

# Religious Believes and Ethics: a Global Comparative View

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# Content

1. Religious and non-religious Believes
2. Ethics, its Domains and Methods
3. Three Types of Relations between Believes and Ethics
4. Five Types of Interpretation of Holy Scriptures
5. Common Ethical Values accross Religions
6. Four Examples
  - 6.1 Overcoming Greed
  - 6.2 Overcoming Corruption
  - 6.3 Integrity
  - 6.4 Public Good
7. The Triplets Law, Ethics and Relations

# 1. Religious and Non-religious Believes

## Religious Believes:

- Believe in a transcendent, non-visible reality beyond/in the depth/center of the visible reality (God, Dharma, Tao)
- Unifying energy from beginning to end of the universe, center of all, orientation, root of harmony.

## Non-religious Believes (Ideologies):

- Belief in a main principle or person which orders/structures/unifies the visible world
- Examples: «I believe in the market economy», «... in free trade», «... in the invisible hand» (Adam Smith), «... in our political leader»

## 2. Three Types of Relations between Believes and Ethics

### 1. Separation: Believe $\neq$ Ethics

Faith is the key for salvation, ethics does not matter.  
The spiritual world only counts, not the material (Dualism)

### 2. Unification: Believe = Ethics

What counts is only the ethical behavior.  
Believes are not relevant for behavior.

### 3. Relation: Believe $\propto$ Ethics

Even if only faith matters for salvation (Christian faith in God's grace), ethical behavior is the fruit of faith.  
No good faith if no good behavior.

## 3.1 What is Ethics?

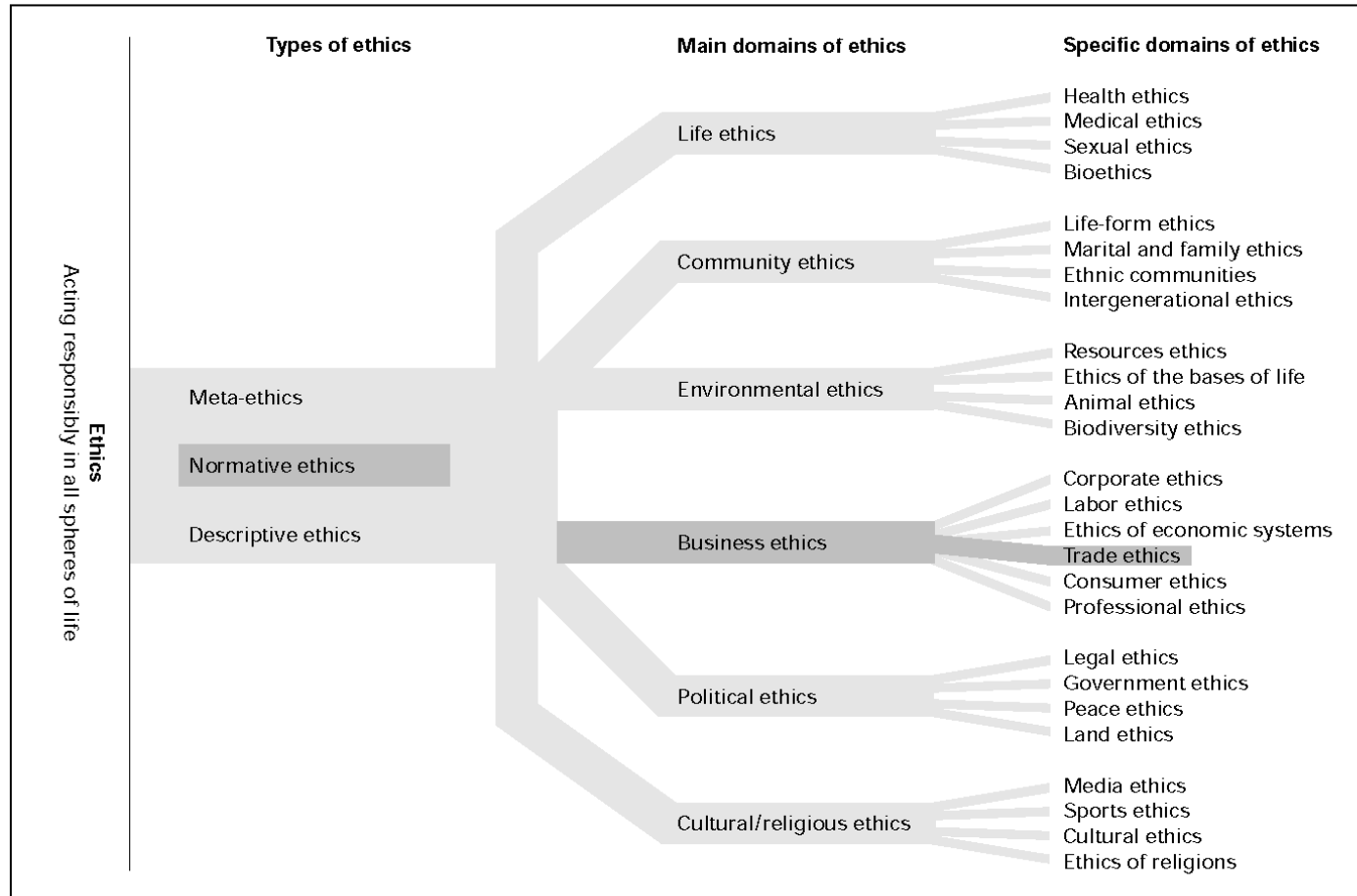
Moral/Morality is the set of traditional and existing values and virtues (personal, in society)

Ethics provides criteria for what is good and bad, right and wrong. It provides principles, values, methodology.

Ethics is also the critical reflection of morality (its confirmation, denial or modification).

Values: long term general benchmarks for ethical orientation of individuals and institutions/society (e.g. freedom, justice).

## 3.2 Ethics Domains and Methods



## 4.1 Major Groups of (World) Religions

**Religions Sorted by age of religion:**

Folk Religions: (regional, pantheist, nature in center)

Dharmaic Religions (Dharma, the ultimate goal of existence as common basis)

- Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism

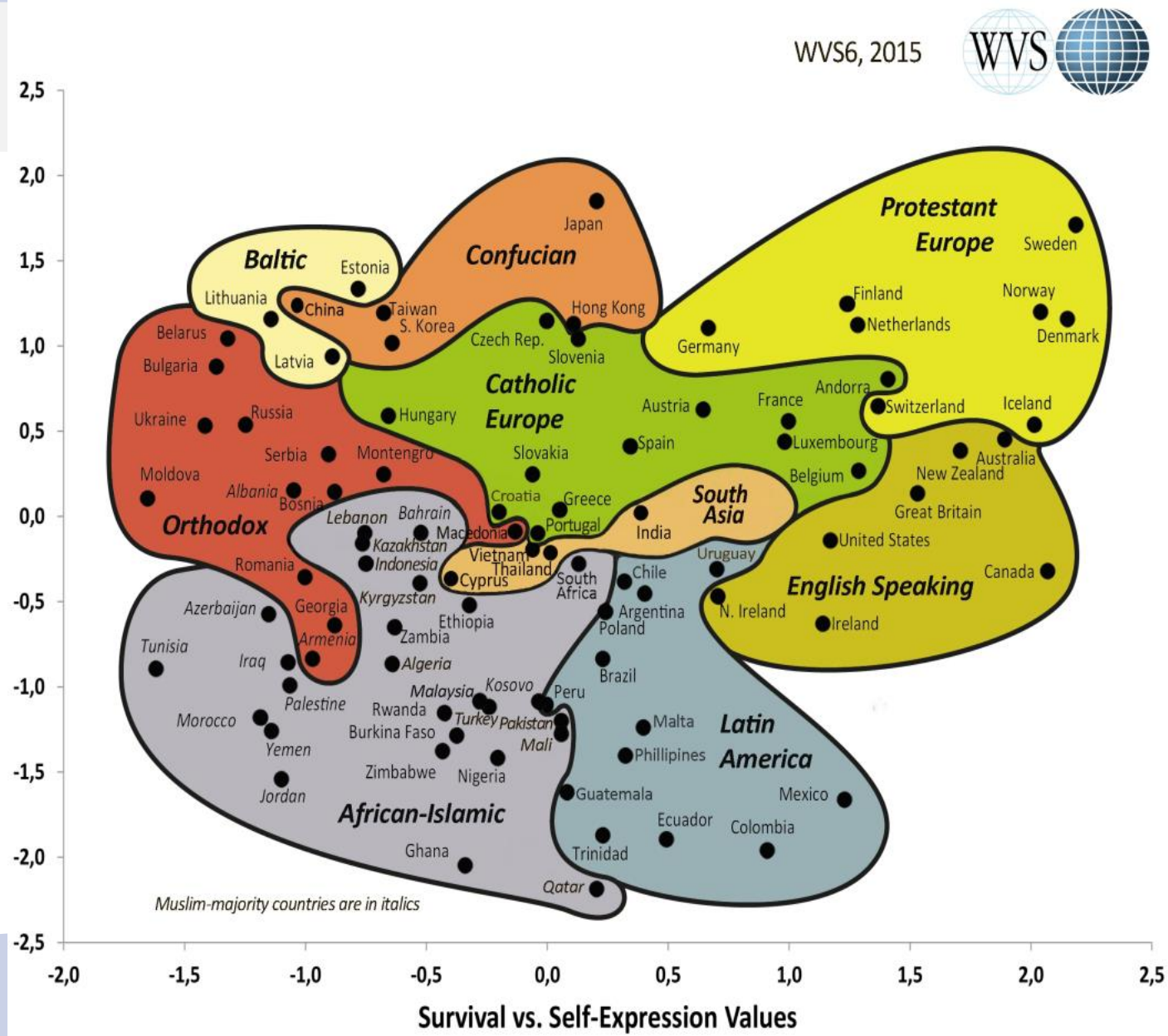
Taoic Religions (Tao, the natural law in universe)

- Taoism, (elements of Confucianism. Confucianism a philosophy, not a religion) (Shintoism)

Abrahamic Religions (Monotheist religions, Abraham as common Patriarch)

- Judaism, Christianity, Islam

## 4.2 Clusters of Cultures of Values





## 4.3 Five Types of Interpretation of Holy Scriptures and its Influence on Ethics

*Hermeneutics (methods of interpretation of Scriptures):*

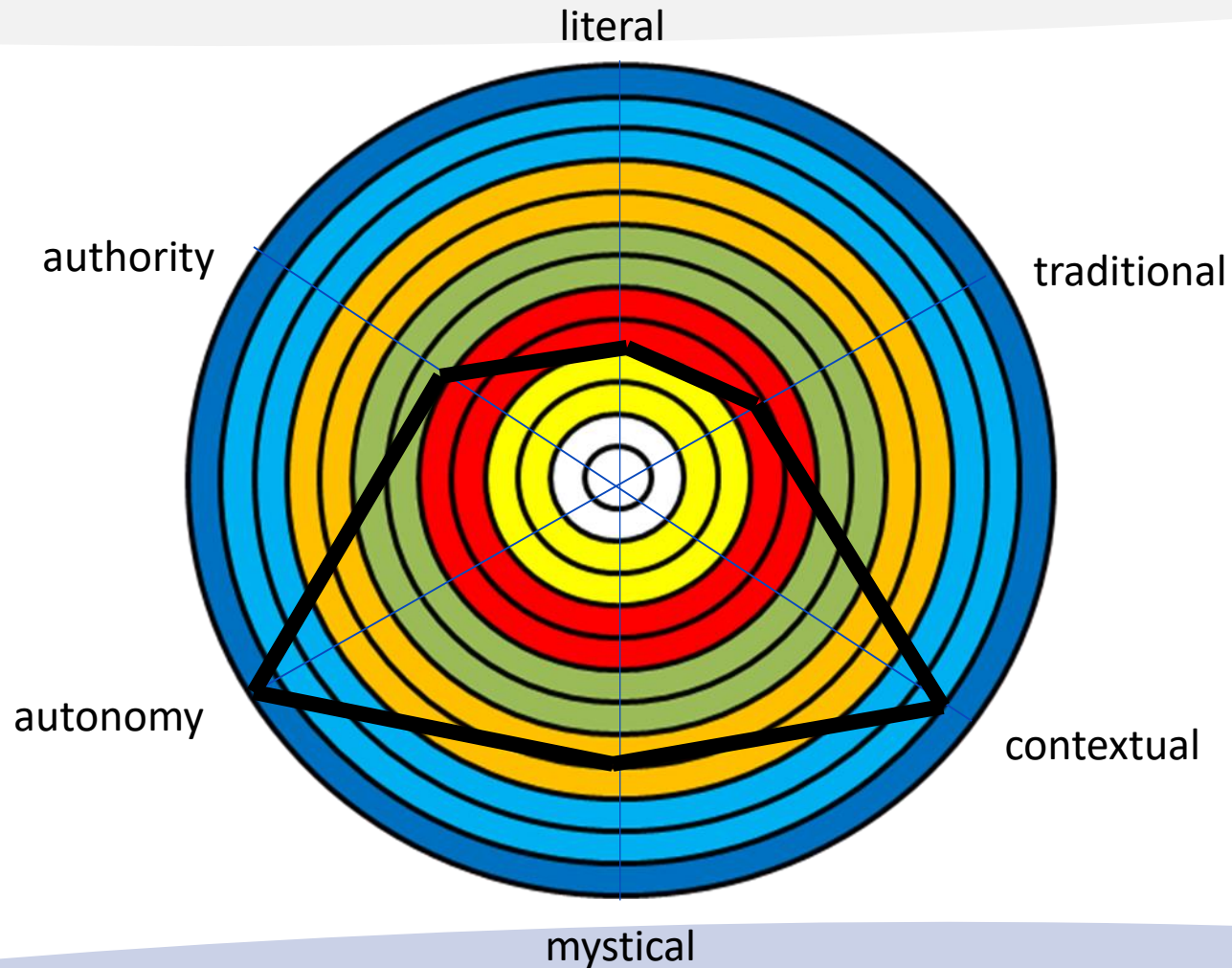
1. Fundamentalist positions:  
scripture: literal (selective) interpretation
2. Orthodox positions  
scripture+tradition, laws of religious authorities
3. Reformist positions  
scripture+contextualisation, inculturation
4. Liberal positions  
scripture+autonomy, individual conscience
5. Mystical positions:  
scripture+spiritual way towards unity with God

## 4.4 Typology: Freedom, Authority, power

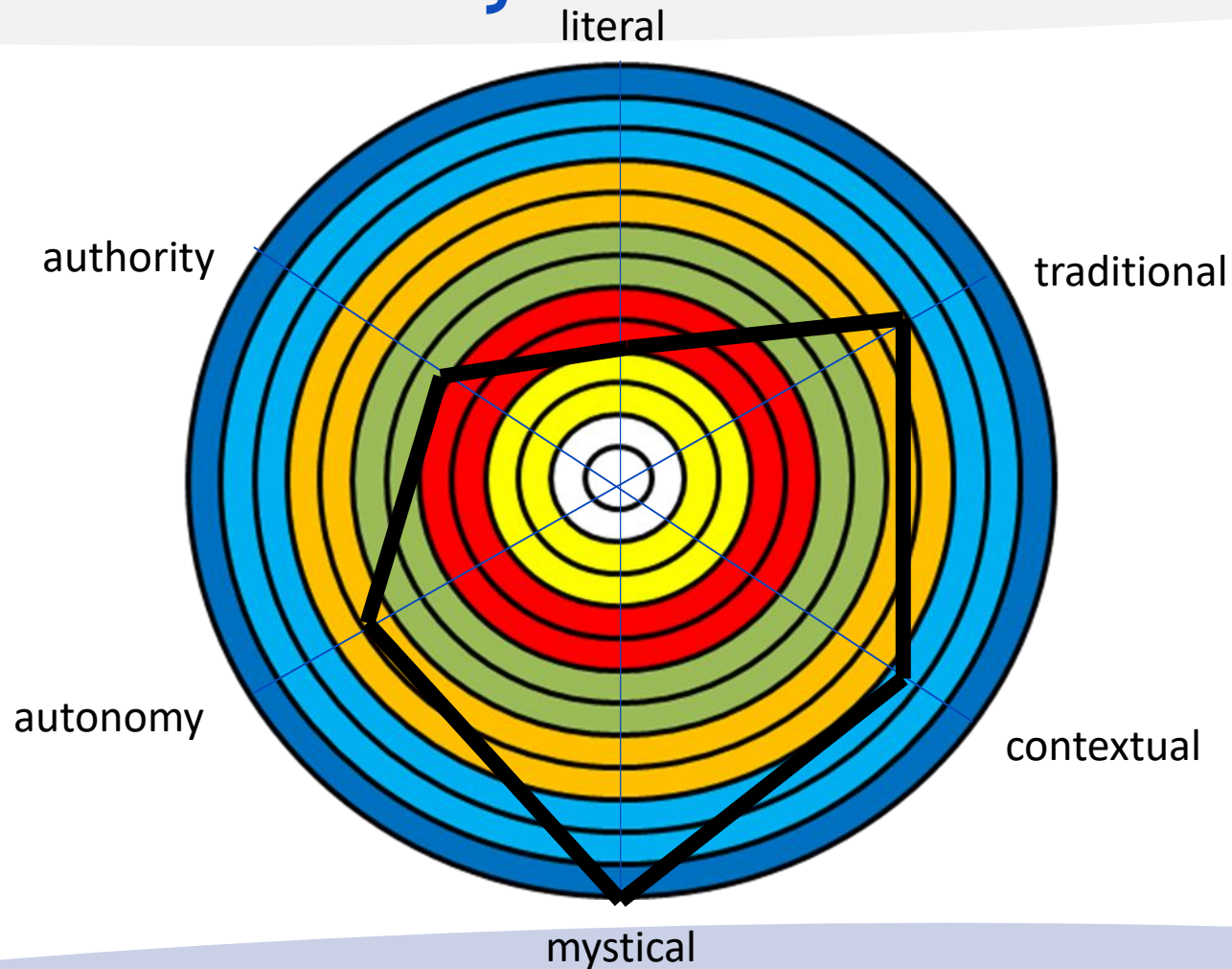
*Individual Conscience*    *versus*    *Institutional Power*  
*God's Spirit for all*    *versus*    *priesthood of a few*  
*Freedom*    *versus*    *Authority*



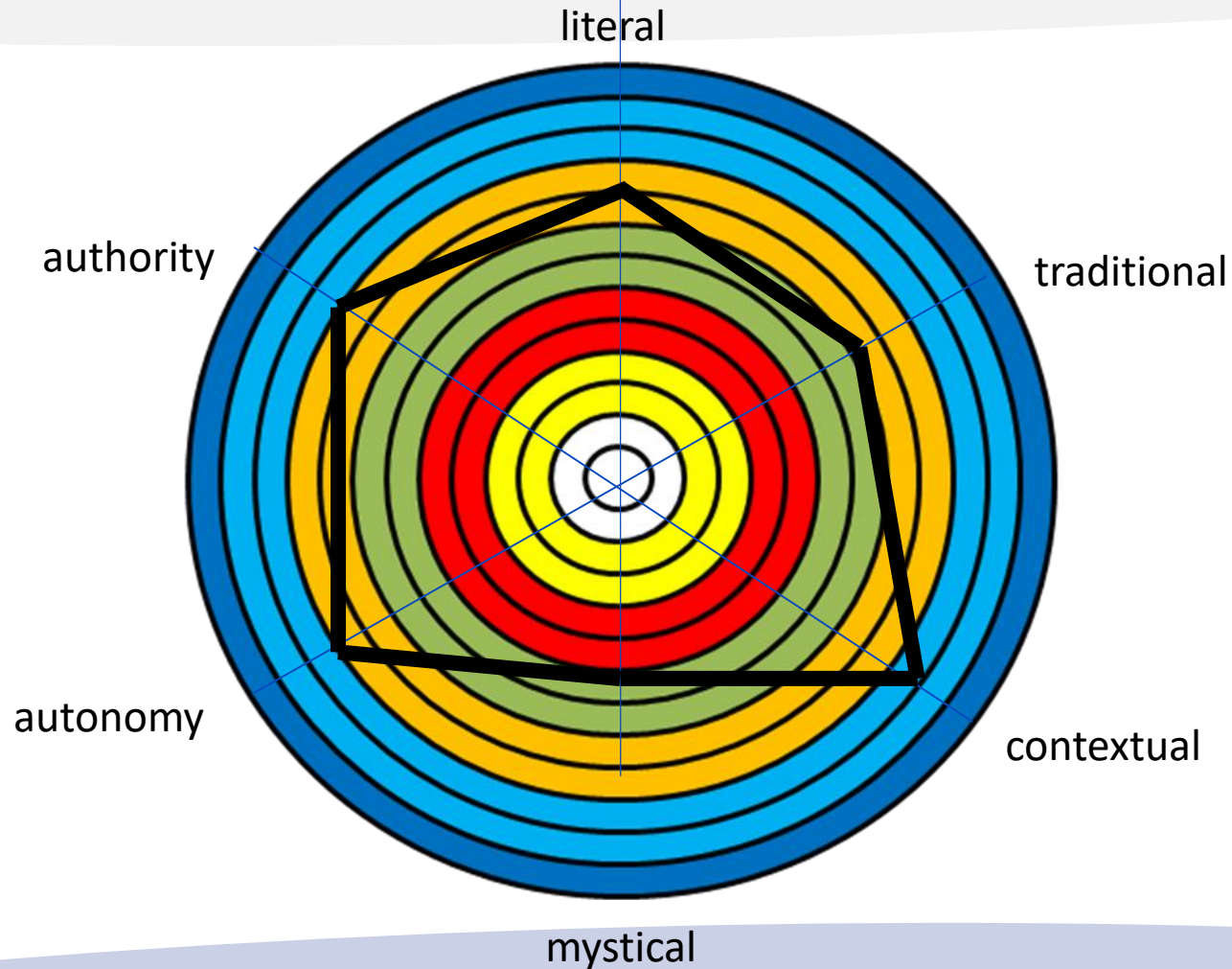
## 4.5a Profile of Liberal Positions



## 4.5b Profile of Mystical Positions

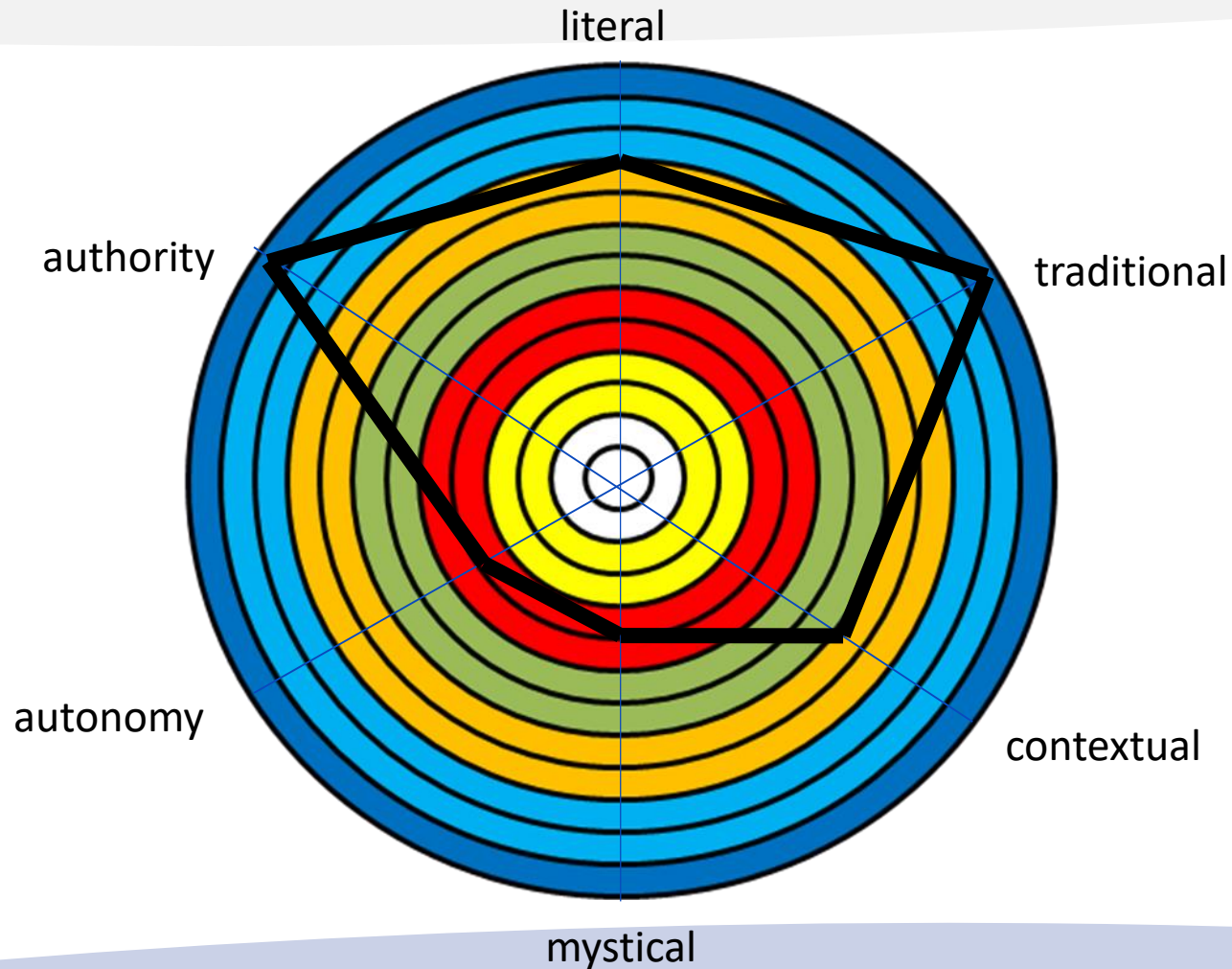


## 4.5c Profile of Reformist Positions

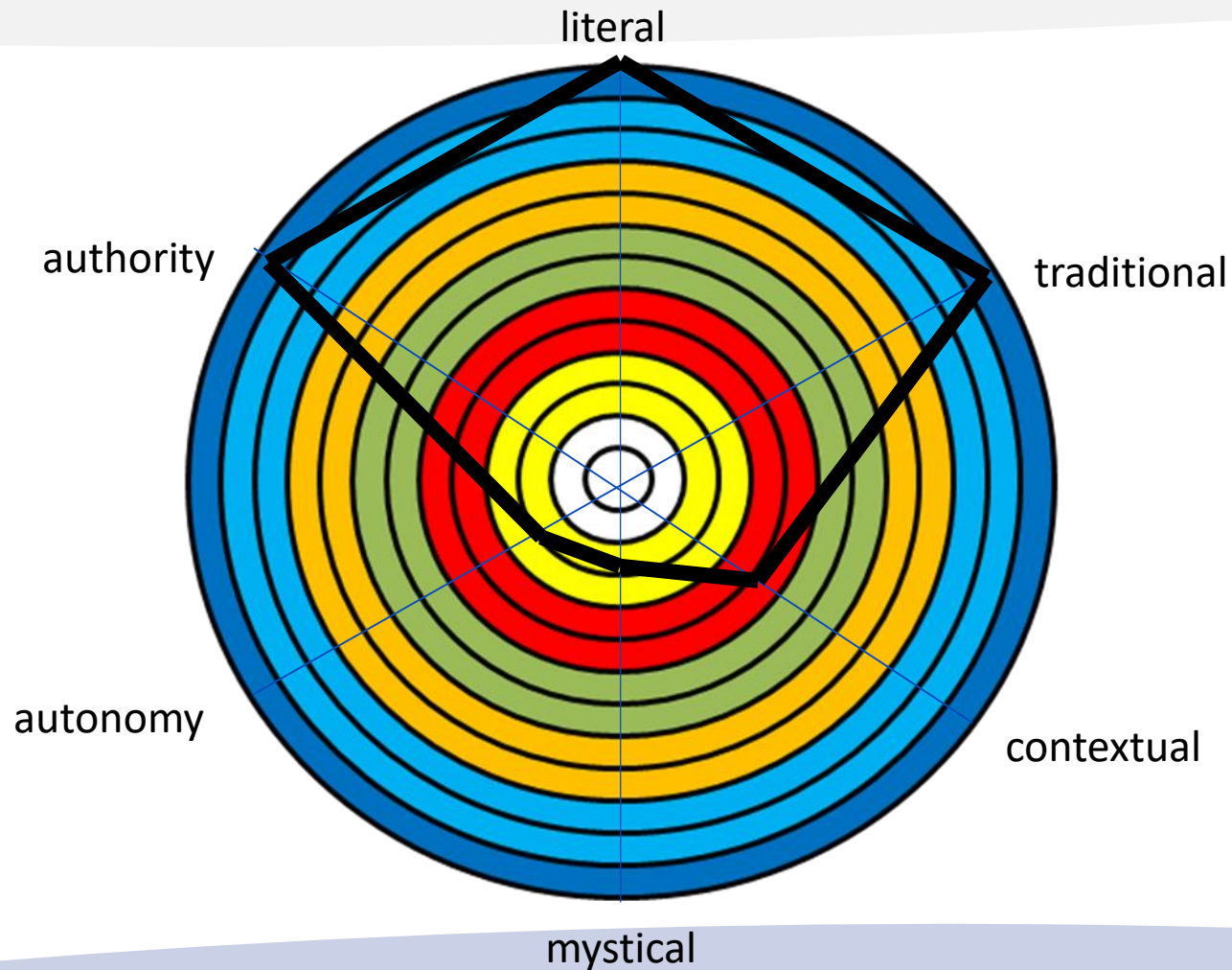




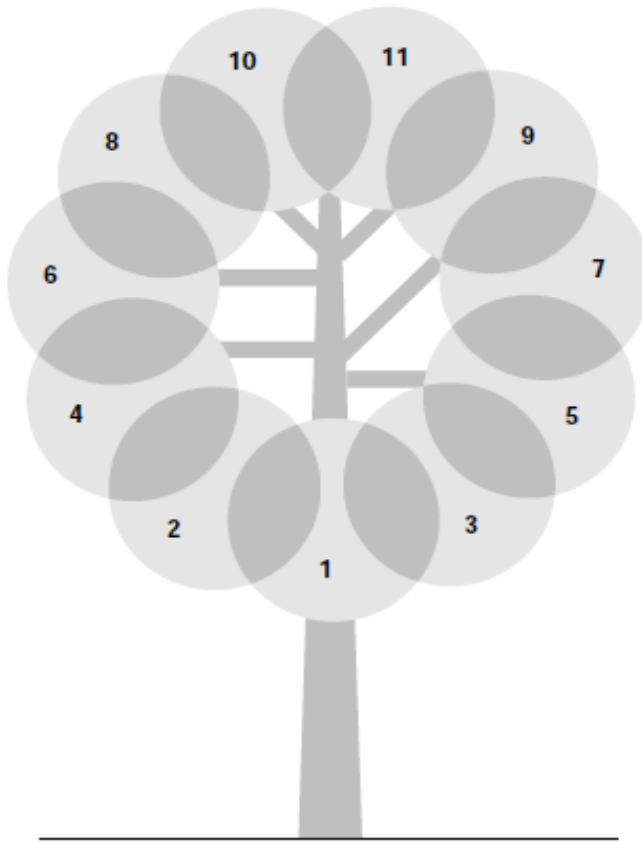
## 4.5d Profile of Orthodox Positions



## 4.5e Profile of Fundamentalist Positions



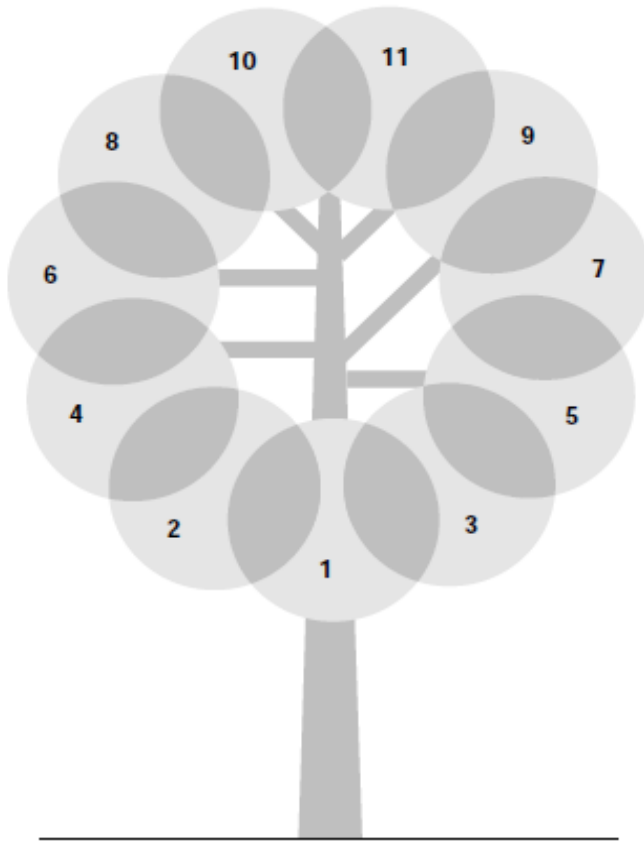
## 5.1 Values for a Global Ethical Culture



1. Dignity
2. Freedom
3. Justice
4. Equity
5. Peace
6. Security
7. Community
8. Inclusiveness
9. Participation
10. Forgiveness
11. Reconciliation



## 5.2 Virtues for a Global Ethical Culture



1. Honesty
2. Compassion
3. Care
4. Transparency
5. Accountability
6. Reliability
7. Respect
8. Humility
9. Courage
10. Gratitude
11. Generosity

## 6.1 Common Value: Overcoming Greed

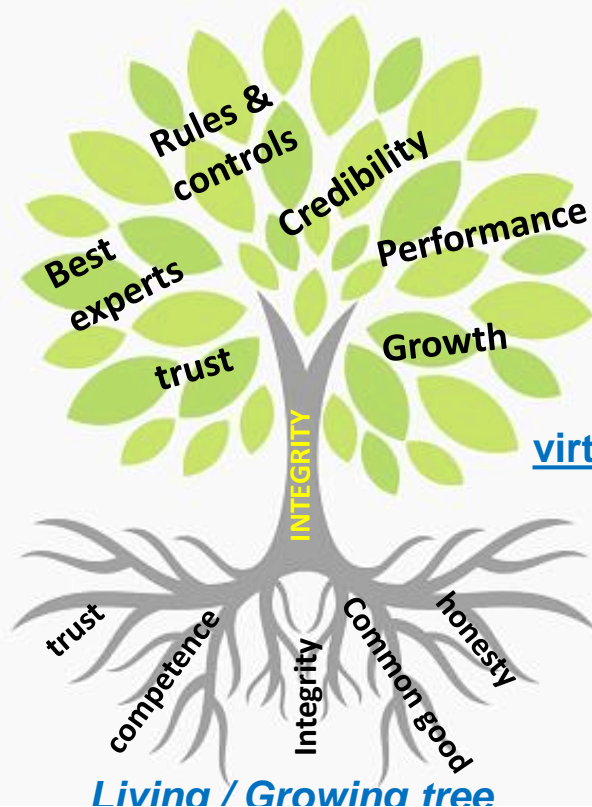
All world religions describe in their holy scriptures greed as a vice to overcome.

Reasons given:

- Greed means self-centeredness
- Greed destroys community
- Greed disables relation to God/Dharma/Tao
- Greed makes unhappy/addictive for more
- Greed destroys environment

## 6.2 Common Value: Integrity

### Integrity Leadership

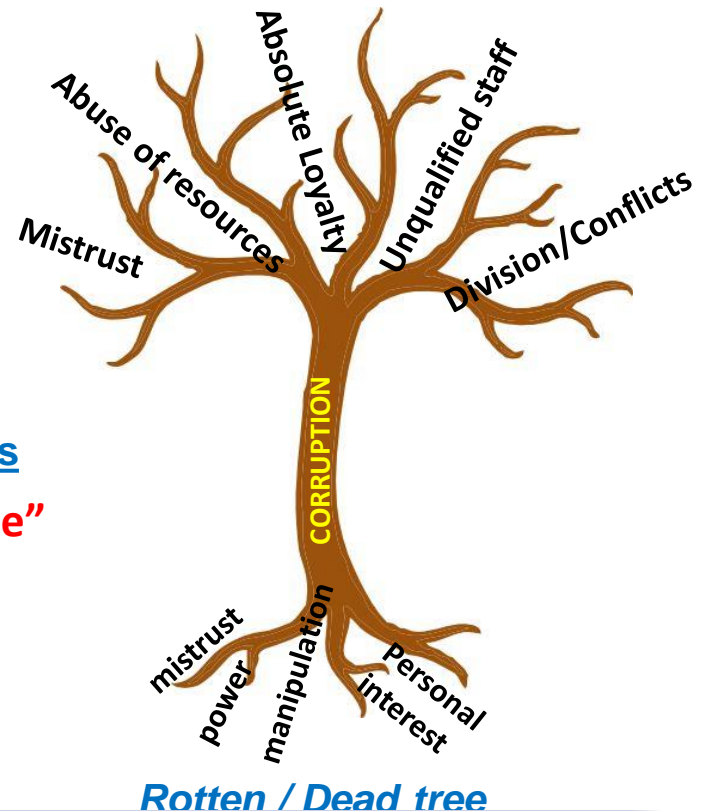


virtues

vices

“we” “me”

### Abuse-of-Power Leadership



**Rotten / Dead tree**

## 6.3 Common Value: Overcoming Corruption

Corruption is unethical because... (Your answers)

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
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## 6.3 Common Value: Overcoming Corruption

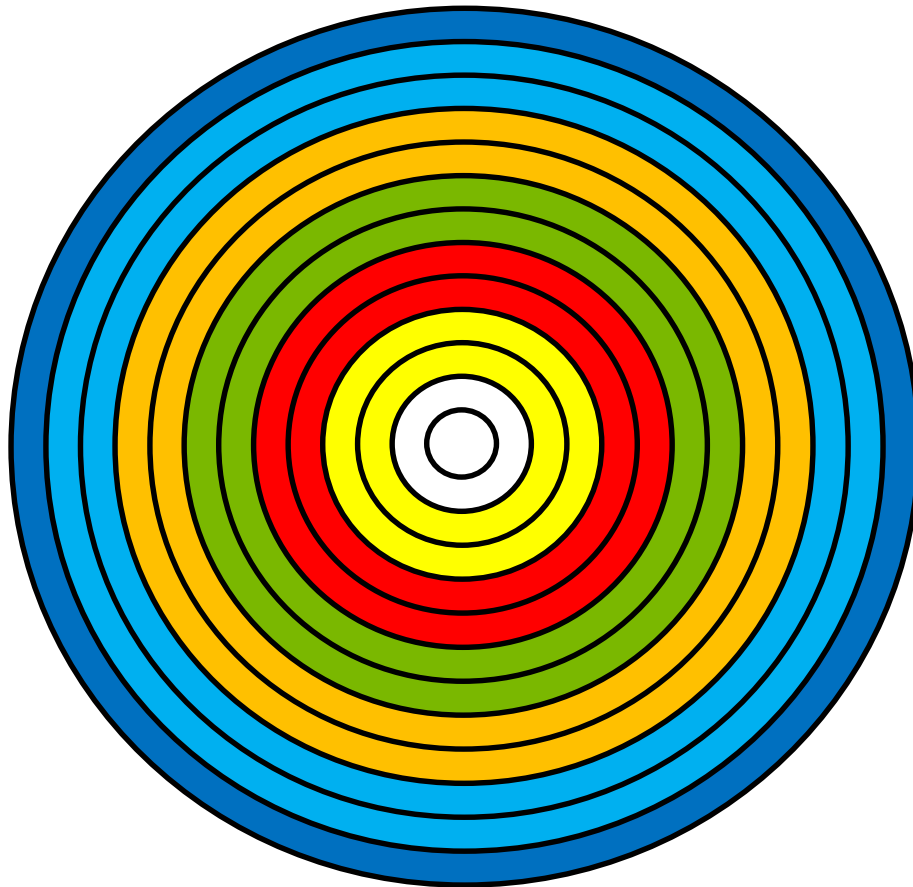
Corruption (the abuse of power for personal interests) is unethical because...

- Community: It undermines trust
- Justice: It is unfair (unequal chances in transactions)
- Transparency: It acts in darkness
- Life: It kills life and increases criminality
- Harmony: It destroys harmonious society
- Wealth: it undermines economic efficiency/performance
- Etc.

## 6.4.1 Value: Community-Orientation

|                |               |              |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1 Common Good  | Global        | Christianity |
| 2 Ubuntu       | Africa        | Traditional  |
| 3 Kyosei       | Japan         | Shintoism    |
| 4 Da Tong 大同   | China         | Confucianism |
| 5 Jew + Yi     | China         | Taoism       |
| 6 Lokasangraha | India         | Hinduism     |
| 7 Cidadania    | Latin America | Political    |

## 6.4.2 Common Good - which community?



White:

1 Myself

2 Inner Family: partner, children

Yellow

3 Broader Family: Clan

4 Professional Community: team

Red

5 Neighbourhood: village, quarter

6 Religious Community: parish/temple

Green

7 Peers: sport, ethnic, interest groups

8 Professional Community: company

Brown

9 Nation: state, peoples,

10 Regions: EU, Asean

Blue

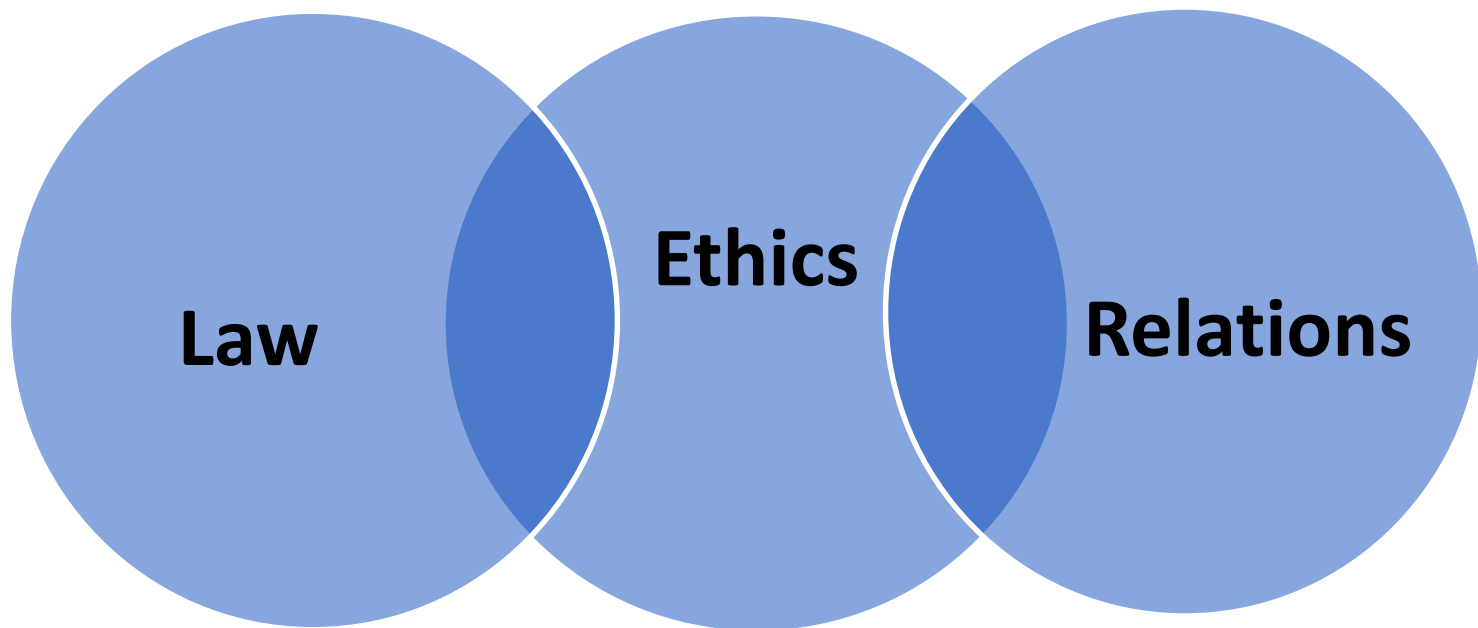
11 All Religions: world spirituality

12 Humankind: all human beings

Dark Blue

13 Biosphere: all living beings

## 7.1 The Triplets: Law, Ethics, Relations



Three types of Decisions:  
Law-driven - Values-driven - Relations-driven



## 7.2 The Triplets: Example Corruption

**Is it allowed to give or take a bribe?**

**Law-driven:** “All is allowed as long as it is not against the law or not sentenced by the court.” -

**Relation-driven:** “All is allowed which helps in good successful business/professional relations.”

**Values-Driven:** My ethics does not allow me to do it, even if it endangers my relations or even if I can escape to be brought to court.

شكراً جداً (Shokran Gidan) merci

thank you teşekkürler ngiyabonga

baie dankie kealeboga

diolch yn fawr धन्यवाद (Danyavad)

謝謝 (xiexie) asante sana

gracias Спасибо (spacibo) danke

grazie adube dalu oshe

nagode dankjewel obrigado/a