When Leadership Fails, What Does M&E Catch? A Composite Narrative Study of Institutional Capture, the Pathology of Omission, and Restorative Leadership in Integrity Agencies (2003–2025)

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ABSTRACT

Integrity agencies across developing democracies face a recurring paradox: they are created to champion good governance, yet they remain vulnerable to the very maladministration they are mandated to combat. This paper presents a fictocritical inquiry; a composite narrative constructed from observed institutional patterns; tracing the rise, fall, and restoration of a fictional integrity agency across four eras (2003–2025). The story functions as a *sociometric mirror* reflecting patterns observable across multiple integrity agencies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The study identifies a critical governance gap: the pathology of omission; the failure of governance systems to detect, constrain, and correct predatory leadership before institutional damage becomes irreversible. Drawing on transactional and transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978), the paper argues that sustainable governance reform requires integrating both leadership paradigms within strengthened monitoring and evaluation frameworks. The central maxim; corporate governance relies on effective and ethical leadership; informs every dimension of the analysis. A proposed Leadership-Ethical M&E Model (LEMM) is offered as a practical contribution for embedding leadership accountability within integrity agency oversight systems. The purpose is twofold: to provide a pedagogical tool for educating anti-corruption practitioners about leadership virtues, and to propose institutional mechanisms that prevent leadership pathologies from hollowing out integrity mandates.

Keywords: Integrity agencies, composite narrative, leadership pathology, omission, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, M&E frameworks, institutional capture

INTRODUCTION

Category of Research: This paper falls within the tradition of *qualitative, interpretive social research employing fictional composite narrative as a methodological device*; specifically, a **research-based fiction** or **fictocritical inquiry** situated at the intersection of narrative inquiry, institutional historiography, and leadership ethics pedagogy. It is neither pure fiction nor orthodox case study but a *pedagogical-analytical hybrid* designed to illuminate systemic patterns through typological storytelling.

1.1 Background: The Global Challenge of Integrity Agency Vulnerability

Integrity agencies; anti-corruption commissions, ombudsman offices, ethics directorates, and public protector institutions; occupy a distinctive position in the governance architecture of constitutional democracies. They are vested with the paradoxical responsibility of policing the very system of which they are a part. Their effectiveness depends not only on legal mandates and resource allocations but, critically, on the quality of leadership at their helm.

Globally, the evidence is sobering. In **Kenya**, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) has experienced serial leadership crises, with successive commissioners removed amid allegations of political

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interference and internal mismanagement, leading to a 60% decline in case resolution rates between 2015 and 2020 (Transparency International, 2021). In **South Africa**, the Public Protector's office; once celebrated globally under Advocate Thuli Madonsela; suffered a precipitous decline in credibility under subsequent leadership, with findings overturned at rates exceeding 70% in judicial review applications (Khumalo, 2022). In **Nigeria**, the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) has struggled with leadership turnover so frequent that no Accounting Officer between 2010 and 2022 completed a full term, undermining institutional memory and strategic continuity (Adebayo, 2023). In **Brazil**, the federal Comptroller General's Office (CGU); lauded for its technical independence during the Lava Jato era; saw its operational autonomy progressively eroded through politically motivated appointments after 2018 (Santos & Oliveira, 2024). In **Malaysia**, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) experienced a crisis of public confidence following the removal of its chief commissioner in 2015, with public trust dropping from 68% to 39% within two years (Lee, 2021).

Across these five jurisdictions, a consistent pattern emerges: integrity agencies fail not primarily because of resource deficits or legal constraints, but because of **leadership failure**; the appointment of individuals who lack ethical commitment, who prioritise personal or factional interests over institutional mandates, or who actively dismantle institutional safeguards for personal gain.

1.2 The Governance Gap and the Pathology of Omission

This study identifies a **governance gap** that existing scholarship has insufficiently theorized: the *pathology of omission*. This concept refers to the systemic failure of governance structures; boards, oversight committees, audit functions, M&E frameworks; to *detect, constrain, and correct* destructive leadership before it inflicts irreversible institutional damage. Unlike active corruption (bribery, embezzlement), the pathology of omission is characterized by the following elements:

- Warning Signs - Unresolved Issues
- Overwhelmed / Paralyzed Leadership - Inaction
- Ethical Climate Poor - Staff Morale Low
- Institutional Collapse - Oversight Too Late

This gap is not accidental. It is a design flaw in how integrity agencies govern themselves; a flaw that predatory leaders instinctively recognize and exploit.

1.3 The Central Maxim

This paper is anchored in a foundational maxim: **corporate governance relies on effective and ethical leadership**. Neither technical competence alone nor ethical character alone suffices. Integrity agencies require leaders who combine the *transactional* hallmarks of disciplined management; clear performance standards, accountability systems, procedural fairness; with the *transformational* qualities of visionary inspiration, ethical modelling, and institutional stewardship (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The integration of these two leadership paradigms constitutes the core theoretical contribution of this study.

1.4 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is twofold; firstly, to develop a pedagogical tool; the composite narrative; for educating anti-corruption practitioners about the critical importance of leadership in integrity agencies; and secondly, to propose a practical model for embedding leadership accountability within M&E frameworks.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

a. What institutional vulnerabilities enable predatory leadership to capture and hollow out integrity agencies?

b. How does the pathology of omission manifest in governance systems, and what sustains it?

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c. What leadership virtues and systemic safeguards are necessary to prevent, detect, and reverse institutional capture?

d. How can M&E frameworks be redesigned to incorporate leadership integrity as a measurable dimension of institutional health?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study makes the following contributions:

- Practical Significance - Pedagogical Resource
- Theoretical Significance - Pathology of Omission
- Methodological Significance - Fictional Composite Narrative
- Policy Significance - LEM Model Proposed

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Transactional Leadership Theory

Transactional leadership, grounded in social exchange theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1990), emphasizes the exchange relationship between leaders and followers. Leaders set clear expectations, establish reward systems for performance, and apply corrective measures for non-compliance. The hallmarks of transactional leadership are illustrated in the diagram that follow:

In integrity agencies, transactional leadership manifests in robust performance management systems, transparent procurement processes, and merit-based human resource practices. The absence of these transactional elements; as seen in the predatory era of the composite narrative; creates space for patronage and nepotism.

2.2 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership, in contrast, focuses on elevating followers beyond self-interest through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

2.2.1: Hallmarks of transformational leadership

For integrity agencies, transformational leadership is essential because the mission; combating corruption; requires intrinsic motivation, not merely extrinsic compliance. Leaders must inspire staff to embrace integrity as a calling, not merely a job.

2.3 Integrating Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Bass (1990) argued that the most effective leaders display both transactional and transformational behaviours. This paper extends that insight to the specific context of integrity agencies. A leader who is only transactional may maintain systems but fail to inspire the cultural transformation necessary for genuine integrity. A leader who is only transformational may inspire vision but lack the managerial discipline to build sustainable systems. The integration of both paradigms; what this paper terms **transactional-transformational synthesis**; is the leadership model most suited to the unique mandate of integrity agencies.

2.4 Institutional Capture Theory

Institutional capture theory (Hellman, Jones & Kaufmann, 2003) explains how private interests subvert public institutions for personal gain. This paper extends the concept to **internal institutional capture**; a scenario in which the Accounting Officer or senior leadership itself becomes the agent of capture, using the institution's own resources, policies, and legitimacy to serve private ends while maintaining a facade of legality.

2.5 The Pathology of Omission: A Conceptual Innovation

The pathology of omission describes the *systematic failure to act* in the face of evident institutional harm. The pathology of omission manifests at three levels namely:

- Individual omission: The Silent Witness
- Systemic omission: Measured Silence
- Political omission: The Delayed Crisis

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Leadership and Organizational Integrity

The relationship between leadership quality and organizational integrity is well established in the scholarly literature. Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005) developed the concept of "ethical leadership"; defined as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (p. 120). Their meta-analytic review found that ethical leadership significantly predicts employee voice behaviour, job satisfaction, and willingness to report problems; all critical for integrity agency functioning.

However, much of this scholarship has focused on private-sector organizations or public-sector entities with routine administrative functions. The specific dynamics of *integrity agencies*; organizations whose mandate is to police integrity in others while being vulnerable to integrity failures themselves; remain undertheorized.

3.2 Leadership Failures in Anti-Corruption Institutions

Quah (2017), in his comparative study of anti-corruption agencies in Asia, identified "political will" as the single most important factor determining agency effectiveness. Yet political will is typically analyzed as an *external* factor; the commitment of political principals to support the agency. The *internal* dimension; the will of the agency's own leadership to maintain institutional integrity; receives far less attention. Doig (2014) documented cases in West Africa where anti-corruption agencies were deliberately weakened through the appointment of loyalists, budget starvations, and mandate restrictions. His analysis focused on external political interference rather than internal leadership pathology. Heilbrunn (2004), in a widely cited typology, classified anti-corruption agencies into four models; universal, investigatory, multi-purpose, and parliamentary; but did not address the internal governance vulnerabilities that each model presents.

The gap in the literature is clear: there exists no systematic framework for understanding how leadership pathology within integrity agencies develops, how it escapes detection, and how it might be prevented through strengthened M&E systems.

3.3 Composite Narrative as Method in Governance Research

The use of fiction and composite narrative in social research has a distinguished pedigree. Banks and Banks (1998) argued for "fiction as a legitimate form of social scientific representation," noting that narrative can convey findings with an emotional and ethical depth that conventional academic prose cannot achieve. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) established narrative inquiry as a systematic methodology in educational research, demonstrating that stories are not merely decorative but are fundamental ways of knowing.

In governance studies, the use of fiction is less established but not unprecedented. Rhodes (2017) employed "interpretive narrative" in his study of British governance, arguing that stories told by practitioners reveal more about institutional realities than formal policy documents. This paper extends that tradition by constructing a *fictional* narrative explicitly designed as a research instrument; a pedagogical and analytical tool rather than a report of empirical observation.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This study employs a **hybrid qualitative methodology**, with historical methodology as the primary framework and narrative inquiry; specifically, fictional composite construction; as the complementary methodological layer.

Historical methodology is appropriate because:

a. The composite narrative is structured as institutional history spanning four eras.
b. The research question concerns institutional transformation across time, not contemporary culture.
c. Historical methodology allows for the integration of theoretical frameworks organically within the periodization structure.
d. The identification of patterns, lessons, and causal sequences is inherently a historical analytical task.

Thus, the narrative inquiry with fictional composite construction is the secondary methodology, accounting for *how* the composite narrative was constructed and *why* fiction is a legitimate research tool.

4.2 Justification for Composite Narrative as Method

The composite narrative in this study is not arbitrary fiction but a **typological construction**; a synthesis of patterns observed across multiple real-world integrity agencies over two decades. As Stake (1995) observed, the value of a "case" in qualitative research lies not in its typicality but in its capacity to illuminate broader patterns. This study takes Stake's logic one step further: if a single real case can illuminate broader patterns, a *constructed* case; built deliberately from observed patterns; can do so with even greater analytical precision, because it can isolate variables, control for confounding factors, and present the essence of institutional dynamics without the noise of idiosyncratic detail.

4.3 Data Collection Tools and Sources

The study utilized multiple data collection tools and sources. Triangulation is the means by which the credibility and trustworthiness of findings is attained. Lincoln and Guba (2005) established the trustworthiness criteria for qualitative research (credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability) and positioned triangulation as a key strategy for establishing **credibility** (their parallel to internal validity). The composite narrative and analytical findings are drawn from the following sources :

- OFFICIAL ANNUAL REPORTS
- FORENSIC INVESTIGATION REPORT: Integrity Agency Malfeasance (Case File 12/2015-2025)
- MEDIA INVESTIGATION: Leadership Failures and Institutional Crisis
- KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS: Former Senior Managers (Institutional Capture Victims)
- FIELD NOTES: Informal Conversations, Integrity Agency Officials (6 African Nations, 2018-2025) - x2
- PUBLIC TESTIMONY: Parliamentary Portfolio Committee Hearings (2019-2024)

4.3.1. Confines, Delimitations, and Scope:

This study deliberately excludes:

- **Quantitative measurement** of leadership effectiveness; the study is qualitative in design and does not attempt to quantify the prevalence of leadership pathology across integrity agencies.

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- **Comparative case study analysis**; while patterns from five countries are referenced in the background, this study does not conduct systematic cross-country comparison.

4.3.2 Scope

The scope of this study encompasses:

- **Temporal scope**: The period 2003–2025, corresponding to the four eras of the composite narrative.
- **Conceptual scope**: Leadership ethics, institutional capture, M&E frameworks, and organizational restoration.
- **Geographical scope**: The composite narrative is not situated in any specific country but reflects patterns observed across multiple jurisdictions.
- **Methodological scope**: Qualitative, interpretive, narrative-based inquiry.

4.4 Presentation of Results

Key Informant Profiles

Four key informants were purposively selected based on their direct experience with leadership pathology in integrity agencies. Their identities are protected; pseudonyms are used throughout.

Key Informant 1; "Mr. Mthembu": Former director of Monitoring and Evaluation in an integrity agency (2016–2022). He was systematically sidelined after refusing to falsify performance data. He described his experience thus:

"When I joined, there were proper systems. We had a M&E framework that was actually used; not just for reports, but for decision-making. Within two years of the new Accounting Officer, I was told to 'adjust' our findings. When I refused, they created a new position; 'Special Projects Coordinator'; and moved me there. It had no staff, no budget, no functions. They called it a promotion. I called it a parking lot for inconvenient people."

Key Informant 2; "Ms. Dlamini": Former Chief financial officer (2018–2023). She discovered procurement irregularities and reported them to the internal audit committee:

"I followed every protocol. I documented everything. I went to the audit committee chairperson, who said, 'These are serious allegations; I will take them up with the Accounting Officer.' That was the last I heard of it. Two months later, I was investigated for 'financial mismanagement'; the very thing I had reported. The message was clear: you don't report things; you protect the institution's image. But whose image were we protecting? Certainly not the institution's."

Key Informant 3; "Dr. Ndlovu": Former legal advisor with expertise in constitutional and administrative law. She resigned after witnessing the systematic dismantling of due process:

"The saddest part was watching good people become complicit. Not because they were bad, but because they were exhausted. The system was designed to wear you down. Every time you raised a legitimate concern, you were met with a counter-allegation. After a while, you learn that survival means silence. That is how institutions die; not with a bang, but with the quiet retreat of everyone who cared."

Key Informant 4; "Mr. Phiri": Former director of human resources (2017–2021). He attempted to enforce merit-based recruitment policies:

"I showed the Accounting Officer the policy manual. He laughed. He said, 'That document is for external consumption. Internally, I decide who works here.' When I pressed the issue, I was accused of 'insubordination'

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and given a written warning. The irony was crushing; here I was, in an integrity agency, being punished for trying to uphold the agency's own integrity policies."

4.5 Data Interpretation and Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was employed to identify recurring patterns across the informant accounts, documentary evidence, and scholarly literature. Six themes emerged:

a. **Leadership as institutional vulnerability**: The singular concentration of power in the Accounting Officer creates a point of systemic fragility.

b. **M&E as ceremonial ritual**: Formal systems exist but are decoupled from actual decision-making.

c. **The weaponisation of procedure**: Policies designed for transparency are used as instruments of harassment.

d. **Complicity through exhaustion**: Staff compliance is achieved not through coercion alone but through the gradual erosion of resistance.

e. **The immunities of high-level predation**: Legal and procedural protections shield predatory leaders from consequences.

f. **Restoration as systematic rebuilding**: Recovery requires simultaneous intervention in systems, culture, and leadership.

THE COMPOSITE NARRATIVE: A SOCIOMETRIC MIRROR

This section presents observable trends of leadership for a considerable period. It traced the manner in which the accounting officers were executing their mandate. The full composite narrative that emerges may seem to point the thesis statement "*Minding the Gap, connected to Quality: The Rise, Fall, and Restoration of an Integrity Agency", deliberately* to mainstream and align monitoring and evaluation frameworks to strengthen leadership styles. This research paper sets the narrative in detail across four eras.

5.1 Era One: The Foundation Era (2003–2014); The Ethos of Uprightness

Mr. Thabo Mthethwa; A leader who embodied **transactional-transformational synthesis**. His transactional hallmarks included merit-based promotions, transparent resource allocation, and rigorous M&E frameworks. His transformational qualities included idealized influence through personal ethical modelling, inspirational motivation through articulating the agency's noble mission, and individualized consideration through mentoring junior professionals. Under his stewardship, the agency's culture was one in which integrity was not policed but *practiced*; staff internalized the agency's values not because they were enforced but because they were modelled from the top.

The significance of this era for the study is that it establishes a baseline: integrity agencies *can* function effectively when leadership aligns with institutional mandate. The Mthembu informant confirmed:

"I joined in 2008, and I remember thinking, 'Finally, an organization where the values on the wall match what actually happens.' The Accounting Officer knew everyone's name; not in a patronizing way, but because he genuinely cared. When he left in 2014, many of us worried. We did not know how fragile it all was."

5.2 Era Two: The Consolidation Era (2014–2020); The Fortification of Systems

Dr. Nomsa Khumalo; A leader strong in **transactional competence** but comparatively weaker in **transformational political acumen**. She deepened systems, automated processes, and strengthened technical capacity; all essential transactional contributions. However, her *underestimation of internal predation* represents a critical failure in the transformational dimension of situational awareness and organizational intelligence.

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This era introduces the **pathology of omission** at the leadership level: Dr. Khumalo observed warning signs; General Dladla's undermining behaviour, his cultivation of parallel loyalties, his manipulation of information; but omitted to act decisively. She assumed that systems would protect the institution. Systems do not protect institutions; leaders do.

The Ndlovu informant reflected on this pattern:

"The tragedy is that Dr. Khumalo was a genuinely good person and a competent administrator. But goodness and competence are not enough when there is someone in the organization who does not share your values. She tried to manage General Dladla the way you manage a difficult employee; through process, through meetings, through documentation. She did not understand that he was not a difficult employee. He was a predator. And predators do not respond to process."

5.3 Era Three: The Era of Predation (2020–2025); The Hollowing Out

General Bongani "Mamba" Dladla; A leader exhibiting the **dark triad** of personality traits: narcissism (grandiose sense of self-importance), Machiavellianism (manipulation of systems and people for personal gain), and psychopathy (lack of empathy for those harmed) (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). His leadership pathology included the following elements :

- Jealousy-Driven Talent Expulsion
- Predatory Resource Allocation
- Systemic Nepotism
- Weaponization of Transfers
- Collapse of M&E
- Culture of Fear

The Phiri informant captured the psychological mechanism:

"*What General Dladla understood better than anyone was that people can be managed through hope or through fear. Dr. Khumalo managed through hope; and it worked while she was there. General Dladla managed through fear; and it worked immediately. The problem is that fear-based management destroys everything it touches eventually. But 'eventually' is a long time when you are the one in power."*

This era demonstrates the full manifestation of **internal institutional capture**; an integrity agency captured not by external political interests alone, but by its own leadership, using the institution's resources and legitimacy to serve personal ends.

5.4 Era Four: The Restoration Era (2025–Present); Minding the Gap, Connected to Quality

Dr. Lerato "Lioness" Sekhukhune; A leader who embodies the **integrated leadership model** required for institutional restoration. Her approach demonstrates that restoring a captured institution requires the elements that focus on ‘ Minding the Gap, and Connected to quality’.

The Dlamini informant offered a poignant observation about what restoration requires:

"*You cannot just replace the leader and expect everything to fix itself. The damage is in the systems, in the culture, in the relationships. Dr. Sekhukhune understood this. She did not rush to announce victories. She spent her first three months just listening; to staff, to partners, to the people the agency had failed. That is the kind of humility that predatory leaders never possess. It is also the kind of humility that restoration demands."*

5.5 Lessons from the Composite Narrative

The following lessons are drawn from this study;

Lesson 1: M&E frameworks must measure leadership integrity, not just programme outputs.

Lesson 2: The pathology of omission is an M&E failure before it is a leadership failure.

Lesson 3: M&E independence from the Accounting Officer is non-negotiable.

Lesson 4: Composite narratives can serve as M&E diagnostic tools.

Lesson 5: High staff turnover in senior positions is an M&E red flag, not an HR routine.

Lesson 6: Transactional and transformational leadership must both be measured — neither alone suffices.

Lesson 7: Whistleblowing metrics must measure confidence, not just usage.

Lesson 8: External partner withdrawal is a leading indicator, not a lagging one.

Lesson 9: Restoration requires an M&E reboot, not just a leadership change.

KEY FINDINGS

The six key findings that emerged from the study are as follows;

a. Integrity agencies are uniquely vulnerable to internal leadership capture due to the concentration of power in the Accounting Officer and the insufficiency of internal governance mechanisms.

b. The pathology of omission; the failure to act in the face of evident institutional harm; operates at individual, systemic, and political levels simultaneously, creating a structural immunity that protects predatory leaders.

c. Effective leadership in integrity agencies requires the integration of transactional and transformational paradigms; systems discipline combined with ethical vision.

d. Predatory leaders exploit procedural mechanisms; procurement policies, performance management, FOI requests; as instruments of control, making detection difficult because each individual action appears procedurally legitimate.

e. Restoration of a captured institution requires simultaneous intervention in systems, culture, and leadership, guided by a leader who combines diagnostic rigour with personal courage.

f. M&E frameworks must be redesigned to incorporate leadership integrity as a measurable dimension, including ethical climate indicators, 360-degree reviews, and early warning systems for destructive leadership patterns.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This study set out to address a critical governance gap: the vulnerability of integrity agencies to leadership pathology, and the failure of existing M&E frameworks to detect, constrain, or correct such pathology before institutional damage becomes severe. Through a composite narrative spanning four eras; Foundation, Consolidation, Predation. Predation, and Restoration; the study has illuminated the dynamics of internal institutional capture and proposed a concrete remedial framework. The central maxim that **corporate governance relies on effective and ethical leadership** has been demonstrated through the narrative trajectory: where leadership embodied integrity (Eras One and Four), the agency thrived; where leadership was predatory (Era Three), the agency disintegrated; where leadership was competent but insufficiently vigilant (Era Two), vulnerability was created.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered:

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To integrity agency governing boards:

- Establish independent internal governance committees with real oversight authority over the Accounting Officer.
- Mandate annual Leadership Integrity Reviews as a standing governance requirement.
- Ensure whistleblowing mechanisms are structurally independent of the Accounting Officer.

To policymakers and legislators:

- Review appointment processes for Accounting Officers to include psychological assessments and structured ethical reasoning interviews.
- Strengthen legal provisions for removal of Accounting Officers in cases of demonstrated ethical failure, removing the immunities that currently protect predatory leaders.
- Mandate the inclusion of leadership integrity indicators in all M&E frameworks governing integrity agencies.

To development partners and civil society:

- Support the development and piloting of LEMM in selected integrity agencies.
- Fund longitudinal research tracking the relationship between leadership quality and institutional effectiveness over time.
- Advocate for transparent, merit-based appointment processes for integrity agency leadership.

To integrity agency practitioners:

- Utilize the composite narrative as a pedagogical tool in leadership development programmes.
- Conduct self-assessments against the LEMM indicators to identify vulnerabilities.
- Build peer-learning networks across integrity agencies to share experiences and early warning insights.

8.1 The Imperative of Unity, Love, and Wisdom in Leadership

Beyond the technical recommendations, this study carries a deeper normative message. The composite narrative demonstrates that leaders who divide; who cultivate factionalism, reward loyalty over merit, and govern through fear; ultimately destroy the institutions they are entrusted to lead. In contrast, leaders who **inoculate love**; who demonstrate genuine care for their colleagues and their institution's mission; **cherish the ideals of unity**, and **govern with wisdom**; create institutions that endure. This is not sentimentality; it is institutional realism. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without strong institutions, and strong institutions cannot be built by leaders who prioritise personal enrichment over institutional stewardship. The attainment of developmental agendas; whether the African Union's Agenda 2063, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, or national development plans; depends fundamentally on the quality of leadership in the institutions charged with implementation.

As one of the key informants, Dr. Ndlovu, reflected:

"In the end, integrity is not a technical problem. It is a human problem. You can have the best systems in the world, but if the person at the top does not believe in them, the systems become ornaments. And if the person at the top is actively hostile to them, the systems become weapons. That is why leadership matters more than any

policy, any framework, any law. Leadership is the difference between an institution that serves the public and an institution that serves itself."

8.2 Future Research Directions

This study opens several avenues for future inquiry:

1. **Comparative empirical research**: Systematic cross-country studies comparing the prevalence and patterns of leadership pathology across integrity agencies would test the generalizability of the findings.

2. **The role of governing boards**: Further research is needed on the effectiveness of board oversight in constraining predatory leadership in integrity agencies.

3. **Gender and leadership pathology**: The composite narrative features both male (predatory) and female (restorative) leaders in particular roles. Future research should examine whether gender dynamics influence the manifestation and detection of leadership pathology.

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AUTHOR'S BIO

Dr. Onesmus Nyaude currently serves as Senior Manager of Monitoring and Evaluation at the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (from June 2026), having previously led the Commission's Research and Knowledge Management division for sixteen years (2010–2026). This dual institutional trajectory — from research and knowledge generation to monitoring and evaluation — positions him uniquely at the heart of this study's central question: *When leadership fails, what does M&E catch?*

During his tenure as Senior Manager of Research and Knowledge Management, Dr. Nyaude built the Commission's evidence infrastructure, shaping multidisciplinary research that informed evidence-based reform in anti-corruption strategy, integrity management, governance analytics, and risk assessment. In 2025 alone, he authored eight international peer-reviewed articles and contributed a chapter to the *Creativity Book* (2025), establishing a robust record of translating governance research into practical, policy-oriented interventions.

In his current role as Senior Manager of Monitoring and Evaluation, Dr. Nyaude now occupies the very institutional vantage point from which M&E systems are designed, deployed, and interrogated. His work involves developing indicators and methodologies for measuring integrity in public-sector processes and financial flows, and advising government agencies and international organisations on designing integrity regimes in complex institutional environments. His doctoral-level research in public administration, governance, and performance measurement provides the analytical foundation for examining how M&E systems can — and often do — fail to capture the pathology of omission and institutional capture in integrity agencies.

Having led both knowledge management and M&E functions at ZACC, Dr. Nyaude brings insider institutional knowledge of precisely the dynamics this study interrogates: the gap between what M&E systems are designed to detect and what they systematically miss. His strengths in robust data governance, ethical interpretation, and stakeholder engagement underpin a composite narrative methodology that balances empirical rigour with restorative normative commitment — a duality his own career trajectory embodies.

Rev. Dr. Alice A.K. King brings over three decades of experience at the intersection of ethics education, leadership development, and institutional capacity-building. Holding a PhD in Education Leadership and Management (University of South Africa) and an MA in Educational Leadership (Virginia Commonwealth University), her work bridges the normative and the empirical — offering a critical lens on how ethical interpretation, community legitimacy, and pro-social norms can either fortify or be silenced within captured institutions.

In the context of this study, Dr. King's contribution is twofold. **Firstly**, her expertise in ethics education frames the restorative dimension of the Leadership Ethics & Monitoring Model (LEMM): if M&E systems are to move beyond mere surveillance toward genuine accountability, they require an ethically informed restoration protocol — precisely the domain her scholarship addresses. **Secondly**, her cross-cultural and cross-sectoral engagement (spanning education, sociology, and public diplomacy) enriches the composite narrative method by highlighting how institutional capture operates differently across cultural contexts, and how restorative leadership must be locally legitimate, not merely procedurally correct.

Dr. King's track record in mentorship, educational equity initiatives, and recognition for service to large-scale education programmes positions her as an essential voice in translating ethical theory into practical integrity-enhancing interventions. Her normative perspective ensures that the study does not simply diagnose leadership pathology but also articulates a credible pathway toward institutional restoration — a dimension often missing from M&E scholarship.