

The Integration of Agency and Communion in Moral Personality: Evidence of Enlightened Self-Interest

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Agency and communion are fundamental human motives, often conceptualized as being in tension. This study examines the notion that moral exemplars overcome this tension and adaptively integrate these 2 motives within their personality. Participants were 25 moral exemplars—recipients of a national award for extraordinary volunteerism—and 25 demographically matched comparison participants. Each participant responded to a life review interview and provided a list of personal strivings, which were coded for themes of agency and communion; interviews were also coded for the relationship between agency and communion. Results consistently indicated that exemplars not only had both more agency and communion than did comparison participants but were also more likely to integrate these themes within their personality. Consistent with our claim that enlightened self-interest is driving this phenomenon, this effect was evident only when agency and communion were conceptualized in terms of promoting interests (of the self and others, respectively) and not in terms of psychological distance (from others) and only when the interaction was observed with a person approach and not with the traditional variable approach. After providing a conceptual replication of these results using different measures elicited in different contexts and relying on different coding procedures, we addressed and dismissed various alternative explanations, including chance co-occurrence and generalized complexity. These results provide the first reliable evidence of the integration of motives of agency and communion in moral personality.

Keywords: agency, communion, moral personality, values, integration, enlightened self-interest, person approach

Omar Bradley (1967), an American World War II field commander and later chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, lamented in a 1948 Armistice Day speech: “The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants” (p. 589). Rather than holding the Axis powers solely responsible for the atrocities of the war, Bradley disparaged a more pervasive imbalance in the fabric of the world’s dominant nations. His commentary begs the question of a corrective.

The current research explores the functioning of ethical giants, or “moral exemplars,” individuals who have achieved brilliance

with wisdom, power with conscience, in their extraordinary commitments promoting benevolence, justice, or basic human welfare. The primary objective of this study is to identify the personality functions that distinguish exemplars from “ordinary” persons. Doing so will provide the basis for subsequent exploration of the developmental progressions and typical stagnations in those functions.

Altruism or Enlightened Self-Interest?

Moral exemplars, when labeled “altruists” (Oliner & Oliner, 1988, p. xii) or “saints” (Wolf, 1982, p. 419), are implicitly regarded as subjugating their personal interests for the sake of the moral cause at hand (reflecting the philosophical legacy of the Enlightenment Era; Kant, 1785/2002). Congruent with this notion, certain extant theories of personality (see e.g., Kohlberg, 1984; Schwartz, 1992) model personal interests and moral sensibilities dualistically, with the self’s basic interests being fundamentally at odds with the person’s moral compassions. Within this modus operandi, elevated moral functioning is manifest when individuals follow the dictates of principled reason or higher values over their personal inclinations.

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A previous article (Walker & Frimer, 2007) examined the personalities of the same sample as that of the present study. This article relies on new data and attends to different issues. This project was supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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Our primary contention is that this dualistic rendition (self vs. morality)¹ may capture some aspects of moral reasoning but fails to adequately explain optimal moral identity and motivation (Stocker, 1976). This dualism between self-interest and the dictates of one's moral code may be typical for most persons; however, our claim is that exemplars are an exception to this rule. We posit that they defy this dualism by integrating their personal ambitions with their moral convictions, yielding a state of "enlightened self-interest" in which their own interests become aligned with the interests of others; therein lays the motivation to lead the virtuous life.

The present study explores the personality functioning of moral exemplars for evidence of the adaptive integration of agency and communion.

Conceptualization of Agency and Communion

To test whether exemplars have integrated personal and moral motives, precise conceptual and operational definitions of the self-interested motives of agency (hereafter referenced as "A") and the moral motives of communion (hereafter, "C") are required. As will become evident, personality theories diverge in defining each construct (see Paulhus & Trapnell, 2008, for a review).

The definitions of A and C that we endorse (and will test empirically) are derived solely from what we denote as the promoting interests scheme. This choice is inspired by our claim that enlightened self-interest underlies virtuous behavior, wherein the best way to promote one's own interests is by advancing the interests of others, and vice versa. Instantiated by Schwartz's (1992) concept of "self-enhancement," A entails motives to advance the self within a social hierarchy: achievement, social power, or material wealth. Instantiated by Schwartz's concept of "self-transcendence," C is expressed as benevolence to familiar others, or a more universalized concern for the well-being of disadvantaged, distant others, or the ecological well-being of the planet.

These specific definitions set up the typical A versus C dualism in that A requires advancing the self relative to others, whereas C requires advancing others relative to the self—and logically, the two are mutually opposing movements. These characterizations of A and C are not ubiquitously endorsed, however.

Across various disciplines, A- and C-like constructs have been used to account for the psychology of culture, language, religion, and gender (see Wiggins, 1991, for a review). Bakan (1966) first introduced A and C into psychology's lexicon but defined them loosely; Hogan (1982) characterized A as the motive for getting ahead and C as getting along. Bakan explicitly portrayed A as a deleterious motive, viewing it as being in opposition to C and prescribing A's nullification with the more positive force of C. "The villain is unmitigated agency. The moral imperative is to try to mitigate agency with communion" (p. 14). Bakan never operationalized the constructs, however. Other researchers have taken up this task in proposing various conceptual and operational definitions of A and C (Paulhus & Trapnell, 2008; Trapnell & Paulhus, in press). We classify these definitions as generally falling within two schemes: promoting interests and psychological distance. We now turn to an examination of each of these schemes.

Promoting Interests Scheme

Within the promoting interests scheme, A is the motive to promote the interests of the self, which manifests as themes of social power, dominance, material wealth, and achievement; C, by contrast, is the motive to promote the interests of others, instantiated in themes of benevolence, interpersonal concern, social justice, and ecological preservation (see the columns of Table 1 relating to the promoting interests scheme).

Schwartz's (1992) typology of universal values exemplifies the dualism within this scheme (Sverdlik, Roccas, & Sagiv, in press). His theory claims that 10 categories of values exist cross-culturally and can be situated around a circumplex. Values situated on opposite sides of this circumplex are in conceptual and empirical tension—individuals who score high on one tend to score low on the other. Schwartz's self-enhancement values (power and achievement) constitute A within this scheme because they are motives that advance or enhance the self; opposite on the circumplex are self-transcendence values (universalism and benevolence), which constitute C because they are values that promote the interests of others. To Schwartz, A and C are in tension: "Acceptance of others as equals and concern for their welfare *interferes* with the pursuit of one's own relative success and dominance over others" (Schwartz, 1992, p. 15, emphasis added). Thus, this approach sets up both the logical and empirical basis for a dualistic relationship between A and C (so defined). The moral imperative implied in Schwartz's theory exists within this mutual exclusivity—promoting C and attenuating A.

Wiggins's (1991, 1995) interpersonal circumplex also aligns with the promoting interests scheme (see Table 1). The interpersonal circumplex models individual differences in personality along two dimensions: A as dominance (vs. submissiveness) and C as nurturance (vs. cold-heartedness). Within the interpersonal circumplex, A and C are modeled as orthogonal dimensions. Although both Schwartz (1992) and Wiggins conceptualize A and C within the promoting interests scheme, they characterize the optimal A–C relationship differently: Schwartz views the attenuation of A and the promotion of C as the optimal personality state, whereas Wiggins prescribes one that blends dominance with nurturance.

As we discuss in greater depth later, the present research endorses defining A and C within the promoting interests scheme. Our theorizing paradoxically endorses both Schwartz's (1992) dualism and Wiggins's (1991, 1995) notion of integration, relying on the former to explain the typical functioning of most people and the latter to account for that of moral exemplars.

Psychological Distance Scheme

The second conceptual scheme for A and C concerns psychological distance from others: A is the motive to increase psychological distance from others, defined in terms of individuation and separation; C, by contrast, is the motive to decrease psychological distance from others, defined in terms of belonging and intimacy (see the columns of Table 1 outlining the psychological distance

¹ Whether the dualism between self and morality applies primarily in Western cultural contexts or is a more universal characterization of human functioning remains an open question.

Table 1
Extant Definitions of Agency and Communion and the Schemes (Promoting Interests vs. Psychological Distance) They Embody

Author	Promoting interests scheme		Psychological distance scheme	
	Of self (→ agency)	Of others (→ communion)	Increased (→ agency)	Decreased (→ communion)
Schwartz (1992)	Self-enhancement (power and achievement)	Self-transcendence (benevolence and universalism)	Openness to change (self-direction and stimulation)	Conservation (security, conformity, and tradition)
Wiggins (1991)	Dominance	Nurturance	Individuality	Connectedness
Groetevant & Cooper (1998)			Separation	Relatedness
Blatt & Luyten (2009)			Self-mastery	Love/friendship
McAdams (1993, 2001)	Status/victory Achievement/responsibility	Caring/help	Empowerment	Dialog Unity/togetherness

scheme). This scheme is exemplified by Groetevant and Cooper's (1998) framework that views separateness as a key element of A and mutuality as a key element of C (labeled "individuality" and "connectedness," respectively; p. 3), and by Blatt and Luyten's (2009) two-polarities model of separation versus relatedness. Schwartz's (1992) value circumplex too captures this psychological distance scheme but places it in the orthogonal axis to the promoting interests scheme. A is captured in values of self-direction and stimulation; C is manifest as security, conformity, and tradition (Schwartz labels these themes "openness to change" and "conservation," respectively; p. 45).

Mixed Schemes

Some researchers adopt definitions of A and C that mix themes from both the promoting interests and psychological distance schemes (see e.g., Eagly, 2009; McAdams, 1993). Within McAdams's (1993, 2001) framework, for example, A (explicitly labeled "agency") is operationalized fourfold, as themes of status/victory, achievement/responsibility, self-mastery, and empowerment (see Table 1). Given the focus on advancing the self, we interpret the former two themes as falling within the promoting interests scheme; and given the focus on individuation, the latter two themes fall within the psychological distance scheme. McAdams defines C (also explicitly labeled as "communion") fourfold, as themes of caring/help, love/friendship, dialog, and unity/togetherness. In our reading, only the caring/help theme exemplifies promoting interests (given the motivational focus on providing for others), whereas the latter three fall within the psychological distance scheme (given their focus on connectedness).

Trapnell and Paulhus (in press) similarly arrived at a mixed-schemes definition of A and C. In factor-analyzing data from (self-report) personality inventories, they uniformly found two factors that they argue represent A and C. In one analysis, Schwartz's (1992) 10 values were captured by a two-factor solution: A entailed themes from both schemes (power, achievement, self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism), as did C (tradition, conformity, security, universalism, and benevolence).

In sum, the field has importantly different conceptions of A and C, which is a source of contention, one that hinges on both theoretical premises and analytical approaches.

Integration of A and C

As was highlighted earlier, within both the promoting interests and psychological distance schemes, A and C are often framed as oppositional. Recent theorizing (Blatt & Luyten, 2009; Fournier, Moskowitz, & Zuroff, 2009; Guisinger & Blatt, 1994; McAdams, 1993), however, has pointed to the virtue of integrating A and C in forming a more coherent personality. If one interprets A and C from the promoting interests scheme, as we advocate, then integrating the motivation to promote one's own interests with promoting the interests of others brings moral purpose to an individual's ambition, thereby providing the motivation to "do the good."

Two noteworthy case study analyses have explored the possibility of A–C integration. Colby and Damon (1992) interviewed a small sample of moral exemplars and drew qualitative impressions about their functioning. One of their primary conclusions was that exemplars did not subjugate their personal desires (A) for the sake of their moral causes (C); rather, the two seemed to have become united over the course of their lives.

The question of A–C integration also came to the fore in Nasby and Reed's (1997) case study of Dodge Morgan, a self-made millionaire who (lacking anything more prosocial to do with his time and money) attempted to break the speed record for sailing solo around the globe. Nasby and Reed's analysis essentially was an exposé of the shortcomings of unfettered ambition and individuality (A) in the absence of social embeddedness and prosocial purpose (C) and prompted speculation about how Morgan could have, but ultimately failed to, integrate his A with C (see Wiggins's, 1997, helpful commentary on the virtue of reconciling A and C).

These rich case studies provide optimism that a synthesis of the motives of A and C is attainable. However, these analyses leave unclear what aspects of A and C need integration and how this takes place; moreover, these speculative analyses have yet to be buttressed with empirical validation. In fact, empirical inquiry has failed to produce convincing supportive evidence.

McAdams (1993) argued that generativity—the desire to create a legacy for the self by providing something of value to future generations—draws on both agentic and communal motivation, and he illustrated this blending with imagoes such as teacher, healer, counselor, arbiter, and humanist. Early empirical evidence

of the integration of A and C in the moral or generative personality of midlife adults was reported by McAdams, Ruetzel, and Foley (1986). Generativity was coded from a life review interview; A (as power) and C (as intimacy) were coded from the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT; Atkinson, 1958). McAdams et al. found that the sum of A and C was a stronger predictor of generativity motives than was either A or C alone.

McAdams et al. (1986) interpreted this finding as support for the claim that generativity entails the blending of A and C. Two problems arise in this interpretation. First, the summing of A and C does not necessarily imply their integration. This result could be a product of some generative adults' scoring high on A while other such individuals scored high on C. Alternatively, generative adults may have expressed A in response to one TAT image and C in response to another. In both of these scenarios, A and C are not integrated. Second, base rates of A and C need to be controlled before conclusions about integration can legitimately be reached.

When more stringent controls of baseline are used, null findings have thus far been the norm. Walker and Frimer (2007) interviewed a sample of moral exemplars and comparison persons, demographically matched on a case-by-case basis. The life narratives of exemplars were found to be richer in themes of both A and C, but a regression analysis did not reveal an interactive effect between A and C (which would be indicative of integration) when controlling for base levels of each variable.

These results could mean that moral (or generative) exemplars are simply strongly motivated or goal-oriented (as indicated by elevated levels of both A and C), rendering the notion of enlightened self-interest an epiphenomenon. The empirical investigation of A–C integration faces the gauntlet of Occam's razor, charged with ruling out more parsimonious explanations.

Analytic Approach to Integrative Interactions

Returning to this theoretical and empirical issue, Frimer and Walker (2009) reconsidered the psychological, and thus analytic, meaning of the integration of A and C. Instead of conceptualizing interactions within the traditional variable approach, they relied on modern interactionism from the person approach, wherein "the person is conceptualized as an integrated, hierarchically organized totality, rather than as a summation of variables" (Magnusson, 1999, p. 236). A–C integration within this person approach is observed in the ways that individuals actively organize their A and C in real-life accounts, be they grouped together in narrative segments (integrated) or kept apart (segregated). In Frimer and Walker's study, participants responded to an interview about their lives, which was later coded for A and C. Results indicated that A–C integration predicted self-reported moral behaviors; more important, this effect held even when controlling for the predictive effects of individual values.

In the present study we aim to extend Frimer and Walker's (2009) findings and advance the science of A–C integration using various methodologies. A–C integration is manifest when individuals weave themes of A and C together in the construction of their life story or expression of their goals. Examples of A–C integration in personal strivings (responses to the stem "I typically try to . . .") include "be a positive role model to young students," "help others achieve their goals," "make people feel good about themselves,"

and "make time to advocate for women who are from 'low-income' bracket." A surfaces as themes of achievement and social power (being a role model, influencing the feelings of others, and advocacy). A relates directly to C (concerns for the well-being of students, disadvantaged women, or unspecified others) in the construction of these personal strivings.

In contrast to goals with integrated A and C, other goals have C but lack the activating force of A. Examples of such "pure" C strivings include the following: "respect the opinions of others," "be kind to other people," "always be honest," and "be sensitive to the feelings and needs of my wife." Such strivings entail concern for the interests of others but lack power or achievement motivation, leaving the self's interests unaffected or even subjugated.

Alternatively, personal strivings can embody A without C, as illustrated in the following examples: "hunt the biggest buck and catch big fish," "be attractive to others (appearance and neatness)," "get my golf handicap to a single digit!" and "be persuasive when I am correct." In these strivings, desire for achievement, social influence, or wealth is implicit, and any hint of prosocial purpose is uniformly absent.

The Present Study

This research examines the functioning of moral exemplars. Do moral exemplars reliably evidence integrated A and C (relative to comparison participants)? How robust is this phenomenon? Can these differences between exemplars and comparisons be detected both in open narrative and with paper-and-pencil measures of goal motivation? Can these differences be detected using different coding procedures? Moreover, the present research advances the operationalization of A–C integration from the mere co-occurrence within narrative segments (wherein the functional interplay, or lack thereof, remains ambiguous) to the functional, compatible interaction within the flow of an individual's life story.

The present study also contributes to the broader field of "motiveology" by introducing a new set of conceptual and methodological ground rules for defining the constructs of A and C—a bootstrapping approach. The present investigation defines the boundaries of A and C beginning with the person (as opposed to the variable) as the unit of analysis. By focusing on how the individual treats A and C, this approach relies on observations of how motives work within the individual's thought structure, as opposed to a structure imposed by the researcher. After eliciting idiographic data—explicit statements of goals and stories that have personal meaning to the teller—raters coded nomothetic themes from the text. Moreover, raters also coded interactions between A and C directly, increasing the likelihood that the data captured the "dynamic organization within the individual" (Allport, 1937, p. 48). Our contention is that this approach retains the scientific rigor of the variable approach—producing highly differentiated, reliable, and valid assessments of personality—but also moves personality science one step closer to the original goal of observing the whole person (see McAdams, 1997, for a discussion). Our claim is that moral exemplars will evidence integration solely within the promoting interests conceptualization of A and C and only within the idiographic, personal approach to analyses.

This article presents an in-depth study of 25 extraordinary persons—moral exemplars—and 25 comparison participants, each a demographic match to an exemplar. This design, then, effectively isolates the distance from normalcy to exemplarity. The study revisits Walker and Frimer's (2007) moral exemplars to examine why these researchers failed to detect the adaptive integration of A and C and to demonstrate that, when properly conceived and analyzed, it becomes evident that exemplars' A and C had been integrated all along.

Our premise is that Walker and Frimer (2007) failed to detect an interaction for two reasons. First, the definition of A and C on which they relied was too broad, thus diluting the effect. Walker and Frimer relied on McAdams's (2001) mixed scheme definition of (and macroanalytic coding procedures for) A and C. Our contention is that the interaction of A and C in moral exemplars is limited to the promoting interests scheme. This implies that changing McAdams's more general definitions of A and C to these more specific sorts will be one necessary step in detecting group differences in the interactive effects of these modalities.

The second reason for failing to detect A–C interactive effects concerns the analytic strategy for assessing interactions. As described earlier, previous research has assessed interactions purely at a variable level. Our contention is that the interaction of A and C occurs primarily at the person level, manifest when individuals actively congregate their A and C in the context of storytelling or goal generation. This approach operationalizes the integration phenomenon as the co-occurrence of themes of A and C within the same thought unit. We predict that, by adjusting these two aspects of the operationalization of A and C, we can pinpoint the phenomenon of A–C integration, thus producing a positive finding from the same data that previously produced nulls. To test these predictions, the present study begins with a reanalysis of Walker and Frimer's (2007) data with consideration for these two issues (*viz.*, definition and analytic strategy).

To test for integration with a more sensitive narrative analysis (and thus provide a conceptual replication), the present study also introduces a new microanalytic coding procedure, entailing the identification of each mention of A-laden and C-laden concepts. McAdams's (2001) macroanalytic coding procedures entail reading a lengthy narrative passage and judging whether each of four themes of A and four themes of C is present. This new, microanalytic coding system, in a sense, taps the level of activation of A and C schemas within a narrative.

We operationalized integration as the coactivation of themes and coded it in a second step. Each instance of dyadic themes (A with A, A with C, or C with C) that were expressed as being semantically compatible or mutually supportive was coded as an integrated unit. Base levels of A and C were then used to assess whether general motivation could account for any group differences in integration.

Next, we explore the robustness and boundary conditions of this integration phenomenon using the coding of statements of goal motivation (*i.e.*, personal strivings). Finally, the present research introduces methodologies for ruling out more parsimonious explanations for findings suggestive of A–C integration. Generalized cognitive complexity—the tendency to differentiate but also integrate seemingly disparate concepts—could account for findings of A–C integration. Complexity, in the present study, is manifest as

integration across different pairings of motives, regardless of scheme or whether the motives are dualistic opposites (*e.g.*, self-direction with benevolence, security with conformity, power with stimulation, or any other elements integrated with any other elements of Table 1). To show that A–C integration is, in some sense, a unique personality achievement and nonreducible to some more generalized mechanism, one must rule out cognitive complexity.

In sum, our prediction is that exemplars will have a pervasive tendency to tell life stories and set personal goals rich in themes of both A and C within the promoting interests scheme. We also predict that, beyond these effects, exemplars will evidence the functional integration of A with C, reflecting their enlightened kind of self-interest.

Method

Participants

Exemplar group. Moral exemplar participants were 25 recent recipients of the Caring Canadian Award. They received this national award for engaging in years, in some cases decades, of extraordinary voluntary service by providing help to individuals in their community or advancing a humanitarian cause. Recipients of the award are initially nominated by members of the general public, then adjudicated by an independent committee, and finally decorated by the governor-general, the vice-regal head of state. Information about the award and its recipients is available on the governor general's website (<http://gg.ca>).

Subsequent to receiving the award, exemplars received a letter of initial contact about the present study. The letter explained that the research project was exploring the positive aspects of human functioning, that they were being recruited because of their award, and that they would be offered a \$50 honorarium for participation. The sample of exemplars was evenly balanced for gender (48% female), was primarily Euro-Canadian in ethnicity (96%), averaged 70.1 years of age ($SD = 13.1$, range = 43–91), and had 14.2 years of education ($SD = 3.0$).

Comparison group. Comparison participants were recruited from a large pool of interested volunteers from the general community. Each comparison participant was selected to be a demographic match to a single exemplar participant (in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and level of education). Thus, the entire sample consisted of 25 moral exemplars and 25 individually matched comparison participants. As with the exemplars, the letter of initial contact for comparison participants explained that the research project was exploring the positive aspects of human functioning and offered a \$50 honorarium; the comparison participants were not, however, informed of their group status. More information on the selection and recruitment of these exemplar and comparison participants is available in Walker and Frimer (2007).

Procedure

Participants who agreed to be involved received (by postal mail) a packet of paper-and-pencil measures, which they completed and returned. The packet included, among other measures, Emmons's (1999) personal strivings list. Later (46 days on average, $SD = 33$), each participant responded to a life review interview (McAdams, 1995), which was typically conducted in the participant's home.

Measures and Coding

Procedurally, the personal strivings list was completed before the life review interview; but to highlight advancements from previous research, the presentation of measures and analyses proceeds in the reverse order.

Life review interview. This in-person, semistructured, audio-recorded interview of approximately 2 hr prompts participants to construct a life story by responding to a lengthy series of questions (adapted from a protocol developed by McAdams, 1995). All interviews were conducted by Lawrence J. Walker, who was unavoidably aware of participants' group identity. This raises the possibility of inadvertent interviewer bias compromising the fidelity of the interview. Previously reported post hoc analyses (Walker & Frimer, 2007, p. 851) of the quantity and quality of the interviewer's prompts and of his interpersonal warmth and interest revealed no indications of interviewer bias. Despite the equivalence of the interviewer's prompts between groups, exemplars' transcribed interviews were somewhat lengthier than those of comparison participants ($M_s = 16,650$ and $12,433$ words, respectively; $SD_s = 3,896$ and $2,545$; 95% confidence intervals [CIs] = [15123, 18177] and [11435, 13430]), $t(48) = 4.53$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.28$.

In the present study, we explored six sections of the interview for themes of A and C. The first three sections were life chapters—participants related the main chapters of their life story. For coding purposes, these were later regrouped into childhood, adolescent, and adult sections. Next, participants provided accounts of three critical life events: a high point, a low point, and a turning point. For each account, participants recalled a specific event or time, explaining the story that led up to and resulted from it, and reflected on how the episode says something about who they are as a person and how the event might have changed them. We later transcribed these interviews for coding.

Macroanalytic coding. A trained undergraduate research assistant who was blind to both the study's hypotheses and the group status of participants coded A and C using McAdams's (2001) coding manual. In this (mixed) scheme, agency is operationalized in terms of the following four themes: (a) self-mastery, (b) status/victory, (c) achievement/responsibility, and (d) empowerment. Communion is similarly operationalized fourfold: (a) love/friendship, (b) dialog, (c) caring/help, and (d) unity/togetherness. Coding entails reading each section of the interview and then independently determining the presence or absence of each of the eight themes (four A and four C) within each of the six sections. This macroanalytic approach detected 1.2 themes, on average, in each section of the interview ($SD = 1.4$, range = 0–6) and had substantial interrater reliability (with 94% exact agreement and $\kappa = .79$), as determined by the independent coding of a random subsample of 13 interviews (26%).

Microanalytic coding. To elicit finer grained observations of A and C and to allow for the coding of their mutual relationships, another rater independently coded interviews microanalytically for A- and C-laden implicit values. The rater (the first author), although aware of the theoretical underpinnings of the study, was blind to specific hypotheses (which had not yet been specifically formulated at the time of coding) as well as to the group status of

participants. Frimer, Walker, and Dunlop's (2009) Values Embedded in Narrative (VEiN) coding procedure was derived from the conceptual and empirical foundation of the Schwartz (1992) universal set of 10 values (power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security) and associated measures (e.g., the Portrait Values Questionnaire; Schwartz et al., 2001) and has been shown to be both reliable and valid (Frimer & Walker, 2009). The highly intensive nature of the coding procedure necessitated coding only the high- and low-point events of the interview² for VEiNs. The training of raters involved their reading the coding manual, coding practice transcripts, discussing agreements and disagreements, and repeating these steps several times until they attained suitable reliability.

Coding was broken into two sequential steps. In the first step, we assessed the prevalence of A and C by coding the two VEiNs capturing A as advancing the self (power and achievement) and the two VEiNs capturing C as advancing others (universalism and benevolence). Coding entailed conceptually matching each uttered concept in the narrative story to items in the VEiN Coding Manual (Frimer et al., 2009). Figure 1 presents an abbreviated example of the microanalytic coding. In this example, A (in boldface) is manifest as VEiNs of power (public recognition, money, being in a position of influence, a competition, and influence over others) and of achievement (working diligently, organizing, performing to a standard of excellence, and succeeding). C (in italics) is instantiated as VEiNs of universalism (reference to a public service organization, helping a fatherless boy) and of benevolence (help, assistance, and guidance).

To facilitate the latter step of this coding process, raters used color-coded highlighter pens in this first step to indicate which words matched a criterion. This sensitive, microanalytic coding provided over 50 times as many coded themes/VEiNs in each section of the interview ($M = 46$, $SD = 41$, range = 3–290) as did the macroanalytic coding.

In the second step of this coding, we assessed the relationships between A and C (again see Figure 1) by coding the highlighted transcript produced by the primary coder in the first step. Coding entailed reading the transcript and identifying compatible relationships between highlighted values. Compatible relationships are defined in the VEiN Relationship Coding Manual (Frimer &

² Selecting only the high- and low-point events for this coding could have constituted "cherry picking" the richest sections of the interview to demonstrate the merit of the microanalytic coding system over the macroanalytic one. This turned out not to be the case, because the richest section (as defined by the density of agency and communion in the macroanalytic coding) was the adulthood section, followed in turn by the high point, turning point, low point, adolescent, and childhood sections. That is, the high- and low-point events were relatively average sections in terms of the richness of their motivational themes. Moreover, when considering the presence or absence of co-occurring A and C, the groups differed significantly only in the adulthood and turning-point sections. In other words, those two sections, not the high- and low-point events, were driving the group difference. Thus, coding the high- and low-point events for VEiNs turned out to constitute a rather conservative test of our hypotheses.

LOOKING BACK OVER YOUR LIFE, IS THERE SOME EVENT THAT REPRESENTS FOR YOU A HIGH POINT?

... the first time I received some **public acknowledgement** was a high point. We were **working diligently to raise funds** for the *Big Brother* association in [the city]. Drew and I were the two... I guess we'd call ourselves the **cofounders** of it... We were **frantically working away at organizing a boxing match** in [the city]. We had **fighters lined up**; we had **a lot of different things going on**, a lot of **promotion and advertisement**... And Drew, that night... just before the last **fight** was on, he said, "Now I have a special **recognition**." And he said, "The motto of *Big Brothers*: No man **stands so straight** as when he *stoops to help a fatherless boy*." And Drew said, "The man **who stands straightest** with me right now is Sam, who's *helped us put on*..."—and he mentioned all the different **events**...

WHAT DID THAT MEAN TO YOU?

Well, it meant that we'd **done something** that has *helped other people*. We've **provided for young people to receive help and assistance** and **guidance** through their growing years. It ... was an emotional time... It lasted a minute or two minutes, but that stayed with me...

Figure 1. An abridged example of a life review interview, and the coding thereof, of a participant from the exemplar group. Coded embedded values of agency (power or achievement) are in boldface; communion values (universalism or benevolence) are in italics. Bars indicate compatible relationships between embedded values. For clarity purposes, some codings are omitted.

Walker, 2010³) as being any one of the following five types: (a) instrumentality (*x* is treated as a means to an end or cause of *y*); (b) compensation (*x* and *y* are treated as equal components in a reciprocal swap or replacement); (c) illustration (*x* is an instance, explication, or a definition of *y*); (d) superimposition (*x* and *y* combine to form a single concept); and (e) logical coordination (*x* combines, in sequence, with *y* to form a coherent thought). An example of instrumentality is "It meant that we'd done something [organized a fundraising event] that helped other people." In this example, having done something (A) is treated as being instrumental to the project of helping others (C). The expression of A and C in semantically unrelated parts of the story would not constitute a compatible relationship.⁴

Three primary metrics were derived from the relationship coding (i.e., Step 2), each a tally of the number of A–C, A–A, and C–C compatible relationships within each section of the interview. Each section of the interview produced 10 compatible relationships on average (*SD* = 14, range = 0–103). We also derived a secondary metric of relationships at the specific VEiN level (as opposed to

the A or C levels) for all possible A–C combinations (e.g., achievement–benevolence).

A second rater determined interrater reliability for the prevalence coding (i.e., Step 1) by coding a random subset of 20 interviews (40%). Reliability was assessed at the level of the interview segment by comparing the number of "hits" each rater had on a particular VEiN and was calculated in terms of an intraclass correlation (ICC). The two raters agreed substantially on the frequency of each of the four VEiNs (ICCs ≥ .94). Interrater reliability for the relationship coding (i.e., Step 2) was assessed for tallies of the three compatible relationship types (viz., A–A, A–C,

³ The VEiN Relationship Coding Manual is available upon request from the first author.

⁴ Incompatible relationships such as conflicts were explored in the present study but were found to suffer from a floor effect. Participants rarely reported conflicts spontaneously. Future research should prompt participants more directly for conflicts.

and C–C). The two raters agreed substantially (with ICCs $\geq .77$). The reliability of A–C relationships was also assessed at the VEiN level (e.g., achievement–universalism) and was similarly found to be substantial (with ICCs $\geq .77$).

Correlations between comparable metrics produced by the macroanalytic coding and those produced by the microanalytic coding⁵ tended to be of moderate size ($r_s = .40, .39$, and $.32$ for A, C, and A–C integration, respectively). Generally speaking, the different approaches detected somewhat similar signals. For deviation scores, the different coding procedures yielded unrelated data ($r = .05$).

Personal strivings list. By prompting participants for what they are typically trying to do, Emmons’s (1999) personal strivings list provides an open-ended template onto which people project their characteristic motives. Participants are prompted to reflect upon, and then write down, a list of strivings by responding to the sentence stem “I typically try to . . .” Examples of strivings include “. . . keep a healthy diet,” “. . . be more affectionate towards my family,” “. . . decorate the interior of my home,” and “. . . not look like a sour-puss.” We later coded each idiographic striving for nomothetic themes—in this case, VEiNs. Participants were instructed to write down at least 10 strivings (space was provided for 15). They produced 12.8 strivings on average ($SD = 2.6$), with production rates not differing between exemplar and comparison groups, $t(48) = 1.52, p = .14, d = 0.40$.

Strivings were entered into a spreadsheet and reordered randomly, thereby allowing for blind coding. Two raters independently coded the presence/absence of a particular VEiN by matching the concepts in a striving to criteria in the VEiN Coding Manual (Frimer et al., 2009). The primary rater (the third author) was aware of the general theoretical perspectives underpinning the present study but was blind to specific hypotheses. Raters trained for this stage by reading the coding manual, coding approximately 100 strivings, discussing agreements and disagreements, and repeating these steps several times until suitable reliability was achieved. The coding was performed independently for each of the 10 VEiNs (not just the four VEiNs reflecting A and C), meaning that each striving could be coded for multiple themes. On average, 1.7 VEiNs ($SD = 1.2$) were coded for each striving. Across the 10 VEiNs, reliability was substantial, with 93% agreement (ranging from 91%–99% for individual VEiNs) and $\kappa = .72$ (range = $.67$ – $.82$).

Analytical Strategy and Results

Analyses collectively test the claim that moral exemplars have especially integrated motives of A and C relative to comparison individuals. First, we revisited the null results of Walker and Frimer’s (2007) narrative analysis using macroanalytic coding of A and C to explore under which conditions group differences manifest. Our claim was that clarifying both the definition of A and C and the analytical approach (person, not variable) are necessary steps to observing group differences. Second, the phenomenon of integration was observed with the more sensitive microanalytic method to explore the psychology of A–C integration at a more direct level of analysis. Analyses also serve to demonstrate the robustness of the phenomenon within narratives. Third, we turned to the personal strivings data to provide a conceptual replication of the phenomenon using a vastly different

methodology, elicited at a different time and context. Fourth, boundary conditions of the phenomenon were also explored with the strivings data, and competing explanations (viz., general complexity) were tested.

Narrative

Analyses began where Walker and Frimer (2007) left off: at the failure to detect an interactive effect between A and C in the life narratives of moral exemplars.

Macroanalytic coding of A and C. As previously mentioned, Walker and Frimer (2007) tested for an interactive effect between A and C, coded using McAdams’s (2001) macroanalytic procedure and relying on a variable approach using a logistic regression analysis. In the first block, they controlled for baseline by entering the prevalence of each of A and C. The second block constituted the test of the interaction, wherein the product of A and C was entered. This analysis failed to detect an interactive effect (see the top-left cell of Table 2). To test our claim that changing both the definition of A and C and the conceptualization of interaction are necessary to detect group differences, we performed three analyses. Our baseline was McAdams’s (2001) mixed scheme of A and C and the variable-centered analytic approach presented by Walker and Frimer (2007); for shorthand, we refer to this as the “mixed scheme/variable” approach.

First, we changed only the definition of A and C according to that specified by the promoting interests scheme. A and C were thus defined more specifically as themes of advancing the self (i.e., status/victory and achievement/responsibility) and advancing others (i.e., caring/help), respectively. This approach—the “promoting interests/variable” approach—was tested by rerunning the logistic regression, using the data based on the more specific definitions of A and C. The second step did not augment the prediction of group differences (see the bottom-left cell of Table 2), meaning that changing only the definition of A and C was not sufficient for detecting the interactive effect of A and C.

Next, we returned to the baseline “mixed scheme/variable” approach and changed only the analytical approach to test a “mixed scheme/person” approach, with the unit of observation becoming the co-occurrence of motives within sections of the interview. But to make this a fair test, the effect of chance co-occurrence needed to be removed. To accomplish this, deviation beyond expected frequency was examined. We derived an expected frequency of co-occurrence on the basis of individuals’ overall levels of A and C, and the number of sections.⁶ Deviation scores (calculated as actual frequency minus expected frequency), then, tapped integration with levels of A and C controlled and reflected the characteristic way that individuals organize their A and C, with positive deviation scores reflecting congregation and negative deviation scores reflecting segregation. A comparison of group differences on deviation scores (with a t test) constituted the test of the interaction effect. Our contention was that changing the

⁵ All data in this analysis were uniformly from only the high- and low-point events and for only themes consistent with the promoting interests scheme.

⁶ Expected scores were the joint probability of A and C assuming that A and C are independent: $E_{A-C} = P(A \cap C) = P(A)P(C) = \#A/6 \times \#C/6$ (when considering six sections of the interview).

Table 2
Four Types of Analyses Examining the Interaction of Agency and Communion (Macroanalytic Coding)

Definition of agency and communion	Analytical approach	
	Variable	Person
Mixed scheme		
$\chi^2(1, N = 50)$	0.67	
Δ Nagelkerke R^2	.01	
$t(48)$		1.10
d		0.43
p	.41	.28
Promoting interests scheme		
$\chi^2(1, N = 50)$	0.92	
Δ Nagelkerke R^2	.02	
$t(48)$		2.11
d		0.59
p	.34	.04

analytical approach (from a variable- to a person-centered approach) is a second necessary (but perhaps not sufficient) step in detecting group differences in the interaction.

The interactive effect of this approach was tested by comparing group means on deviation scores, which failed to reach significance (see the top-right cell of Table 2). Similar to the result of the previous analysis, this result implies that changing only the analytical approach is not sufficient for detecting the interactive effect of these modalities. Changing one or the other strategy (definitional or analytical) did not alter the prevailing null result.

Finally, we changed both the definition of A and C and the analytical approach—the “promoting interests/person” approach. Here, we tested the interactive effect by again examining group means on deviation scores, on the basis of the more specific A and C promoting interests themes. As predicted, exemplars evidenced significantly higher deviation scores ($M = 0.31$, $SD = 0.45$; 95% CI = [0.14, 0.49]) than did comparison participants ($M = 0.09$, $SD = 0.26$, 95% CI = [-0.01, 0.20]; see the bottom-right cell of Table 2). Thus, only when simultaneously changing the definitions of A and C and the analytical approach does a significant effect emerge. This set of analyses supports our contention that both more specific definitions of A and C and a person-centered analytical approach are necessary to detect the adaptive integration of A and C.

One shortcoming of the macroanalytic coding of A and C interaction, however, is insensitivity. Coding procedures permit only a crass measurement (present or absent) of each theme in oftentimes lengthy and rich narrative passages. Out of six sections of the life review interview, exemplars averaged only 1.3 ($SD = 1.0$) A–C integrated sections (using the promoting interests definition), compared with the comparison group’s average of 0.3 ($SD = 0.5$) integrated sections. Despite a possible floor effect, the previous set of analyses established group differences (albeit significant at just the $p < .05$ level) in the degree of congregation of these modalities. To explore the interaction of A and C in the life narratives of exemplars in greater depth and to establish the robustness of this finding, we next tap this phenomenon using a subset of the same narrative transcripts but with a substantially different (and more sensitive) coding procedure.

Microanalytic coding of A and C. This set of analyses differs from the previous in three ways. First, A is measured not by McAdams’s (2001) themes of achievement/responsibility and status/victory but by VEiNs (Frimer et al., 2009) of power and achievement; similarly, C is measured not by McAdams’s theme of caring/help but by VEiNs of universalism and benevolence. These conceptualizations of A and C are similar but nonidentical, with the VEiN scheme more precisely operationalizing the concepts of promoting interests of the self and others.

Second, to keep the coding task manageable, coding was restricted to two sections of the life narrative—the high-point event and low-point event—compared with the six used in previous analyses. These two sections were selected because they (like the adulthood and turning-point sections) tend to elicit more elaborated, revealing stories than do the early-life childhood and adolescent sections, and because they are, in a sense, of parallel construction.

Third, we altered the coding procedure considerably, allowing for observations of the dynamic interplay of A and C within a person’s life narrative. In the previous analysis, the data representing A–C integration was the mere co-occurrence of these motives in a narrative passage (where they need not be functionally and phenomenologically related at all); in the present coding, the unit was a functionally compatible relationship between these two themes, embedded within the flow of a life story.

Previous analyses employing macroanalytic coding evidenced higher levels of A and of C in exemplars over comparisons (see e.g., Walker & Frimer, 2007). To test for replication, this analysis was repeated using the VEiN coding procedure. The prevalence of A and C in exemplar and comparison participants’ narratives was explored (see the Mode section of Figure 2) with a 2 (group: exemplar, comparison) \times 2 (mode: A, C) mixed-model analysis of variance (ANOVA). This analysis yielded the predicted main effect for group, $F(1, 48) = 11.14$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .19$, not qualified by a Group \times Mode interaction.⁷ Replicating previous trends, exemplars had higher levels of both A and C relative to comparison participants.

Next, the frequency of A–C compatible relationships was compared between groups (see the Relationship section of Figure 2). Exemplars evidenced substantially more A–C compatible relationships than did comparisons,⁸ $t(48) = 4.12$, $d = 1.18$, $p < .001$. However, this result needs to be interpreted carefully: Having more A and more C (as the exemplars did) could explain the A–C compatible relationship differences between groups in that the latter were coded from the former. If values “naturally” combine at some rate, then elevated levels of A and C producing a greater number of A–C compatible relationships would be expected. To

⁷ The omnibus test also yielded a main effect for mode, which is not of theoretical interest.

⁸ The effect of word count was also considered and ruled out. Across the high-point and low-point events, exemplars told longer stories than did comparison participants ($M_s = 1,805$ and 1,264 words, respectively). Group differences persisted, however, when correcting for length of transcript. Rerunning the reported analyses using VEiN density (i.e., number of codes per 1,000 words) in lieu of VEiN frequency produced similar findings. Exemplars had a higher density of A ($p = .06$, $d = 0.54$), C ($p < .001$, $d = 1.07$), and A–C compatible relationships ($p = .003$, $d = 0.90$).

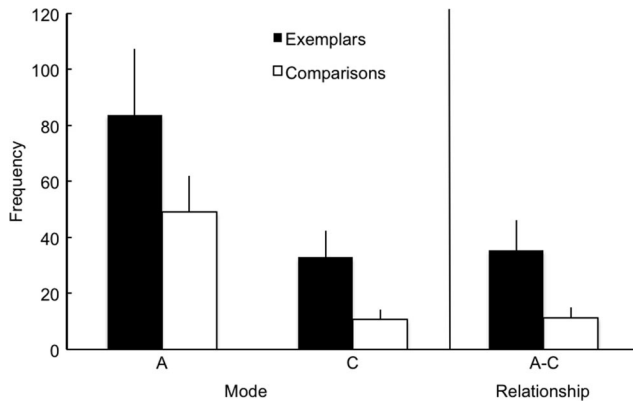


Figure 2. The frequency of agency (A) and communion (C) and the compatible relationships between them (A–C) in the narratives of exemplars and comparisons (microanalytic coding). Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

perform a fair test of integration and to rule out generalized motivation (reflected in high scores on all motive variables) as an explanatory mechanism, group differences on A and C need to be controlled. Our next analytical goal was to test whether exemplars exceeded expected amounts of A–C compatible relationships given base levels of A and C.

Testing whether the group difference in A–C compatible relationships can be explained by “chance” combination of A and C poses an analytical problem. What would constitute chance combination of compatible relationships of value-laden statements in open narrative? We addressed this question by introducing an assumption: that the rates at which A VEiNs combine into A–A compatible relationships and C VEiNs combine into C–C compatible relationships together reflect a fair⁹ baseline rate of relationship formation for A and C into A–C relationships.

The first step in this test was to empirically estimate the rate at which instances of a modality (e.g., C) tend to form the respective intramodal compatible relationships (e.g., C–C). This was accomplished by linearly regressing the number of relationships (e.g., A–A) on the number of modalities (e.g., A) in each section of the interview (with the y -intercept set to 0). This allows for the estimation of the rate (slope of the best fit line, not the correlation coefficient) at which modalities combine into compatible relationships using $A \rightarrow A-A$ and $C \rightarrow C-C$ and thus determines a baseline. Modality and relationship rates were found to have a clear linear relationship, explaining a substantial 91% of the variance. The least-sum-of-squares analysis yielded a combination rate of 44.4%, meaning that for every two modalities coded, roughly one relationship was formed.

Next, we assumed that the intramodal combination rate (just derived) provides an expectable rate of formation for intermodal (viz., A–C) relationships. Multiplying this factor by the average number of A and C hits in a section of the interview, expected A–C relationship levels were calculated. As suspected, exemplars had more expected A–C compatible relationships than did comparisons, $t(48) = 3.35$, $p = .002$, $d = 0.94$, meaning that group differences in total motivation anticipate group differences in integration.

Does this group difference in expectable relationships explain the finding of elevated levels of compatible relationships? Or do exemplars exceed expected levels, congregating the A and C that they have at a higher rate? Deviation scores permit a test of these mechanisms and were derived by subtracting expected values from actual scores. We predicted that exemplars’ deviation scores would both exceed chance levels (i.e., be greater than 0) and exceed the comparison group’s deviation scores, demonstrating that exemplars functionally congregate their A and C at a higher rate.

As Figure 3 illustrates, exemplars exceeded chance levels, with $M = 4.8$ A–C compatible relationships ($SD = 9.0$), $t(24) = 2.67$, $p = .01$, $d = 0.53$, whereas comparisons’ deviation scores did not differ from 0 ($M = -1.0$, $SD = 4.8$), $t(24) = -1.02$, $p = .32$, $d = -0.21$. Next, a comparison of the groups directly showed that exemplars congregated A and C into A–C compatible relationships at rates that substantially exceeded those of the comparison group, $t(48) = 2.83$, $p = .007$, $d = 0.80$. These results replicate and extend the finding that exemplars integrate A with C in their life narratives by providing depth of observation and stringent controls on competing explanations (such as general motivation and chance combinations).

Extent of compatible relationships. To explore the more specific loci of A–C compatible relationships, VEiN dyads were compared across groups. For all four VEiN dyads spanning the A–C relationship (e.g., power–universalism), the exemplars had more compatible relationships than did comparisons, $t_s(48) \geq 2.89$, $p_s \leq .004$, $d_s \geq 0.59$. Exemplars showed a consistent pattern of A–C integration when integration was observed within the person (in terms of functional relationships between values within an individual’s life story) and when A and C were defined by the promoting interests scheme.

Strivings

To replicate and extend the findings from the narrative data, the same basic phenomena were explored in participants’ goal motivations. Compared with the life review interview, the personal strivings list is simpler to administer and quicker to code. Coding was restricted to VEiN identification without directly coding compatible relationships; integration is thus manifest as co-occurrences within the same statement. These analyses thus serve a pragmatic function: to test whether a more efficient methodology has sufficient sensitivity to detect the basic phenomenon of integration and thus pave the way for maximal efficiency in future research. The analytic strategy adopted was to first test whether the findings in the previous section would replicate and to then explore competing definitional boundaries and explanatory mechanisms of A and C.

Prevalence of A and C. Strivings analyses began by testing whether exemplars had more A and C in their strivings than did comparisons (see the Mode section of Figure 4). The prevalence of A and C was examined with a 2 (group: exemplar, comparison) \times 2 (mode: A, C) mixed-model ANOVA. The analysis yielded the

⁹ For the present study, this is a conservative estimate because within-kind relationship formation (e.g., A into A–A compatible relationships) likely occurs more readily than for between-kind relationships (viz., A–C relationships), especially when the two motives are in some tension with one another, as A and C frequently are. Thus, this approach makes it less likely that an effect for A–C relationships will be detected.

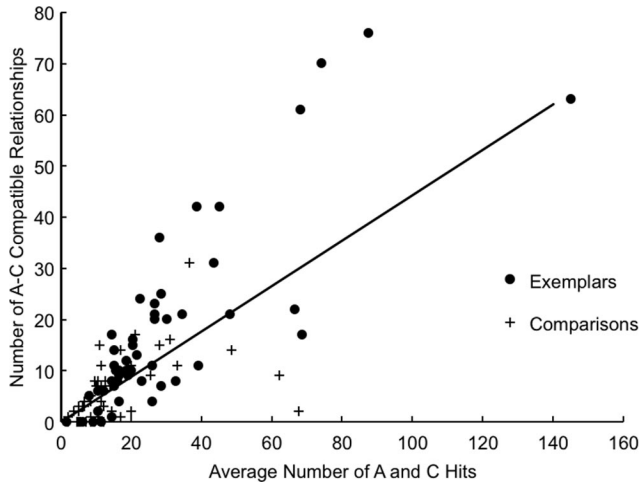


Figure 3. The actual number of A–C compatible relationships plotted against the number of (averaged) modalities within a section of the life review interview. Expected scores of A–C compatible relationships are represented by the line. Deviation scores are calculated as the vertical distance from an actual point to the expected A–C compatible relationship line.

predicted main effect for group, $F(1, 48) = 9.10, p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .16$, and no other significant effects. This omnibus test indicated that exemplars had more A and more C than did comparison participants. Next, the frequency of co-occurrences of A and C in strivings (see the Relationship section of Figure 4) was examined. As predicted, exemplars evidenced more A–C co-occurrences than did comparisons, $t(48) = 2.90, p = .006, d = 0.87$, thus replicating the analogous findings from the narrative data.

As was discussed in the previous section, caution is needed in interpreting the latter result (given that the higher prevalence of A and C implies a higher likelihood of chance A–C co-occurrences). We calculated expected levels of A–C co-occurrences in strivings as the product of the number of A and C hits divided by the number of strivings. We then derived deviation scores by subtracting these expected values from observed A–C strivings. Exemplars had positive deviation scores (i.e., greater than 0), $t(24) = 3.93, p = .001, d = 0.79$, meaning that they tended to congregate their A and C motives. Exemplars also congregated their A and C marginally more so than did comparison participants, $t(48) = 1.76, p = .09, d = 0.52$, with a moderate effect size. These findings provide a conceptual replication of those from the narrative data, using a different measure elicited in a different time and context.

Test of alternative explanations. We claim that the coactivation of A and C (as defined within the promoting interests scheme) is driving the elevated co-occurrence of A and C in the strivings of exemplars. The findings thus far presented could be consistent with two related theories. First, the definitional boundaries of A and C have yet to be empirically demonstrated. The findings from the macroanalytic coding of narratives support the definitional focus on the promoting interests scheme; the data do not support (broader) mixed definitions (such as those of McAdams, 2001). Still, a more direct test of the definitional boundary of this phenomenon is needed. The second alternative explanation partially overlaps with the previous: Generalized complexity could

explain the results reported thus far. Each of these objections is addressed in turn next.

Definitional boundaries of A–C integration. We found that, at the narrative level, when A–C integration was limited to McAdams’s (2001) themes of A as status/victory and achievement/responsibility and with C defined as caring/help, group differences were manifest. We replicated this finding with VEiNs of power and achievement as A and universalism and benevolence as C. Altogether, these findings are consistent with the conceptual focus on the promoting interests scheme. To test the boundaries of A–C integration more thoroughly, at a different level of personality description, we explored whether the exemplars’ integration is specific to value combinations predicted by the promoting interests scheme versus those predicted by the psychological distance scheme.

Theories advancing the alternate definitional boundaries of A and C (see Table 1), focusing on the psychological distance scheme, might predict a broader set of A–C integration findings. We unpacked the broader definition theory to predict that exemplars will also evidence greater integration across the orthogonal axis of the Schwartz (1992) values circumplex, which captures themes of independence (self-direction and/or stimulation) and group belonging (security, conformity, and/or tradition)—the psychological distance conceptualization of A and C. In contrast, our prediction is that exemplars will evidence A–C integration for only the promoting interests conceptualization of advancing self (power and achievement) and advancing others (universalism and benevolence).

These competing hypotheses were tested with a 2 (group: exemplar, comparison) \times 2 (definition: promoting interests, psychological distance) mixed-model ANOVA, using the VEiN coding of the strivings data. Our prediction was a Group \times Definition interaction. Indeed, significant main effects for definition and for group were qualified by the predicted interaction (see Figure 5), $F(1, 48) = 10.41, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .18$. Simple main effects were examined to determine for which definitions exemplars differed from comparisons. Exemplars differed from comparisons on the promoting interests form of integration, $F(1, 48) = 8.66, p = .005, d = 0.83$; however, they did not differ on the psychological

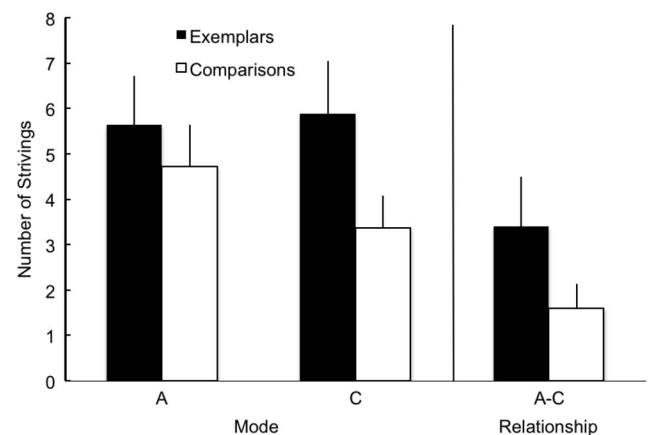


Figure 4. The prevalence of agency (A), communion (C), and A–C co-occurrences in the strivings of exemplar and comparison participants. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

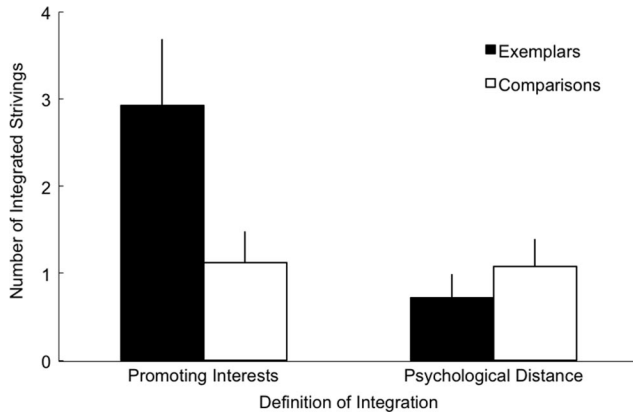


Figure 5. The number of integrated strivings for two definitions of agency and communion, promoting interests and psychological distance. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

distance form of integration, $F(1, 48) = 1.42, p = .24, d = -0.34$. In sum, the A–C integration evidenced by exemplars supports the specific boundary of A and C as defined by the promoting interests scheme.

Generalized integration mechanism. A related, more parsimonious, explanation for the present finding of elevated A–C integration among exemplars is that they are simply more integrative in general (integrating more values into their strivings) and that a broader mechanism such as cognitive complexity (see e.g., Commons, Trudeau, Stein, Richards, & Krause, 1998; Suedfeld, 2009) can account for the present effect. We unpacked this general complexity theory to the prediction that exemplars' strivings will evidence greater integration across many or all other combinations of values outside of the promoting interests A–C axis.

We tested this hypothesis by comparing two classes of differences between exemplars and comparisons in integrated strivings. The first class (“on-axis”) is composed of the four permutations of the four elemental VEiNs that lie within the promoting interests A–C axis (viz., power–universalism, power–benevolence, achievement–universalism, and achievement–benevolence), and the second class (“off-axis”) is composed of the 41 remaining permutations of VEiNs that lie outside the A–C axis (e.g., self-direction–conformity, security–tradition, universalism–hedonism). The frequency of co-occurrence of each VEiN dyad was derived and then standardized (z scores). For each participant, these z scores were then averaged for each class, producing a metric of integration for the on-axis promoting interests dyads and for the remaining off-axis dyads. If generalized complexity were driving the A–C integration finding, then exemplars would also differ from comparisons on the off-axis integrations (indicated by an unqualified main effect). On the other hand, if exemplar integration were specific to the A–C axis, an omnibus test would yield an interaction, with integration evident more so on-axis.

These competing mechanisms were tested with a 2 (group: exemplar, comparison) \times 2 (axis: on, off) mixed-model ANOVA. Our prediction was a Group \times Axis interaction. A significant main effect for group was qualified by the predicted interaction (see Figure 6), $F(1, 48) = 9.18, p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .16$. (As a result of the standardization, the main effect for axis could not approach sig-

nificance.) Simple main effects were examined to determine for which of the axes exemplars differed from comparisons. Exemplars and comparisons did not differ for off-axis integration, $F(1, 48) = 0.23, p = .64, d = 0.13$, but exemplars did differ from comparisons in terms of on-axis integration, $F(1, 48) = 7.35, p = .009, d = 0.77$. This result rules out a generalized integration mechanism for explaining elevated levels of A–C integration.

Discussion

Relative to a demographically matched comparison group, moral exemplars consistently evidenced more themes of A and C in the personal goals they shared and in the life stories they told, implying that exemplars are strongly motivated. Moreover, exemplars tended to congregate their A and C themes within the semantic flow of narrative passages and within personal strivings, thus evidencing the integration of A and C. To our knowledge, this is the first reliable empirical evidence of this personological feature in moral exemplars. Although reliable and robust, this effect was not evident under all conditions. Analyses began by showing that previous research (Walker & Frimer, 2007) failed to detect the integration of A and C for two reasons. Only when A and C are defined in terms of promoting interests (of the self and others) and when the interaction is observed within the person did the exemplar and comparison groups differ on the measure of integration. These results are consistent with the claim that moral exemplars have achieved enlightened self-interest, whereby they best advance their own interests by advancing the interests of others. After demonstrating the robustness of this phenomenon by providing a conceptual replication of these results using different measures elicited in different contexts and relying on different coding procedures, we addressed and dismissed various alternative explanations, including chance co-occurrence and generalized complexity.

Integrated Agency and Communion

Integrated A and C of exemplars were found both in a life narrative interview and in a measure of personal strivings. The interview prompted participants to recall, among many other questions, critical life events, including a high-point event. Each par-

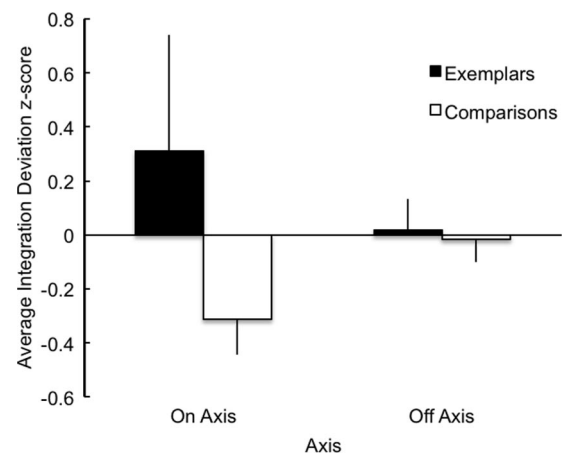


Figure 6. Deviation scores for on- and off-axis integrated strivings. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

ticipant's responses were both rich and idiographic, entailing specific persons, happenings, and personal significance to the individual. Moreover, each story had its own signature set of motivational themes and interwoven, implicit value endorsements.

Figure 1 (presented earlier) is an example of the narrative of one participant from the exemplar group, Sam (a pseudonym), and the coding thereof. Themes of implicit A and C surface frequently in this passage. A emerges often in Sam's delight in receiving social recognition and in the hard work necessary to organize a boxing match; C is manifest both in the direct caring action toward the younger generation and in an indirect, organizational form, in his fondness for the Big Brothers organization. Indeed, Sam had high scores on these modalities: His high-point event had 38 instances of A and 18 of C (for reference, the comparison group averaged 30.3 As, $SD = 30.0$, and 5.5 Cs, $SD = 4.2$).

Beyond the base amounts, important personological information is observable in the relationship between the A and C that Sam presents. Sam does not treat A and C in a demarcated fashion but, rather, weaves A and C together within the narrative flow: The purpose of Sam's hard work and organizational acumen (A) is explicitly for the higher purpose of assisting disadvantaged children (C). Buttressing this qualitative observation are the quantitative data that Sam's high point had 36 A–C compatible relationships, 12.4 of which were expectable on the basis of Sam's overall levels of A and C. The deviation score, 23.6 A–C compatible relationships above expected, quantifies the integration of A and C in Sam's moral personality.

Narrative analyses tended to produce large effect sizes between exemplars and comparison participants; analyses of personal strivings generally produced respectable effects (in the medium range) but require considerably less resources to administer and code. In the latter measure, integration was manifest in strivings that had both A and C present, such as "I typically try to . . .": "help my mother financially," "get involved in the problems of others—to help them out," "educate my peers about important social issues," and "live giving my utmost in service daily to the people of my country." In each of these examples, A manifests as social influence (e.g., educating peers), affluence (e.g., money), and effort (e.g., giving one's utmost). C emerges in concerns for close others (e.g., helping a mother or a peer) or in a more generalized concern for a social system (e.g., social issue). Consistently, A and C are coordinated; A, in a sense, mobilizes ideals of C into action.

The Predicted Paradox and the Developmental Solution

A and C are two fundamental human motives. This much is in common among personality researchers. Their respective definitions and how they interact, on the other hand, is a source of considerable debate. In our reading, definitions of A and C can be categorized into two schemes—promoting interests and psychological distance. Certain theories emerge from one scheme, other theories from the other, and yet others draw from both simultaneously. Independent of this definitional concern, theories diverge on their characterization of the relationship between the modalities, be they compatible with, independent of, or in conflict with one another. The present study posits that optimal moral motivation entails enlightened self-interest, wherein mature psychological functioning (e.g., that of moral exemplars) involves the compatible integration of A and C, as defined by

the promoting interests scheme. The data of the present study clearly support this contention.

This prediction of the adaptive integration of A and C, however, entails a paradox. When A is operationalized as motives of power and achievement (promoting the interests of the self) and C as motives of universalism and benevolence (promoting the interests of others), A and C entail a mutually oppositional dualism. How can one advance one's own situation and the plight of others simultaneously? How do moral exemplars integrate these dialectical themes?

The reconciliation model (Frimer & Walker, 2009) explains this paradox within a developmental framework. For all young persons, future moral exemplars included, development involves the strengthening and elaboration of these motives in a mutually segregated fashion. Research with a "normal" sample showed that, typically, one or the other motive (but rarely both) is active at a given time (Fournier et al., 2009). However segregated these motives are, they are not independent; throughout this initial developmental phase, they remain in mutual tension. This tension poses little trouble for either pursuit until the modalities become highly elaborated and begin to vie for the motivational, attentional, and temporal resources of the person. At this point, Erikson's (1968) crisis of conviction emerges, manifest as a dualistic choice between excellence (A) and compassion (C) and illustrated by quandaries such as "Should I get ahead in my job, or be there for my kid's soccer game?" "Do I play to win, or play fair?" "Will I make a lot of money, or do something for my community?"

The reconciliation model holds this period of conflict, likely arising in adolescence or emerging adulthood, to be a critical period of personality development. This crisis is particularly important because multiple resolutions are available. Stagnation or regression to earlier forms presents one possibility; attenuating one motive (C) to provide growing room for the other (A) is a second common, however nefarious, resolution. The latter is manifest as the champion of capitalism, unmitigated agency—rampant greed, materialism, and lust for power—what Bakan (1966, p. 14) unambiguously defamed as "the villain." The most adaptive resolution, however, is the creative reconciliation of the tension between A and C and their mutual integration. This reconciliatory move entails the insight that, with some reconfiguration, A and C can be most efficiently and effectively achieved in tandem—that when self-interest is understood not purely in material or interpersonal terms (as financial gain or social dominance) but perhaps in more psychological terms (e.g., as moral elevation; Haidt, 2003), then promoting the interests of others may be the most adaptive way to better one's own condition.

The notion of enlightened self-interest seems to be somewhat compatible with evolutionary approaches to prosocial motivation (see e.g., Dawkins, 1976). To some extent, enlightened self-interest as a causal mechanism for good behavior relieves of duty the motive (or concept) of altruism. In comparison to more dualistic models of moral functioning (see e.g., Kohlberg, 1984; Schwartz, 1992), this approach provides a clearer, more parsimonious mechanistic link between moral thought and moral behavior.

Persons or Variables?

How, exactly, is this phenomenon of integrated A and C manifest? What precisely does it mean, psychologically? Traditional

approaches to the study of personality have relied on the self-reporting of personality traits, wherein variables (such as the Big Five factors) are measured and conceived as independent entities. Within this variable approach (Magnusson, 1985, 1999), the person is modeled as a set of scores on different modalities. This measurement approach effectively limits the ways that integration across modalities can be observed; in the present and past studies (see e.g., Frimer & Walker, 2009; Walker & Frimer, 2007), this theoretical approach was unpacked to predict that, controlling for base levels of A and C, the interactive effect (i.e., their product) will predict some adaptive criterion variable (e.g., moral exemplarity). This approach has repeatedly failed to detect significant differences, perhaps because this variable approach fails to make observations about the dynamics of these modalities at their locus of interaction—phenomenologically, within the person.

Magnusson (1985, 1999) identifies a qualitatively different approach to the study of persons, which he calls the person approach; conceptualizing the person in terms of the organization of, and dynamic interactions between, personality constructs. Within this metatheoretical frame, both the strength of modalities and the relationships between them constitute important psychological data. The present study advanced a new method for measuring both of these constructs and found that moral exemplars score high on both strength of modality and frequency of compatible relationships; moreover, the latter could not entirely be explained by the former, meaning that the integration of A and C is (only) manifest at the person level of analysis. This set of findings provides rigorous empirical support for deeper exploration of the within-person dynamics of personality functioning.

In many ways, Nasby and Reed's (1997) pivotal case study of Dodge Morgan was a commentary on the field of personality psychology as much as it was on Morgan himself. Nasby and Reed expressed ambivalence toward the life story, or narrative, approach:

The LSM [McAdams's life story model], with its interdisciplinary breadth, multiple levels of analysis, and appreciation of metaphor, is suited for rising to the panoptic perspective denied us by the FFM [five-factor model], but the scope and complexity of the model have not yet been well-mapped. In this analysis one can indeed take to the air, but must do so rather anxiously, fearful of losing the way. The LSM has no factor scores, no trait markers, no appropriate comparison groups that can reassure us that we are indeed on course. (p. 900)

The present study provides a method and a map for keeping one's way in navigating the rich wilderness of life narrative, linking qualitative observation and empirically reliable and valid measurement.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the present study is still an advancement from previous research, one limitation was the lack of differentiation of the directionality of instrumentality between A and C themes. For example, a compatible relationship could be manifest as A instrumental to C (e.g., using money to assist the poor) or as C instrumental to A (e.g., using concern for the poor to make money). Future research should develop more sophisticated coding techniques to differentiate these importantly distinct phenomena.

The present study did succeed in leveling the empirical playing field between qualitative and quantitative approaches to personal-

ity in the production of highly sensitive measurements of holistic phenomena. However, the coding procedure (especially for the life narratives) is laborious, which presents a pragmatic limitation for future research in the field.

A third limitation in this study was the failure to demonstrate segregation of A and C in the comparison group. Across several measures, comparison participants' deviation scores tended to not differ from zero, implying that they were neither segregated nor integrated but neutral. The reconciliation model holds this segregation as the stored energy that launches personality development. Participants in the comparison group may not have been ubiquitously "ordinary" insofar as they were willing to volunteer for a research project. Future research should aim to overcome this recruitment bias problem of having highly functioning individuals constitute the comparison group by drawing more-ordinary people into the study.

In the present study, moral exemplars were individuals who had engaged in decades of service to their community or some broader humanitarian cause. This caring type of moral exemplar is, of course, not the only type. Other types may exemplify justice or bravery (Walker & Hennig, 2004) or may simply be less publicly visible, as is the case for a scientist who strives to develop a vaccine that could save countless lives (see Holland, 1985). This example may be another instance of A in service to C and thus integration. Future research should explore whether the integration of A and C is ubiquitous across different types of moral exemplars.

Relying on a "reverse-engineering" approach, this research enterprise has now established the developmental end point (maturity). Future research should work backward to explore the ontogenesis of those psychological functions that compel or sustain exemplars in their good work. Moreover, future research should delineate and explain phases of progressions and stagnations in the developmental process.

Conclusion

In light of Omar Bradley's disparaging words about the state of the more-dominant nations of the world in the introduction, this research contributes to the broader enterprise of understanding how to make this a world of ethical giants. Ethical giants integrate their brilliance with their wisdom, their power with their conscience; what is now needed is a deeper understanding of how they come to do so.

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