

Thinking beyond the ethics of good intentions: an ethics of care for radiological protection

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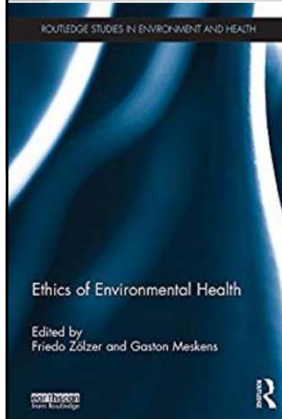
4th International Symposium on Ethics of Environmental Health
9 – 12 September 2018, (České Budějovice), Czech Republic

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- 3 The ICRP 138 Core Values and the extended pragmatic set
- 4 Doing good - possibilities and hindrances
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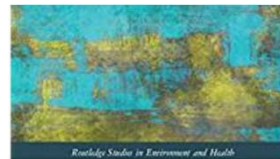
Intro

Previous research



“Better Living (in a Complex World) – An Ethics of Care for our Modern Co-existence”

In *Ethics of Environmental Health* (Routledge Studies in Environment and Health) Apr 2017



“The Politics of Hypothesis – An Inquiry into the Ethics of Scientific Assessment”

In *Environmental Health Risks: Ethical Aspects* (Routledge Studies in Environment and Health) Jun 8, 2018



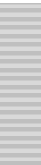
“Reflections on Uncertainty, Risk and Fairness”

In *Ethics for Radiation Protection in Medicine* (Series in Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering) Nov 2018

1 Morals at breakfast

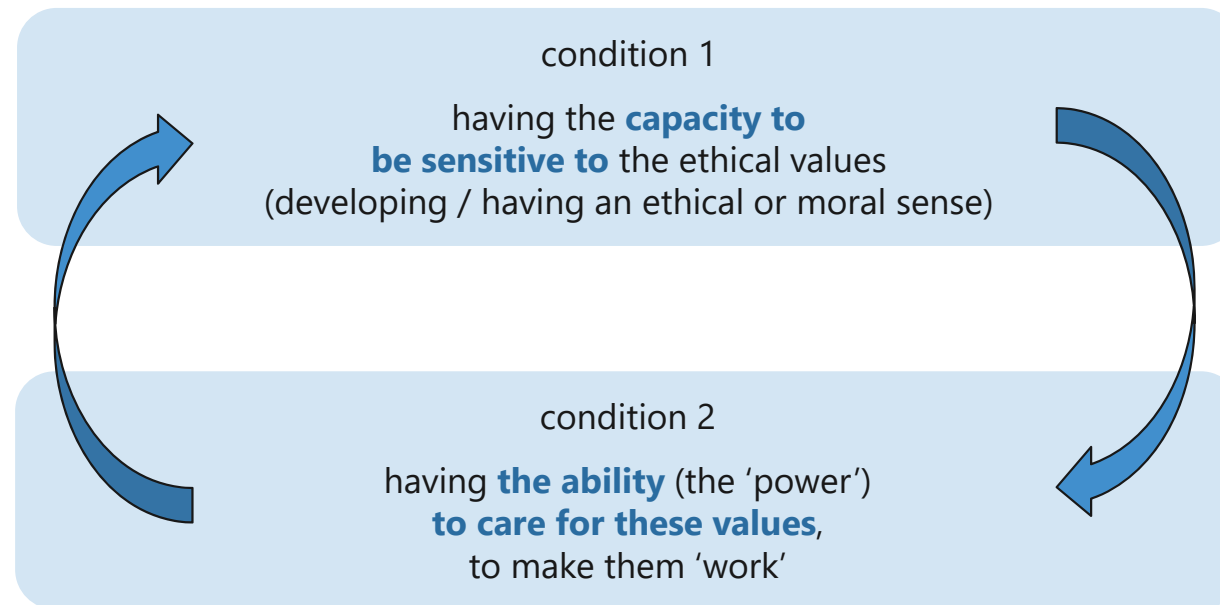


*Thinking beyond the ethics of good intentions: an ethics of care for radiological protection, Gaston Meskens, gaston.meskens@sckcen.be
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2 The two conditions to make ethical values 'work'

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↳ 2 'needs' 1

but 1 is not always a guarantee for 2

3 The ICRP 138 Core Values and the extended pragmatic set

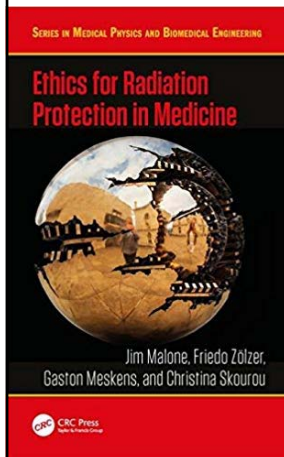
3 The ICRP 138 Core Values and the extended pragmatic set

- ICRP 138

core values: beneficence / non-maleficence, prudence, justice, dignity

procedural values: accountability, transparency, inclusiveness:

- The extended pragmatic set (proposal from *Ethics for Radiation Protection in Medicine*, Malone, Zölzer, Meskens & Skourou)



Core values	Correlated values	Procedural values
Respect for autonomy	Dignity	Inclusiveness
Non-maleficence	Precaution	Accountability
Beneficence	Solidarity	Empathy
Justice	Sustainability	Transparency

3 The ICRP 138 Core Values and the extended pragmatic set

However, the crucial question remains

- ? ... to what extent and in which way do formal 'systems' and specific 'cultures' (political, scientific, managerial, educational) **enable, stimulate or eventually hinder the 'caring for' or the 'working of' those values?**
- ∨ These values remain only 'good intentions' if we don't at the same time
 - 1 critically consider the formal systems and cultures in which they aim to 'work;
 - 2 care for systems and cultures that would enable and stimulate the working of these values instead of 'hindering' them.
 - ∨ formal systems
 - management system of an organization (company, hospital, university, ...);
 - political systems of democratic decision making (global, national, local);
 - legal systems;
 - ∨ cultures
 - commercial profitism, neoliberalism;
 - paternalism;
 - scientific positivism;
 - ...

3 The ICRP 138 Core Values and the extended pragmatic set
Applicable to various cases – e.g. uranium mining in Tanzania

Tanzania 'will mine uranium on Selous Game Reserve'

BBC News 1 July 2011 | Africa

Tanzania will go ahead with plans to mine uranium in the UN World Heritage site Selous Game Reserve, the natural resources minister has told the BBC.

Ezekiel Maige said he told the recent UN World Heritage Centre meeting it would mean the park's size would need to be reduced by less than 1%.

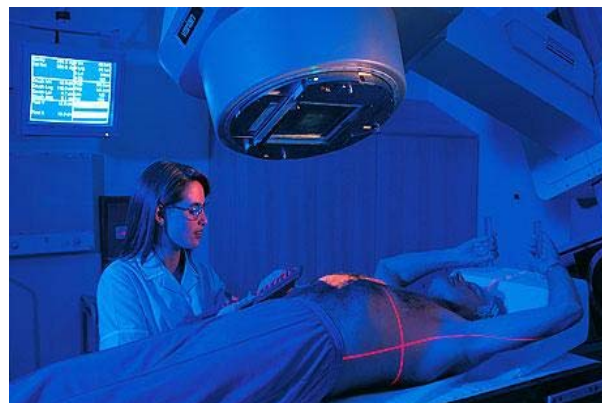
The UN body said it would approve the plans, as long as environmental assessments were carried out.

Money made from the mining would help in the park's upkeep, Mr Maige said.



The Selous Game Reserve in southern Tanzania is one of the largest fauna reserves in the world

3 The ICRP 138 Core Values and the extended pragmatic set
Applicable to various cases – e.g. medical use of radiation





4 Doing good – possibilities and hindrances

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	ability to care for ...	possible impact	hindrances	enabling, stimulating systems & cultures
(respect for) autonomy	(the own autonomy) (others autonomy)	(providing) influence on decision making	Paternalism Strategic maintenance of oppressive power structures	
non-maleficence, beneficence				(codes of conduct)
dignity			Paternalism Cultures of misogyny, racism, ...	
precaution			Scientific positivism Commercial profitism Legal frameworks at the service of neoliberalism	
solidarity				
justice				

4 Doing good – possibilities and hindrances

	ability to care for ...	possible impact	hindrances	enabling, stimulating systems & cultures
inclusiveness			democratic deficits of traditional democracy	
accountability	own accountability			
empathy				
transparency	own transparency			



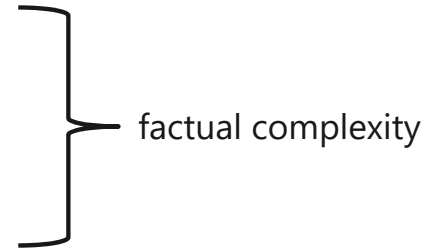
5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research

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Characteristics of a complex social problem

interdependence

diversified impact

organisational complexity

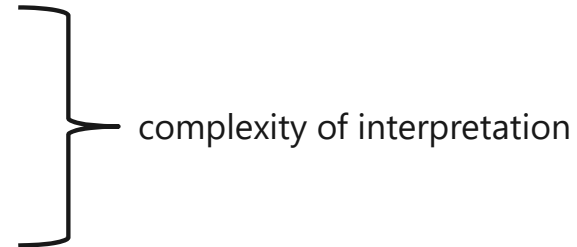


relative responsibilities

**uncertainty due to incomplete
and speculative knowledge**

moral pluralism

relative authorities



5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research

idea 1 Reflexivity and scientific perplexity

5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research
Dealing fairly with complexity implies one common virtue for everyone concerned

→ **reflexivity** as an **ethical attitude** (an **ethical 'experience'**)
with respect to the own position, interests, hopes, hypotheses, believes and concerns, and this in any formal role or social position (as scientist, medical doctor, engineer, politician, manager, citizen, civil society representative, activist, ...).

Adopting this attitude requires **reflexivity** as an **intellectual skill**

seeing the bigger picture and yourself in it

with your interests, hopes, hypotheses, believes and concerns

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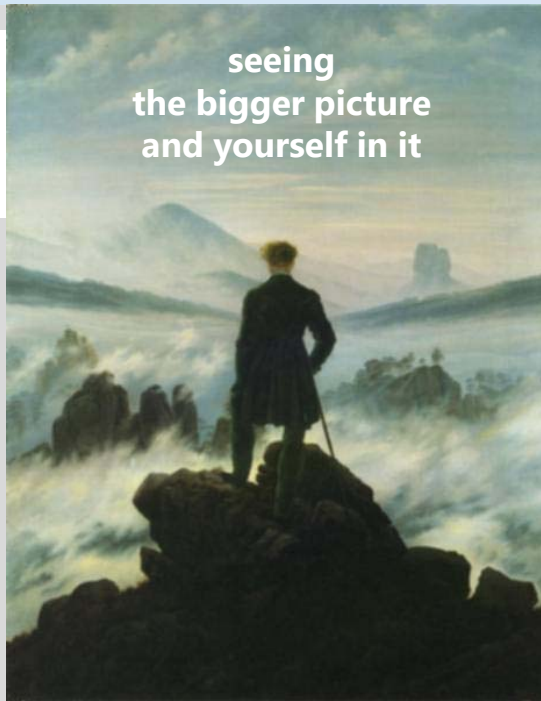
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Adopting this attitude requires **reflexivity** as an **intellectual skill**

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with your interests, hopes, hypotheses, believes and concerns

Caspar David Friedrich
"Wanderer above the Sea of Fog"
1818



5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research
Reflexivity and scientific perplexity

- Confronted with the need to deal with incomplete and speculative knowledge and value pluralism in providing policy advice on issues of social well-being, **the challenge of science** is not the production of credible proofs, it **is the construction of credible hypotheses.**



5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research Reflexivity and scientific perplexity

- From an ethical perspective, in the general interest of rendering hypotheses with credibility (and the potential to generate societal trust), **science has no choice but to 'open up its method'** towards society.
- **The ethics of scientific assessment, as a form of 'intellectual solidarity':**
 - ↓ [objectivity and independence]
 - Recognising uncertainty, value pluralism, contingency & potential misuse (of 'products of science' (technologies))
 - opening up the scientific method for transdisciplinarity and public involvement
- The aim of this ethically inspired 'relativism' is not to undermine the scientific (and engineering) practice but to make it stronger
 - more resilient against pressure from politics and the market to deliver evidence it cannot deliver

5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research

idea 2 The idea of intellectual solidarity

5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research

The idea of intellectual solidarity as a joint ethical commitment

- Intellectual solidarity is about jointly recognising
 - complexity
 - (factual) uncertainty and value pluralism
 - the limitations to and the relativity of the own and other's authority
- ↳ ... leading to a joint preparedness
 - to seek rapprochement in open and transparent deliberation
 - in which we give account of the rationales we use to defend our position, interests, hopes, hypotheses, beliefs and concerns.
- Intellectual solidarity requires (and emerges from) the creation of 'spaces' for 'encounters' that work emancipatory and (compassionately) confrontational at the same time.

5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research

idea 3 An ethics of care for a fair dealing with complexity

5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research
An ethics of care for a fair dealing with complexity

Western) normative ethics theories

→ seeking reference in 'universally applicable principles'
(Kantian) deontology, consequentialism (utilitarianism)

danger risk of overlooking the particular of specific situations

→ seeking reference in evaluating particular situations
'particularism'

danger risk of self-protective relativism (cultural, social, political)

→ seeking reference in virtues ('being good')
virtue ethics (Aristoteles)

problem virtues do not (always) unambiguously translate into concrete action

→ seeking reference in the care for human relationships
ethics of care

problem works for close relations with known people; not always clear how it could
work for distant relations with strangers

5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research
An ethics of care for a fair dealing with complexity

Goodness according to Confucianism can be understood as an ethics of care

- "Goodness [...] is the ability to respond well to others; the development of a sensibility that enables you to behave in ways that are good for those around you and to draw out their own better sides..."

("The Path", Michael Puett & Christine Gross-Loh, Penguin Books 2016)

5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research
An ethics of care for a fair dealing with complexity

complexity: If nobody has the truth and if our authorities are all relative, then ethics should start from a care for our human relationships

Three (new) characteristics of our modern co-existence:

connectedness

We are connected with each other 'in complexity'. We cannot any longer escape or avoid it. Fair dealing with each other implies a fair dealing with the complexity that binds us.

vulnerability

In complexity, we became intellectually dependent on each other, while we face our own and each other's 'authority problem'. We should care for the vulnerability of the ignorant and the confused, but also of 'mandated power'.

**(sense for)
commitment**

Our experiences now extend from the local to the global. As intelligent reflective beings, to become involved in deliberating issues of general societal concern became a new source of meaning and moral motivation.

5 Dealing fairly with complexity - three ideas from previous research
An ethics of care for a fair dealing with complexity

- An ethics of care inspires (and instructs) new approaches to the formal 'systems' or 'methods' we use to make sense of our co-existence


deliberative decision making ((in a professional context, in societal context)

transdisciplinary and inclusive research as policy advice

pluralist education, in the interest of critical-intellectual capacity building

- ∨ As 'spaces' for 'encounters' that work emancipatory and (compassionately) confrontational at the same time.

they can be considered as the basic enabling and stimulating systems & cultures considered before,



6 Fair dealing with complexity: an ethical framework beyond the ethics of good intentions

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Reflexivity is the basis for 'moral competence' ('ethical competence')

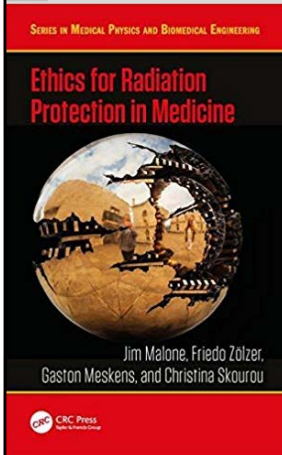
6 Fair dealing with complexity: an ethical framework beyond the ethics of good intentions

Reflexivity is the basis for 'moral competence' ('ethical competence')

competence "The ability to put skills, knowledge and attitudes into practice in order to perform activities or a job in an effective and efficient manner within an occupation or job position to identified standards" (source IAEA)

Ethical competence: developing, fostering and 'using' an ethical sense	
	in our public professional life
skills	awareness (recognizing something as an ethical problem) analytic skills, context thinking, empathy reflexivity (seeing the bigger picture and yourself in it)
knowledge	of the situation, including factual uncertainties & values at stake of other views and perceptions of the situation of methods of dialogue, deliberation, teaching
attitudes	sense of responsibility, sense for fairness (justice), caring for fairness tolerance, openness, curiosity reflexivity (seeing the bigger picture and yourself in it)

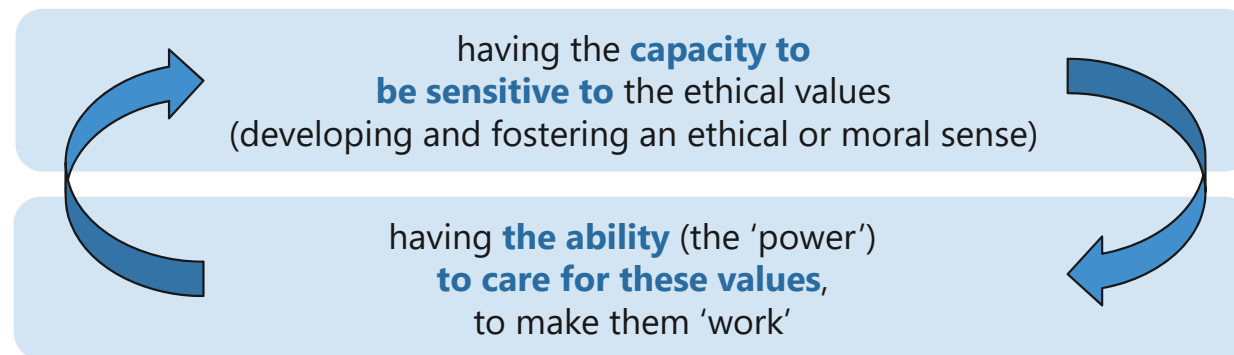
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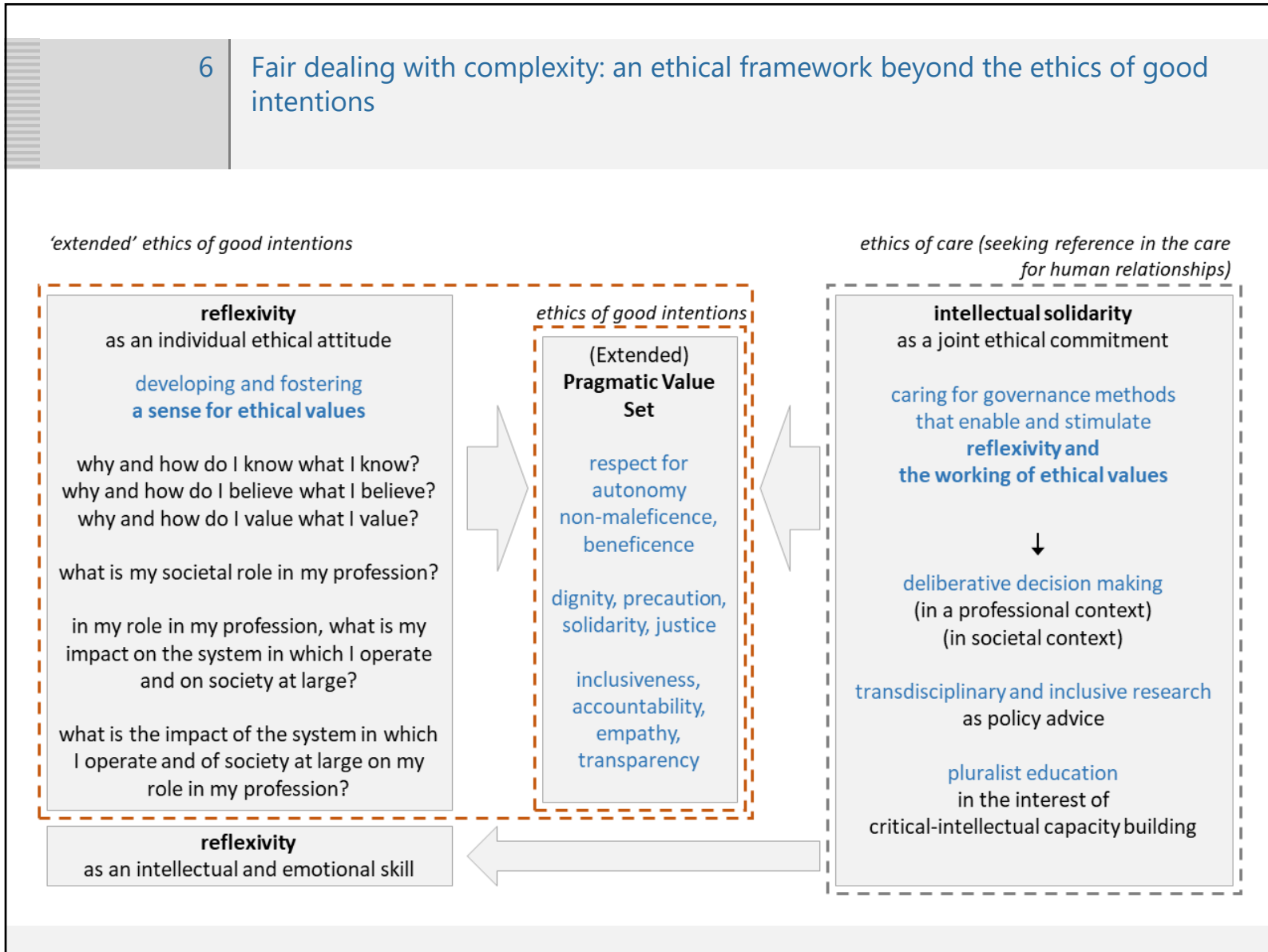
The idea is that, in order for all concerned to become sensitive to the values of autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, dignity, precaution, solidarity, justice, inclusiveness, accountability, empathy and transparency as a prerequisite to putting them in practice, they need to adopt the ethical attitude of reflexivity related to their own position and related interests, hopes, hypotheses, beliefs and concerns in the first place.


In other words: one cannot see the meaning and relevance of those values if one is unable to 'see the bigger picture' of the situation and 'oneself in it.'

Need for an ethical framework concerned with capacity building, taking into account the two conditions to make ethical values 'work'



6 Fair dealing with complexity: an ethical framework beyond the ethics of good intentions





7 Conclusions for radiological protection

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- The ethical values relevant to RP will remain only 'good intentions' if we don't at the same time
 - 1 critically consider the formal systems and cultures in which they aim to 'work;
 - 2 care for systems and cultures that would enable and stimulate the working of these values instead of 'hindering' them.

- ↳ There is a role for RP institutions such as the IAEA and IRPA and especially for the ICRP (in follow-up work on their work on ethics of RP) in doing this:
 - stimulating the debate
 - caring for critical-intellectual capacity building in scientific research and education