

# The Difference Between **RELATIVISM** *and* **ABSOLUTISM**

Ethical principles and values  
are culturally and/or historically  
dependent



Ethical principles and values  
are objective and independent  
of cultural context

## RELATIVISM

## ABSOLUTISM



### MAKING A CASE...

1

Different societies have different moral codes.

2

There is no objective standard that can be used to judge one societal code better than another.

3

The moral code of our own society has no special status; it is merely one among many.

4

There is no “universal truth” in ethics.

5

The moral code of a society determines what is right within that society.

6

We should adopt an attitude of tolerance toward the practices of other cultures.

1

SIMILAR MORAL PRINCIPLES

2

SIMILAR MORAL NEEDS

3

SITUATIONAL SIMILARITIES

4

INTERCULTURAL SIMILARITIES



### #OBJECTIONS



"Just because values differ that does not necessarily make them right in one culture or another" (Thiroux & Krasemann, 2012).



"Some absolutes, however, are too general to be of use in the specific situations" (Thiroux & Krasemann, 2012).

"The greatest problem raised in the absolutism-versus-relativism controversy is how to introduce stability, order, and security (absolutism) into morality and moral systems, while still allowing for individual and group freedom and creativity (relativism)" (Thiroux & Krasemann, 2012)?

#### References

Thiroux, J. P. & Krasemann, K. W. (2012). *Ethics: Theory and practice* (11th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall



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