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The modern technology has helped in improving communications among people. People from different cultures and background have started communicating with each other more often than before. Since the interaction among people from different cultural backgrounds has become more widened, it is resulting in enhanced conflict especially in case of morals. These conflicts can be mitigated with the application of relativist and natural law approaches. This essay is therefore aimed at analyzing the similarities and differences among these theoretical paradigms.

# Natural law and Relativism

The natural law for the people living on Earth is what the eternal teachings suggest to us (as humans). The eternal law is God’s plan, by which He commands the entire universe. The human beings believe (in different manners) that such commandments are for the betterment of human civilization and therefore human beings are bound to accept these commandments. By the application of this Natural Law, God has created everything in this universe, which is a reflection of the Natural law. Natural law is derived from such commandments. We, humans, understand this law in a specific manner and it is how the natural law is written into human’s nature. In general terms, the Natural law is same for each living creature on the Earth. It can also be substantiated by the fact that at a certain level, the Natural law or God’s command is same at everywhere. For example, it commands at one place “do and pursue good, and avoid evil (Fabian and Fordyce 1990)”.

Now what is good or what is evil, we humans specify it by reason. For example, ‘life is precious and must be protected’, we humans justify this by resorting to the reason that ‘murder is wrong’. Although in some particular cases it becomes difficult to decide that taking the life was right or wrong, as some states practice death penalties. In the Natural law, there are also many moral absolutes, but deciding on each case individually, there can be a lot of uncertainties. These moral obligations are particularly dependent on the circumstances and over the personal nature of people involved. For example, if a rape is committed by any less paying worker, similarly on other side is a high ranked official, there could be many chances that the decision may not be what the natural law dictates. Hence, the virtue of prudence works here. The mental and moral character matters a lot and it guides the interpretation of the natural law.

Compared to Natural law, relativism is completely different. It is presumed on the idea that people and cultures are different and for such reasons they see different aspects in a particular situation. The general idea which surrounds this notion is that none of the viewpoints could be right. Therefore, the discord cannot be resolved by any means (Jarvie 2015). Another aspect of this debate remains that some people or culture believe that their viewpoint concerning any situation is superior and other side believes the same. It is for all such reasons that in relativism there is no similar standard about what is right or what is wrong and similarly there is no correct judgment about the morality of a specific event. There are several belief systems in relativism also, one of such is to promote tolerance of different moral standards. Such debates erupt from the concept of ethnocentrism, which contrasts relativism. Ethnocentrisms entails that each individual’s actions are right, and application of methodology remains the secondary option.

Contrary to this, relativism necessitates that since there are no similar moral standards, therefore there must be a space for accommodating each other beliefs. These accommodations should base on the viewpoints of equality and there should be no discounted value since it is all about our own morals. Some of the early proponents of moral relativism also argue that since each individual on earth faces different environment and by any mean there can be no similarity in their life experiences, therefore different viewpoints about the world leads to different moral understandings.

# Differences between Natural law and Relativism

As explained above, natural law is not different depending upon the geography or cultural boundaries, but relativism theory has different interpretation (d’Entreves 2017). Considering a specific case scenario, the natural law’s interpretation would be different and so does for the relativist approach. Since morality is based in reason (not God) and in rational behavior of human beings, therefore it is how we discover the moral laws. In a relativist approach, the human decides by themselves, they interpret certain natural laws and finally come up with their own decision. By this reasoning, the first and foremost difference remains of the ‘variable nature (d’Entreves 2017)’. Natural law contrast relativism. The culture of a specific country or applicable at specific geography may benefit certain population but it cannot be used as an alternative for the natural law. The interpretation of natural law will remain the same throughout the whole universe.

Another major difference between the natural law and relativism erupts from its interpreters. Relativism is purely based on material factors. Its interpretation is dependent upon material beings and also is carried over by humans. In circumstance which favors one and displeases others, relativist approach becomes a source of conflict. However in the case of natural law, since the humans are bound to obey, it becomes a source for resolution rather than a conflict. The interpretation of the natural law is different at different places, it remains largely unjustifiable, but certain things are interpreted in the same manner. Different to this the relativist approach is based on specific circumstance, it puts moral and cultures as a source and not as a factor for coming up to judgment.

# Similarities between Natural law and Relativism

Natural law and relativist approach are strikingly different from each other. When it comes to comparison there are very fewer aspects which makes them similar. Starting from the definition and their application, it is evident that both laws are dependent upon human behavior. The application and practice rest upon human behavior. Natural law and relativist approach both defines the conduct of human behavior. The circumstances where morals and ethics are not applicable they both come up with similar justifications. There are very fewer incidences where morals become a source of conflict between natural law and the relativist approach. About some basic aspects like good or bad conduct the natural law and relativist approach hold guides similar behaviours. General good is acceptable in both ways and same is true for the bad aspect. Unless the situations don’t contrast significantly, both approaches will come to a similar conclusion (Pound and DeRosa 2017).

Their similarities are just not related to material things, they converge upon the ideas of natural objects. The relativist approach never contrasts to the Natural law. Concerning this aspect some believe that since natural law is primary in nature, therefore relativist approach comes at obedience to it. This relation between both is also suggestive of the fact that there exist similarities about the pressing aspects of nature and mankind. Finally, the doers of both are same, humans (Pound and DeRosa 2017). The natural law and the relativist approach both remain applicable to humans and by any means remain inapplicable upon any other living creature.

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