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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# How differing conceptions of integrity and self-integration influence relationships: Implications for management, personal and professional development

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**ABSTRACT**

As human beings, the exercise of our professional roles demands that we relate to others. Relationships, however, challenge the self in a way that requires us to act with integrity. Different approaches to integrity configure diverse ways of cognitively and intuitively feeling and acting in our relationships. Moreover, different ways of understanding human development are related to different ways of understanding integrity in the self. While not an exhaustive account, we sketch out three models of human development that capture much of this diversity, the so-called autonomous self (AS), processual self (PS) and inter-processual self (IPS). Each has a particular way of understanding how self-integrity and congruent action come to be.

The AS and PS models understand integrity as internal coherence thanks primarily to rational exercise, with priority given to the content of action, while relations are utilised as resources. AS and PS focus on cognition through rational or emotional and external mastery of our relationships and own integrity (self-integrity is also handled as a cognitive exercise that mirrors how external relations are understood). The IPS understands integrity as the dynamic that leads to growth and cognition itself is a relational act that, when it arises from within, affects all dimensions of the person and hence how we ethically relate to others and ourselves. Different kinds of integrity are also related to practical wisdom. Based on this, we explore consequences of these different ways of understanding self-integration and relationships for approaching management and leadership roles, aiming to open up reflection on relational integrity and personal development via education in the field of management/leadership.

**Key words:** Self-integration, integrity, human development, relationships, practical wisdom, inter-processual self

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As human beings and professionals we undoubtedly need others in order to make sense of ourselves and grow into who we are, as well as to work in common, while co-creating goods in organisations and groups made up of family, business and society. But relational expectations may create strong demands or emotional pressures and experiences that lead to personal conscience and wider inner ethical conflicts (Akrivou *et al.*, 2011). For instance, what others expect from us in our relationships may conflict with what we hope or wish for, or what we wish would occur may oppose others' conceptions of duties to oneself and perceived professional obligations, such as loyalty to employers versus concern for action that supports personal well-being, as well as that of the groups we care for and the wider professional communities we partake in.

Figuring out how to navigate and grow in our relationships is perhaps at the heart of all our roles, whether professional, societal and familial. Virtuously navigating the world of relationships is not just about learning to follow a certain professional rulebook, nor just a matter of technical or theoretical reason. Above all, it is a matter of living well and enabling a good life for others. Hence, it requires a broader and more finely tuned awareness of the self, others and the given context, which involves certain cognitive effort that is both complicated and uncertain. Every person is able to act in a fine and appropriate manner based on an integrated sense of self, or

personal integrity, both of which are used in the literature on human developmental and adult psychology to refer to the moral maturity of persons who act (agents). The verb 'to integrate' captures, at the level of the self, the personal capacity to combine, unite, blend or put together, assemble, join, coalesce, and fuse various differentiated and yet interdependent aspects, parts and components of the self.

'*Integrity*' in psychology and moral philosophy refers to the quality of being honest and adhering to strong moral values and principles, as well as the state of being whole and undivided (Paladino, Delbosco & Debeljuh, 2007). Integrity in the self elevates the importance of personal moral constancy of character (Robson 2015). It is a personal asset, which deeply predisposes the self toward adapting to novelty and complicated relational, contextual and role demands, while displaying an enduring, solid moral character; it allows flexibility to appropriately tune forms of personal action into contextual aspects and their particulars, while enabling virtuous action (Koehn, 2005).

We argue that different approaches to integrity and self-integration enable diverse ways of relating to who we are and action in face of relationships within the wider context and the particulars that surround us in the exercise of our roles. We also suggest that these arise from salient, distinct ways of understanding human development and personal and shared growth. While not an exhaustive account, we sketch out three models of human development—the so-

called autonomous self (AS), processual self (PS) and inter-processual self (IPS). Each has a particular understanding (cognition) or corresponding mindset, which defines how being, integrity and action are understood, which, in turn, drives their respective ways of approaching relationships that often come into conflict.

The AS and PS models understand integrity as internal coherence thanks to primarily rational exercise; they prioritise the content of action and/or the subject's internal regulatory focus (at the level of the will or one's emotional aspects of self). In these models, the self cognitively managed integrity, while relationships are seen as resources. They maintain a twin focus on subject-specific mental regulation, aiming toward mastery, but in contrasting ways. Namely, to maintain integrity in both the self and relationships, AS relies on attendance to specific rules and normative frameworks, or perceived expectations and obligations that one adheres to as mental models that guide internal regulation processes.

PS does so as well, but with the difference that it has an extrinsic focus on relationships rather than (moral) rules; in this model, diverse psychological faculties (cognition and/or emotion) are chosen with a focus on how to best enable action from the subject to master relationships and maintain a sense of independence and autonomy. Hence, for PS, relationships are essential means for mastery in the pursuit of one's ends. AS and PS focus on cognition through rational or emotional mastery of the outside world; relationships therein are externally significant, but they are

perceived of as threatening to or enabling (instrumental role) of the subject's relationship to his/her own integrity. Integrity is also handled as a cognitive exercise that mirrors how external relationships are understood). PS leads toward adaptive dialogical mastery; it receives and acts on emotions by self-mastering them, while mastery of others evidences the subject's cognitive development through acts of relationships. There's an aspect of relationships here, but not a genuine relational act of cognition. AS relies more on the subject's rational actions and straightforward following of normative or other rule-based frameworks. This makes it easier for action within the framework of AS's integrity to maintain a stable pattern in the handling of relational pressures (i.e., via a more detached and principled approach), while PS is more sensitive to context and has the advantage of higher adaptability and flexibility in relational conflicts.

The IPS model understands integrity as a dynamic for personal growth due to the fact that cognition is itself lived as a relational act that, when it arises from within, affects all dimensions of the person. Hence, in IPS, relating to others is an act driven by seeking to grow with others through our intimacy; and relating to ourselves is driven by a deeper personal interiority towards be(coming) more of the person one is (our personhood is wider and richer than our perceived or developed self at any given point). Ethically, this purports a different kind of integrity from within the relational act of IPS cognition, whereby relationships become essential for better and more deeply

developing self-knowledge. At the same time, this integrity dynamic captures a more profound personal predisposition in the self that tends toward action enabling personal growth via the experience of our own and others' humanity. In IPS, growth happens through relational acts within the logic of the gift (appropriately giving and receiving).

IPS's conception of integrity makes it possible to understand certain aspects of AS-PS's models of integrity as an aspect of their globality. For instance, in the IPS model, the relationship is "integrated" (characterised by mutual integrity), hence individual self-integration arises as a natural consequence and the actor(s) do not have to self-regulate in order to achieve consistency with their own integrity. But in AS-PS models, one can be self-integrated without being integrated with others; one can achieve, for example, a sense of moral character including the certainty of action within an idealised conception of virtue, while that same action denies the logic of the gift or shies away from giving and receiving the gift of others. Thus, AS-PS action is oriented toward managing a sense of integrity in the self, and relationships are approached as separate domains or become instrumental for self-integrity, which may generate conflict with others' if achievement of self-integrity violates their integrity or dignity, or the true possibility of the gift.

The AS conceives of human growth as a result of individual productive activity, which aims toward cognitively "mastering" the environment as a focal object, according to the wishes of actors-subjects, or forces

others to fall in line with the mental model of being AS even when persons of virtue are encountered. This action cancels out the possibility of interpersonal encounters in our humanity. The resulting action is facilitated by self-regulation guided by externally-provided moral frameworks and rules. For AS, as the sense of being a self as subject prevails and emphasis on cognitively relating to others grows, AS distrusts oneself and one's personhood. Thus, AS tends toward regulation of relationships with preference for the rule that relationships should obey normative, predefined expectations or power and authority frameworks.

In certain situations (especially threatening ones), AS may respond to relational demands in a way that implicates one's sense of (weakening) personal integrity by means of rational choices through denial of relationships. This orients AS toward familiar integrity pursuits via increasing autonomy and independent action based on the will if no laws or dominant moral rules are violated. The PS model is presented as a variation on or mature form of the AS model because it values reason, albeit through an attempt to systematically and more impulsively follow one's will without the burden of moral normative rules that restrict action. Action takes on more dialectic forms of integrity whereby the self as subject instrumentally harnesses relationships according to the wishes of the subject-master in the process of achieving self-regulation. In AS-PS models, ethics is in addition to individual pursuit of self-actualisation, while AS and PS models can also be technically synthesized as a fused

way of action that cleverly combines the above forms to resolve the antagonisms involved.

Conversely, we suggest that IPS is a genuinely integrative mindset (i.e., it does not technically combine AS and PS in an effort to resolve their antagonistic mindsets) because it aims to act from within personal intimacy and interiority. In IPS, ethics is an integral part of being and action, whereby profound personal predisposition in the self also entails the basis, process and outcomes that guide an integrity growth dynamic that is both personally and interpersonally oriented (involving both the giver and the receiver). This dynamic within IPS integrity is driven by its *telos* (higher purpose or goal), which corresponds to acting in ways that enable personal growth via an experience of our own (and others') humanity.

Action driven by a purposeful orientation involves deeply wishing to grow to be(come) more aware of our personhood, which, as noted in IPS, is about how to be virtuous while being oneself. Personhood is wider than our known identity and so, for IPS, its relational, personalist basis of integrity allows for personal growth. Practically wise forms of action that enable this purpose are only possible in IPS through relational acts within the logic of the gift (appropriately sharing in giving and receiving). Within this context, IPS orients acts of personal integrity via parallel acknowledgement of personal feelings, affections and agency-driven action that systematically respect the shared humanity of all involved. The integrity involved in the IPS conception of the self and action

places human dignity as the key root, process and purpose of action, while ethics is integral to it at every moment of being and action— of course in IPS knowing and acting are always unified in IPS's unified theoretical definitions (Akrivou, Orón, & Scalzo, 2018).

Integrity, from within an IPS perspective, (cognition) is a personal - relational act. As noted, self-integration in IPS relies on one's personhood, which involves dignity dwelling both in personal uniqueness and intimacy, and in our shared humanity. From within personal intimacy (intimacy and relationships being the only ways for us to capture and realise, or "know" our singularity) springs the 'logic of the gift' (Schrift, 2014; Hénaff, 2003), which involves how best to grow relationships in an ethical way; including welcoming, acknowledging and properly accepting (honouring, elevating) gifts received from others, as well as our own personhood. Relating to others and the gifts we receive implicates benevolently and lovingly growing in our action beyond the logic of duty and obligation (Baviera, English & Guillén, 2016).

Integrity in the IPS model involves relating well and aiming to deepen our sense of humanity both in understanding who we are and in facing other human beings in the realm of personal and social relations. This involves honestly seeking out appropriate ways of acting and doing good for all involved, including one's own good, which involves practical wisdom, i.e., the appropriate forms of practical-ethical reason sensitively enacted with concern for all involved. Hence, for the IPS model,



ethics represents a path toward growth, and self-integrity enables acting as a person of virtue, a human being who is able to use practical-ethical reason for the good (understanding and acting in a practically wise manner as to how means, ends and the

teleological aspects of human action should be connected for us to feel respect for ourselves and others). Table 1 summarises these two different approaches to integrity (AS and PS models versus the IPS's integrity conceptions).

**Table 1: Two divergent models with respect to integrity:**

	AS and PS models	IPS model
Integrity is understood as:	The qualifier of the subject's state of maturation	Dynamics of growth
Integrity refers to:	The subject  Action from within a sense of duty, obligation or moral feeling towards others	Action from within one's personhood (dignity involving both personal uniqueness and intimacy, and shared humanity).  Personal intimacy (which springs from the 'logic of the gift')
Integrity is achieved through:	Extension of the domain over which the subject performs in the environment and with respect to herself  Acting via cognitive mastery	Benevolent and loving action with others  Intensification and improvement of interpersonal relationships
Interpersonal relationships occur:	At a second and optional moment after individual action aiming at individual self-constitution; the subject sees as key priority to not endanger self-constitution (maintaining cognitive mastery).  Objects of an acting subject's cognition. Through acts of	First and necessary moment that is constitutive self that emerges later



	rational or emotional mastery of the outside world, relations are instrumental to self-integrity; they are <i>externally</i> significant as threatening or enabling subject's relationship to his/her own integrity	
Ethics is:	An addition to individual maturation. Managed as a domain of mastery: Mastery of moral self-identity (managing action and regulation of self to follow a moral rule or more emotivist resolutions of relational and identity conflicts according to the will)	Inherent in the entire relational act of growing, inherent in being and growing as integrated person
Ethical integrity is:	Coherence with one's own principles, will, moods etc.	The internal reciprocity and reception of others

In this article, we introduce the AS, PS and IPS models based on how their focus on cognition relates to oneself and personal integrity and the problem of human growth and action, as well as corresponding ways whereby personal and social relations are understood.

## 2. MORAL PSYCHOLOGIES OF THE AUTONOMOUS SELF (AS) – PROCESSUAL SELF (PS) VERSUS THE INTER-PROCESSUAL SELF (IPS)

### 2.1 *The modern perspective underlying the AS and PS – Cognitive Mastery*

The background and mindset that characterizes the moral psychology of the

autonomous self (AS) supports the vision of integrity demonstrated through effective domain mastery (Kegan, 1994; Ryan, 1995; Ryan and Deci, 2000; 2004). The AS mentality is in line with philosophers who understand habit as a routine and virtue as an ideal value, and thus purports that human beings can be taught externally. This perspective corresponds to the neuroscientific approach that splits the brain into different modules and correlates each module with one function. Based on moral psychology, recent advances in the autonomous understanding of the self and its integrity are compatible with a self-interested rational agent who can self-orient via the integrity of the will, which is understood as autonomous and formal.

Integrity, as an autonomous cognitive act, sets external rules to master the self-system of relationships. AS understands the self and agency as separate or, at times, in opposition to various “objects” or domains. At the heart of AS, integrity is found in different forms of cognitive mastery; higher forms of cognitive mastery appear to both capture managerial expectations and conform to externally established moral rules and conventions that embody those higher forms (Kohlberg, 1969).

The AS paradigm holds an individualistic understanding of how integrity is experienced, i.e., through primarily rationalist principled action. For example, integrity in management or roles of control is premised upon distinct mastery of separate groups and individuals and the division of the organisation as a territory to manage with primary and secondary domains. The subject’s integrity requires cognitive distance from real persons, contexts, particularities and relationships since they include their humanity, which favours reliance on power or status as ways of imposing a subject’s will. It involves the reliance on external rules (regulation) and even abstract moral universals. It also requires a stance of personal and cognitive neutrality to all related objects and persons-groups, while focusing on one’s primary duties (Mansell, 2013).

Hence, AS integrity is compatible with a rationalist mature agent perspective whose integrity requires an autonomous, principled will. Adherence to external normative universal frames of action orients personal integrity toward preserving self-constitution. Action that arises is self-

protective and comes in somewhat self-interested forms of prudence. Deontological-driven action protects self-identity via an alignment of self with primary interest groups— a rationalist thought process guides how to align the self with the categorical imperative. Accordingly, AS understands and experiences the relationship between (a1) duties that spring from an incumbent’s role as primary rules guiding action and (a2) key people or groups involved as a problem of mastery over independent relationships as additional domains. In accordance with AS, the motives of mature agents in leadership ought to be rationally seeking to align leader-agency with the self-interests of their principals, taken to be the shareholders as understood in agency theory (Davis *et al.*, 1997).

In our research (Akriovou, Orón, Sclazo, 2018), we also found that, as noted earlier, AS’s conceptions of self and action include the sub-variety called the “Processual Self” or PS. PS prefers a mastery experience through dynamic, on-going and fluid adaptation of action, which is often driven by more affective and intuitive processes, but genuinely personal action with concern for the person one relates to still escapes it. This includes changes to the subject’s own interests or adaptation to other people’s responses and action herein arises as an emotivist response to external stimuli. PS also focuses on cognitive mastery because relationships are essential means for mastering the pursuit of ends. Thus, AS and PS’s focus on relationships is external as socio-behavioural approaches to maintaining self-integrity and implies that

relationships are impulsively perceived either as threatening or enabling (instrumental role), positive or negative; they affect how the subject responds and adapts to action in relationships in order to maintain the subject's relationship to his/her own integrity. Thus, intuitive social responses drive PS's action, facing integrity challenges as a primary cognitive mechanism even if reason is used at times as a post-hoc mechanism to justify or communicate reasons behind adaptive strategies.

AS and PS focus on maintaining one's sense of being a subject, which also means that the self and identity are defensively maintained as core basis of who one is, and that integrity fears opening up wider exploration that involves the discovery of the person beyond identity elements in the self. Self-identity is a key concern in relation to how integrity is pursued. Integrity is also handled as a cognitive exercise mirroring how external relationships are understood. PS leads with purpose; it receives and acts on emotions while mastering them. At the same time, mastery of others proves the subject's cognitive development through acts of relationships.

Given this, PS still aims for strategic control of action. For example, in terms of organizational roles, there is a preference for structure, and the use of fluid post-bureaucratic structures, which emphasize team and social control, thus elevating the value of subjectivity. PS can be more amoral (than AS) in the chosen approach to relationships if the subject so wills and, rather than regulating emotions for

cognitive mastery. It uses more chaotic (or we can call it strategically adaptive) emotional processing as a way to free the will towards acting in the direction that seems fitting. This can equip PS with greater ability to grasp opportunistic gains in certain situations, while maintaining a sense of integrity as compared with the AS since more adaptive responsive action is permissible in terms of action consistent with integrity. The focus is still cognitive mastery here, even in what may appear as the acting subject's avoidance of any stable cognitive or moral framework, which appears as freedom to act as one wills at every moment, and is which, in turn, entirely in contrast with the IPS's perception of freedom (Orón, Akriovou & Scalzo, 2019). Thus, this form of integrity relies on an ethical footprint that it doesn't actually contain and is in reality a sub-variety of AS.

The AS and PS models understand the problem of integrity as a primarily rational exercise(s), with priority given to the content of action while relationships are seen as resources; for AS, maintenance of integrity in our relationships requires reliance on or attention to specific rules and normative frameworks. PS highlights relationships and diverse psychological faculties for mastering relationships as essential means in the pursuit of given ends. AS and PS focus on cognition through rational, external and emotional mastery of our relationships and our relationship to our own integrity.

Behind the modernist reading of cognition that characterises AS and PS is the idea that cognition (mental models including the

will) drives action, and that cognition drives being, whereby integrity in relationships is seen as the ability to act while always maintaining safe distance that allows for freedom from others and always allows the subject to maintain the certainty of control over the self and relationships.

This assumption shapes the understanding of wider human development theory regarding action with maturity in broader life domains, which in the last thirty years has influenced leadership and leadership development theory or leadership development teaching and practices (for example following models such as Flavell, 1963; Harvey, Hunt & Schroeder 1961; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Lahey Laskow, 1986; Loevinger 1966, 1976; Perry 1970/99).

Piagetian and post-Piagetian cognitive development psychologies share a common heritage with Piaget's (1962) uni-linear stage theory of cognitive development (Flavell 1963), which "borrows" a structural genetic epistemology marked by a universal assumption of growth in cognitive terms and influences overall human growth. Indeed, in all of the Piagetian and post-Piagetian stage models, cognitive moral maturity is seen as associated with a dualistic hypothesis whereby initially an autonomous (AS) and subsequently a processual (PS) kind of cognitive meaning making underlie two opposing modes of human maturity. For example, key models that match up are from Kegan (1994) and Lahey-Laskow (1986). They propose a subject-object psychoanalysis oriented toward answering the question of how to best deal with life's mental demands, which include

relationships. These theories, despite their multi-dimensionality, emphasize a cognitivist approach to the self and mature action (Creamer, Baxter & Yue, 2010: 550 and 552). These stage model(s) describe a subjective framework in which a person is embedded in the "assessment" of an object (which refers to a person, an act, or a situation in these works). Its basic assumption is that the subject's autonomous growth must become the "object" of higher frames of mind. Each person's mind is thus seen as capable of developmental shifts and as following a type of subject-object progression akin to AS. Thus, later on PS emerges in rejection of previous stages: this new PS challenge allows one to adaptively and reflexively respond to the transcendence of one's "mind" with a Hegelian-like dialectic approach to relationships between agents who are valued in a subject to subject framework.

Another seminal post-Piagetian piece corresponds to Cook Greuter's 1999 extension of Jane Loevinger's (1966, 1976) theory, whereby PS emerges at the end in rejection of previous assumptions in line with an idealized AS mode of the self that seeks human integrity in self and identity. Cook Greuter (1999), based on Freudian ego development theory, understands problems of self growth as challenges of the ego rather than as a more general cognitive challenge. The main idealised pursuit here is how to overcome the ego, which results in the proposal of higher stages of ego-transcendence.

Naturally, an interest in integrity in relationships premised on a morally mature person's ability for autonomous moral

reasoning brings us to Kohlberg's cognitive moral development theory. This theory is the best example that critically displays the antagonistic interplay between AS and PS. The model focuses on moral reasoning maturity growth stages that enable higher meaning making and judgment, hence a special concern for moral action as a domain. At the end of his model, Kohlberg proposes a seventh stage of moral reasoning akin to PS, but it is not initially clear (Akrivou, Orón & Scalzo, 2018) if Kohlberg goes from AS to PS via a "rejection" of his main theory's premises (which purport AS) or if he ultimately proposes a dualistic synthesis between AS and PS (which would mean not rejecting AS in line with Colby and Kohlberg, 1989; Kohlberg, 1969). We suggest (Akrivou, Orón & Scalzo, 2018) he has a rather dualist proposal. Drawing on Kohlberg & Mayer (1972), his earlier body of work focussed on AS (Colby and Kohlberg, 1989; Kohlberg, 1969, 1981), while only his last alternative processual "mode" of human maturity switches to a moral maturity akin to PS (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972; Kohlberg & Ryncarz, 1990).

However, Kohlberg's work helps us to uncover and theoretically describe the differences and interplay between AS and PS (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972). But even his latest revised theories do not help transcend AS and PS's conflict or dualistic understanding.

In mainstream psychological theory, theories from key modern psychology scholars (Deci and Ryan, 2002; 2013; Ryan, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2004; Ryan and Lynch, 1989) echo similar assumptions

grounded on a universal model of self and cognitive integrative dynamics. They purport that self-integration is an aspirational ideal and a goal to be "mastered" via more mature states (not stages, in this case) of human development. The main theoretical premise aims to uncover how motivational integrative dynamics in the self function (Ryan, 1991). The focus here is psychological dynamics that activate inner tendencies, striving to cover various needs and domains, and gradually aiming to establish higher unity in the self (Ryan, 1995). The self is seen as lacking unity and, for them, self-development seems to rely upon a dynamic-synthetic Hegelian synthesis type (Hegel, 1965) with systemic self striving towards gradual self-unifying processing and striving for self-autonomy therein (Ryan, 1995). This is seen as possible via two opposing or conflicting modes i.e., either via a more rationalist-cognitive processing mode that relates to AS, or via a more emotive and intuitive mode of processing that relates to PS.

Such stage theories share a common biologically based assumption rooted in Werner's 1948 orthogenic principle (Johnson, 2000) that personal integrity is characterized by a) it being autonomously mastered via the agent's intense cognitive development, b) it only being possible in the highest levels of growth, c) it being mainly premised upon mastery of the self via a critical distance with the wider world, which firstly relies on the mastery of cognitive rules (the mastery of universal moral rules, which is seen as part of the post-conventional path of moral maturity in



the self). The modern paradigm on the self and action has key assumptions regarding integrity vis-à-vis the social world, including the idea that individual autonomous cognitive development enables the subject-agent to make good, clean, rationally calculated decisions regarding tactical and strategic choices of ends and means to master the self and relationships.

However, these same authors recognize their key assumption as a weak hypothesis at a later stage when all of a sudden most cognitive stage development theories switch from a universal rule mastery approach to an antagonistic and more emotivist path premised upon intuitive, dynamic and adaptive kinds of action that avoids following cognitive rules. Yet, it is mainly concerned with response efficacy, reacting effectively to external stimuli based on the inner self's will. This proposal is more akin to the PS model and its stage theories of cognitive development mainly appear at the end of post-conventional growth. It does not substantially overcome the assumptions and limitations of the AS model as it is still mainly concerned with how the self maintains its subject mindset in achieving successful autonomous "authorship," which becomes a dialectic cognitive mastery approach to others.

At a neuroscientific level, the cognitive dynamics of the Autonomous Self (AS) versus the Processual Self (PS) is found in that the former relies on System 2 ("slow" i.e., the mastery of critical, detached and rationalist knowledge that requires analytical cognitive processing). By contrast, the Processual Self (PS) relies on a synthesis between system 1 ("fast") and

system 2 ("slow") (Kahneman 2011; Kahneman & Riis, 2005). This allows PS to rely more heavily and comfortably on moral intuition and adaptive cognitive processing responses as dominant modes of actions; while AS's system 2 dominance makes it rely more on rules and maxims and sees action as best when detached from moral feelings, to operate cleanly and detached from (moral) feelings, AS may become more strongly so when someone tries to approach another from a relational point of view, which is often characterised as a threat to autonomy.

It should be noted that, regarding the conflicting cognitive preference bases that distinguish AS (relying on an abstract/rationalist basis) and PS (relying on a cognitive functioning more akin to an intuitive and emotional basis), AS does not imply a lack of emotion or intuitive functioning, but rather a preference for rationalism in the face of choices and dilemmas related to action (Haidt, 2001) with integrity.

## ***2.2 The Inter-processual self: Integrity as relational act from within personal interiority***

The IPS presents a different paradigm for understanding the self and action that influences its view of action with maturity. It consists in considering human beings and human development **as they really are**, rather than in an idealized way, thus abandoning altogether the hypothesis of self-autonomy as a precondition for self, human action, meaning-making and moral and cognitive maturity itself.

The philosophical moral psychology of the inter-processual self is a novel theory based on an interdisciplinary dialogue between philosophy and psychology (Akrivou, Orón 2016; Akrivou, Orón, Scalzo 2018). The paradigm of the Inter-Processual Self (IPS) is a broad, unified theoretical proposal on the self and action that understands and values the self, ethical action and human development beyond the mere logics of self-interest and obligation, suggesting the recovery of the so called “logic of the gift,” which highlights human freedom and gratuity for the sake of strong relationships (Hénaff, 2003).

This model is based on interdisciplinary dialogue between philosophy and psychology and key philosophers for understanding this personalist virtue ethics proposal include Aristotle, Leonardo Polo, Alfred N. Whitehead, and Wang Yangming, as well as the psychologists Carl Rogers, Erik Erikson, and Viktor Frankl (Akrivou, Orón 2016; Akrivou, Orón, Scalzo 2018). IPS is deeply grounded in personalist philosophical assumptions on the self, life, human and social growth and action. Personalist philosophy regards the person, or each human being as a singular entity as the ultimate ontological, epistemological, explanatory, and axiological principle of all reality, but there are substantial variations when it comes to how different philosophical streams of personalism emphasize these aspects (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Polo’s philosophical personalism and Mounier’s personalist philosophy (1989) are influential in how the self and personal

action are understood in the IPS (Akrivou, Orón 2016; Akrivou, Orón, Scalzo 2018).

The central premise in this proposal is rooted in personhood and its approach to human beings and growth; IPS’s notion of personhood affirms that human beings have a singularity based on our intimacy and uniqueness, and that we can rely on our intimacy to lead action with a particular kind of freedom, which is “freedom for” affirming a relational ontology and a transcendental anthropology regarding what it is to be human i.e., the person is a unity that pre-exists action and life itself.

This proposal starts from the Spanish neo-Aristotelian and personalist philosopher Leonardo Polo and his three radicals (fundamentals), which philosophically capture the main approaches to personal being in the history of philosophical thought. The radical of nature—based on classical philosophy e.g., Aristotle’s works—states that we are all rooted in our distinctive and common psychological, biological and cultural assumptions. Based on our traditions or distinct roots, human nature includes the development of psychological and biological dimensions. Polo’s radical of the person—based on Christian philosophy, such as the works of Aquinas—affirms that human beings have a singularity and this uniqueness is expressed and exists due to intimacy. Finally, the radical of the subject—based on modern philosophy from Descartes to contemporary modern philosophers—is focused on the results or products of our agency; it affirms that human beings can produce novel solutions instead of perfecting or developing what we receive,



i.e., our nature. Polo proposes that these three “radicals” are present in each action and integrated by the person. Therefore, human action is born integrated. Applying this to integrative human growth, Akrivou, Orón and Scalzo (2018) suggest that being and growing as a human being requires the systemic integration of these fundamentals from within a person and, in addition, that this moral psychology fittingly harmonizes with virtue ethics’ normative philosophy.

According to the scholars associated with IPS personal growth, it is meaningless to understand integrity outside of the notion of acting for and with others, within the frame of relational inter-personal growth. IPS hence understands integrity in the context of its cognition i.e., as a relational act that, when it arises from within, affects all dimensions of the person. How to ethically relate to others and ourselves purports a different kind of integrity whereby the “logic of the personal gift” highlights human freedom and gratuity for the sake of growing with others in personal human relationships that enable mutual virtuous growth. Such a notion of relationships from within a personalist gift perspective that supports human singularity and intimacy become essential for better self-knowledge and experience of our own humanity. Personal relationships with intimacy are central to being, as are our acts of integrity, which together help cultivate ourselves and our integrity, and help us learn how to live with and love others better. Secondly, according to IPS’s understanding of moral psychology, human growth is shaped by free and open systems such that growth can be positive or negative (growing as a person

of virtue or growing negatively as a person without virtue; emphasis is on showing that the basis of this action in the personal fundamental root (or ‘radical’) of being following the literature presented earlier in this summary). Yet, processual and responsive moral dialogue (Akrivou & Orón, 2016) **in personal** relationships can enable further self-understanding as to how to strengthen action fuelled by integrity. While IPS’s moral psychology understands the self and personal and systemic action guided by assumptions of open and free systems, its action aims to mutual virtuous growth in relationships, which requires deepening the quality of relatedness between those involved.

These assumptions and the understanding of integration in IPS through Polo’s personal radical capture what is expressed by the notion of integrity in inter-processual terms in the IPS proposal. According to this model, “to integrate entails a maturation in which different aspects and relations differentiate and optimize to the same extent that they place themselves in a relationship with one another” (Orón 2015, 114). Deep personal integration in IPS (which expresses a high form of personal integrity in moral psychological terms) means a kind of commitment and implication with the other’s growth beyond a rational choice or a decision driven by logic; it means implicating oneself with the other(s) for whom relationships with intimacy are part of who he is and becomes. This needs to happen from within the person and is directed through one’s interiority embracing oneself and the other(s) in their humanity. This of course

requires trust(ing) and learning to trust. This is possible only by acknowledging everyone as a transcendental and unique human being with the capacity to be free to love other human beings not for narrowly logical reasons, nor for a sense of moral obligation, or developed disposition to give care, but based on a deeper level of devotion that requires love and transcendence of narrowly logical forms of exchange.

The self and integrity in the IPS are not separate domains, nor does the latter pursue the former for some (later) point in life. For IPS, the self and integrity are always a unity, *a dynamically evolving relationship within which each part is closely related to the whole, but always maintains its internal identity driven from its own singular interiority that is complex, multifaceted and cannot be captured or measured, but only intuitively felt. In IPS, this human integrity as expression of interiority is expressed via our intimacy. Therefore, it is personal intimacy and not our cognitive capacity or mastery that enables us to grow.* IPS understands and lives the relationship with others affectively from within our intimacy, both at the personal and systemic levels.

It is therefore important to note that there is a key qualitative difference between the AS and IPS paradigms of integrity and to highlight that IPS begs the question of the degree to which each of the (integrally related) parts can be utilized in a higher order or capacity. This involves seeking to genuinely work in common for a naturally shared higher purpose (Alford & Naughton, 2002). For the IPS mindset, it is not possible to consider other's ethical virtuous

growth outside of the system that considers the globality of all relating parts.

The brain model that supports IPS corresponds to a lack of independent modules and to the existence of dynamic and temporal neural coalitions that reach a synchrony and coordination driven by intentionally purposeful action (Orón et al. 2016, Orón 2019).

The conception in IPS regarding personal integrity relies on the ethical quality of intimate relatedness to others because every human being organically integrates (from within one's ethical self-system) her unique identity and internal quality of relating with every (specific) other. Personal growth and effectiveness are not "seen" as possible unless they come through a lens of trust and the "logic of the gift" (Baviera et al., 2016), while personal and interpersonal growth entails how to learn to love others better.

AS and PS are based on the modern radical, while IPS integrates the three radicals from the personal radical. That is why the IPS integration model has the ability to welcome the good elements of the AS-PS integration model, while exceeding their limits.

Thus, based on the latter, this personalist moral psychology harmonizes well with the normative philosophy found in what is called virtue ethics (Akrivou, 2016; Koehn, 1995; Solomon, 1999). Both have a systemic (social-personal) and a teleological orientation (personal and wider growth which makes happiness and co-existence possible for all) and draw on character. IPS self-integrity is a "personalist kind of relating to others respecting their

own integrity and uniqueness”, which is required by the premises of virtue theory on personal virtue rather than on principles and a rule-based principled will (Koehn; 1995; Solomon, 1992) guiding moral action.

Broader human learning and development theory outside the key theories of development in modern psychology reviewed earlier, including the works of Rogers (1951; 1961, 1964) and Erikson (1994), are particularly relevant for illustrating *how action with integrity and moral maturity* result from the IPS way of living personal action in relations of mutual growth. IPS is more vulnerable; as personal action with integrity, it is concerned with relations as a true gift. So one has to work to learn how to best act acknowledging one’s humanity through acts of intimacy involving the giving and receiving of the self and the other via one’s work; such action is however freely chosen and is neither imposed as a duty and obligation nor is understood as a mechanical, forced or transactional type of exchange.

IPS integrity and relational growth are harder because institutional and wider systems in the economy and even in our political and social life (especially in late modernity) are geared toward functioning that mirrors AS and PS’s logic of action and corresponding integrity. So, learning to shift action with integrity from an autonomous or processual gear to an inter-processual way of life requires a contemplated and genuine inner life of virtue; it calls for choices of helping-psychotherapeutic relationships that respect and elevate personhood for mutual relational growth. What these mutual

developmental relational approaches that enable IPS look like can be understood via the work of Rogers (1961), who illustrates the humanistic personalist psychology of IPS i.e., that relationships with the integrity of all involved do not present a model of maturity that simply synthesizes, or technically integrates (Akrivou & Oron, 2016).

From the very beginning of the therapeutic process, one relational party enters into a new interiority and a personal growth path is opened up. Immersing the self into an experiential path that frees the *inner experiencing focus* require trust, and gradually trusting the immediacy of experience within the person’s organism, which gradually frees us to release the integrity we all naturally share as persons (Rogers 1961: 131). Our common humanity and relationality are the basis of this integrity, as it is rooted in a deeper personalist root of being, as noted. From there, the person within is freed (which is wider and richer than the social and biological self we are habituated into), which allows the self to operate in full integrity. This can be trusted and produces predictable outcomes that allows for wider concern for true growth and well-being of all involved including the acting person, while it maintains the “novelty” and uniqueness that characterises each human being. This requires enabling true personal growth for all involved and happens by gradually trusting in the manifestation of one’s humanity. This reference to the inner experience process is only facilitated through the logic of the gift by the less vulnerable and the more morally and

professionally accountable party. The giver of the gift corresponds to the latter and the receiver acknowledges the need to grow in their journey to inner virtue and this, for Rogers, involves immersion in various experiences and feelings, as well as in the relationship of growth itself. Our proposal is of course less hierarchical and clear in the definition of roles compared to Rogers' therapist-client relationship, but IPS coincides with Rogers in that growth is only possible through mutual growth in a personal relationship (Akrivou & Oron, 2016) on the basis of intimacy and the singularity of each person. Rogers' humanistic relational psychoanalysis provides IPS with a useful theoretical path toward turning "modern autonomous selves" away from a closed Cartesian subject-agent rationality and safe distance mode.

### **3. IMPLICATIONS FOR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

We argued here that different models of human development conceive of the person and personal integrity differently and, from them, contrasting kinds of action that denote how we relate to others in our profession and in life ensue. We suggested that integrity is not just about learning to follow a certain professional rulebook, nor just a matter of technical or social intelligence and skill regarding how to handle relationships to yield results for one's own agenda and goals (e.g., to achieve narrowly conceived business profits). It requires a broader kind of awareness and maturity that enables reliance on a mature sense of what is good

for all involved, a kind of knowledge-action appropriate mindset that enables acting for the good of all involved within practical-ethical rationality, which frees personal and relational growth without violating human dignity.

Regarding the existing antagonism between AS and PS in the self-autonomy paradigm of human growth, PS does not abandon AS because PS maintains the cognitive approach to relationships and roles in organisations and society, which require professional action and involve working with or influencing others. Within AS integrity, we primarily find a way to rationally regulate cognition towards ends within a preferred set of moral rules. Relationships are also understood as domains that should be normatively mastered and regulated to support the acting subject's agenda in a way that provides certainty to the fulfilment of the actor's goals.

This mode of action in AS and PS recalls Perez Lopez's (1993) critical review of the dominant models of organisational and economic agency, i.e., reliance on mechanistic/technical or psychosocial forms of management. The first (dating back to Taylorism) and the second (dating back to Hawthorne's experiments and the dawn of psychosocial competence for more effective management) can be seen as corresponding to personal action in AS and PS. It draws on this and other related mental models through which relations are approached as an instrument or means to an end. These approaches to integrity rely on control or power through people in key roles (e.g., managers or administrative

decision makers) seeing as legitimate control in order to bring about the desired ends via an approach to relationships that values them instrumentally as resources or psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef and Avolio 2007), the value of which should be harnessed via effectively managing them as key success factors in a dynamic and networked world (Parikh, 1999).

Such approaches see integrity on the same level as actors' personal values without deeply implicating ethical aspects of action regarding the wider common good of all involved through systematic ethical action relying on appropriate forms of practical wisdom. While AS is more likely to maintain a principled agency that orients technical reason in avoidance of straightforwardly unethical action, action is rather concerned with short term efficiency and mainly serves a narrow set of interests. In PS, reason is used in legitimation processes to enable positive support or the mastery of key groups or distinct people and it includes less concern for the integrity or dignity of all involved over time because a more subjective sense of integrity rules is legitimated in the process of action according to the subject's will. Both AS and PS lack deeper concern for affective sources of information in the self that enable stronger forms of personal integrity based on richer personal orientation to virtue since, in both cases, emotion is regulated in the self.

The IPS proposal is related to another way of understanding that allows personal action with integrity to not be concerned with the mastery of others, whether as a means or as

an end of action. Instead, the main concern in IPS is how to relate to others from within our intimacy and singularity to work in common and achieve common goods while facilitating through them the personal (ethical) growth of all involved. In the integrity of the IPS, the output of action is not mainly concerned with the products produced, but is more concerned with how to enable personal flourishing of all involved. This is a more profound conception of integrity and its corresponding moral psychology acts to enable true sustainability of all involved.

For this, as noted, the IPS relates to a richer form of cognition that properly integrates affective, ethical, practical and cognitive forms of rational excellence. Accordingly, IPS approaches integrity not just as a set of idealised values, but as a relational act that concretely implicates ethical aspects of action. It affects all dimensions of the person and others involved in the act as it arises from within the interiority of a person. For this reason, IPS is not based in neuroscientific understanding of modules 1 and 2 in which one system integrates (controls) another, as AS proposes, or the two systems are integrated (synthetized), as PS proposes. This transforms cognition as an essentially personal relational act, which transcends modular mentality because a way of understanding the integrated brain emerges in every system. The concern here is to bring back ethical inner life in the self, which contemplates how to grow as a virtuous person relationally rather than individually because interpersonal integration guarantees the integration of all



emotional, cognitive and intuitive aspects. This kind of integration requires more affective commitment in the exercise of professional roles, which involves relating to others with dignity, but also with compassion, forgiveness and a serious concern for a contemplated life that systematically relies on the practical wisdom of personalism (Alford, 2010).

This suggested approach to integrity, and its corresponding approach to action in IPS, is closely related to what Perez Lopez (2002) describes as an anthropological approach that is a new and necessary turn in organisational life. It is important based on the need for more sustainable role organisations and on economics' ability to enable social and ecological improvement. Human and social communities are premised upon a diversity of perspectives and interests and there are surely different pathways for pursuing certain ends, but not all can ensure the mutual growth of all involved and the common good. Beyond the need to control and the "skills and power needed to... impose moral rules and the values that help advance the well-being of the majority and engender power accumulation of a small group in society and organisational group" (Martinez-Echevarria 2015; Scalzo, 2017), the IPS approach to action fits well with the anthropological approach and the logic of the gift, which is concerned with the relational act of integrity to support ethical and practical action and to better enable wider co-existence and growth starting from personal intimacy. Accordingly, from within an IPS perspective, action in relational aspects requires courage to

transcend and transform the mind by embracing the act of leadership as something other than a duty or transactional exchange (e.g., for more access to power and control and better career prospects), and instead embracing it as an act of the gift, which means concretely loving human beings in their singularity and diversity and wanting to offer and receive within this context.

This discussion informs how to think about approaching education (Orón, Akrivou & Scalzo, 2019), which, in this context, relates to professional and management development to transcend the limitations that we argue exist in AS and PS approaches. For AS, professional action is about integrity as a mainly psychological and cognitive act, whereby a focus on a theoretical set of principles and rules to guide action may be seen as an antidote to the kinds of agency produced by the twin AS and PS models. There, the idea is that ethics training and education and values-related education (like in Kohlberg's initial stages) can correct or add-on as new features of knowledge. So, in this model, an ethical orientation toward action is seen as possible through ethics as an add-on component, which is congruent with the Hegelian synthesis approach underlying the autonomous self.

Models drive behaviour in this case, thus the importance in AS lies in cascading the appropriate mental model to others who are expected to adopt and follow the cascaded model maintaining a principled stance. For PS, cognition is still a psychological act whose activity focuses on a practical emphasis driven by a theoretical basis (the

mental model of who fills management roles and wields authority to impose their mental model on followers). This is not essentially different as AS and PS are sub-varieties of the same mentality. Simply put, in PS, integrity is a rationalist act where its cognitive model aims to satisfy ends via the mastery of others. In this model, the developmental focus is on learning sets of skills and competencies (such as social intelligence, intercultural skills, etc.) or behavioural ethics that enable professionals to develop social, ethical and wider psychological faculties that support the will. This model of development also attributes importance to emotional adaptability, enriching the dynamic adaptive approach to relationships. Along with personal relationships, these other psychological acts also have an instrumental value, which enables control of action contexts (human and wider in all groups involved) and foment behavioural skills (e.g., nudging models, coalition building, motivation and control).

This new moral psychology of the “Inter-processual self” fundamentally involves a relational *person* who genuinely pursues a virtuous and good life. However, for IPS, integrity is initiated from the interiority of the person as a deeply personal, psychosocial act that is simultaneously relational, allowing the other to flourish and grow in common, albeit in the assumption of freedom and openness. This attends to the mutuality of what and how acts of giving and receiving ensue.

Professional development implications therefrom include an ontology of each human being’s relationship-building based

on one’s uniqueness and intimacy (freedom for). They are at the root of human action within the IPS. Professional role exercise under this assumption cannot therefore aim at mastery or control, or towards harnessing others’ psychological capital. It must trust relationships in terms of personal integrity oriented towards understanding and respecting one’s own and others’ singularity.

Emotional education is important in this approach to help people learn to better recognize, trust and free the integration of emotion in the self as information. It also helps us understand and enable ethical and relationally responsive personal action, with the aim of facilitating personal growth through appropriate forms of practical wisdom that support a process of intensification of relationships and that constitute the human person in what she fundamentally is (Orón 2016, 2017, 2018b).

A note should be made here to more sharply distinguish PS and IPS. Both consider relationships as central concerns in acts of personal integrity, but how relationships are valued differs radically. While, for PS, relationships have an instrumental value (which makes forms of PS leadership potentially dangerous for the common good as it can gradually erode social bonds and trust in a shared humanity), for IPS they have a final value, or value in themselves. IPS calls for a paradigm change in personal and professional development that puts interpersonal relationships and personal growth at the basis and centre of growth models; it does not just shift towards relationships as the core philosophies of educational programmes, but more radically



shifts our understanding of what personal integrity means and what relating to others from within the logic of person involves: the gift within free and open systems. The instrumental view of relationships can be found in programmes and proposals, but they do not help outside the mentality of the autonomous self.

Different educational models allow us to approach wider aims and pillars of education, for example, learning to enable action, learning of being, learning to know and learning to co-exist with others in Delors *et al.*, 1996 UNESCO report. This pushes us to inquire into a broader vision as highlighted by Peters (1966: 34, 1967), who warns us not to confuse an educated and a trained person. Emphasis should be given to how to enable a shift to personhood, hence we should educate people as ethical persons.

This open debate helps us to see what personal transformation in education is about concerning developing integrity in relationships and, as suggested, how we face the problem of the relational nature of our integrity is based on contrasting ways of understanding the self and action in the paradigms of AS, PS and IPS and the cognition of integrity involved in each. For AS, cognition is a psychological act reduced to mastery via thorough rationalistic exercise; improving integrity is seen as a mainly cognitive and theoretical act with personal relationships as accessory. Professional practice here is more about how professionals relate to the content of the goals and ends they pursue and the theories and models allowing for them. For PS, the focus in education is how to acquire

practical and applied skills and know-how and how to enable growth in psychosocial faculties to enrich action and reason. Effective adaptation to various aspects of one's roles and accountability, which requires both intense cognitive effort and the mastery of the social world for impact and results, is central. This paradigm has dominated personal, management and organisational psychology for many decades starting in the early twentieth century. While popular, it has also resulted in the dehumanisation of the world at large and modern organisations (Dierksmeier & Pirson, 2009; Mansell and Sison, 2019; MacIntyre, 1999; Moore, 2005; Pirson *et al.* 2010).

For IPS, cognition as a psychological act is initiated from the interiority of the person as a way of interacting and positioning in the world, while accepting one's vulnerability and humanity, which requires us to re-learn how to abandon our individual, safe distance from which we critique or instrumentally relate to others. Action from the personalist radical, which integrates nature and self-acceptance, requires production through mastery and requires learning to grow as a person who integrates appropriate practical-ethical forms of reason and wisdom. This calls the person to abandon safe, abstract expert positions and immerses the self in integrity and personal vulnerability. This requires a (re)learning of how to more wisely express feelings and experiences, while maintaining wisdom, spirituality and a practically-ethically wise type of rational excellence. However, it also invites the affective sources of ourselves and others as

emotional beings, which requires time to develop trust and a deeper understanding of each parties' transcendental, complicated personhood.

This relies upon other cardinal and wider virtues that moderate autonomous, self-interested and narrower forms of reason; such virtues include courage, friendship, generosity, and the self-awareness to acknowledge our tendency to run from intimacy in relationships (or the simultaneous grief and relief when others run away that enables us to find safety back in the autonomous self). Remaining committed and learning to display true community is an act of personal integrity related to IPS cognition and is activated from the person's interiority, where various psychological faculties are integrated. The person's ends are the interpersonal relationship, encounter with the other and learning how to work together to make growth and happiness possible for both within a wider good and higher purpose.

Having clarified the anthropological and psychological assumptions associated with AS, PS and IPS, its application to leadership is very suggestive. For AS and PS, the aim is to be a moral person who acts in professional roles and who also sees moral frameworks as additional features to ensure responsible action. In addition, in AS, and especially in PS, professional integrity is understood as legitimacy for changing and fixing others in order to elevate their maturity according to a certain ideal that the leadership group endorses and in order for them to perform more effectively. While PS instrumentalises the relationship to reach the object, IPS

instrumentalises the object to reach the person as an end. In both cases, the object is mastered and the relationship is present, but the two approaches are very different.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In this article, we explained how the "Inter-Processual Self" (IPS) presents a strikingly different way of understanding the self and action in social settings and life. We suggested that IPS is an integrative mindset that considers all the aspects of human beings that manifest our interiority and singularity.

We also suggested that the prevailing paradigm—whether AS/PS or IPS—constitutes a point of departure for characterising the person and results in different ways of understanding management's role and its implications. The cognitive and psychosocial capacities that people utilise at work when relating to other people and groups are largely akin to AS and PS, namely the relationship itself is seen as a means or instrument of action. IPS presents a richer environment in which the interpersonal relationship is an end, thus facilitating understanding of how to be and act as a person of integrity in one's singularity. In truly valuing and respecting others' dignity, we do not undermine our own. With all of this in mind, the interpersonal encounter emerges as the medium in which leadership based on the common good emerges.

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