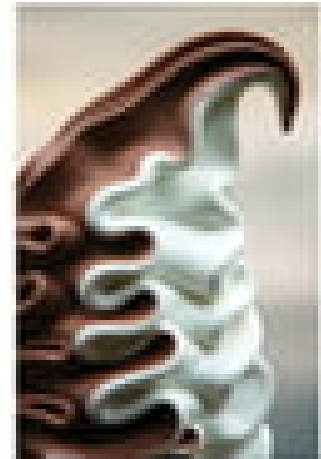


ETHICAL RELATIVISM

Defining relativism

- ❖ Some things really are relative:
 - Preference for chocolate or vanilla
 - Fashion
 - Humor
 - Being large
- ❖ Different cultures have different moral codes
 - For example some Eskimo culture:
 - Men had more than one wife
 - less regard for human life :
 - infanticide was common
 - female babies in particular were likely to be killed.



Relativism

#philosophy

Relativism is the concept that points of view have no absolute truth or validity, having only relative, subjective value according to differences in perception and consideration. As moral relativism, the term is often used in the context of moral principles, where principles and ethics are regarded as applicable in only limited context. There are many forms of relativism which vary in their degree of controversy. The term often refers to truth relativism, which is the doctrine that there are no absolute truths, i.e., that truth is always relative to some particular frame of reference, such as a language or a culture.

What is Moral Relativism?

Definition:

Moral relativism can be 3 different types of positions, descriptive, meta-ethical, or normative, depending on the differences of moral judgments amongst a certain people or culture.

- Descriptive: describes the way things are, without suggesting a way they should be. This is to say that people frequently disagree over what is the most “moral” course of action.
- Meta-ethical: is the position that the truth or the falsity of moral judgments is not objective. Justification for moral judgments is relative to the traditions, convictions, or practices of an individual or group of people. Ex: “It’s moral to me because I believe it is”.
- Normative: is the position that because there is no universal moral standard by which we can judge others, we should tolerate the behavior of others, even when it is against our personal or cultural moral standards.

The Problem for Relativism

- This poses a problem for relativism
 - Given any cultural practice we can sensibly ask “is it good” or “is it right?”
 - But if so then being good cannot be the same thing as being a cultural norm
 - So too we can ask for any given preference if it is good
 - But it doesn’t make sense to ask these kinds of questions for fashion or preference for ice cream