Integrity—Clarifying and Upgrading an Important Concept for Business Ethics

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the concept of integrity. Often, integrity is used as a characteristic of individuals showing a high fidelity to generally praised norms. Here, a more independent meaning is suggested so that the concept implies a clear distance to integration instead of mixing up the two concepts. Integrity implies integration within the individual of beliefs, statements, and action. To what degree can society and companies accommodate a pluralism created by individuals with integrity? Here, it is argued that integrity is a useful virtue and that a more integrity-friendly environment in companies would be beneficial by stimulating the empowered employee to make improved contributions. The concept is central for business ethics and crucial for the company's choice of such policies. A priority of integrity also affects organizational theory and the practical organizing of the company. Integrity is also vital for society at large for both citizens and companies, providing an ideological support for pluralism and a check on demands for

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conformism. The article also discusses how a virtue such as integrity can function as guidance for the individual operating in a complex world.

INTRODUCTION

This article argues that integrity can be a fruitful concept for a number of issues in business ethics and organization theory. A starting point is to give it a more precise meaning in order to avoid the fate of a diffuse positive word. This is the task for the first section. The article then proceeds by penetrating the relationship of this concept with integration. There is a confused use of the two terms in much of the literature. A third section discusses the relation between integrity and main ideas in the business ethics discourse. Do stakeholder theory, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and codes of ethics support or limit employee integrity? A fourth section examines the possibilities for autonomy and empowerment in the modern company. Where are organizations heading and should they be concerned about their own integrity and the integrity of their employees? The fifth section discusses trends in modern society that influence integrity issues. The sixth section examines what a virtue can and cannot accomplish as guidance to the right behavior. The article ends by drawing conclusions.

THE CONCEPT OF INTEGRITY

Integrity is frequently mentioned not least in business ethics. It is considered to be of positive value and is often seen as a virtue, but there is little agreement about a more precise meaning of the word. There are even some almost contradictory uses of the concept, which cause confusion and have led several scholars to ask for a clearer definition (Becker 1998; Parry and Proctor-Thomson 2002). This article will clarify the concept and further, make the claim that the concept is of high relevance for central issues in business ethics. One reason why the term is relevant is its popularity; an empirical study by Murphy (1998) of ethical statements by companies found that integrity was the most frequently mentioned virtue.

The word "integrity" comes from *integer*, meaning wholeness in Latin. This wholeness can be described as internal consistency, combining beliefs, words, and actions. The defining moment for this consistency is often a situation with external pressure to revise opinion or action. In many situations, there is strong pressure from authorities, colleagues, or common opinion to agree with a rival recommendation or at least to accept it without objections. The external pressure is not necessarily negative, such as some kind of threat; it might be a temptation, a positive opportunity but one implying abandonment of important personal beliefs. Integrity is manifested by expressing and following a personal position rather than adjusting and conforming to external demands. I will define integrity by what I see as the core meaning of the concept. The wholeness implies a combination of components (Cox et al. 2003); it is more similar to a molecule than to an atom. I think the following definition is at the optimal level that avoids becoming too narrow or too broad a definition:

> An agent has integrity if harboring positions of consistency and durability manifested in a correspondence between authentic values, espoused values, and behavior, also persisting in adverse situations.

Another frequent definition is to limit integrity to the correspondence between words and deeds (Palanski and Yammarino 2007). Sometimes, the term is defined as *perceptions* of nonhypocrisy (Simons 2002). The latter might be practical when, for example, investigating coworkers' opinions about a manager, but it is important to stress that the factual situation is central for the concept, not the image that surrounds a person. However, I think that such nonhypocrisy content is better described by concepts such as honesty and trustworthiness. My definition includes some personal reflection ending up in a position of some intellectual and emotional conviction. The position expressed and acted upon must be a part of the individual himself or herself and needs some substance. Integrity implies having some principles and values that can prevail despite pressure (McFall 1987). Always acting according to self-interest or agreeing with the prevailing opinion is not potential principles for illustrating integrity but rather a deficit of it.

There are also suggestions for more demanding definitions than the one chosen here. In my view, it is a problematic condition that

the principle defended has to be morally right in order to deserve the positive label integrity. Such a definition becomes very subjective if correspondence with the moral position of the observer is crucial. Some definitions stipulate that the position of the agent has to be considered good by society at large (Taylor 1992). Another demand is that the agent has to be objectively right to deserve the characteristic of integrity, making it "objective integrity" (Ashford 2000). Often agent-neutral morality or divine authority is seen as a necessary component of the morally right (Carter 1996). However, I do not think integrity should be restricted by a condition of morality in the sense of conforming to respected moral norms according to the observer's judgment. Rather, integrity should be open to disagreement in moral values and is, in fact, often attributed to a person with adversary judgments. It is less the content than the way of presenting, defending, and following one's principles that wins respect as integrity. Therefore, it is the agent himself or herself who decides to what degree his or her goals and values are agent-neutral or agent-relative. Taylor (1992, p. 33) claimed that morality is inescapably dialogical, but this is only partly correct. An agent is of course under influence from others, but the important choice, to agree or disagree, is taken by the individual. The idea that there are substantial conventional limits to principles that can be relevant for integrity is here labeled the "moralistic concept" of integrity.

The suggested definition does not imply that integrity means voicing a belief with a "proper respect" for others as proposed by Calhoun (1995). Rather, having integrity in practice means holding other beliefs than the dominant opinion and/or other views about how to act for these beliefs. A starting point is to connect integrity with a whistleblower rather than a team player. Being self-righteous or self-victimizing is not a requirement for integrity status, but neither is social competence. Being a team player is no disqualification for the integrity label, but there is a need of some kind of ideological spine and a responsibility for decisions taken even if one is not formally in charge. It does not imply always expressing an opinion, but it is an inclination not to be silent even when that would be much more convenient. I do not think the concept should be burdened with originality but with some authenticity. By including authentic values in the definition of integrity, I attribute weight but make the concept

authentic a bit narrower. I understand it to imply some intention depth in the position taken and a significant conviction; it is not whim. Authentic includes being honest to oneself in making up one's mind. Integrity implies in addition a willingness to stand up for these convictions, not only having them.

To be courageous implies knowing the danger and taking the risk, while a person unaware of the risk is just ignorant rather than brave. Similarly, integrity implies some awareness of taking a controversial position, of knowing something about the dominant normal belief and still taking a different position. A fundamentalist in a fundamentalist society has not shown any integrity, but in an unfriendly environment, his or her ideas will be exposed to pressure. Then a religious fundamentalist, a Nazi, and a communist can show integrity. I think that concepts should be based primarily on descriptive content, although this does not imply that there is no normative connotation. Concepts such as hardworking, courageous, and loyal have characteristics that are considered good by most people. Still, we should not proceed from that generalization to some kind of "ethical cleansing." Loyalty can be harmful, but if so, such loyalty should not be redefined and excluded. A rejection of an ideology does not imply that persons worshipping its beliefs cannot be hardworking, courageous, and loyal. Sometimes, they might also have integrity. This is a complement to Churchill's observation that most irritatingly, idiots are sometimes right.

In ethics, there is a perennial decay of words and concepts into just "good" or "bad." The discussion then becomes threatened by linguistic quarrels because of personal judgments about what a word's meaning should include in order to fit ideas of what is good. I see no point in striving for unity about which words should stand for something always good and which words should stand for something always bad. It is better to let most concepts be basically descriptive and more open to what the normative conclusions are, this in order to be able to draw these conclusions based on different situations rather than making the judgment automatic by first procrustering the semantics. To limit an influence by persuasive definitions, integrity can be seen as an adjunctive virtue and not as a substantive virtue (Audi and Murphy 2006). Such a virtue is not always good in itself, but it is often an important contributor to the good. The judgment that integrity is

a virtue has two components. One is that it is good for the agent to strive for integrity. It is a source of pride and self-esteem, and it fosters reflection and responsibilities, making the individual grow. The second reason is a liberal and republican view of society. If people express their opinion even when it deviates from hierarchical demands, peer pressure, and the political correctness of the time and place, this will contribute to the development of society.

There are several similarities to the argument for freedom of speech. All contributions are not worthy, but some are untrue, irritating, and destructive. Still, the proponents see a positive aggregated effect. The alternative to forbid statements that are deemed to be untrue, irritating, and destructive will have other consequences than just to promote the true, comforting, and constructive. Many times, choices have to be made between packages, each package carrying with it advantages as well as disadvantages. To suggest free speech for opinions in line with the own ideas is not a vote for free speech. The crucial question is whether to accept those thinking differently or not.

Integrity can be a latent characteristic of an individual. A person sharing the dominant ideas will be an unproven card regarding the integrity of his character. Another complication is that the person being a proponent of integrity might lack it and a person condemning integrity might be practicing it. An intolerant person might push other people to the limit of their tolerance, while a tolerant person might censure himself or herself not to irritate others harboring opposite opinions. The paradox of integrity is that it is nurtured in a tolerant environment but manifests itself most clearly in an intolerant environment. However, in line with the Aristotelian view of virtues, integrity is enhanced by practice. A habit of integrity fostered in a tolerant environment will be strengthened and also useful in a more intolerant one. Character is to some extent given by nature but also influenced by environment and prior decisions and actions taken by the individual. Integrity can be nurtured.

From the point of view of strict negative responsibility, there is no difference between doing harm and letting harm happen. The consequences are what matters, and the individual performance in the process has no real significance. From an integrity perspective, the role of the individual's beliefs, consent, and actions

is of importance (Williams 1973). There is not only the issue of responsibility, which implies a duty, but there is also a positive value, a right to agency. The claim of something being a virtue implies that a propensity to act in such a way is generally good for the individual and for society, although not that it is optimal in each situation. An objecting person might be plain wrong, with the main effect of wasting his or her own and others' time. But, generally, there are some positive effects of speaking up. The individual might also do things according to his or her own mind that turn out to be personal disappointments. However, there is some value in making a mistake of one's own, rather than suffering from a mistake caused by the judgment of somebody else. This is the position of seeing integrity as a virtue.

Of course it is not necessary to agree with a positive judgment of integrity, but I think it is helpful if people who disagree state that they accept the term as a suggested virtue, even though they consider this potential component in human character to be overrated. This is similar to claiming that some of the theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity) or the classic cardinal values (prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice) are more of a problem than a solution. One can be skeptical toward faith and fortitude with a full understanding of why these concepts are commonly seen as virtues while arguing for more prudence and less faith, more temperance and less fortitude. Such an argumentation is more constructive than introducing a rival content of the concepts of faith and fortitude in line with one's personal preference. Supporting all virtues with the subjective reservation "in the proper amount" might contribute to an impression of unity but will obfuscate real differences in judgment.

Even if few people explicitly argue against integrity, they make other priorities that imply at least an implicit criticism. To many persons, the prime problem is that there are too many dissidents. There is a striving for more coherence, more respect, and more unity. Demands for morality are generally demands for others to behave in line with norms that one supports. When praising loyalty, there is often an implicit attraction to submission (Campbell 1986). There is frequent criticism of other people's disregard for common rules, and there are many suggestions for additional restrictions. Simultaneously, most people have a very tolerant view of their own deviations from common norms (Wuthnow

1994). This difference in the judgment of derogation by oneself and others explains the combining of demands for wider personal choice with demands for stricter rules.

The suggested definition of integrity will be helpful when addressing some important questions. The normatively controversial content of integrity is interesting because it is relevant to a number of issues that are usually not treated analytically but in a marketing manner. As a positive but vague concept, integrity risks overexploitation. But as an individualistic virtue, it becomes an important aspect for a wide range of organizational and ethical issues.

The recommendation here is not to use the term as a moralistic concept but as a virtue. A nurtured virtue will increase a kind of behavior that generally is good, even if the substantial content in a specific situation is not in line with the normative judgment of the observers. The term "moralistic" is used when demanding specific endorsing normative judgments. This definition also implies the judgment that it is better to use the term as a combination of some components of a whole than as corresponding to just one component such as nonhypocrisy. The most important aspect of the concept is the persistence in adverse situations.

Terms such as authenticity has a connotation closer to combining emotions and positions, while integrity is more linked to behavior, making it less exclusively philosophical and more oriented toward doing.

INTEGRITY AND INTEGRATED

Sometimes, both in ordinary parlance and in academic articles, no distinction is made between the two concepts "integrity" and "integrated." An individual with integrity is then seen as a person following norms and instructions rather than voicing a different opinion. Some examples will illustrate how articles on business ethics use the concept at odds with the suggested definition in the first section.

Biegelman et al. (2007) wrote about "corporate integrity units." The mission of these units is to enhance compliance by organizing surveillance to prevent fraud by the employees. Many companies

have introduced "integrity tests" asking potential employees about their behavior. Both the diagnostic value and privacy concerns can be questioned (Karren and Zacharias 2007). At other occasions, it is not the proper behavior of individuals that is emphasized but the proper behavior of companies. Again, there is no connection with autonomy and independence but compliance with norms.

Integrity is often used in the sense of accepting supererogatory duties. The article "Corporate Integrity and Public Interest" by Marvin Brown (2006) is one of many contributions requesting companies to be more "embedded" by following values espoused in the general debate. This is, of course, a possible position but why call it integrity? The article "Leadership Integrity in a Factual Knowledge World" (Waddock 2007) is about management education, "which can be used to develop leaders and managers capable of taking the types of actions needed to create both ecological sustainability and an integrated knowledge world." Here, the central concept is "integrated," not "integrity." The book *The Balanced Company: A Theory of Corporate Integrity* (Kaptein and Wempe 2002) is also about integrating the company into the noneconomic environment. Also, common course books such as Carroll and Buchholtz (2003, p. 198) and Waddock (2002, p. 116) practice this (mis)use. This list can easily be expanded.

Any apparent harmony between integrity and being integrated is probably best illustrated by the term "a vertically integrated company." This descriptive term implies a level of independence for the company that can be a base for integrity. The point is that such a company has integrated its *own* parts and is a stronger whole. In contrast, to be integrated with *other* companies does not in itself support independence but rather dependence that undermines possibilities for integrity. Similar to physical things, individuals and companies can be a whole with substantial autonomy or else they are integrated into something larger and are not mainly a whole but rather a part.

The frequent use of integrity as synonymous with being integrated has caused confusion in the discussion. The problem perceived in that approach is often an insufficient level of integration—the employee should be a team player synchronizing his or her efforts with coworkers, management, and society at large. A conflict arises about all different opinions as to what is

good, and integration implicitly proposes adjustment to other people's judgment. In contrast, integrity as a virtue implies an explicitly positive view of trusting and acting upon one's own judgment.

I think it is justified—even if not diplomatic—to express the opinion that the confusion is not simply a mistake but deliberate. In reality, there is often a conflict between an alternative preferred by personal judgment and an alternative in line with the opinion of others. Often, one's own preference is overruled, but with some semantic juggling, the problem can be denied. It is a bit Orwellian to describe centralizing efforts at integration with the decentralizing concept of integrity. In his classical dark picture of opportunism in the corporate world, Jackall (1988) defined a team player as a person to whom the boss does not need to show the whip. In a harmonious world, all people work for the best of mankind and will find out what that is through a deliberative dialog. In a more realistic environment, there are clashes of interests and of beliefs. A central question is then to what degree obedience should be enforced. Integrity is an alternative to submission—not a more appealing word for it.

The discussion about integrity is a topic not only for business ethicists but also for moral philosophers, and they are generally protagonists of unselfishness. Evidently, all humans do deviate from dominant moral ideals, but these shortcomings make little impression on most philosophers. The discrepancies can be described as deviations, sins, or weakness of will, but such an idealistic stubbornness can be questioned. Is it not a problem to have too much submission to the general welfare function and other high aims that authorities and conformism advocate? No doubt, there is a need for social adjustment of egoistic wishes— but it seems improbable that recommendations of personal restrictions and suggested duties are to be accepted with little critical examination. A more focused morality is an alternative to idealistic universalism. There might be a legitimate place for personal goals in not being overwhelmed by moral obligations. Bernard Williams is a philosopher arguing for a place for integrity: "We must reject any model of personal practical thought according to which all my projects, purposes, and needs should be made discursively and at once, considerations *for* me. I must deliberate *from* what I am" (Williams 1985, p. 200). Hare's objection to

Williams' position is interesting. "What is remarkable is the bold-
ness of the persuasive definition by which he [Bernard Williams]
labels the self-centered pursuit of his own project 'integrity' and
accounts it a fault in utilitarianism that it could conflict with this"
(Hare 1982, p. 29). This quote illustrates not only a difference in
values and terminology but also a habit of universal idealists to
monopolize concepts with ethical connotations.

Moral disputes are hardly only about how to serve the general
welfare function. They concern which interests should be consid-
ered legitimate. Both as consumers and as employees, people
have personal goals promoting private interest and development.
There are also valid obligations to less universal entities than
humanity and the universe since people have common projects in
subgroups that are at odds with other groups. Different interests
lead to different judgments and different propositions for action.
Frequent conflicts indicate problems of priority and deviation from
the popular rhetoric of submission to the universal good.

Kaptein and Wempe (2002) demanded both "internal and exter-
nal integration" of integrity, but this seems similar to a harmony
assumption implying a high correspondence between actor and
observer about what is the right thing to do. However, problems
often arise because of different opinions, and the integrity concept
is useful for the conflict between internal conviction and external
demands. It implies that the agent should not do what others
want or expect without at least voicing her own opinion.

The conflict between integrity and integrated has been dis-
cussed in other terms for a long time. One influential attempt to
solve the conflict is Rousseau's idea of the general will (Rousseau
1762/1971). If the personal will and the dominant will in society
become identical, there is no conflict. At first glance, this might
sound attractive but it is a most dangerous idea. A common
distinction between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes is that
the first demands obedience, while the totalitarian demands not
only to be obeyed but also enthusiastically endorsed—the totali-
tarians insist on faithfulness to the prescribed general will.

I think it is necessary to discard dreams similar to a harmo-
nious general will and acknowledge a potential conflict between
internal values and external requirements of the social surround-
ing. But to what extent the individual should be coerced is a
controversial issue. In a democracy, the choice stands between

giving people more alternatives and to increase unity by moderate authoritarian measures. To a large extent, that is decided by etiquette rather than ethics and politics. What is the proper way to behave? Should I shut up and do as told or should I voice dissent?

Integrity is described as a potential personal virtue, but it can be enhanced or hindered in the organizations and society to which the person belongs. If reaching a positive evaluation of its effects for the person himself or herself and for his or her environment, there are reasons to consider possibilities to make the environment more "integrity-friendly." This is to be discussed first in the field of business ethics and later in the field of organizing.

INTEGRITY AND BUSINESS ETHICS

One important aspect of the issue of priority between "integrity" and "integrated" is its connection with different ideas in business ethics such as codes of ethics, CSR, and stakeholder theory. Companies operate in a world with some deregulation, but it is also a world of reregulation (Brunsson and Jacobsson 2000). Are more issues to be decided at the central level? Will employees take more decisions using their own judgment? For an employee, the deregulation and reregulation of company rules are of great importance, and business ethics suggestions will influence this development.

The mission of central authority in an organization is reorganization and instructions so there is a risk of oversupply (Tullberg 2006). One central issue is whether many central goals and programs are constructive or rather an illustration of "Something is being done." There are also many external vested interests. These new programs, standards, and reports that are to be produced and verified add up to something of a consultant utopia.

From the integrity position, it is often constructive to investigate the "less is more" hypothesis. A few company principles might provide guidance and still leave room for personal judgment but a large number of rules might be restrictive in a stifling way. More and higher goals also increase the risks of failure compared with ambitions. From a motivation point of view, it is stimulating to have a fair chance to reach goals. Unrealistic high targets for

sales will often demotivate sales representatives rather than spur them to achieve the improbable. Hence, to keep the balance, increased ambitions should be combined with more resources. However, companies might not delegate sufficient powers or resources to the employees for meeting these ambitious obligations. The responsibility is attributed, but the empowerment is missing. The employee has a few more goals to reach and his or her mission becomes more complicated so he or she probably has to consult his or her boss or some coworkers more often before acting. If an employee does something that results in criticism of the company, this will bring him or her into a hot spot. It seems likely that the boss will have little inclination to take some blame for a decision reached at a lower level. CSR has stressed that benefiting a lot of others and avoiding negative impact may sound uncontroversial, but in an organization, these responsibilities might imply a reduction of employee independence.

In the 1970s, before privatization became an actual issue, there was a general shift in the governance of state companies. Many had a history of multitask goals, with profitability as one goal, often showing disappointing results. Governments then shifted their governance to a focus on profitability after these negative experiences with multitask objectives (Heath and Norman 2004). CSR increases the number of goals that have to be taken into account, and the stakeholder theory increases the number of people that the employee has to consider. Making operations not only multitask, but also multiprincipal, will entail difficulties with objectives. Can the employee handle such complicated missions independently or will he or she be more dependent on detailed instructions from top management? One suggestion to solve this complicated coordination of stakeholders is having a "metaphysical director" as suggested by Freeman (1984).

From the perspective of integrity, the most promising component of new business ethics practices is the introduction of codes of ethics. They can be helpful as support to the integrity of an employee by providing norms limiting instructions from the direct boss or the team. There is a potential for codes to counteract micromanagement. The idea with a code is that it has a distinct message to communicate which is understood and still perceived after interpretation and operationalization by middle management. When low-level instructions are in conflict with the code,

the presumption should be that the code is to be followed and then it can support the employee's integrity by reducing ad hoc instructions from middle management.

My empirical observations indicate that it is advantageous for companies to ground codes primarily in what a company already is perceived to be; a code should accentuate strengths rather than promote new visions. The introduction of codes often includes participating with employees, and an ambition of providing guidance rather than strict instructions. One common objective is to sustain priorities and accept flexibility to accommodate changes in context and demands of special cases. This positive judgment of codes is based upon the condition that they are kept focused and not transformed into expanding lists of wishes and restrictions.

A general difference between Europe and the United States is the American habit of steering society with a large number of rules, while in Europe, there is at least in theory a frequent declaration of going for principles rather than rules. On a strategic level, Europeans seem comfortable with their choice, while Americans become more inclined to consider following the European strategy. On a practical level, there is a strong inclination to acquire more and more rules. The introduction of a few principles tends to be replaced by a larger number of instructions. The development of the British Cadbury Code is an illustration. The original code from 1992 contained 19 recommendations for companies. Its successor, the Combined Code from 1998, had 45 recommendations. The next successor, the Higgs Review from 2003, had 82 recommendations (Coombes and Chiu-Yin Wong 2004). The development can be summarized as a doubling of the number every five years. This can hardly be a path to sustainable ethics. With this reservation, it seems motivated from an integrity perspective to attribute a positive potential for company codes.

ORGANIZATION AND INTEGRITY

The extent to which the employee can influence his or her job is affected not only by prevailing ideas of ethics but also by those of organizing. A person with ambitions of integrity wants a larger role than just being an integrated cog in the organizational

machine. The integrity perspective will inquire whether the company can stimulate employees to do more for the company by putting more heart and mind into the tasks, by giving them more space for individual judgment. Can employees be given a longer leash?

The conveyer belt is a historic example of strong integration. Clearly, the blacksmith had a more independent work situation than the factory worker of early industrialization. By now, the general industrial processes have moved away from that particular practice, but there are strong forces in organizations that pull in a centralizing direction. The specialization of many skills implies that many tasks become fragmented between different employees, and then it is harder for the individual to grasp the wholeness. Interdependence reduces independence.

The more pressure against an individual, the more integrity he or she demonstrates by still daring to act according to his or her personal beliefs. But in the high-pressure environment, we see fewer acts of integrity. Considering integrity as a virtue, it is something that improves with practice. The movie mogul Samuel Goldwyn of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) is famous for the following dictum: "I do not want any yes-men around me. I want everybody to tell me the truth even if it costs them their jobs." A company that does fire employees who voice criticism stimulates conformist feedback. There is always some pressure against deviant opinion, but conformism might be counteracted instead of forcefully augmented.

A boss usually wants employees enthusiastically doing what he or she wants to be done in the way he or she wants it, following hints in a good-natured manner. Threats should preferably not be needed. The possibility to act through other people increases the range of the manager's will and impact and is a positive resource for him or her. It might be appropriate to stress this power and acknowledge that it often implies some restriction on those subordinated. For some people, there seems to be no declining marginal attraction of power—rather, the appetite is stimulated. Still, I hold that most people consider the power over the self as more valuable than power over others. From a utilitarian perspective, concentration of power is therefore negative if it does not succeed in solving problems to a substantially greater extent than decentralized power.

One alternative to hierarchy is participation in a collective decision, perhaps with a project manager as the "first among equals." The advantage is that it implies that a vertical leader's mission of integration is partly taken care of in a horizontal process. With a better knowledge of detail, this method might bring the optimal combination of integrity, integration, motivation, and efficiency for many decisions. But it is a time-consuming method, which is one limit for its appropriate range. Cooperation is troublesome, and in large organizations, it is difficult to find persons who do not think they waste a lot of time in meetings; information and dialog are costly in time. There are advantages with involving more persons in a decision, but these gains have to be compared with costs in working hours and a slow process.

Even if the specific employee has had possibilities to make a contribution to the collective decision, it might not be his or her preferred alternative that is chosen, and the decision therefore becomes a restriction on his or her action. This impairs motivation since the employee can perceive a collective decision by colleagues to be as harmful as a decision taken by the boss. Participation is no panacea since there are many factors that can undermine the legitimacy of a decision.

An alternative to hierarchy and participation is delegation. The argument for such organizing is the possibility that the person doing the job can contribute positively not only with better motivation but also with deviation from how the boss would have done it himself or herself. The delegation should therefore include some maneuvering room. The crucial question is whether people at the top are so much better in quality and strategy that they compensate for the detailed knowledge and larger amount of time for each minor issue that people lower down in the organization will invest in a decentralized decision. Delegation implies that the boss abstains from some power and colleagues accept less adjustment to their ideas.

Hybrids between these three models are also very common. Often, there are elements of participation while the boss takes the decision after listening. Other hybrids are networking models, where most decisions are delegated and interaction is more of an information exchange than a collective decision process.

For a company, there is generally an objective to reduce variation in behavior. Such a reduction will be at some cost of

excellence, but primarily, it is negative deviation that is corrected. The consumer should know what to expect and then get a product or service that is standardized. To a large extent, organizational development means finding improved or more cost-efficient solutions and then implementing these new ways across the organization. It implies moving a variety of behaviors toward a new standard above the previous average.

Another strategy is to put less emphasis on standardization and focus on individual motivation and competence. An employee with more "maneuvering mandate" will bring more effort into the work. A further contribution to norms of behavior is made by professional norms that are not company-specific nor under management control. The employee's previous work experience at a different company might be an additional source of divergent choices. Personality and factual convictions also lead to variation. Standardization is in line with a potential rationality, but there are negative externalities. Autonomy, plurality, and motivation might suffer in the process. There is an old joke stating "pay peanut—and get monkeys." A similar problem exists between company and employee regarding the content of work. There is a gulf between the hyped talk about the knowledge society and the routines of the work place. Employee alienation is not a destiny for companies, but it is a danger that managers need to be aware of. Integrity can be made a countervailing force by stressing the importance of the employee's "maneuvering mandate." It might also raise a moral aspect for management. Is it right to homogenize? The point here is that conformism does not need a demonic manager trying to domesticate his subordinates. To a large extent, peer pressure and personal convenience may generate standardization. Therefore, the mission of leadership might be not only to generate action toward a common goal but to stimulate subordinates to use individual competence and imagination. The issue of integrity brings up the quality factor and the importance of personal judgment rather than just performing as expected in the prescribed way.

The critical reader may find the preferences for empowerment, autonomy, and delegation to be somewhat romantic. Are there not frequent expressions of selfishness indicating that what is needed is support for a strong superego that generates more social behavior? This author is less convinced of the virtue of social processes.

Are there not even more atrocities committed for common projects? Nietzsche's judgment comes to mind: "Madness is something rare in individuals—but in groups, parties, peoples, ages it is the rule" (Nietzsche 1886/1983, p. 85).

Is it not appropriate to consider dissidence from general moral goals as having a value? The Catholic Church saw a value in appointing an "advocate of the devil" in the process of appointing new saints. If everybody joins in praise for a potential saint, the canonization might turn out to be a misjudgment. Also, in companies, apparently, worthy projects might need a critical evaluation even if management regards this phase as terminated and urges that all forces should focus on enthusiasm and implementation. In an environment with strong conformist forces, people loyal to their own values, projects, and judgments deserve a positive concept.

This discussion has shown skepticism about unity, and integrity has been manifested in disagreement. It might be reasonable to acknowledge that persons of integrity can reach unanimity decisions. There is nothing wrong with a board agreeing to a compromise, but it is assuring if this decision is taken by members that have the integrity to make individual judgments upon the issue at hand. A unanimity decision by a board of socially competent members might just reflect one person's judgment of the issue, while the rest are "teambuilding," "showing confidence in the CEO," and "avoiding negativism." As a personal characteristic, integrity is present also when not bluntly manifested.

Delegation is often not introduced by new policies, but by irregular initiatives—it is easier to receive forgiveness than to obtain permission. Organizational reforms generally propose more coordination but perhaps there are good reasons for considering a need for a policy of decentralization more often to offset a general tendency to integration and centralization.

Integrity is highly relevant for these choices between different ways to design the work in the modern organization.

INTEGRITY AND SOCIETY

Discussing the position of integrity in society is not to abandon the interest of business organizations but to observe an indirect

influence by the social environment on companies and their employees and customers. The very idea of the market economy implies a maneuvering room for companies. The state often gives itself the possibility to intervene with price control under exceptional circumstances, but generally, decisions of production and pricing will be delegated to companies. Regarding values, there is a less principled support for company independence. The question of integrity is more complicated for companies than for individuals. The company policy might ask for delegation from the state, while it should also properly restrict its power to accommodate the integrity of employees. Still, there is space for a community with some shared values and interests that differentiate the organization from the larger society and do not intrude too much on its members.

There is some confusion about the company position. A general conclusion is that companies overvalue the differentiation of the company culture from the national culture. Different companies from a given country share many characteristics (Hofstede 1991; Zander 1997). Still, further organizational differentiation seems to be an advantage if employees have a choice between different subcultures so that they can choose something in line with their own personalities. Differences between companies caused by self-selection by employees cause few conflicts with integrity. When companies try to foster ideas and behavior with a top-down process, there are more severe problems. Still, such cultural revolutions are less problematic than if ordered by the state since individuals can disengage at a lower cost from an organization while a change of society might not be a viable possibility at all. The less sanctioning power an institution has, the more it can proclaim demands with limited harm for its members since they have an exit possibility. A religious sect can order what, when, and how its believers should live in a way that would be intrusive to integrity if ordered by the state or a company.

It seems feasible that companies should have a mandate to choose their own sets of values, and that heterogeneity itself implies a positive value. Some companies will focus on high quality, others on low prices; some favor tailor-made solutions, others "one size fits all." Similarly, some will have a military-style hierarchy, others self-ruling groups, and yet others delegation of personal responsibility. Franchise companies can be seen as

experiments in combining incentives and some independence for the franchisee, with uniformity that corresponds to expectations from customers. The company has a moral zone that it might claim, demanding integrity for itself while sufficiently respecting that of the employees.

Regarding the relation between companies and the state, there are frequent proposals for a shorter leash. The planning socialists are fewer in the post-communist world, but many scholars suggest more embedded companies. Voluntary submission implies the possibility of defection if the rule produces major negative effects, while changing a law is a much slower process and beyond company control. A disadvantage of unofficial rules is that they might be introduced without sufficient scrutiny. Moral norms are not only an evolutionary experiment of finding the optimal rule for the whole of society but an arena for selfish organizations testing their power to influence other organizations.

Companies' attraction to general virtues has obscured issues of integrity and differentiation. Conformism is abundant. There are frequent claims of being generally virtuous in having better quality, lower prices, and more consumer-friendliness. Business normally proposes self-regulation but that might imply a lot of verbal conformism combined with some essential deviation in behavior. Protagonists for embeddedness and morality see too much pluralism and diversity and want more integration with the dominant rules of society. In contrast, protagonists of more pluralism will seek support from norms of integrity. This perspective suggests a long leash if there are no compelling arguments against it. Straying away might not be as much of a problem as an excess of conformism. Keynes' judgment seems valid also today: "Worldly wisdom teaches that it is better for reputation to fail conventionally than to succeed unconventionally" (Keynes 1936, p. 158).

Some people will see uniform behavior as an advantage per se even if the chosen standard is not better than other rival alternatives. Often, states, corporations, and groups declare and enforce uniformity in situations when individual pluralism could have been beneficial. These efforts for cohesion spend energy that could have been focused on issues where deviations from the norm are really harmful. This is problematic because essential coherence might need coercion, while more optional coherence can be obtained more easily.

All agents are restricted by the ideas of others about what is best for the individual and what is best for society. The common good and sympathy for others are very attractive as goals, and the advocates can earn respect and power. There are many euphemistic descriptions such as "being in touch," "showing respect," and "embracing change." Most people are very conformist and opposition is sometimes seen not just as a different opinion, but as inability to understand the situation and as putting money on the wrong horse. Socialists can have very different ideas about what should be accomplished during the next five years, but they can unite behind the view that it is most important that every company and every worker follows the future plan. There are similarities between planned economies and companies run by plans and budgets. Private industry executives have other ideas than socialists, but they often share the positive judgment of employees strictly following central instructions and rules (Jackall 1988). With strong inclinations to opportunism and conformism, it seems justified to honor some countervailing ideas and at least acknowledge the potential contribution of those who speak up against the dominant views. In that perspective, it is rather mergers and coordination committees that need to be scrutinized. Are there advantages of scale and standardization? Integrity has an important function as a countervailing power.

Another arena for discussion of integrity is the balance in modern society between the maintenance of security and integrity. The possibility of an emerging "surveillance society" is an issue of controversy. It can be claimed that a person with a clear conscience has nothing to fear from the increased possibilities of being observed. Others claim that there are deeds one is ashamed of, and there are further deeds that might be used against a person even if he or she is not ashamed of these deeds. An individual who is transparent in all respects is a more vulnerable individual. Integrity versus security is a controversial issue in most Western countries when technical possibilities and terrorist threats have moved the balance toward more surveillance and less concern for integrity. The issue of the proper balance is also relevant for companies. In many countries, the employer can monitor the employees' e-mail, health records, and so on. Information technology has something of a Janus face when it comes to effects on employee empowerment. It can bring out information

vital to the employee having firsthand contact with the issue to be handled. This offers the possibility of decentralization. However, the information availability also makes it possible to monitor operations closely, and when there are possibilities of monitoring, there are possibilities to introduce and enforce more detailed instructions.

Another trend in modern society is the exhibitionist attitude demonstrated by some individuals. They do not protect a personal sphere from others but open their private lives for all to see. This might be regarded as self-assertive behavior that ignores social norms about proper and improper behavior. However, this attitude does not imply integrity but rather lacks a sense of integrity. Another kind of behavior is to repudiate from a dominating environment the individual is unwilling or unable to relate to. Such a radical decoupling is neither to be seen as a sign of integrity. Rather, the concept integrity describes a third attitude in between exhibitionism and alienation: to detach and protect an independent position, and from that strength, voice a judgment. Despite being an insider in an organization, it implies stepping out of the organization or out of a specific limited role in the organization and make a judgment, constructive in their own eyes, even if expected to be considered destructive by the many or the powerful.

It would be unjustified to perceive all trends as pointing in a conformist direction. A liberal practice has established itself in Western societies. The consumer is not free from conformism but more free to choose—and not only more affluence. The Western employee is also affected by individualization, and this implies demanding possibilities to express integrity. A liberal view of humanity attributes some common sense to people making individual choices, and it attributes some suspicion to authority. Paternalism has lost some of its position in the West. It is hard for representatives to argue that some authority knows better than the individual himself or herself what is best for him or her. This change is less of a problem for soft paternalism than for hard paternalism. In a complex world, with a lot of choices, it is helpful if some choices are assisted (Sunstein and Thaler 2003). A central issue is how to treat a person in the absence of his or her active choice. It can be argued that it is better to register a new employee in the company-saving program until he or she chooses to quit, rather than to treat him or her as not participating until

he or she makes a decision to join. In a study by Madrian and Shea (2001), such a change of the default rule increased the enrolment rate from 49 percent to 86 percent. Considering people as organ donors if they do not explicitly object makes a big difference compared with demanding an active pledge of donation. The main argument against soft paternalism is that it eliminates practice opportunities for individuals to be responsible and make up their mind (Glaeser 2006). It fosters expectations that good decisions on their behalf are taken by others so there is no need for engagement. The psychologist Bent Hougard warns about the emergences of "curling parents"—parents who make sure that their children have an environment smoothed to perfection so that bumpy rides can be avoided (Hougard 2004). The shift of the debate from antipaternalism versus hard paternalism to the merits and risks of soft paternalism indicates an environment with greater concern for integrity.

Patterns of submission and obedience are very strong also in the modern society. Milgram's classical experiments showed that people were much more willing to inflict severe harm on other humans if somebody else had some authority and took the formal responsibility. It was hard to resist instructions even from an artificial authority with no power, insisting on a repulsive action such as giving a third person electric shocks with apparent pain and danger (Milgram 1974). In some more recent experiments, Arnstberg (2006) asked students to perform some minor social misbehavior so as to test the reactions of ordinary citizens observ- ing the deviant act. Very often, the students could not actually perform the misbehavior that they personally had chosen and planned. The deviations to be performed were often violations not of ethical norms but rather of rules of etiquette. These tasks were not challenging other people's beliefs, only conventions—but still, it was hard to deviate. In a small-town context, the students motivated the inhibition with a lack of anonymity, but the strong force of conformism was also manifested in big-city contexts. The sociologist thesis of "the strength of weak ties" (e.g., Baron and Hannan 1994) receives further support. Evidently, we do not only react to "significant others"; also important are "insignificant others." Even under very weak external pressure, it is hard to manifest integrity and act or speak in a way that is expected to meet disapproval.

THE TASK OF VIRTUES AND MORAL PRINCIPLES

In discussions about integrity, I have met the comment that it is "too thin" in substance to be useful. The presentation has hopefully succeeded in showing the relevance in a business ethics context, but many people have the expectation of a principle to be more exact and capable of separating right from wrong. I think such expectations are an effect of an unrealistic view of the capability of moral principles. Therefore, I think it is of central interest to clarify what can and cannot be expected of an ethical rule.

It is of course desirable that a general moral principle should be perfect in its specific judgment so that it never recommends something wrong or rejects something right. My more modest claims for the principle of integrity are combined with the claim that other moral concepts have the same basic weaknesses. All rules can run into conflict with other worthy rules, and in that forced choice, acting against the rule might be the right thing to do. They can also run into situations where the negative consequences are so significant that it is motivated to break the rule. A first universal rule about moral principles and virtues is that there is no rule without exceptions.

A second rule is that no principle or virtue stands above a reevaluation. Is it motivated to support this rule? This doubt is similar to a parliamentarian investigation making an evaluation of whether a new law has delivered positive results. Continuously, legislation is changed in different aspects and new behavior is criminalized while other previously criminalized behavior is decriminalized. Basically, we have some kind of "morals by agreement" as suggested by Gauthier (1986).

A third rule is that aspiring a virtue and support of a principle is more than having it as a default principle to follow when nothing else speaks against this choice. Supporting principle/virtue A implies following A instead of B in a situation of uncertainty: in the choice between A and B, the choice ought to be A except when it is evidently destructive. This implies that the expanded use of rule A not only will have a number of successful outcomes but also some situations with negative outcomes.

These three rules constitute criticism of perfectionist demands on moral principles and virtues. My claim is that they all have

severe limitations, and the three rules are necessary to bring some reflection and realism into a field marred by daydreams and bold speculations.

Some people understand Aristotle as saying that "virtuous is to do the right thing, in the right way, in the right amount and at the right time." However, this is advice as useful as "Do what is the morally right thing to do." We all try to do this in some way, but the very reason for moral analysis is that we do not have a perfect moral sense that, similar to a balance organ, unconsciously is guiding us to the right behavior. Instead, we have to use more approximate cognitive tools. Some forbidding rules provide frames and some positive rules give objectives. In a management context, virtues and positive moral rules can be seen as agendas; they try to guide the focus to worthy objectives. But they do not provide specific correct judgments.

On a personal level, an employee may be in disharmony; for example, he or she thinks he or she works too hard and spends too little time with his or her children. He or she already knows that being with the children is an option he or she can choose. The problem is that it is seldom chosen so he or she has to make a change in the balance. That the children always should come first is hardly defendable. Even a more moderate shift to more time with the kids will not always be at the right time in the right amount. There will be more actions of the category "being with the kids despite it would have been better being at work." These mistakes will hopefully be more than compensated by the increased number of successful cases when being with the kids was more rewarding than the work alternative. Choices are made before results without the possibility of peaking into the future. When our employee after some time will evaluate his or her new work/family mix, the result of this experiment will be important. Does he or she feel more of *eudaimonia* (Aristotle ca –330/1970)?

It seems likely that some kind of balance for individuals is preferable; a very extrovert person probably makes the mistake of talking too much more often than being too silent, and the shy person should try to improve his or her social skills. But an average in all aspects is hardly recommended or even possible. Many pursuits need a moderate level of excess to reach a takeoff. Life is too short to develop all potential interests to even a modest level so much has to be left unexplored. There are plenty of

possible good deeds for the self and others that will not be done. Virtue ethics has no real advice to give a person about what his or her correct mix is and even less so any specific advice about time, place, and magnitude. Rather, its idea is to tilt the propensity to act in a way that eliminates unbalance by directing and training yourself to a revised pattern of behavior rather than looking at each situation independently. At first, this change of pattern depends on the will to make the change, but after some time, a habit of practicing the new pattern will be established. The virtue will be the person's normal behavior instead of just a possible action, often not even considered as a deliberate choice.

You easily make too many instead of too few exceptions from the rule. Therefore, there is a proper place for virtues and principles that are followed stubbornly despite sometimes giving negative results. There has to be some kind of expected value calculation of whether the average benefits exceed the costs. The perennial problem of a rule is that if it is used rigidly, there will be some overuse in the sense that some results of its use are negative. If it is used flexibly, the overuse will decrease, but unfortunately, the "underuse" will increase. In my mind, a useful rule needs to imply some overuse. When a rule is more often right than wrong, it is advisable to follow the rule in a stubborn, but not rigid way.

All moral systems with several rules will find themselves in situations when the believer will be forced to brake against one rule to be able to follow another. There is no harmony between them, even if enthusiastic supporters try to claim an absence of conflict. The Ten Commandments can of course run into conflict with each other. Furthermore, they are not more eternal than being revised: after many centuries, the second commandment's prohibition to paint an image of God was discretely taken away. There is no problem of presenting situations with conflicts between principles, leading to the unavoidable support to my rule number one, no rule without exceptions.

Kant tried to avoid a conflict between suggested principles by the claim that his categorical imperative—including at least three different principles, universalism, respect for persons, and kingdom of ends—are but one principle with different "formulations" (Bowie 1999). This claim has similarities with the Christian metaphysics of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit being three, but

simultaneously only one. From a Christian fundamentalist perspective also, the Ten Commandments can be seen as different
formulations of one instruction, the one from an opaque God. But
this is only metaphysics and not suitable for further discussion.

For more secular persons, the Universal Declaration of Human
Rights (UDHR) can have a similar important position as the Ten
Commandments. Here, we also find claims of internal harmony.
The UDHR states: "All human rights are universal, indivisible and
interdependent and interrelated" (Clause 5). This claim is blatantly false and Bentham's demeaning words of human rights
being "nonsense on stilts" appear a justified verdict. I think it is
also advisable to remind ourselves that the declaration is not a
philosophical masterpiece but a political compromise between
Western democracies and communism. That Josef Stalin, one of
history's major violators of human rights, had a veto in the
process of developing this manifest for human rights is an illustration of irony in history. Given this problematic background, the
declaration is not a bad result. Its prime merit is that instrumentally, it has been more of a support than an obstacle for a
democratic development. But in substance, it is to a large extent
only a wish list with a lot of things that are desired. However, the
declaration avoids the problems of priority and how this list of
rights should be tied to a list of obligations. It is easy to perceive
unity around some concepts as a proof of them having solid
foundation. But the unity and popularity can be the effect of
using the concept only as a vague positive word.

We have not found the perfect rules that always give the
optimal advice, nor can we expect to find any. Therefore, the task
of moral discussion is not to search for perfect rules but to find
the constructive rules and distinguish them from less constructive and destructive rules. The claim of this article is that integrity
is a virtue for companies and the employees in these companies.
This attitude can be used for a number of more specific rules. We
are in a situation where progress can be achieved by introducing
new rules of conduct. But these rules have no divine blessing and
are subject to revision since many individuals have some ideas
about such changes on the individual and on the social level. In
an organization, there are many divergent ideas, based on knowledge and experience, which are challenging the ruling ideas. I do
not even say that these diverging ideas generally are better; I say

they can be of use and that they deserve some appreciation especially when others are saying, "it is decided" and "everybody knows."

Some people think they know what is objectively right, morally and factually, and many more are often sure they clearly perceive what is morally or factually wrong. We all dislike listening to somebody consuming our time and energy with some stupid idea. But I think it is motivated to harbor some sympathies with people thinking for themselves and then use possibilities to influence others in a situation of conventional resistance. The crazy dissident shows a virtue that I think is worth recommending: he or she is not just a member of a crazy crowd. There is much more of a problem when the dominant majority is promoting the stupid idea and even worse if it also silences the dissidence to ideas that, according to the conventional opinion, are morally and factually wrong. Even if the majority most of the time really is right and the dissidents wrong, this is not a sufficient reason to support the enforcing of conformism. Voicing a minority truth against the dominant prejudice is much more helpful than the voicing of dissident prejudice is harmful for a dominant truth.

Integrity has, in many respects, similarities with other suggestions for business. Accountability, transparency, and sustainability have many supporters. But they all need to be reviewed and scrutinized, procedures that the promoters seldom are enthusiastic about. Integrity is more sustainable in the respect that the control by dissidence is already built into this project.

A central idea of Aristotle is that of balance; too much of a good thing makes it negative. This is similar to an economist perceiving not only a diminishing marginal utility but also that the declining marginal utility can pass zero and become negative, such as eating more and more of your favorite dish making you sick. If there is too little of some behavior, promoting it to a virtue is a way to stimulate it and create a better balance. However, if there is too much of this behavior in general or a dominating trait for a person, it could be considered a vice. In another perspective than mine, it can be perceived that there is too much of discussion and doubt about policies in use. What is needed is more alliance to the company leadership and conventional ideals in society. Then integrity is more of a vice. In my perspective, there is a strong conformism to the zeitgeist (political correctness) and too much

submission to leadership. There is an excess of "social compe-tence" and mobilization mentality, "those not with us are against us." As I also previously have pointed out, this judgment about the situation in business organizations is a central factor when evaluating the worth of integrity.

CONCLUSIONS

The first two sections penetrate the concept of integrity. To avoid confusion it is preferable if concepts can keep their meaning across discourses. The meaning of integrity in the security/terrorist debate is compatible with the definition here, while the moralistic definition of integrity is not. That view would rather support the sacrificing of privacy for the common good, and integrity would then rather end up on the same side as security. This is a general problem with definitions stressing the individual adherence to praised values. We already have solidarity, loyalty, and heroism for those making sacrifices in line with prevailing values.

There are many persons in organizations that mobilize attrac-tive concepts to promote adjustments to worthy goals and authoritative instructions. The enthusiasm for an integrated company often does not address the integrity question but hopes that it will disappear due to the similarly sounding term. The attraction to integration is that there is a popular idea that morality implies a high degree of subordination to obligation. There is also an assumption of harmony about different valuable goals—if there is no necessary conflict between worthy goals, there is no need for moral disagreement.

This article has hopefully described the usefulness of the concept. But some readers might think I attribute too much importance to the specific word. Maybe a more introvert word such as "authentic" or a more physical word such as "bravery" could do as well? It is often said about words that meaning is use. I think it should be noticed that misuse also contributes to meaning so this attempt to separate integrity from integration has the advantage of killing two birds with one stone. Choosing another word would miss that opportunity. I think there are reasons to follow the advice of a Chinese proverb "The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names."

A paradox of integrity is that the more integrity-friendly the environment is, the less strength of character is demanded from individuals to manifest integrity. The virtue perspective provides a solution to this apparent contradiction. The practice of any virtue improves the capability, and increases the inclination, to behave according to that virtue. An unfriendly environment is likely to give similar results as self-censorship as individuals will avoid conflict by asking themselves not about their own best judgment but what authorities would like to hear. Then only few people will be capable to act with integrity.

The article proceeds by discussing the relevance of integrity. Is it likely that an upgrading of integrity as a virtue will have an influence on choices in business ethics and in business organizations? The discussion in business ethics is to a high degree focused about introducing some new programs; CSR policies, a stakeholder initiative, and company codes are three popular alternatives. An integrity perspective will give prominence to company codes.

The autonomy of an employee cannot be upheld without restrictions. There is, of course, a difficult task of finding the balance with, on one side, too few guidelines and a lack of willingness to accommodate to justified demands from others, and on the other side, micromanagement that limits individual learning, responsibility, and motivation. With the company top level deciding the balance, there is a temptation to err with too centralized solutions. A delegated authority implies that the person doing the job is under few restrictions, including limited obligation to adjust to his or her boss or colleagues. An integrity perspective will recommend frequent use of delegation when organizing a company.

There are many forms of conformism since adjustments to the many or to the powerful is a safe and simple strategy. Still, society has become more individualistic in some respects. The increased technical possibilities to invade what was previously private information have stimulated a concern for integrity. There is also a shift away from forcing people to act in certain ways to a treatment with incentives, consent, and soft paternalism. Such anti-authoritarian shifts in society at large are relevant for companies.

Integrity is not only about following norms and values but also about deciding which norms and values to follow. A fair objection is that not everybody sees this as an ideal. People with

collectivistic ideals rather regard it as atomistic and asocial. However, for people of the latter opinion to acknowledge that integrity to its protagonists is a virtue would seem fair and constructive. The situation can be described as a quest for a trade-off between the virtues of integrity and unity. Protagonists for integration make claims of efficiency while those of integrity see inefficiencies when pluralism is dominated by conformism. If the society or the organization thinks integrity useful, there are reasons to provide a more integrity-friendly environment. According to a contrasting judgment, individual interests and preferences need no additional support—the mission of philosophers and managers is rather to increase loyalty to collective goals. These conflicting judgments make integrity a central concept for business ethics and organization theory.

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