:

Case 1. Leader Jack is committed to the value of earning money. He refuses to compromise his commitment even when his financial cuts in safety equipment result in injuring his employees.

Case 2. Leader Jill refuses to obey shareholder demands to cut costs because it will reduce the safety of plant operations. Because Leader Jill will not make cuts that could harm her employees, she tells the shareholders to sell their shares or replace her.

One clear distinction between Case 1 and Case 2 is that Jack's actions are in accordance with his personal values while Jill's actions are in accordance with some type of moral values. Broadly speaking, *personal values* are those values that a person commits to for her own reasons and that the community has no general right to expect the person to actualize. Personal values

are justified as important by personal reasons, needs, and expectations. Examples of personal values include becoming a chess Grandmaster, belief in the superiority or inferiority of capitalist or socialist principles, personal wealth, and the importance of stamp collecting. In the case above, Jack's identity-conferring commitment to the personal value of accumulating wealth is chosen for his own reasons and the human community is not justified in expecting Jack to actualize that value. If he does not become wealthy, the human community is not justified in condemning or correcting him for his failure.

I define *moral values* as those values that the human community in general has a right to expect its members to practice. The idea of being a member of a human or *moral community* has been developed in the writings of Strawson (1968) and most recently Darwall (2006). The moral community is shorthand for our fellow humans. Darwall argues that our moral obligations and responsibilities to others are in force from the perspective of the moral community because other members of the moral community expect us to act according to moral values. Sidgwick (2000) similarly observed that, "the most important part of the function of morality consists in maintaining habits and sentiments which seem necessary to the continued existence, in full numbers, of a society of human beings under actual circumstances" (p. 94). Examples of these moral values include honesty, fidelity, keeping one's word, justice, and respecting each other.

The main difference between personal values and moral values is their justification. As mentioned above, personal values are justified by personal reasons, goals, and expectations. But moral values are justified by both instrumental and moral reasons that directly relate to the maintenance of interpersonal trust within the moral community. For example, moral values are justified because the moral community has an instrumental need for reliable negative action (e.g. we won't lie to each other) and positive action (e.g. we will help each other in emergencies) for it to function and survive (Williams, 1985). Wallace (1978) also argues that community-oriented character traits or *conscientiousness*, which I loosely equate to an identity-conferring commitment to moral values, are essential for communities to function. The character traits that fit within conscientiousness are "honesty, fairness, truthfulness, and being a person of one's word" (Wallace, 1978, p. 90). The benefits of trust, efficiency, and survival are instrumental reasons that justify the importance of moral values and also justify community members expecting each other to actualize these values.

Moral values are also justified by moral reasons which are those demands for certain behaviors that members of the moral community can reasonably make upon each other. Consider two neighbors Jane and Sam who talk to each other while doing yard work. Most people would agree that they are justified in demanding honesty from each other, all things being equal, because they are members of the same moral community. If Sam is justified in demanding honesty from Jane, then most people would say that he is also justified in feeling upset if she lies to him. The demand for honesty and the resentment from being lied to are both justified by the fact that moral community members are expected to actualize positive and negative moral values in their relations with other members. It follows that moral values are important and not easily dismissed by members.

When we return to Leaders Jack and Jill, we note that they both have identity-conferring commitments to different types of values. Jack has an identity-conferring commitment to the personal value of wealth which is justified as important by his personal reasons. He has a form of personal integrity, but not moral integrity. The importance of Jack's personal value of accumulating wealth is not justified by reasons that refer to the function and reasonable expectations of the moral community. Instead, he justifies the importance of this value by his own reasons, or those reasons that are relative to him and have no power to obligate anyone else. Jack can remove his obligation to his personal values by changing his values. He cannot, however, remove himself from the moral community's reasonable expectation that he not harm his employees. Moral values apply to Jack whether he chooses to recognize them or not and the moral community is justified in demanding that he fulfill his leadership obligations to actualize moral values.

The result of Jack *not* committing himself to moral values is that he is not morally trustworthy (see Table 1). Much like the Tuskegee researchers, Jack does not have moral integrity because he lacks identity-conferring commitments to moral values. He does not consider the lives of his employees, "and without this moral compass, no one can be said to be deserving of the admiration that is signaled by justified attributions of integrity" (Graham, 2001, p. 245).

In contrast to Jack, Leader Jill has identity-conferring commitments to moral values, and the moral community can observe her uncompromising commitment not to harm her employees. For a leader like Jill, we are justified in saying that she has moral integrity because of her identity-conferring commitment to moral values. Because Jill defends the welfare of her employees (a moral value) even when pressured to compromise, the result as described in Table 1 is that Jill is viewed as morally trustworthy. Note again that if Jill decides to violate her moral values, then the moral community is justified in resenting her, demanding an apology, and labeling her as morally untrustworthy.

We see now that leaders can develop identity-conferring commitments to different values. In the case of Jack, he has an identity-conferring commitment to wealth and no commitment to moral values. The result is that he is a leader who lacks moral integrity, and yet he does have some *form* of integrity that I have temporarily labeled personal integrity. In the case of Jill, she is a leader with moral integrity because she has identity-conferring commitments to moral values.

One could object to my moral values account because grounding these values in the expectations of a moral community could invite moral relativism into the determination of moral integrity. Some could argue that a "moral community" could demand dishonesty of its leaders or expect them to harm a minority group to benefit the majority. In response I argue that the three or four moral values I have listed (e.g. honesty, fairness, keeping promises, not harming innocent people) fit with normatively appropriate conduct among humans regardless of the demands of a community. Even a group of thieves must tell the truth to each other and keep their commitments or their group will collapse in internal strife. For the purpose of analyzing moral integrity, I hold that the limited normative values that I have identified can be justified and even operationalized to determine their content. Just as Becker (1998) defines moral integrity as a "commitment in action to a morally justifiable set of principles and values," I also contend that to have moral integrity a leader must act on morally justified principles and values, regardless of the

skewed and sometimes evil practices of the community in which they live (p. 157-158). In fact, leaders with identity-conferring commitments to moral values may be required to elevate and transform the moral deficits of their communities.

3. The three faces of leadership integrity

Identity-conferring commitments and different values combine to create different types of integrity. I have described the cognitive structure supporting moral integrity and personal integrity above, and in this section I apply and expand these constructs to identify three types of *leadership integrity*. The three types of leadership integrity are substantive leadership integrity, formal leadership integrity, and personal leadership integrity.

3.1. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf—substantive leadership integrity

In 2005, Liberians elected Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to the presidency of a country ravaged by years of civil war and infested with corrupt government officials. Not long into her first year she decided to go to the 118,000 acre Firestone Natural Rubber Company plantation where a conflict between employees and management resulted in the deaths of two people. About 50,000 people live on the plantation and Firestone is the largest employer in the country. The workers demanded better housing, better education for their children, and a pay increase of 37.5% promised by past president Charles Taylor. Johnson-Sirleaf met with the Firestone managers and negotiated better housing and education facilities, but she had to agree with management that they could not give every worker the raise Taylor promised. After the negotiations she addressed thousands of workers who were expecting to receive their raise. She told them, “Let’s tell the truth. We cannot push the company on that one” (Junge & Johnson, 2008). She told the workers the truth even though it was unpopular and could hurt her ability to lead the country.

Earlier I argued that to say that a leader “has integrity” in the moral sense is to indicate that the leader is morally trustworthy. President Johnson-Sirleaf has proven that she is a morally trustworthy leader. The Firestone incident is one example of her identity-conferring commitment to the moral value of honesty. As evidence, she told thousands of workers about her decision on the 37.5% salary increase. Instead of putting off the announcement, blaming the problem on Firestone or lying, Johnson-Sirleaf told the workers the truth. In a video of the exchange, the workers were not happy about the announcement. Some even appear stunned that the president told them the truth (Junge & Johnson, 2008). By telling the truth when the easy path was to lie or blame others, Johnson-Sirleaf proved that she is a leader of moral integrity or what I classify as having substantive leadership integrity.

To have *substantive leadership integrity*, a leader must meet the baseline characteristics of having identity-conferring commitments to values. In addition to these characteristics, Johnson-Sirleaf has substantive leadership integrity because she has identity-conferring commitments to moral values. As described above, moral values are those values that members of the moral community expect all its members to avoid violating. A leader with substantive leadership integrity will not compromise the values of honesty, respect, fairness, and trust. In line with the moral integrity discussion, a leader with substantive leadership integrity cannot only be trusted, but is trustworthy (see Table 1). She is a person who can be trusted not only to do what she has promised, but to stand by moral values even when compromise may provide her with great gain.

An important difference should be noted among authentic transformational leadership, authentic leadership, spiritual leadership, and substantive leadership integrity. According to the ethical leadership literature presented above, authentic transformational leaders have a strong ethical core and express their moral character in behaviors and not only words. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) further describe authentic transformational leaders as altruistic because they are “inwardly and outwardly concerned about the good that can be achieved for the group, organization, or society for which they feel responsible” (p. 188). Likewise, Brown and Trevino (2006) cite research that describes ideal authentic leaders as altruistic and concerned for others. The spiritual leaders discussed above have a high concern for others and demonstrate altruistic love (Fry, 2003).

The difference between these theories and substantive leadership integrity is that to attribute substantive integrity to a leader is *not* to imply that the leader is altruistic. As a reminder, the original meaning of integrity combines the Sanskrit roots *tag* meaning “to touch or handle” and *in* meaning “not.” The result is the word *integ* which can be interpreted as not touched, pure, healthy, and uncorrupt. The definition does not imply that to have substantive leadership integrity is to be altruistic and concerned for others. It *does* mean that the leader will not violate moral values lest she be unfaithful to her deepest commitments and thereby corrupt herself. The point I draw from this comparison is that a leader with substantive leadership integrity does not exactly fit the three leadership theories above. However it would be impossible to fit any of these theories without also demonstrating substantive leadership integrity.

The benefit of identifying substantive leadership integrity as a type of leadership integrity is that it identifies an observable and testable ethical notion of integrity that matches common usage. If a person were to say, “Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is a leader with integrity,” we can acknowledge this statement as referring to her identity-conferring commitments to moral values and the resulting moral trust we can have in her. Substantive leadership integrity stands out as the genuine integrity that extends from Cicero’s speech about poor leadership to our modern ethical leaders.

3.2. Amon Goeth—formal leadership integrity

Amon Goeth was a Nazi and SS commander who operated a Forced Labor Camp outside Cracow, Poland. He demonstrated an identity-conferring commitment to the eradication of the Jews and saw executions as a form of “political, racial, and moral

justice” (Keneally, 1982, p. 168). He would allegedly shoot Jews from his bedroom balcony as they walked across the camp. Industrialist Oscar Schindler attempted to convince Goeth to restrain his violence toward prisoners and a rumor spread that Goeth had temporarily given up arbitrarily murdering prisoners. Keneally (1982) writes, “But the allure of clemency vanished quickly. If there was a brief respite, those who were to survive and give testimony of their days at Plaszow would not be aware of it. The summary assassinations seemed continual to them” (p. 220).

Goeth is a leader with some form of leadership integrity, but what type of integrity does he have? The problem with calling him a “leader of integrity” in a moral sense is that he is a moral monster and we do not usually attribute admirable traits to such leaders. At the same time, Goeth demonstrates the identity-conferring commitments to values which indicate a leader with some type of integrity. He also meets Palanski and Yammarino’s (2007) and Simons’ (2002) definition of integrity because he is a person who has *behavioral integrity* as evidenced by his consistent actions in accordance with his statements. He tells his guards that he will eradicate the Jews from Europe and he spends each day acting out his commitment. Simons (2008) understands the ethical implications of his definition and describes how he must grudgingly agree that unethical and selfish people can have behavioral integrity (p. 6). At the same time he focuses on the benefits of narrowly defining behavioral integrity rather than suggesting that behavioral integrity is the preferred definition for all uses of the concept.

While we could label Goeth’s type of integrity behavioral integrity, this would not differentiate him from ethical leaders who similarly align their words and deeds. A more specific classification for Goeth’s type of integrity is *formal leadership integrity*. Like other leaders he has identity-conferring commitments to act in accordance with values and he consistently actualizes those values. What is unique about Goeth and monstrous leaders like him is that they have identity-conferring commitments to *immoral values* and so their integrity is a form or shadow of moral integrity.

The key to understanding different types of leadership integrity is found in the different values to which leaders commit. Unlike Johnson-Sirleaf who has identity-conferring commitments to moral values, Goeth is equally committed to immoral values. Immoral values are directly opposed to moral values because they violate the moral values that allow the moral community to function and develop trusting relationships. For example, moral values reject the harming of innocent people while immoral values would justify harming innocent people. Moral values would require being honest to other humans, while immoral values permit dishonesty to others when a more important value is at stake. One could argue that Goeth’s “more important value” was vanquishing the “evil” Jews from Europe and therefore his actions were justified by his commitment to a moral cause. But even if this were true, Goeth would still not be a candidate for substantive leadership integrity because he is terribly mistaken about what is moral and what is immoral. A leader with substantive leadership integrity could not possibly be this wrong about what is moral and what is immoral.

Another concern about Goeth’s behavior being classified as a type of integrity is that he may not seem that different from another person who practices immoral actions. Or maybe Johnson-Sirleaf is not that different from a person who practices moral actions. Why apply the concepts of formal leadership integrity and substantive leadership integrity to them and not to other leaders who act in similar ways? My response to this concern is that a person who practices immoral or moral actions could be a candidate for an attribution of integrity. But good or bad behavior is not enough to indicate the reliable and consistent behavior *across situations* that characterizes those who have some type of integrity. For example, an SS officer may shoot prisoners, but only when commanded to do so. He may also avoid killing women and children and even show mercy at times. In this case the officer practices immoral actions, but he does not have the identity-conferring commitment to killing that identifies Goeth as having formal leadership integrity. Similarly, a politician may tell the truth most of the time, but stretch the truth when necessary to win political favor. Unlike Johnson-Sirleaf, this politician does not demonstrate the identity-conferring commitment to honesty needed for an attribution of substantive leadership integrity. Evil people and good people behave in certain ways, but they may not have the deep resolve needed for some type of integrity attribution.

There are two benefits of identifying the formal leadership integrity type. The first benefit is that it allows us to acknowledge that these leaders do have identity-conferring commitments to values and that they align their words and deeds. Determining this integrity baseline allows us to explain why we must begrudgingly recognize the uncompromising determination of unethical leaders. It also explains why these leaders *appear* to have integrity. The second benefit is that we can set these unethical leaders apart from ethical leaders. By recognizing formal leadership integrity, we can acknowledge the strong commitment of unethical leaders while also acknowledging their deplorable values. These leaders have a form and a shadow of substantive leadership integrity, but there is no moral substance linked to their deepest (and darkest) commitments.

3.3. Thomas More—personal leadership integrity

Sir Thomas More became Lord Chancellor to English king Henry VIII in 1529. A strong defender of the Pope’s authority above that of the king’s in certain matters, More refused to sign a letter asking the Pope to annul Henry’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon. He eventually was allowed to resign but was still pressured to compromise his religious beliefs. In 1534, More refused to swear his allegiance to the Parliamentary Act of Succession because of an anti-papal preface in the oath and his refusal to uphold Henry’s divorce from Catherine. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London and eventually tried as a traitor in 1535. When offered the king’s mercy if he would change his mind about the marriage, More stated, “I beseech Almighty God that I may continue in the mind I am in, through his grace, unto death.” He was convicted of treason and sentenced to death. Before the executioners ax fell he told the crowd, “I die the king’s good servant, and God’s first” (Sir Thomas More, 2010).

In addition to formal leadership integrity and substantive leadership integrity, another type of leadership integrity is needed to account for cases in which the leader has identity-conferring commitments to neither moral nor immoral values. Sir Thomas

More's refusal to violate his religious convictions appears to be such a case. More has identity-conferring commitments to the decrees of the Catholic Church and the Pope. On my account, one could argue that the objects of his identity-conferring commitments are not moral values because they are not justified by the expectations of the moral community. In other words, More's refusal to sign an oath does not violate any moral values like honesty or respect. Instead, More has identity-conferring commitments to personal values that he has chosen for his own reasons. As a reminder, personal values are those values that an individual determines are important for his or her own reasons, but the moral community does not require the leader or anyone else to abide by these values. In More's case, if he were to change his mind about his personal values he would not violate any reasonable obligations he may have to the moral community (e.g. telling the truth or keeping one's word). He would, however, violate his personal values of allegiance to the Pope.

I call the third type of leadership integrity *personal leadership integrity* because it is characterized by a leader's identity-conferring commitment to personal values. A leader with personal leadership integrity may at times elevate a personal value to the status of a moral value. More and others who have identity-conferring commitments to personal values may even make a particular value a part of their consciences. By conscience I mean the collection of identity-conferring commitments and beliefs that one considers it morally wrong to violate personally. The leader who violates this value is subjectively experiencing the violation as an immoral act. But at the same time, the value is unlike moral values because the leader has no reasonable obligation to the moral community to live out the value. Personal values can take many forms and may include life projects (e.g. serve the under-privileged, become an exceptional teacher), personal lifestyle choices (e.g. vegetarianism, home schooling children, recycling), and religious principles (e.g. obey scripture, only eat Kosher food).

Leaders with personal leadership integrity, however, must monitor their actions to make sure their identity-conferring commitments to personal values do not result in the violation of moral values. Consider the story of another leader of More's time who was his main opponent. William Tyndale was a Cambridge scholar who held opinions that contradicted those of the Pope, English Bishops, and More. In particular, Tyndale was convinced that only the Bible should determine what the church does and therefore everyone should have access to a translation. When Catholic leaders in England banned him from producing English translations, Tyndale fled to Germany in 1524 and began translating the Bible into English. He completed the New Testament in 1525 and started translating the Old Testament. More's dislike for Tyndale's teachings drove him to write two volumes (his longest book) arguing against Tyndale's views of the Church. He also sought Tyndale's capture. In 1535 More was beheaded for his own convictions. As for Tyndale, he was captured in Antwerp, Belgium and was executed by hanging in 1536. His final words were, "Lord! Open the king of England's eyes!" (Sir Thomas More, 2010; William Tyndale, 2010).

Both More and Tyndale *appear* to have substantive leadership integrity, but on closer inspection it is their personal leadership integrity that we admire. They appear to be morally trustworthy, but at the same time they fought viciously against each other and More wanted to imprison Tyndale for violating Catholic edicts. In this case, both men elevated a personal value to that of a moral value which became part of their identity and conscience. Evaluating them as having substantive leadership integrity would require more research into their lives, but we can definitely agree that their identity-conferring commitment to personal values (e.g. Tyndale's Bible for the common man and More's refusal to approve of the king's divorce) did not violate moral values. In a sense this means that they have not "disqualified" themselves from having substantive leadership integrity.

I have now described three types of leadership integrity to emphasize that leaders can demonstrate identity-conferring commitments to various values without necessarily making them leaders who have strict moral integrity. Even though the three leaders appear to have some form of integrity because of their identity-conferring commitments, we are only justified in attributing substantive leadership integrity to Johnson-Sirleaf. She is the only leader committed to moral values based on the abbreviated cases I presented. In terms of leadership theory, she is a candidate for authentic transformational leadership and authentic leadership attributions because of her substantive leadership integrity. Goeth does not meet the minimum requirements for these attributions and I would suggest that More probably meets most of the requirements if we consider his entire life's work. I also emphasize that substantive leadership integrity is not mysterious and can be operationalized and distinguished from other types of leadership integrity.

4. Summary and future research directions

A "leader of integrity" is often thought of as an ethical leader. However, recent discussions of integrity have substituted non-moral definitions of integrity for its traditional ethical meaning. These discussions rightly describe the confusion surrounding integrity as a moral concept, but I have attempted to resolve the confusion by defending the ethical meaning of integrity while acknowledging other important aspects of integrity. The word's rich history points to an ethical meaning while contemporary disputes have divided the word into a non-moral term meaning wholeness and a moral term meaning moral trustworthiness. The business and leadership literature has been less dogmatic about the meaning of integrity, but appears to have settled on the non-moral definition of fully integrated, whole, or consistently acting on one's statements.

Contrary to this view, I have argued that abandoning the ethical meaning of integrity goes far beyond common usage and is not helpful to those who want to study integrity as a moral concept. Using leadership theories about ethical leadership, I derived a definition and attribution criteria for integrity as a moral concept. I also explained observable and testable cognitive structures of identity-conferring commitments and values that produce different types of leadership integrity. I concluded my discussion by presenting three different types of leadership integrity and explaining how substantive, formal, and personal leadership integrity are based on identity-conferring commitments to particular types of values.

The three types of leadership integrity can establish a framework for future research that builds on current ethical leadership research and models. Substantive leadership integrity research can build on the work of Brown and Trevino (2006) whose comparison of ethical leadership and current leadership theories opens the door to discussing the importance of moral identity. Schlenker et al.'s (2009) and Aquino et al.'s (2009) moral identity experiments have demonstrated that some people have deep commitments to moral values and others do not. Drilling down to a leader's deepest moral commitments could explain their consistent or inconsistent moral behavior across situations. A further question to consider is whether or not leaders with substantive leadership integrity are trusted as much as or more than leaders with personal leadership integrity?

While research on substantive leadership integrity is closely connected to the ethical leadership literature, research on formal leadership integrity is difficult to find. In my personal research on destructive leaders such as Lenin, Stalin, Pol Pot, and various failed corporate leaders, I have found deep commitments to values such as power, prestige, and wealth. Often the destruction created by these leaders occurs because of their identity-conferring commitments to non-moral or immoral values which results in the subordination of moral values. More work is needed to identify the personality types and situational factors that consistently result in leaders subordinating moral values to immoral values. A research question worth pursuing is how does formal leadership integrity blind leaders to the moral expectations of the moral community in which they live?

Personal leadership integrity research can be informed and build on research in behavioral integrity (Leroy et al., 2012; Simons, 2002, 2008). The data coming from these studies suggests that followers respect and value leaders who demonstrate word-deed consistency. A further question to consider is if leaders who demonstrate personal leadership integrity identify specific values that produce behavioral integrity. Is personal leadership integrity, like that demonstrated by More and Tyndale, anchored to values or is it a general habit of following through on promises and commitments to others?

Pursuing these research questions can produce powerful insights into leadership behavior that deepens our understanding of leadership integrity. The research can also fill in gaps in the current leadership literature about the origins of ethical leadership behavior. By operationalizing the cognitive structures behind identity-conferring commitments to values (immoral, moral, or personal), researchers can better explicate a notion of integrity that preserves common usage while providing empirical support for developing substantive leadership integrity.

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