

# Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism essay examples

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



More than often, culture is learned, shared and patterned in the society through aspects of enhancing unified cultural institutional change throughout interactions among individuals. Nonetheless, diverse cultures exist in a social environment allows for increased constant interactions between internal and external cultural values that articulates in the concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism (Spade & Ballantine, 2012). Even though, it is not easier to accept the beliefs, values and practices of other cultures it is essential not to become judgmental and harsher towards any specific cultural value and norms. More noticeably, ethnocentrism and cultural relativism remains as ways in which individuals from different cultures can understand the perceptions of different cultures that should be grounded in the empirical reality and perceptions with increased relations to socio-cultural differences.

Ethnocentrism is considered as the tendency in which individuals undertake to judge other cultures according to the criteria of an individual's own culture depending on the level of correctness of their way of life especially those from primitive cultures. In most cases, ethnocentrism makes individuals to either judge others as positive, negative or extremely negative based on their cultural differences (Spade & Ballantine, 2012). On the other hand, cultural relativism is mainly characterized by the idea that different cultures or ethnic groups have to be appraised based on the basis of its own values and norms of behavior. As a result, cultural relativism is more likely to give rational decisions as compared to ethnocentrism as it is based on different cultures as it is not based on the basis of another culture (Ballantine & Roberts, 2012).

As a matter of fact, both ethnocentrism and cultural relativism are similar because they give different perspectives on diverse cultures based on the behaviors and beliefs of other people raised in other cultures. In addition, as measures of cultural differences both ethnocentrism and cultural relativism is based on the notion that allows individuals to view different habits, traits and values of an individual based on relevance another set of different cultural values.

In most cases, ethnocentrism makes individuals to always view their own culture to be more superior to any other culture as they measure other communities' values, beliefs and practices in relation to their own culture. As a result, ethnocentrism as a way of perceiving different cultures can lead to cultural misinterpretation as it often misrepresents communication between human beings (Ballantine & Roberts, 2012).

On the other hand, cultural relativism remains rational as it enhances the concept of importance of a particular cultural idea as it acknowledges that it varies from one society to another. As a result, cultural relativism allows individuals to view people from different cultures based on varied ethical and moral standards that remain relative to what a particular culture believes to be good or bad, right or wrong. More importantly, cultural relativism allows sociologists to look at a culture and understand it as much as possible before making judgments in accordance with values, norms and morals of a particular culture (Spade & Ballantine, 2012). As a result, cultural relativism gives a wider perspective of diverse cultures, in terms of attaining the finest possible understanding of diverse cultures.

In addition, cultural relativism seeks to understand an individual based on their own culture while ethnocentrism bases itself centrally on an individual's use of their cultural norms, morals, as well as values to judge and compare other cultures. As a result, individuals tend to view their way of life based on their practices and behaviors in which we think, live and act as correct even though, it indicates a clear deviance from the fact that the internal norms is seen as wrong in other cultures. More significantly, the perspective of other cultures depends on the different three levels of cultural perspective of ethnocentrism that is either a positive one, a negative one, or an extreme negative one. This is because positive ethnocentrism remains coherent, this is because it seeks a point of view that is widely accepted as it is based on an individual's way of life that remains preferable to all others, as it gives a wider perspective that acknowledges others based on the initiative that there is nothing erroneous with feelings that define different cultures.

Perhaps, the American culture tends to have increased levels of ethnocentrism as compared to cultural relativism as individuals had increased tendency to view their own culture as being superior and apply their cultural values, norms, beliefs and behavior when judging individuals who initially lived or were raised in other cultures (Spade & Ballantine, 2012). In most cases, the idea of not giving diverse cultures an equitable opportunity, propagates as it remains a measure that make Americans become judgmental and harsher towards any specific cultural value and norms (Ballantine & Roberts, 2012). Even though, ethnocentrism seems to discriminate and rationalize individuals from different cultures it is essential

to understand that the perceptions of different cultures is grounded in the empirical reality and perceptions with increased relations to socio-cultural differences. On the other hand, it is indispensable to consider that behavior of Americans in terms of other individuals' standards remains relevant because it is normal for individuals to view actions that take place in other cultures from the codes of their native culture. As a result, there should always remain a perception that gives an assumption of fairness.

More importantly, ethnocentrism has an increased level of influence within the society as it contributes to social solidarity among individuals from the same culture as it creates a sense of value and community especially among the American people who share a cultural tradition (Spade & Ballantine, 2012). However, there is increased likelihood that individuals who judge other based on their relatively familiar expectations and their opinions and customs focus on being right, true, proper, natural and moral. As a result, most of the individuals who interact with the different American culture find the different behavior and beliefs that individuals hold as strange, unnatural, immoral and savage. In most cases, ethnocentrism seeks to believe that individuals who come from other cultures have primitive cultures, as they relate their own way of lives with that of individuals from other cultures. In addition, individuals from the American culture create an instant tendency to believe that some cultures remain more backward in their lack the technology and consumerism in their practices.

Arguably, cultural relativism allows individuals to view people from different cultures based on varied ethical and moral standards. In fact, this remain

relative to what a particular culture believes to be bad or good, wrong or right (Spade & Ballantine, 2012). As a result, cultural relativism, as opposed to ethnocentrism allows individuals from within the American culture and outside to look at different cultures and understand each as much as possible before making judgments in accordance with values, norms and morals of a particular culture (Ballantine & Roberts, 2012). More considerably, cultural relativism is mainly characterized by the idea that different culture or ethnic group differ and as a result, has to be appraised based on the center of its own norms and values of behavior. In most cases, cultural relativism is more likely to give rational decisions as compared to ethnocentrism as it is based on different cultures as it is not based on the basis of another culture.

Conclusively, it is essential to always be rational based on judgment given on an individual's belief, behavior, values and norms to ensure uniformity. In most cases, it is essential to apply the measures of uniformity based in cultural relativism into practice as it easily allows all the nations to develop unique sects of ethnic, as well as cultural norms. As a result, the level of biasness and lack of uniformity from such cultural values that vary depending with individuals from one ethnic group to the other can enhance increased superiority of diverse cultures. More significantly, it is necessary to understand that ethnocentrism gives a tendency in which individuals undertake to judge other cultures according to the criteria of their own culture depending. Without a doubt, cultural relativism is more likely to give

rational decisions as compared to ethnocentrism as it is based on different cultures as it is not based on the basis of another culture.

## **References**

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