

## **Corruption as part of National Culture: The disconnect between values, ethics and etiquette.**

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*National culture can influence how actions may be construed as corrupt or not corrupt, due to differences in perceptions and etiquette. This is consistent with Hofstede (1991) who distinguishes between cultural values and cultural practices, suggesting that national cultural differences can be identified according to values and, to a minor extent, variations in practices. Maingot (1994) stated that acts of corruption may be influenced by cultures and cultural value systems that may endorse, rather than condemn, such activities and because of the existing social structures of some nations, there may exist a propensity to resort to corrupt practices to achieve socially approved goals (cited in Beets 2005, p. 67) Trompenaars and Woolliams (1996, p 67) see cultural differences as based on a series of dilemmas that being two propositions in apparent conflict with the need to choose between two good or desirable options.“*

*Trompenaars and Woolliams (2003) describe culture as having three aspects: the outer layer of the visual reality, the mid layer of Norms and Values – these are the values and standards that inform action- and the Inner layer – unquestioned implicit culture – the basic assumptions that inform the norms and values. An apparent contradiction can be identified in cultures with a strong basic assumptions and values that are linked to religious beliefs such as Buddhism, Islam and Christianity which advance virtues of duty, honesty, truth and respect yet where acts of bribery and corruption are seen as a normal business practice. This paper will explore cross cultural models, put forward a possible explanation for the rationalisation and normalisation of corrupt practices and advance an hypothesis that explains the disconnect between values, ethics and etiquette.*

Field of Research: Business Ethics, Cross Culture, Bribery and Corruption.

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