



Beyond Right and Wrong

In order to build better partnerships, how are we to balance respect for different cultural practices with our perceptions of social justice?

Richard Harris Ph.D

Virtual Guidelines

If you want to be part of this conversation, please kindly follow these short guidelines.



Good wifi /data connection



Calm environment



Sufficient battery/power



Headphones/earphones



Comfortable seat



Video on



Use mute (when not speaking)



Phones off

Ground rules

PARTICIPATE (or say pass)

Take **RISKS** (appropriate size for you)

CONFIDENTIALITY

CURIOSITY is OK

Speak from your **OWN** experience

Find **VALUE** for self



Schedule

Cultural relativity : a brief outline of the history and development



Multiculturalism (group work)

Contemporary challenges and problems for cultural relativity



Human rights vs cultural rights (group work)

Irreparable physical harm



Irreparable physical harm (group work)

Irreparable psychological harm



BREAK - 10 minutes



Cultural Dilemmas (group work)

Approaches to resolution



Cultural Dilemmas (group work)

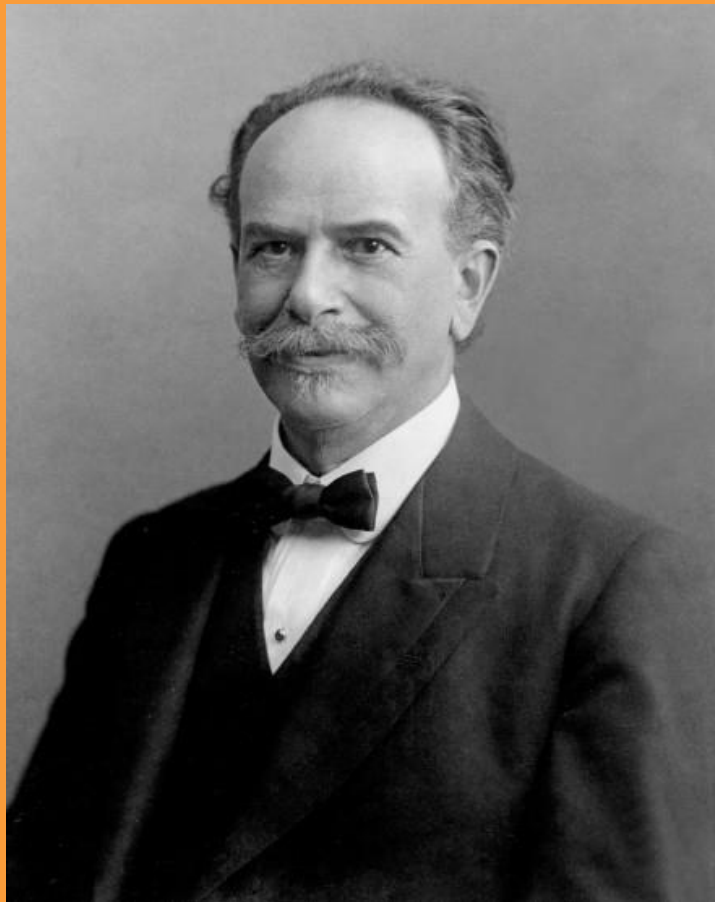
Final discussion - Q&A



Beyond Right and Wrong

Cultural relativity

The idea that cultural beliefs and behaviours can only be evaluated from within that culture, and that any judgment from outside that system must necessarily be influenced by the cultural background of the observer.



Franz Boas
(1858-1942)

**« There is no fundamental difference
in the ways of thinking of primitive
and civilized man. »**

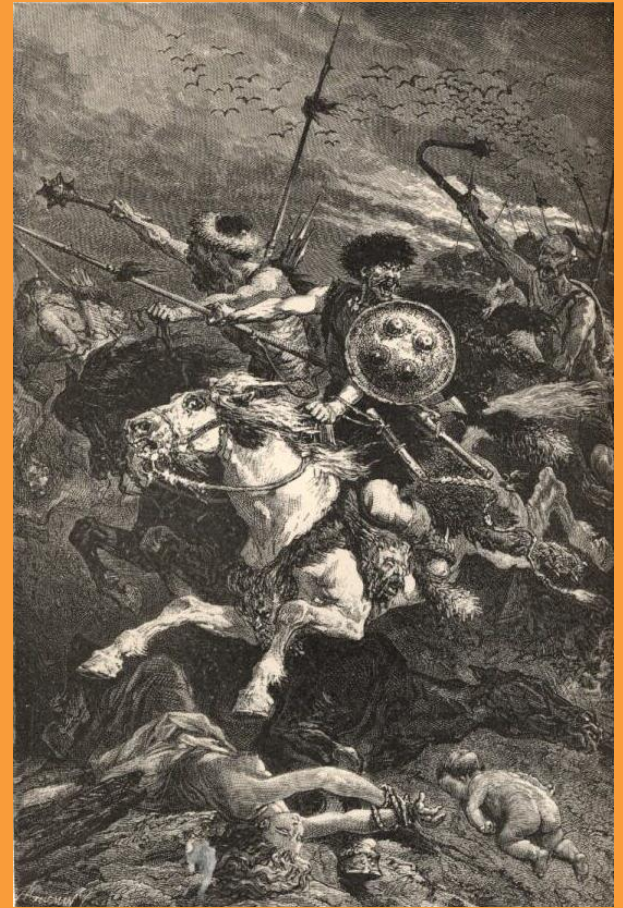
Franz Boas



Savages



Barbarians



Civilised





Ruth Benedict
(1887-1948)



Margaret Mead
(1901-1978)

« An observer will see the bizarre developments of behavior only in alien cultures, not his own. »

Ruth Benedict

« Body Ritual Among the Nacirema »

Horace Mitchell Miner

Multiculturalism



« My dream would be a multicultural society, one that is diverse and where every man, woman and child are treated equally. I dream of a world where all people of all races work together in harmony. »

Nelson Mandela (1993)

Multiculturalism



« This multicultural approach, saying that we simply live side by side and live happily with each other has failed. Utterly failed. »

Angela Merkel (2010)

Multiculturalism

In 2019, Russian president Vladimir Putin told the Financial Times that the ideology of liberalism on which democracy is based has “outlived its purpose.”

Multiculturalism, freedom, and human rights must give way to “ the culture, traditions, and traditional family values of millions of people making up the core population.”



Multiculturalism and Pluralism

MULTICULTURALISM	PLURALISM
Multiculturalism refers to the co-existence of diverse religious, ethnic or cultural groups within a society	Cultural pluralism refers to a phenomenon where minority groups participate fully in the dominant society
There is no dominant culture	There is a dominant culture





Beyond Right and Wrong



Multiculturalism

 Group question in break-out groups

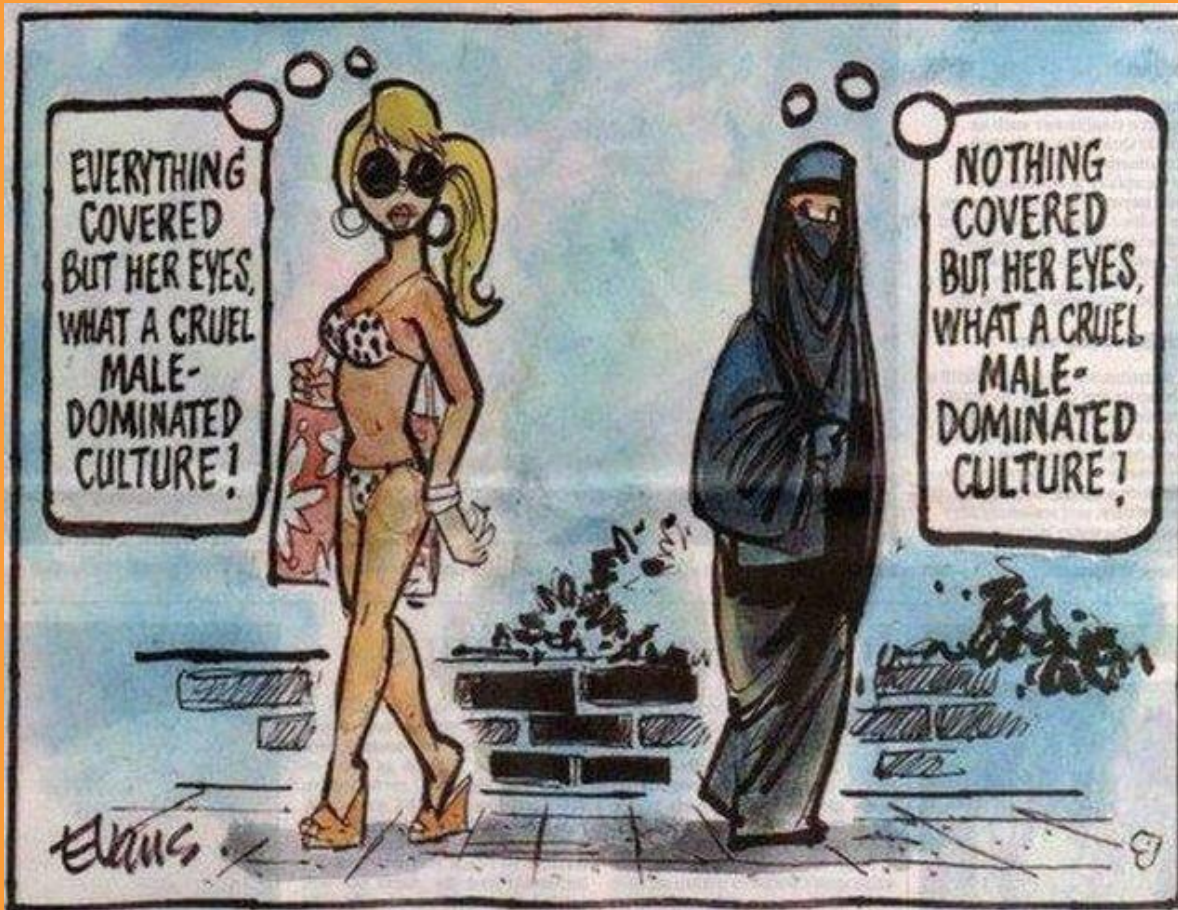
What do you think?

Do you agree that multiculturalism is failing? If so, what might be some of the reasons for this?

Dialogue

« Dialogue starts from the courageous willingness to know and be known by others. It is the painstaking and persistent effort to remove all obstacles that obscure our common humanity.»

Daisaku Ikeda





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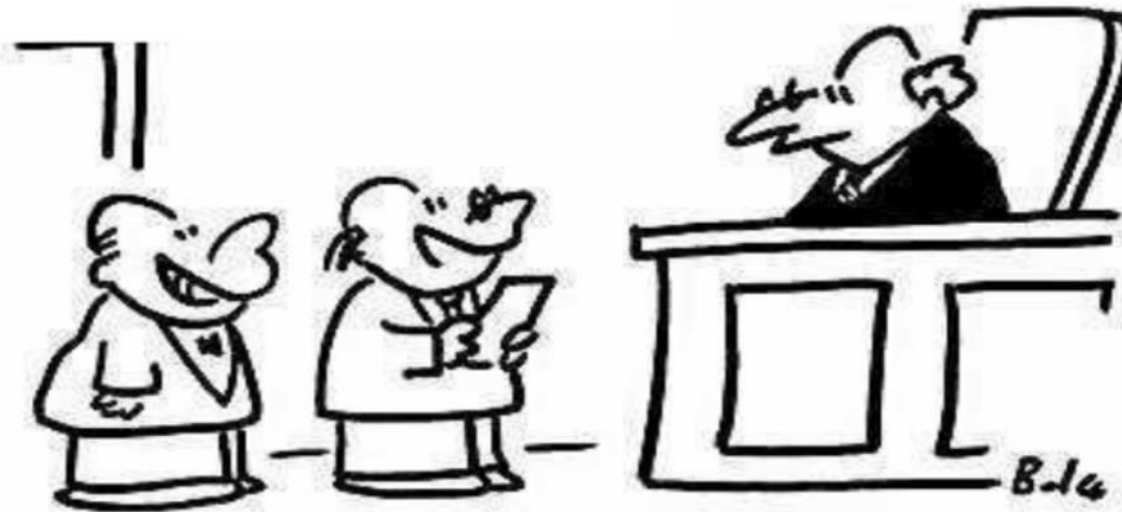
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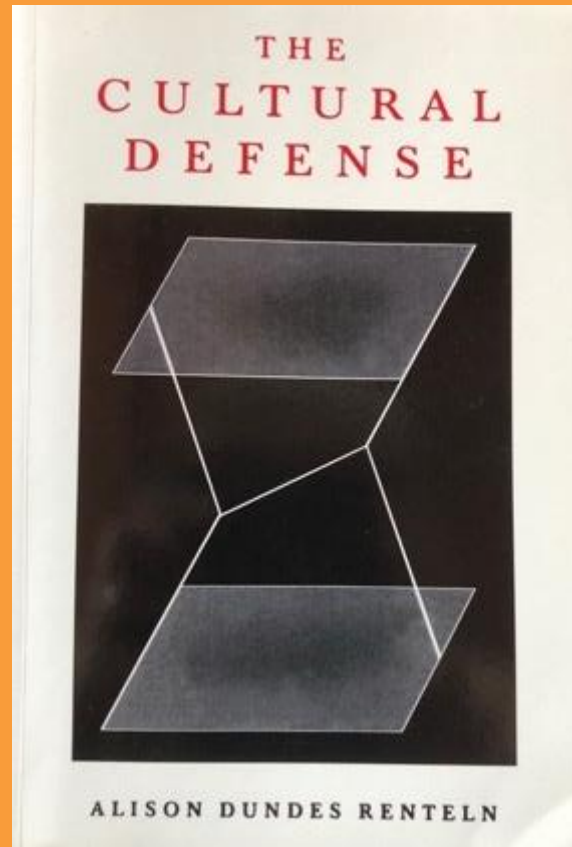
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Beyond Right and Wrong



"Your Honor, my client pleads not guilty by reason of cultural relativism."



Beyond Right and Wrong



« The idea of cultural relativism is nothing but an excuse to violate human rights. »

Shirin Ebadi

Human rights vs cultural rights

 Group question in break-out groups

What do you think?

Do you think that human rights should always take precedence over traditional cultural rights? Any exceptions?

Irreparable *physical* harm

Violence against women

Persecution of sexual minorities

Abuse of minors

Treatment of animals

Irreparable physical harm

Violence against women

Assault

Rape

Domestic violence

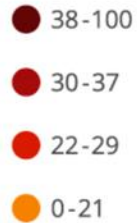




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Many Europeans consider rape acceptable

% agreeing that sexual intercourse without consent is justified in certain situations*



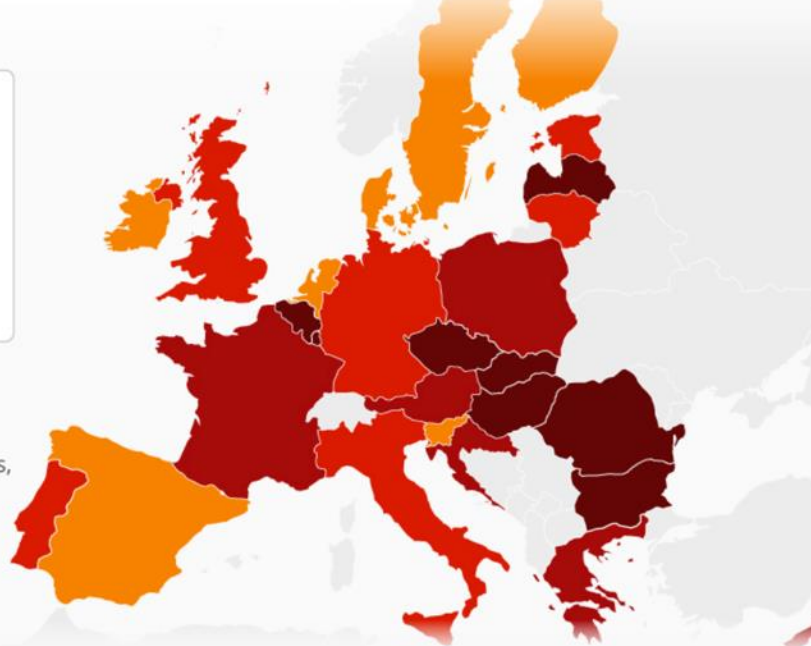
* Multiple answers possible.
Circumstances include a woman being drunk/on drugs, going home with someone, wearing revealing clothes and walking home alone



n=27,818

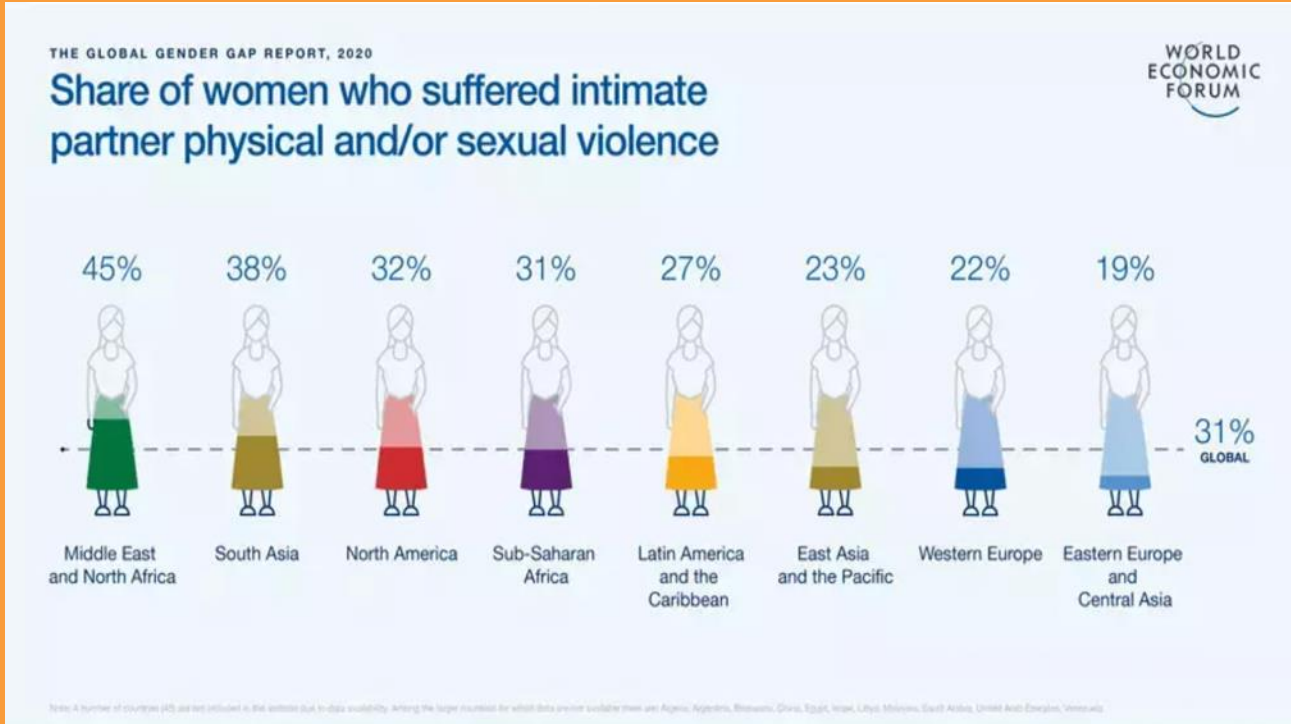
@StatistaCharts

Source: Eurobarometer



statista

Domestic violence



Honor killing

Honor Killings Reported in 26 Countries

Experts say between 5,000 and 20,000 women and girls are killed each year in the name of family honor. Many of the victims are tortured, burned, stoned or strangled. The murders, which often go unpunished, have occurred in at least 26 countries — nine of them Western countries with large immigrant communities, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Germany.

Countries Where Honor Killings Occur



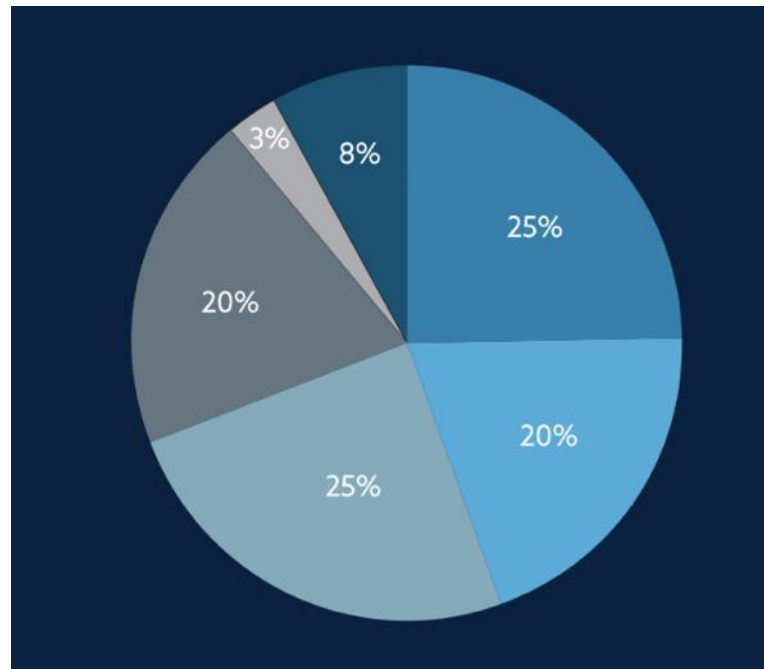
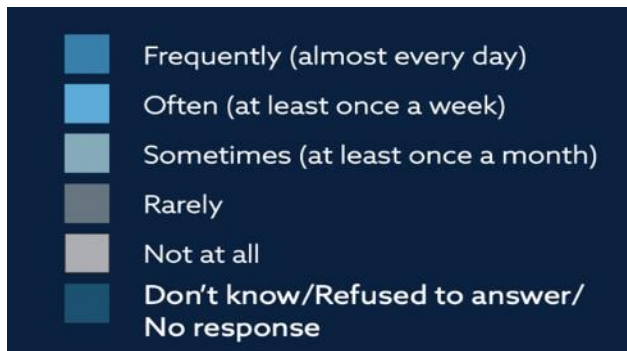
Irreparable physical harm

Persecution of sexual minorities



Irreparable physical harm

How often, if at all, do you face discriminations, violence and harassment because of sexual identity? (Bangla Desh)



Source: International Republican Institute

Irreparable physical harm

Discrimination and Persecution

- 74 countries criminalize same-sex relations and in 13 it is punishable by death
- 17 countries ban “propaganda” promoting sexual minority rights or identities
- Homophobic/transphobic acts include
 - Discrimination in housing, employment, education
 - Verbal harassment, threats of violence, blackmail
 - Targeted physical and sexual violence, including “corrective rape” (of lesbians) and murder
- Perpetrators include family, community, religious leaders, teachers, government authorities and non-state actors, such as gangs or rebel groups

Source: HIAS



SEXUAL ORIENTATION LAWS IN THE WORLD - OVERVIEW

ILGA, THE INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND INTERSEX ASSOCIATION

MAY 2017
ILGA.ORG



CRIMINALISATION

72 STATES

- Implemented in 8 States (or parts of) 14 Y - life (prison) 14 States
- not implemented in 5 States Up to 14 Y 57 States
- Religious-based laws alongside the civil code: 19 States 'Promotion' laws 3 States
- No penalising law

In green, yellow and orange countries, same-sex sexual acts were decriminalised or never penalised: 123 States

PROTECTION

85 STATES

Many States run concurrent protections

- Constitution 9 States
- Employment 72 States
- Various 63 States
- Hate crime 43 States
- Incitement to hate 39 States
- Ban on 'conversion therapy' 3 states

RECOGNITION

47 STATES

A small number of States provide for marriage and partnership concurrently

- Marriage 24 States
- Partnership 28 States
- Joint adoption 26 States
- 2nd parent adoption 27 States

Separate detailed maps for these three categories are produced alongside this Overview map.

The data represented in these maps are based on State-Sponsored Homophobia: a World Survey of Sexual Orientation Laws: Criminalisation, Protection and Recognition, an ILGA report by Aengus Carroll and Lucas Ramón Mendos. The report and these maps are available in the six official UN languages: English, Chinese, Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish on ILGA.org. This edition of the world map (May 2017) was coordinated by Aengus Carroll and Lucas Ramón Mendos (ILGA), and designed by Estuardo Enoki (estuardo.enoki@gmail.com).

Irreparable physical harm

Abuse of minors

Scarification

Female genital cutting

Child marriage

Trafficking

Child labour





Beyond Right and Wrong

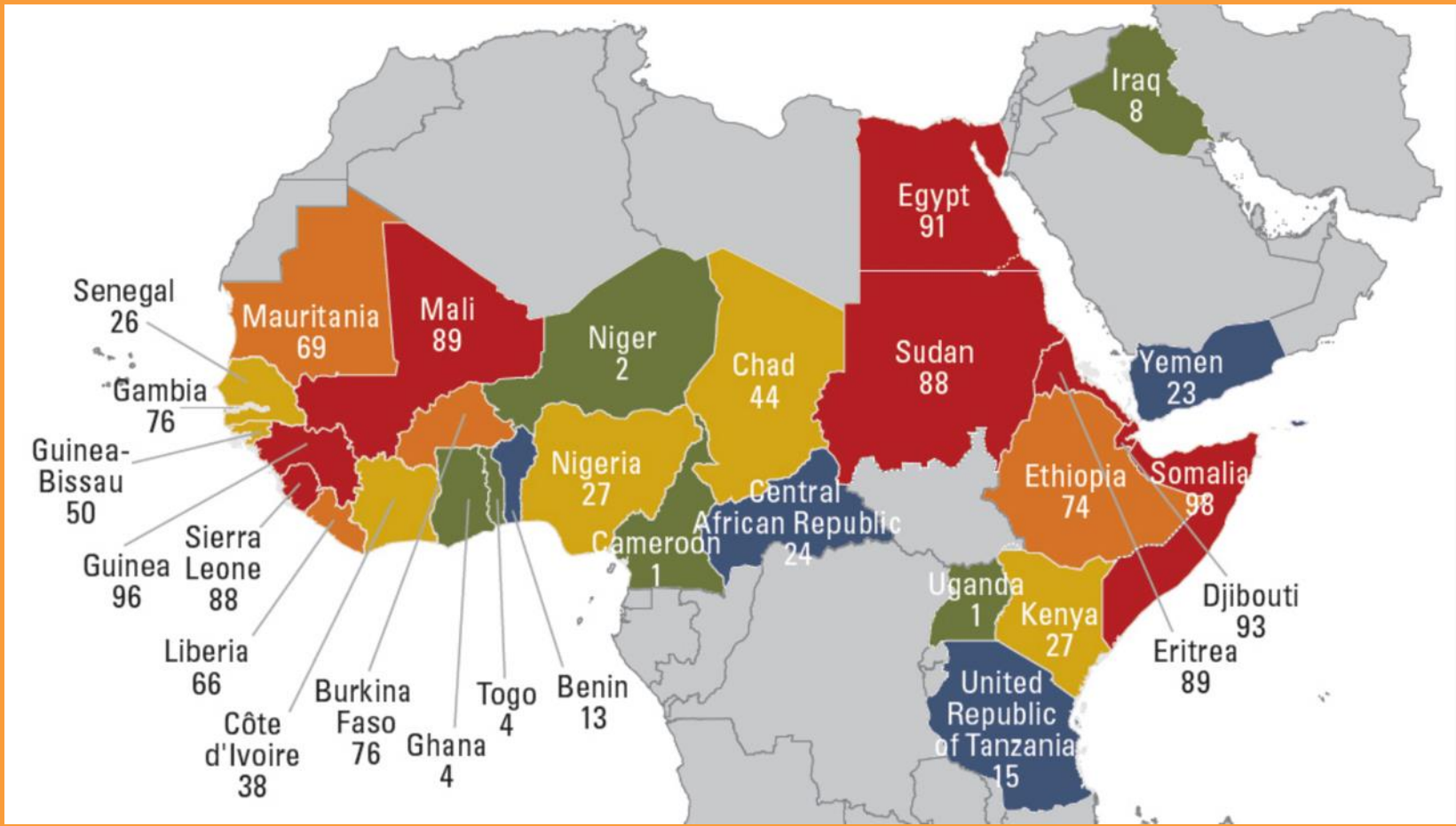


Beyond Right and Wrong

Facial scars by Iestyn Flye + As seen on BME.com



Beyond Right and Wrong



Source: WHO



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© Stephanie Sinclair/ VII / tooyoungtowed.org

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HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

1 IN 14 GIRLS ARE MARRIED BEFORE THEIR 15TH BIRTHDAYS.

Child trafficking



Irreparable physical harm

Child prostitution

« There are over one million child prostitutes across the globe. It is estimated that there are 20 000 under-age prostitutes in Thailand, 575 000 in India, and 500 000 in Brazil.

Theoretically, universal human rights must take precedence over any demand for cultural rights. In practice, however, the actual enforcement of human rights laws that conflict with other cultural values and practices can be more messy and complex than it is often conceptualised. Essentially, universal human rights accommodate, recognise and promote cultural rights; however, the latter ends at a point where its observance is likely to result in the violation of the fundamental human rights of others. »

Joseph Yaw Asomah

Child trafficking



Child labour

Estimates point to about **168 million children being forced into labor around the world.**

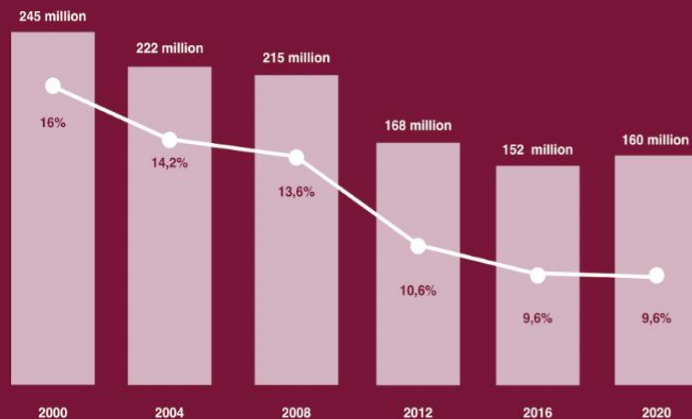
With more than 50% of those children doing hazardous work. Hazardous work is anything that damages the child's physical wellbeing, psychological state, or social wellbeing



Child labour

Child labour has risen by 8.4 million to 160 million since 2016

Percentage and absolute number of children in child labour, 5–17 years age range, 2000 to 2020



International
Labour
Organization



for every child

Irreparable physical harm

Treatment of animals

Hunting

Exploitation

Sacrifice

Dietary practices

Pets



Entertainment



Livestock



Wild animals





Beyond Right and Wrong



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« Jews and Muslims in Belgium could face difficulty finding food prepared according to their religious rules, as new animal slaughter regulations banning kosher or halal slaughter began to take effect Jan. 1 »

Brussels, Belgium, Jan 8, 2019 / 03/19pm (CAN/EWTN News)



Irreparable physical harm

 Group question in break-out groups

What do you think?

What are your views on the issues raised above? Are there any areas of particular interest to you?

Irreparable *psychological* harm?



« Give me four years to teach
the children and the seed I
have sown will never be
uprooted. »

Vladimir Lenin

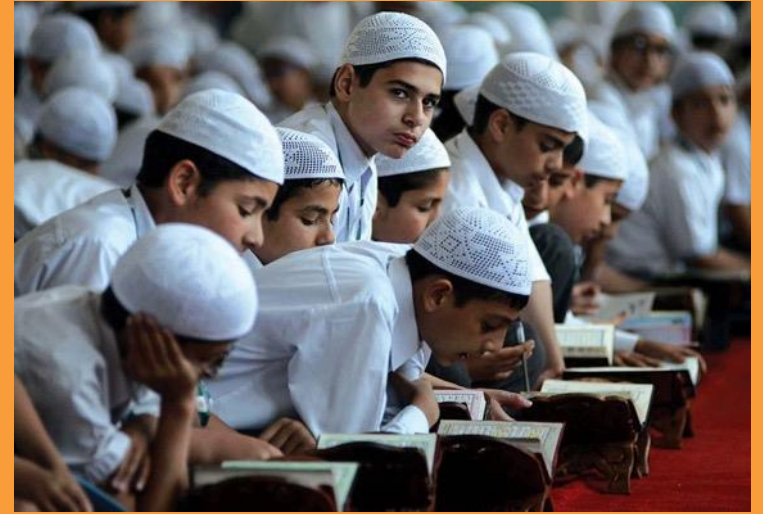
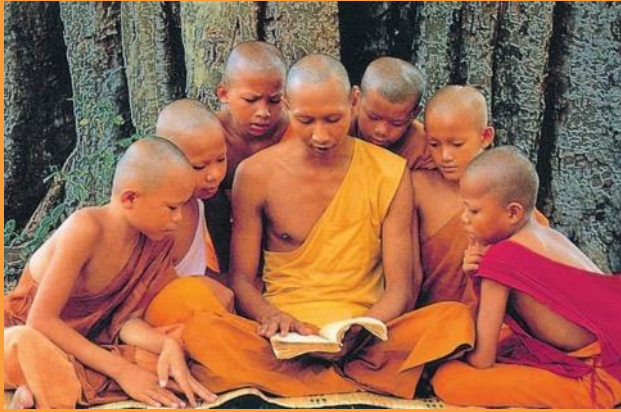


credit, Saint Agnes School, St. Paul, MN





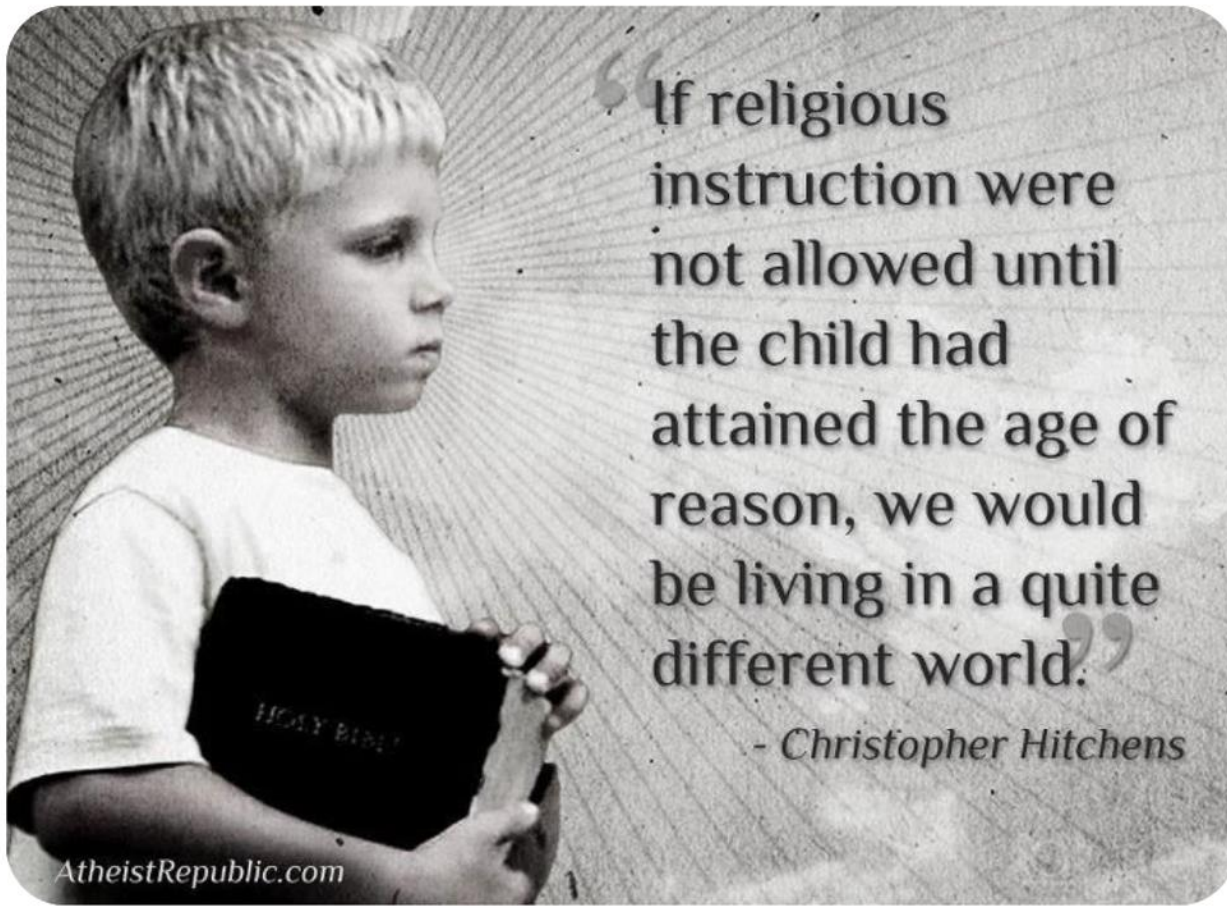
Beyond Right and Wrong



Beyond Right and Wrong

When Your Child
Doesn't Fit the
**“Mormon
Mold”**





« We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. »

Elie Wiesel

Cultural dilemmas

 Group question in break out groups

Discuss the **dilemmas** on the next slide.

Share :

How do you feel about each situation?

What might you do?

Cultural dilemmas:

What do you feel about this? What might you do?

1. You are working in a village where child labour has been a traditional social norm, as well as an important source of income for many families. One family you know wants their child to go to school but fears criticism from the community if he or she does not work.
2. You are walking through a town in a foreign land when you see a crowd of people laughing and singing, carrying a girl of about 8, dressed in beautiful traditional costume, on an elaborate chair. On enquiry, you learn that she is being escorted to her wedding to another 8-year-old, and you are invited to the ceremony.
3. You are staying with a family in a foreign country when one morning you find them dragging their young daughter, screaming and crying, out of the house. You are told that she is to 'become a woman' that day by having her genitals cut, and they invite you to the ceremony.

Cognitive and ethical development

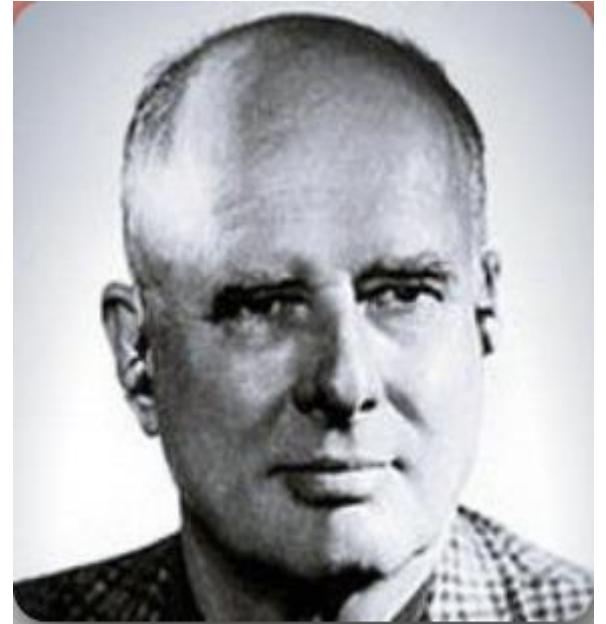
William Perry

Dualist thinking

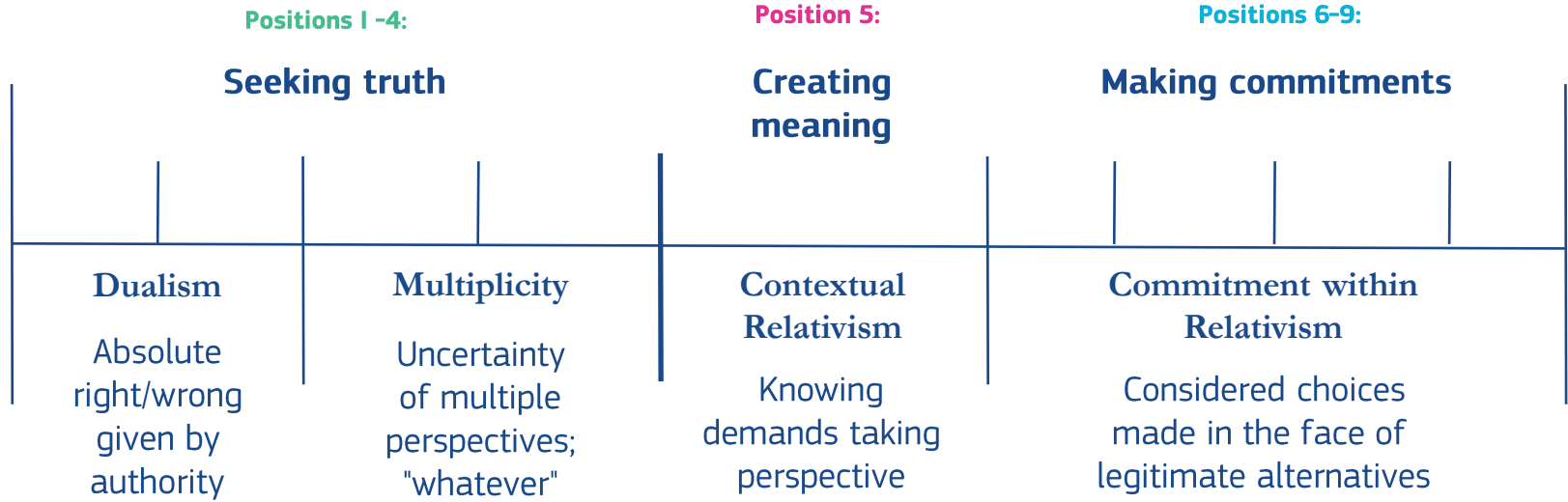
Multiple perspectives

Contextual relativity

Committed relativity



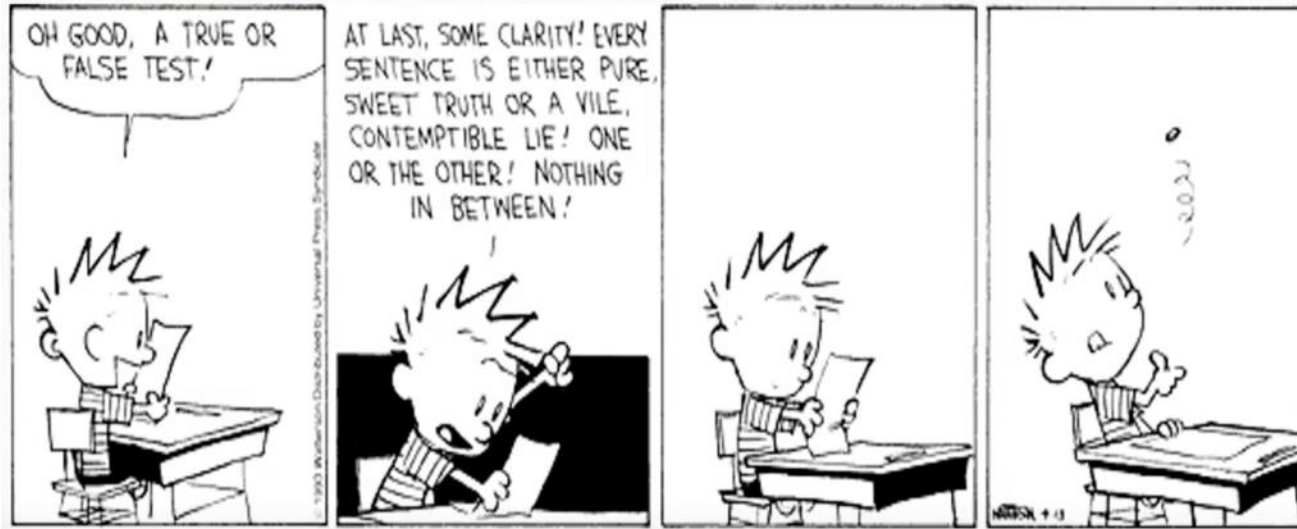
The Perry scheme of ethical development



Perry, W. (1970,1998) Forms of Cognitive & Ethical Development in the College Years; Knefelkamp,L. « Introduction»; Moore, W. Overview of the Perry Scheme

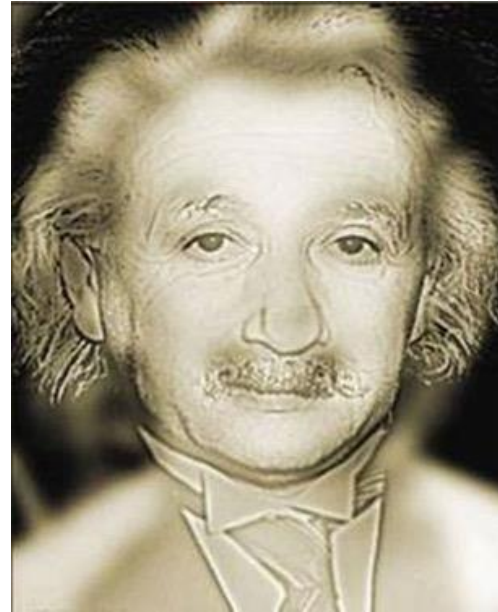
Dualist thinking

There is one true answer, given by an authority figure such as a parent, a teacher, an institution or a religious leader.



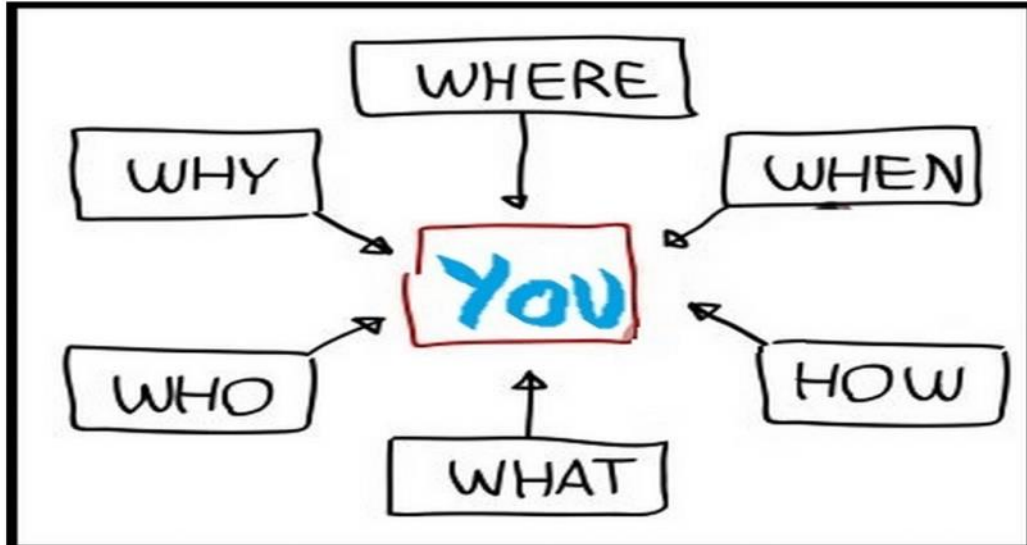
Multiple perspectives

Different authorities may have different answers as to what is true, so all opinions are equally valid.



MIT optical illusion

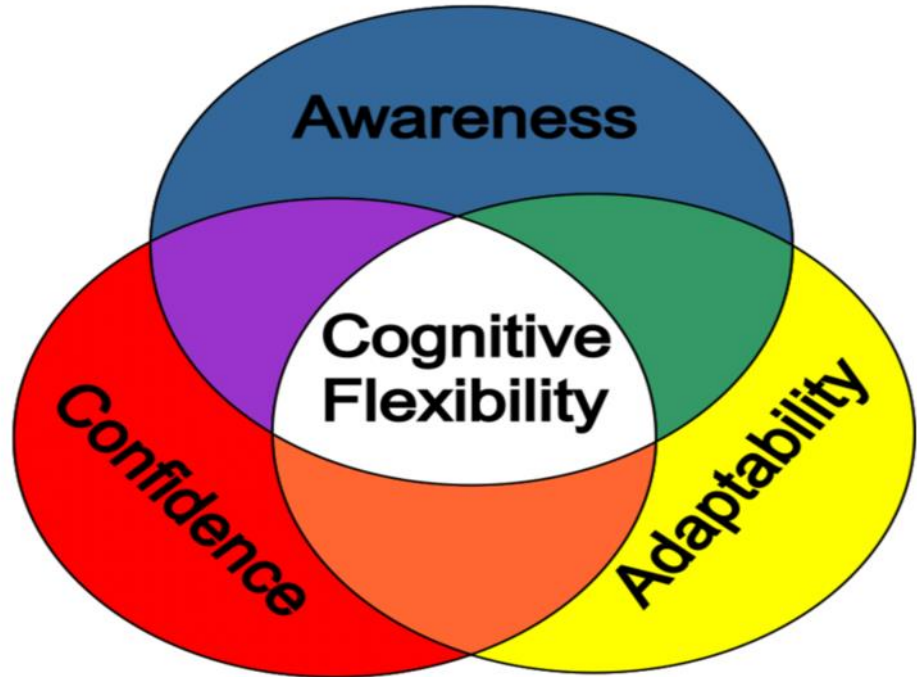
Contextual relativity



Truth can only be approached by considering all aspects of a situation in context.

Committed relativity

Different situations require a strong commitment to cognitive flexibility and constant learning: a willingness to question assumptions and form new conclusions.





« Cultural relativity is actually a moral theory that gives a central place to one value: *tolerance*. »

Henry Bagish

Our Asian Culture

Lee Kuan Yew visit
chong pang 1966

"Only when we first know our traditional values can we be quite clear the Western world is a different system, a different voltage, structured for purposes different from ours."

Speech at the Singapore Teachers Union's 26th Anniversary Dinner Held at Shangri-la Hotel (5 Nov 1972)

Source: www.SGHardTruth.com

Cultural values

United States

1. Freedom
2. Independence
3. Self-reliance
4. Equality
5. Individualism
6. Competition
7. Efficiency
8. Time
9. Directness
10. Openness

Japan

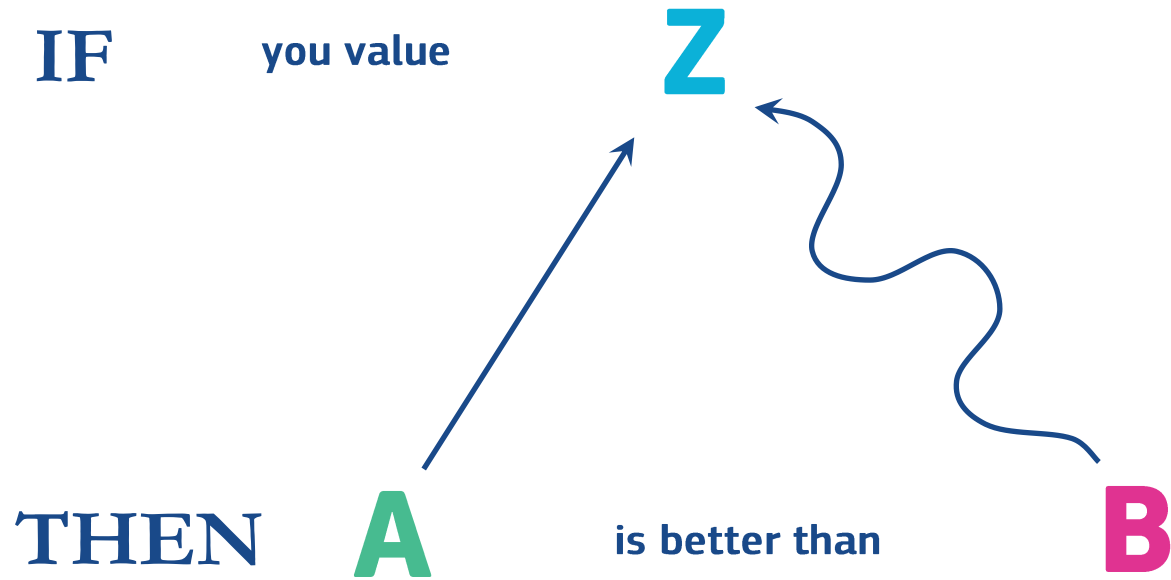
1. Belonging
2. Group harmony
3. Collectiveness
4. Age/seniority
5. Group consensus
6. Cooperation
7. Quality
8. Patience
9. Indirectness
10. Go-between

Arab Countries

1. Family security
2. Family harmony
3. Parental guidance
4. Age
5. Authority
6. Compromise
7. Devotion
8. Patience
9. Indirectness
10. Hospitality

E.U. Values





Henry Bagish, (1990) « Confessions of a Former Cultural Relativist »
in Elvio Angeloni (ed.), Anthropology 90/91. pp. 30-37

« Robust civility »

Timothy Garton Ash

Civil responsibility

To be **curious**

To be **informed**

To be **engaged**

Education

The utility of any cultural system lies in its ability to uplift the lives of its people. Societies that are full of superstitions, religious indoctrination, lack of proper education and nationalistic in outlook are usually ridden with poverty.

Education ensures that the pathway to knowledge is not blocked by allowing entrance of all ideas and theories, and hence making it imperative to remain open to new facts and competing perspectives. Education also ensures that debates are more discerning.

Nsama Jonathan Simuziya (2021)



« All opinions are not equal. Some are a very great deal more robust, sophisticated and well supported in logic and argument than others. »

Douglas Adams

Cultural dilemmas

 Group question – break out groups

Now return to the dilemmas you discussed earlier and talk about them in the light of the approaches presented here.

What stage in the Perry scheme did your initial reaction seem to fit?
What might you do differently in the future?
What more would you want to know?

Cultural dilemmas:

1. You are working in a village where child labour has been a traditional social norm, as well as an important source of income for many families. One family you know wants their child to go to school but fears criticism from the community if he or she does not work.
2. You are walking through a town in a foreign land when you see a crowd of people laughing and singing, carrying a girl of about 8, dressed in beautiful traditional costume, on an elaborate chair. On enquiry, you learn that she is being escorted to her wedding to another 8-year-old, and you are invited to the ceremony.
3. You are staying with a family in a foreign country when one morning you find them dragging their young daughter, screaming and crying, out of the house. You are told that she is to 'become a woman' that day by having her genitals cut, and they invite you to the ceremony.

Cultural dilemmas:

1. You are working in a village where child labour has been a traditional social norm, as well as an important source of income for many families. One family you know wants their child to go to school but fears criticism from the community if he or she does not work.

What if the child wants to work with his or her friends, and not go to school?

2. You are walking through a town in a foreign land when you see a crowd of people laughing and singing, carrying a girl of about 8, dressed in beautiful traditional costume, on an elaborate chair. On enquiry, you learn that she is being escorted to her wedding to another 8-year-old, and you are invited to the ceremony. What if the bridegroom were in his 50s?

3. You are staying with a family in a foreign country when one morning you find them dragging their young daughter, screaming and crying, out of the house. You are told that she is to 'become a woman' that day by having her genitals cut, and they invite you to the ceremony. What if it were a young Jewish boy being taken to his *bris*?

You've participated to

Beyond Right and Wrong

In order to build better partnerships, how are we
to balance respect for different cultural practices
with our perceptions of social justice?

Richard Harris Ph.D



Thank you!

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