



A Theory of Mental Integrity

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Mental Integrity

- E.U. human rights documents
 - e.g., Convention on Human Rights, Charter of Fundamental Rights
- Standard view: **autonomy-based**
- Mental integrity as an **absence** of neurotechnological interference

The Standard View (Ienca & Andorno 2017)

- For something to be a threat to mental integrity, it must:
 - (i) involve the **direct access to and manipulation** of neural signaling
 - (ii) be **unauthorized** –i.e. must occur in absence of the informed consent of the signal generator
 - (iii) result in physical and/or psychological **harm**



The Standard View(s) (Lavazza 2019)

- Drops the harm condition (iii), loosens the directness condition (i)
- “Mental Integrity is **the individual’s mastery of his mental states** and his brain data so that, without his consent, no one can read, spread, or alter such states and data **in order to condition the individual** in any way.”



Two Objections

1) The Millian objection

- Autonomy **rights** needn't be grounded in the value of autonomy itself.
 - As in J.S. Mill's *On Liberty* (1859)

2) The objection from parallelism

- For the body, we appropriately distinguish between (bodily) **integrity** and (bodily) **autonomy**.



An Alternative View

- Mental integrity as **mental integration** (Storr 1960, Welford 1970)
 - A **positive good**
 - Compatible with an autonomy **right** against interference with this good



Mental Integration (Welford 1970)

- Mental integrity as **functional integrity** of the mind
- Homeostatic equilibrium
- Ground of **human dignity** and basis of a conception of **life itself** (at least for persons)



Specifying Mental Integration

Combination of:

- Welfare, understood in terms of our **emotional** or **affective** life (Lin 2016, Heathwood 2016, Zuk 2019)
- Meaningfulness, understood **cognitively** in terms of making sense of the world (Repp 2018, Seachris 2019, Thomas 2019)

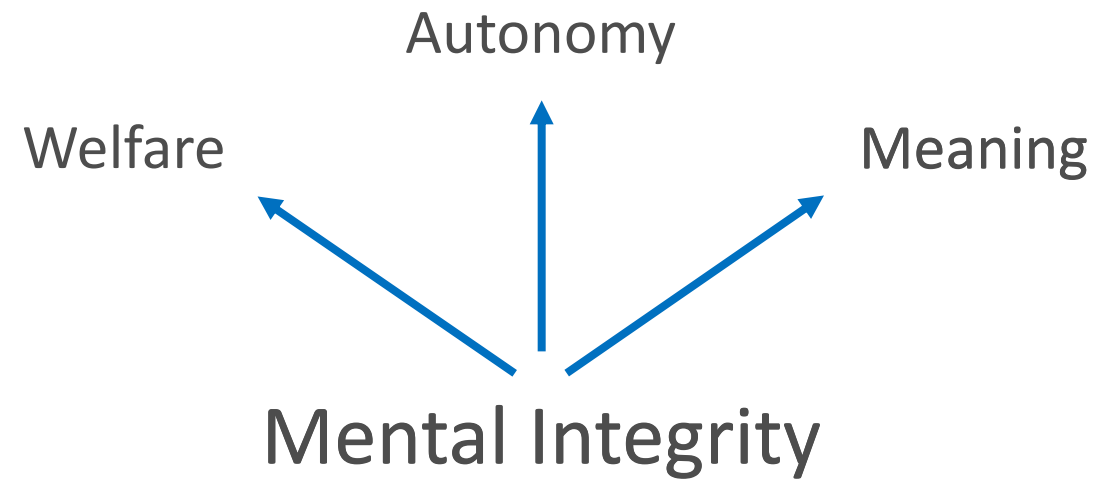


Autonomy, Redux

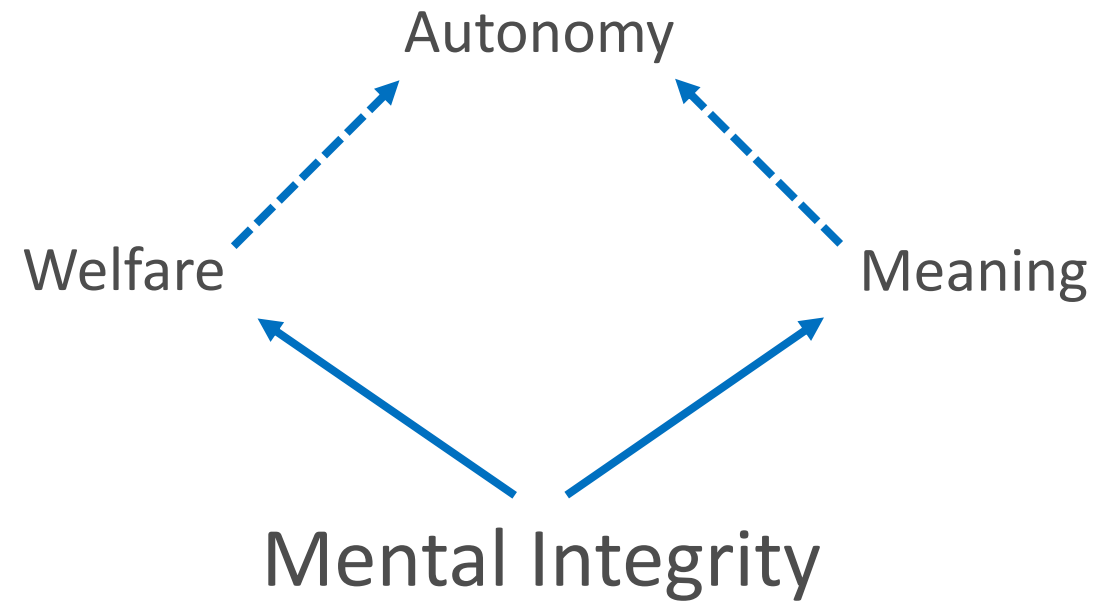
- Autonomy as a **third, independent** element?
- Or as a **special combination of welfare and meaningfulness?**



Option #1



Option #2



The Payoff

- **Explains why** mental integrity is so important
- Covers the **non-autonomous**
 - e.g., **children**
- Scope extends **beyond neurotech**
 - esp. to web-based **digital technologies** (social media, other apps, etc.)



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