**Cultural relativism and human rights**

Culture is one of those words which are hard to explain. There is not a real definition of culture, a reason for this is that a culture contains many things. The easiest way for me to define it; is that a culture is a lifestyle, based on traditions, behavior and ideas. There are various cultures, but we never really named them. Lately there is an idea about cultural relativism, which signifies that cultures are not comparable and that every culture must be able to be experienced. If we look at the definition of relativism we can say that relativism is the fact that nothing is right and nothing is false. In this essay I will discuss if this idea of cultural relativism is nothing but an excuse to violate human rights.

When we are talking about cultures the first thing that comes to mind is diversity. There are a lot of things in which cultures can vary. Some examples are clothes and character traits. There are also a lot of things which are labeled normal in one culture while it is unacceptable in another culture, for example eating insects. At this point, cultural relativism plays a big role. With cultural relativism we suggest ourselves to look at those differences from the point of view of the other culture. We tell ourselves that things can be weird for us, while it is totally normal for the people within that culture. With this idea we give every culture the same value. This results in the fact that every culture, thus every person has the same rights.

However, there are norms and values in life, for instance being respectful and being able to take responsibility. It is not to be discussed that variables in some of the cultures are against those norms and values. Till the 19th century it was normal in the Indian and Indonesian culture to burn a woman with the body of her dead husband. It is of course beautiful to see how loyal someone can be, but this must not cost this person's life. Neither should we preserve any of those cultural traditions that violate human rights. With cultural relativism we are not able to deny the people those traditions. This is causing cultural relativism to become an excuse for those cultures to violate any kinds of rights.

To sum up, cultures are lifestyles based on traditions and customs. Every person has the right to life with their own culture. Some of the things in a culture can be wrong for someone while it is totally normal for the other. With cultural relativism we let everyone experience their culture and we do not judge the 'wrong' things. Those 'wrong' things are not always different kinds of food though. Because of the cultural relativism we will be unable to stop people when their culture is or becomes dangerous and when human rights are violated. I believe that cultural rights should persist. In the meantime we should define what is accepted and what not in a culture. We have to do this to be able to life on with cultural relativism, without it becoming a threat to human rights.

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