

Integrity and Trustworthiness: similarities and differences

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Abstract

Integrity and trustworthiness are important concepts in the social sciences, because each is said to enable and enhance cooperation. In the commonly spoken language, but also in some academic literature, both terms are often used as synonyms or as subsets of each other. This, however, is not self-evident and warrants closer inspection. The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, to investigate more precisely what the similarities and differences are of the concepts integrity and trustworthiness and how they relate to one another; and second, to investigate what insights can be gained for the study of integrity from merging the two bodies of literature.

Key similarities are that both concepts are attributes of individuals that are generally considered to be positive. Also, both concepts are relevant because of the perceptions other individuals have of someone's integrity or trustworthiness. Another similarity is that both concepts are also often considered to be attributes of organizations, although that is not a straightforward assumption. A potential difference is that an important dimension of trustworthiness is ability or competence, while that appears not to be the case for integrity, since this concept focuses on moral dimensions only.

Given these similarities and differences, a new perspective on integrity is formed and research questions formulated.

Introduction

Integrity and trustworthiness are important concepts in the social sciences, because each is said to enable and enhance cooperation (for example, Maesschalck, 2003; Dobel, 1999; Blau, 1964; Fukuyama, 1995; Zand, 1972; Deutsch, 1973). In the commonly spoken language, but also in some academic literature, both terms are often used as synonyms or as subsets of each other. For example, in the trust literature integrity is often seen as one of several dimensions of trustworthiness (for example, Mayer *et al.*, 1995). In other words, integrity is seen as a subset of trustworthiness. In the integrity literature trustworthiness is often seen as one of a large set of moral values held by an actor (for example, Huberts *et al.*, 2003). In other words, suggesting that trustworthiness is a subset of integrity. This cannot be true at the same time. Hence a closer examination is required to clarify each concept in relation to the other. What are the similarities? What, if any, are the differences? What are the consequences for future research? What can be learned from merging the two bodies of literature?

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, to investigate more precisely what the similarities and differences are of the concepts integrity and trustworthiness and how they relate to one another. And second, to investigate what insights can be gained for the study of integrity from merging the two bodies of literature.

We continue with a brief overview of common descriptions and definitions of integrity and trustworthiness, before examining similarities and differences. Then we proceed with giving an overview of what insights can be gained for the study of integrity.

Defining integrity and trustworthiness

In much of the integrity literature, integrity is defined with reference to a generally accepted set of values and norms (for example, Fijnaut and Huberts, 2002; Thomas, 2001; Uhr, 1999). Even though many acknowledge that these values (and norms) may vary in time and place, an assumption of a universal ethos permeates much of current integrity literature. A universal ethos implies that there is such a ‘thing’ as a set of values and norms that is generally/universally accepted to be appropriate, for a particular situation. We will argue later that this assumption is too simplistic and therefore problematic.

Dobel (1999: x) takes a somewhat different approach with his definition: ‘integrity means attending to the relevant promises and obligations in each setting’, even though he implicitly refers to a generally accepted set of values and norms for the particular setting. In these definitions, integrity is seen as an attribute of an actor.

Few sources in the trust literature give a separate definition of trustworthiness. Most only define trust and then implicitly say that someone is trustworthy when he is worthy of our trust. Mayer *et al.* (1995) refer to trustworthiness as a characteristic of a trustee that is responsible for trust. Hardin is one of the few authors who explicitly distinguishes trust from trustworthiness. He defines trustworthiness with reference to trust by saying ‘your trustworthiness is your commitment to fulfil another’s trust in you’ (Hardin, 2002: 28). He proceeds to offer three general categories for fulfilling such a commitment: (1) internal inducements, where the actor adopts the relevant disposition out of habit or character (bald and moral dispositions); (2) external inducements, through interest alignment arrangements; and (3) a mixture of internal and external inducements, by norms that motivate and sanction behaviour (Hardin, 2002: 28-29).

Thus, in order to understand trustworthiness, we need to address trust. Many different perspectives have been taken when studying trust and definitions abound. Common elements appear to be:

- Trust is relevant in situations where the trustor is dependent on the trustee's action(s) in the future to achieve his own goals and objectives (Hosmer, 1995; Lane, 1998; Whitener *et al.*, 1998). This implies a time lag and time asymmetries (Coleman, 1990).
- This dependence implies that the trustor, when acting on his trust, makes himself vulnerable to the actions of the trustee.
 - . When the trust is broken, the trustor will be hurt (Hosmer, 1995; Lane, 1998).
 - . Even if the trustor runs no probabilistic risk in relying on the trustee to act in a particular way, he must still recognize that the other party is a free agent and that his welfare is in the free hands of the trustee (Hosmer, 1995).
 - . Trust is thus assumed to provide a way to cope with risk or uncertainty in a relationship (Lane, 1998).
- Trust is seen as a choice; it entails voluntary, not forced, cooperation on the part of the trustor (Hosmer, 1995).
- Trust is related to optimistic expectations about the outcome of the event; that vulnerability will not be taken advantage of (Hosmer, 1995; Whitener *et al.*, 1998).

Largely following the growing consensus among trust researchers (among others, Hosmer, 1995; Lane, 1998; Mayer *et al.*, 1995; Rousseau *et al.*, 1998), we define trust as a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability to the actions of another party based upon the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to you. Since trust is related to the positive expectation that it will not be taken advantage of, it requires the absence of opportunistic behavior by the trustee so that the trustor can make

himself vulnerable to the action(s) of the trustee. For trust to be possible, the trustor needs to believe that the trustee wants to continue the relationship into the future (Hardin, 2002). Trust is thus an attribute of a trustor who faces the question whether to put his trust into action and make himself vulnerable to the trustee. An important antecedent of a trustor's trust in a trustee is the trustor's perception of the trustee's trustworthiness (Mayer *et al.*, 1995).

Trustworthiness is thus an attribution of a trustee.

Hardin points to another important difference between trust and trustworthiness:

... trust and trustworthiness are not analogous or symmetrical [...], because one can be disposed to trustworthiness without any risk. [...] A relationship cannot make you worse off if you are merely trustworthy in it. It can, however, make you substantially worse off if you are trusting in it.... (Hardin 2002: 37).

Similarities and differences

What are the similarities of the concepts? The definitions given in the previous section hint at similarities, but take different approaches. Although, when we consider Dobel's (1999) definition of integrity, a strong resemblance to Hardin's (2002) definition of trustworthiness is found. Both authors talk about promises, commitment and obligations in their discussions of each respective concept. Also, both integrity and trustworthiness refer to attributes of a specific actor that make that actor have higher or lower integrity or trustworthiness. And in both cases, the concept is generally considered to be good to have lots of. In this section we investigate the similarities in more detail. Four areas of similarity are identified: (1) importance, (2) relevance of perception, (3) distinction between individual and system level and (4) impact of context. Last, we investigate the difference that the concepts possibly focus on different characteristics of the actor involved.

Similar importance

Why is an actor's integrity or trustworthiness a relevant attribute? Both concepts have intrinsic value, that is, they are important as a value in and of itself. Trustworthiness has been shown to have an extrinsic value as well. As Hardin's definition of trustworthiness shows, an actor's trustworthiness is relevant because it shows his commitment to fulfil another's trust in him. And trust is important because it enhances and enables successful cooperation (for example, Argyris, 1970; Blau, 1964; Deutsch, 1973; Ellinor and Gerard, 1998; Ryan and Oestreich, 1998; Zand 1972, 1997; Zucker, 1986). Trustworthiness is shown to center around an actor's interest in maintaining a relationship with another actor (Lindenberg, 2000; Hardin, 2002; Six, 2004).

Can a similar argument be made for the extrinsic value of integrity? We argue that the integrity of an actor (A) is at least important when that actor has been granted the discretion, or power, to act in ways that affect another actor's (B) interests. If actor A has obtained that power by force, then it may be argued that his integrity is not relevant. He can be a malevolent tyrant if he wants. No one can stop him, unless they oust him by force. But if the power and the discretion have been granted to him, then he has to show that he is worthy of that responsibility. If he misbehaves, the power can, and eventually will, be taken from him. For example, the case of a politician. When he is elected, the electorate grants him certain powers and discretion that they can take away at the next election. If the politician is found to have misbehaved in a serious manner in between elections, other mechanisms usually exist to oust him from power before the next election. Similarly, a civil servant is granted certain powers when he is appointed and these powers can be taken from him when he is found to have been misbehaving. When actor A has the power to act in ways that affect B's interests, actor B is dependent on actor A's future behaviour, since actor A's future behaviour poses a potential risk to actor B; and B not able to control A directly. We could therefore say that the

integrity of an actor is important, because the higher his integrity, the more he will be trusted (Dobel, 1999). Or conversely, Brien (1998) argues that trust promotes ethical behaviour, because if you want to be trusted, you have to be seen to be complying with the relevant norms, in other words, act with integrity. Thus, both concepts are relevant when actor B is dependent on actor A's future behaviour. Actor A's integrity and trustworthiness become attributes that B will find relevant and important. Both concepts give indications of actor A's interest in maintaining a relationship with actor B. In sum, both the integrity and trustworthiness of an actor are important because the higher his integrity and/or trustworthiness the more he will be trusted.

Similar relevance of perceptions

The above discussion leads to another question, Who determines an actor's integrity or trustworthiness? The trust literature is very clear regarding trustworthiness. The trustor's perceptions of the trustee's trustworthiness are what counts (Hardin, 2002; Mayer *et al.*, 1995; Six, 2004). If the importance of an actor's integrity lies (at least) in that another actor will trust that actor more, then, similar to trustworthiness, the second actor's perception of the first actor's integrity is the one we should be interested in. Thus, the relevant degree of an actor's integrity is ultimately determined by another actor's perceptions; it is in the eye of the beholder. This has important consequences, because there are bound to be differences in perceptions between the two parties (Hardin, 2002; Six, 2004). The party whose integrity is in question will usually consider himself to be acting with integrity, considering the circumstances; possibly also helped by psychological mechanisms such as cognitive dissonance reduction (Dobel, 1999). As Srivastva (1988: 19) noted, 'the intriguing fact is that very few of us see ourselves as lacking in integrity, yet we can readily point to disintegrity in

almost every institution in which we are involved.’ Part of the explanation, as he proposed, is the presence of

one of the most pervasive and puzzling of all organizational phenomena, [that] the organizational world is fraught with schisms where people think one thing and say another, where espoused beliefs are contradicted daily in practice, and where our own self-deceptive processes blind us to our consequences in the world but also serve as an essential defense to the ego and the maintenance of our self-esteem (Srivastva, 1988: 19).

Therefore, the other party may see things very differently, also due to differences in mental maps, world views, expectations and goal definitions (for example, Weick 1995). These differences, in turn, lead to different values and norms (Schein, 1992). Again, we see that integrity and trustworthiness are similar.

Similar distinction between individual and system level

In both literatures each concept is often used at both the individual level and the system level. In the integrity literature the actor whose integrity is studied can be an individual, an organization, like a business firm, or public service, as in ‘public integrity’. In the way these notions are treated, often no distinction is made between the different levels. A firm can act, just like the individual. This is not self-evident, since in many of sociological theories a clear distinction is made between an individual and a system, or organization. A similar confusion exists in some of the trust literature (Hardin, 2002; Nooteboom, 2002). We follow the tradition that says that the only action that can occur takes place at the individual level (for example, Archer, 1995; Coleman, 1990). Thus, only individuals can act. Hardin (2002: 152) illustrates the implications when he examines the notion of ‘trust in government’ and concludes

Whatever might be the importance of citizens' trust for the functioning government, *it is surely more important that government be trustworthy than that it be trusted*. To give an account of trust in government on analogy with trust in individuals requires two classes of argument. First, we must give an account of the trustworthiness of government agents. Second, we must account for the knowledge citizens are likely to have of such trustworthiness.

Thus, for both concepts a clear distinction must be made between the individual and system level, which is not always done properly in the literature.

Similar impact of context

In both definitions, each concept, either explicitly or implicitly, is taken to be context-dependent. Expectations about integrity and trustworthiness may vary in time and place. For example, you are sitting in the car with your best friend who is driving. He causes an accident in which someone else is seriously injured. To act appropriately in one culture would imply always to tell the truth under oath even if that implies a prison sentence for your best friend. In another culture it would mean always to protect your friend even if that implies lying under oath. Another example is the construction industry in the Netherlands. For years it was accepted practice that builders colluded and compensated each other. EU regulation made that illegal, but still for many years this practice continued with the collaboration of all parties involved. Only recently, after some scandals hit the media and parliament conducted a parliamentary inquiry, is real change starting to occur. The generally accepted moral values and norms have changed over time.

In general, the social context in which an individual acts affects the relative benefits of different actions. An individual's behaviour is guided by the social context in which he operates; it is not determined by it, as individuals retain (some) freedom of choice, they can

choose to obey the rules and norms or break them (for example, Archer, 1995; Coleman, 1990). For organizations, several institutional arrangements that are part of the organizational context are important for trust (Six, 2004) and trustworthiness. Firstly, an organization can increase the chances that its people are considered trustworthy through the explicit formulation and implementation of those *norms and values* relevant for operating within it (Lindenberg, 2003). The second institutional arrangement concerns the *socialization process* for newcomers. The more explicit and intensive the socialization process for newcomers, the more quickly norm- and value-congruence can be achieved and the more quickly newcomers can be considered trustworthy. Thirdly, the ways in which people use *control* is important to whether they are seen as trustworthy (for example, Sitkin and Stickel, 1996). A fourth institutional arrangement is the way in which people in the organization are functionally dependent on each other. Several studies (for example, Powell, 1996; Wittek, 1999) have shown that the higher the *functional interdependence*, the higher the trust needs to be and thus the more effort is made to achieve trust and trustworthiness. A fifth institutional arrangement concerns *human resource practices* (Creed and Miles, 1996; Mühlau, 2000), since they influence the trustworthiness of direct superiors and management in general, as seen by employees.

In the integrity literature some elements of the organizational culture and structure that enhance integrity are:

- . Encourage forthrightness and reflexivity in open dialogue with colleagues about integrity dilemmas (Gawthrop 1998; Maccoby 1988; Harrison 1988; Waters 1988).
- . Create a proper balance of external and internal controls (Cooper 1998; Dobel, 1999).
- . Explicitly socialize newcomers in the organizational norms and values and ‘the way we do things around here’ (Cooper 1998).

- . Explicitly recognize that a conflict between objective responsibility (to be held accountable by superiors and the public legislation) and subjective responsibility (in which one feels and believes oneself to be responsible) is very common and that it is not a sign of weakness to ask for help and advice when facing such a conflict (Cooper 1998; Dobel, 1999).
- . Through education and training increase the awareness of the individual regarding integrity issues, develop the individual's own moral philosophy and improve his intellectual and moral reasoning and ability to act responsibly (Mentkowski 1988; Raadschelders 2000).
- . Encourage norms of generating valid information, promoting free and informed choice, and encouraging personal responsibility for action. Display the ability to make theories-in-use congruent with espoused theories and the ability to create situations of inquiry into values whereby both parties advocate their beliefs and open them to confrontation in a setting of reciprocal dialogue (Argyris and Schön 1988).

Different characteristics of actor

A potential difference appears to be that in trustworthiness both intentions and competence are relevant, while for integrity only intentions appear to matter. In the trust literature many different dimensions of trustworthiness have been identified. It appears common in most sources that a distinction is made between competence or ability on the one hand, and intentions on the other (among others, Barber, 1983; Nooteboom, 2002). The dimension 'intention' is in turn split up further. Mayer *et al.* (1995) came up with benevolence and integrity (personal integrity and moral integrity). Nooteboom (2002) subdivided intention into benevolence and dedication. In Lindenberg's relational signalling approach to trust (2000) only the dimension of intention appears to be addressed, with a distinction between strategic

opportunism, which this study argues relates to (lack of) 'benevolence', and myopic opportunism, which this study argues relates to Nooteboom's (2002) notion of (lack of) 'dedication' and Mayer *et al.*'s (1995) notion of 'personal integrity'. Several authors (Tyler and Kramer, 1996; Gabarro, 1978), however, put forward convincing arguments why ability is a relevant dimension to be included in trustworthiness. We argue that a fourth dimension should be added as put forward by Mayer *et al.*, since their dimension 'integrity' consisted of two elements: personal integrity, or the adherence to one's principles, which this study calls 'dedication'; and moral integrity, or the acceptability of one's principles, which is not mentioned by either Nooteboom (2002), Lindenberg (2000) or Barber (1983), yet which is considered relevant. Thus we propose the following four dimensions of trustworthiness: ability, benevolence, dedication and norm-acceptability.

Ability (or competence) is 'that group of skills, competencies and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain' (Mayer *et al.*, 1995: 717). It is situation- and domain-specific. Does the trustee have the skills, experience, means and position to perform as I want? A person may be highly competent, and therefore worthy of our trust, in one area, for example finance, but inexperienced or incompetent in another area, such as personnel. Also a person may simply not be in a position to influence the situation in the direction desired by the trustor. For example, a superior promises you that you will be able to follow a particular career path within the organization. That person, however, is not in a position to deliver on that promise as he does not have the resources; nor does he have the decision making power required to deliver.

Benevolence is 'the extent to which the trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor, aside from an egocentric profit motive' (Mayer *et al.*, 1995: 718). It is trustor-trustee specific. Benevolence only appears relevant when the trustee has opportunities for opportunistic

behaviour. And there are limits to the occasions when people will forgo opportunistic opportunities: everyone has a price (Nooteboom, 1999).

Dedication is the extent to which the trustee is believed to make the effort to meet the expectations of the trustor. Dedication as a dimension of trustworthiness is about commitment, punctuality, making the effort and reliability. If the trustee fails, despite making the effort, this may be because of his inability to meet the expectations of the trustor in the specific situation; and since the trustee tried but failed, he was not aware of his inability. Or the failure despite the effort may be due to changed circumstances that have led the trustee to change his priorities to opportunistic behaviour after all. The distinction between benevolence and dedication may be illustrated with the situation in which the trustee really means well – is benevolent towards the trustor – but he cannot be bothered to make the effort. One could possibly argue that, if you cannot be bothered, you are not really benevolent, since your egocentric laziness dominates. But in real life, these situations occur regularly; hence the distinction is useful. The trustee can also be found to be dedicated without being benevolent. This occurs when the particular action that the trustor trusts the trustee to take is also in the trustee's own interest; that is, he has an egocentric profit motive. Trust is relevant in that situation, because the trustee's self-interest may be weak and he may therefore not bother. The trustor has to consider how dedicated the trustee is, whether he will bother to make the effort. Perceived lack of dedication needs to be evaluated carefully. It can simply be due to the natural occurrence of inconsistent behaviour. Even though many of us make an effort to 'practice what we preach' or 'walk our talk', we will never be perfect. Mayer *et al.*'s third dimension includes personal integrity or one's adherence to a set of principles. This has to do with making the effort and being dedicated.

Norm-acceptability is the acceptability of the trustee's (set of) norms. Since it is rare for two individuals to have complete norm-congruence, occasions for violations of trust exist

whenever we find the other's norms unacceptable. Someone can be highly capable, benevolent toward me and dedicated, yet I may want to have nothing to do with him. He may be benevolent to me but, in wanting to help me, hurt others. He may not behave opportunistically towards me, but take every chance he gets to take what he can from others. This is likely to happen when I belong to his 'clan' and the other person does not¹. If someone helps me by behaving in ways that I consider unethical, I will not ask this person to help me. I may even avoid contact because I do not want this person to volunteer to help me. For example, he may steal, commit fraud, lie or otherwise harm others or break rules. He may consider that fair play while I do not. The emphasis is thus on the trustee's behaviour toward others: whether that is acceptable to the trustor.

Can we make a similar typology for integrity? We can start with the distinction between personal and moral integrity indicated above and proposed by McFall (1987). Furthermore, it can be argued that integrity requires that the actor refrains from opportunism, hence benevolence can be argued to be applicable as well. Hence we argue that, at least, three of the four dimensions of trustworthiness also apply to integrity, and that integrity appears to be, at least, similar to the intentions part of trustworthiness. This would make integrity a subset of trustworthiness, since no dimension of integrity can be found that is not also covered by the four dimensions of trustworthiness. Does integrity really not include the dimension of ability or competence? Informally talking to research objects and friends about trustworthiness, we found that most do not automatically include 'ability' into their notion of trustworthiness; they look at the intentions dimension only. However, when explaining why ability is relevant, most agree. An important part of the reason why is when things do not go according to expectations. When things go well, we seem to assume that the other actor is able and

¹ I belong to his 'ingroup' and the other belongs to his 'outgroup'.

competent and the only outstanding issue is his intention. However, when things go wrong and we experience trouble, the other person's ability to perform as expected becomes a relevant factor (Six, 2004). Dobel (1999: 166) suggests a similar phenomenon for integrity when he investigates the ethical reasons for getting out of office.

The ability to bring critical self-reflection, discipline, energy, focus, and insight to the job depends upon integrity. Personal capacities enable individuals to endure the routine, hassles, and the physical and emotional strains of office as well as provide the moral backstop for periods when legal or institutional directives may be vague or in conflict. They are also the capacities that give strength to a person's ability to judge and act upon principles. When these basic capacities of integrity erode, it is time to resign.

This suggests a relation to a person's competence or capacities. And examples abound of people resigning, or being fired, because of exhaustion, substance-abuse or because of changes in the job requirements of the function (Dobel, 1999). This provides an argument to include ability or competence as a dimension of integrity and would make the two concepts synonyms. Is this really true? Integrity focuses on 'soundness of moral principle' (Montefiore, 1999: 7-9), the emphasis is therefore on the *moral principles* guiding behaviour, while that emphasis is lacking in trustworthiness. Even though academic researchers define trustworthiness without explicit reference to the moral principle, moral principles can still be part of trustworthiness.

But what then about those authors that claim trustworthiness is a subset of integrity? For example, Huberts *et al.*'s (2003) argument runs as follows: integrity is defined as acting in accordance with a generally accepted set of moral values and norms. They proceed to generate a list of these moral values in different settings in empirical research and find that respondents and documents often mention 'trustworthiness' as an important moral value.

Hence, trustworthiness would be a subset of integrity. However, the same empirical research also generates 'integrity' as an important moral value. This creates a problem: how can integrity be one of several moral values that together create integrity? The explanation is that integrity can be defined at different levels of analysis (Montefiore, 1999) and integrity researchers need to be explicit and consistent at which level they define and use integrity. At the first level, the notion of integrity as wholeness or completeness is central (for example, Srivastva, 1988). This definition goes back to the Latin origin of the word. At the second level, integrity is connected to virtue and represents the whole set of virtues, while at the third level integrity becomes one type of virtue. The confusion in Huberts *et al.*'s study appears to be caused by mixing the second and third levels of analysis. This sorts the problem of integrity being a subset of itself. How does it explain trustworthiness as a subset of integrity? If trustworthiness is a synonym of integrity and integrity can be used at different levels of analysis, then the above argument for integrity also holds for trustworthiness. Also, further research is needed to investigate whether in the commonly spoken language integrity is defined the same way as academic researchers do.

In conclusion, integrity and trustworthiness have been found to be concepts that operate in the same way and perform similar functions and roles. The only difference appears to be that they possibly focus on different characteristics of the actor involved, but good arguments can be found to argue that even there the two concepts are similar and hence they appear to be synonyms.

Implications for the study of integrity

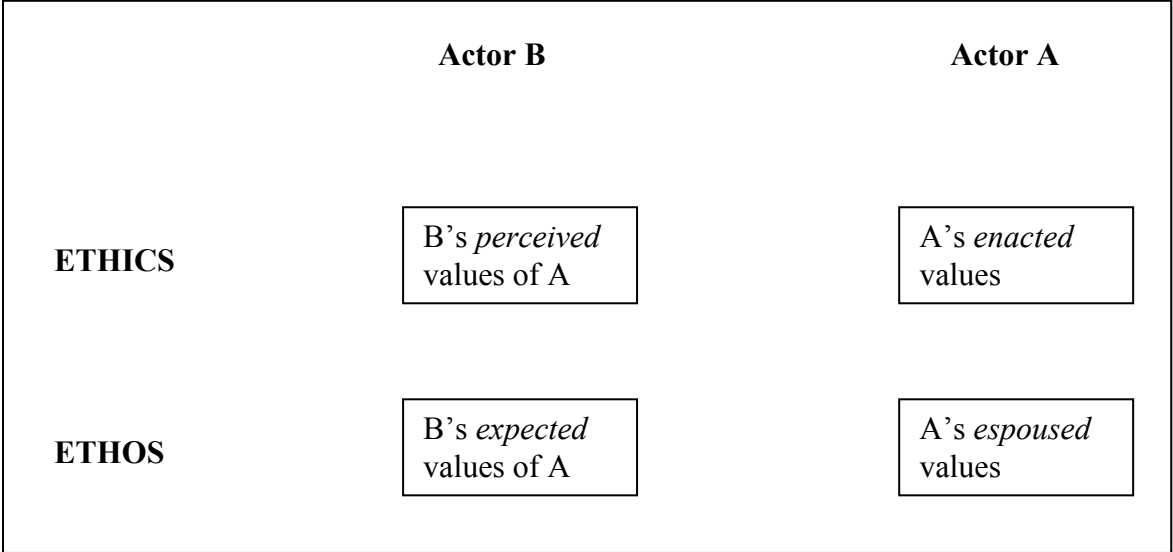
The investigation of the similarities and differences between the concepts integrity and trustworthiness provides a new perspective on integrity due to the different approaches taken to study trust and trustworthiness. In this section we formulate some research questions that are triggered by this new perspective.

Perspectives on values

If, as argued above, it is the perception of the other actor that ultimately determines an actor's integrity, what are the theoretical and empirical implications? A tentative model is proposed that incorporates the different perspectives on an actor's values that are relevant for determining his integrity. The model helps to explain why it is so difficult, even despite the best intentions, to be seen to be acting with integrity. The proposed model is presented in figure 1 and consists of two actors. Actor A is the actor whose integrity is relevant, or in question, and actor B is the person who finds himself in a position to wonder about actor A's integrity, because he finds himself dependent on actor A's future actions. The model furthermore distinguishes 'ethos' (general principles) and 'ethics' (application of general principles in practice). The ethics and integrity literature commonly use this distinction between ethos and ethics (for example, De Vries, 2002; Van den Heuvel *et al.*, 2002). In the organization science literature a similar distinction between espoused theory or values and theory-in-use or enacted values can be found (Argyris, 1990; Schein, 1992). This is commonly applied to the person who takes the actions, in our model actor A. Thus, the ethos of actor A is labelled 'A's *espoused* values' and the ethics of actor A is labelled 'A's *enacted* values'. The other column reflects actor B's perspective on A's values. First of all he has certain *expectations* about the values that actor A should be following (ethos); second he will have certain *perceptions* of the actual values that actor A follows (ethics). Actor B will base

these perceptions of actor A’s integrity on actor A’s actions that he can observe directly, the social context and information provided by third parties. In theory all four perspectives of A’s values can be the same and all can be different. Empirical research needs to be performed to investigate this in practice.

Figure 1: Different perspectives on actor A’s values



How does this model help determine actor A’s integrity? Using the distinction between personal integrity, or an actor’s adherence to his principles, and moral integrity, or the acceptability of his principles, the following propositions can be formulated. The smaller the

difference between actor A's enacted values and A's espoused values, the higher his personal integrity. And, the smaller the difference between B's expected values of A and B's perceived values of A, the higher (B's perception of) A's moral integrity. Further work is needed regarding how exactly to measure these different perspectives on values.

Limits to integrity and integrity violations

Six (2004) argues that there are limits to trustworthiness in every human being, because, first, no one is perfectly competent in all respects. Also, there are limits to when we forego opportunities for opportunism; everyone has a price. And, even though many of us make an effort to 'practice what we preach' or 'walk our talk', we will never be perfect; inconsistent behaviour will occur naturally. Finally, no two individuals will have complete norm-congruence. As a consequence, the challenge in trust building is 'the better I know under which circumstances I can trust him to do what', rather than 'the higher my trust in him the better it is' (Gabarro, 1978). This emphasises that trust building is a process in which an actor learns about the other's trustworthiness, in different situations. An actor's perceptions of the trustworthiness of an other actor is thus based on learning, primarily cognitively based and secondarily on forging emotional bonds (McAllister, 1995). Judging someone's integrity appears to work in a similar fashion. Without any knowledge about the actor whose integrity needs to be determined, what basis does one have? Dobel (1999) gives some suggestions for the bases on which to judge the integrity of a public official, emphasising public performance, personal health, patterns of economic interest and advice, and possible abuses of power. Another insight from the trust literature is related to the notion of having information to base one's judgement on. Lack of trust is not the same as distrust (Lindenberg, 2000; Six, 2004). Distrust needs information to form one's opinion, just as trust does. Lack of trust is the situation in which you do not have the information to form an opinion about the trust or

distrust of the other actor. The same holds for integrity. If you do not have the information to form an opinion about the other person's integrity, that does not necessarily imply that the other person has no integrity. You need information to base a judgement of 'disintegrity' on. What can we learn from the trust literature regarding bases for judging someone's integrity and limits to integrity? What can we learn about the process of learning about the other's integrity?

Huberts and colleagues (for example, in Fijnaut and Huberts, 2003) have focused on studying integrity violations, formulating a typology of different types of integrity violations. What can we learn from research into 'dealing with trouble' (Six, 2004; Wittek, 1999) and 'rebuilding trust' (for example, Lewicki and Bunker's model for trust violations, 1995) about how to deal with these integrity violations?

Conclusions

This study set out to achieve two goals. First, to investigate similarities and differences of the two concepts integrity and trustworthiness. Are they synonyms, subsets or else? Second, to investigate what new insights can be generated for the study of integrity from merging the two bodies of literature.

We concluded that, despite different definitions, the two concepts appear to be in fact synonyms. The clear similarities are first that both are attributes of an actor that make that actor have higher or lower integrity or trustworthiness. And in both cases, the concept is generally considered to be good to have lots of. Also, both the integrity and trustworthiness of an actor are important because the higher his integrity and/or trustworthiness the more he will be trusted. Third, for both concepts the relevant degree of an actor's integrity or trustworthiness is ultimately determined by the other actor's perceptions. Fourth, for both

concepts a clear distinction must be made between the individual and system level, which is not always done properly in the literature. And finally, both concepts are context-dependent. The only difference appears to be that they possibly focus on different characteristics of the actor involved, but good arguments can be found to argue that even there the two concepts are similar and hence they appear to be synonyms.

Two new insights for integrity research were generated from this comparison of concepts. First, a tentative model was presented to study the implications of the observation that it is the other actor's perception of an actor's integrity that matters. Second, research questions were formulated relating to bases for judging someone's integrity, learning about someone's integrity, limits to integrity, and dealing with integrity violations.

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