

## Ethics and perception of Nanotechnology in the cultural context

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The problem to deal with Nanotechnology from the ethical point of view is the term itself because it differs from country to country. Observing the different concepts in Nanoethics, we can consider the same problem. Going back to basic concepts, we can see that most of the concepts have normative ideas, for e.g. integrity and privacy. “Integrity”, “privacy” are very good examples for this standpoint because these normative conceptions have an enormous impact on the perception of the ethical issues. They are specific, focus on the case and their connotation differs from culture to culture, for example privacy is a very high value in the western culture but less important in Asia. What are the similarities? We can follow N. Luhmann who had proposed that the unit of the difference is the difference. So we have to find a term, which every culture has together with others, which is more general. It seems that the concept of a good life can be the basis because the term “good life” can be considered as something which all cultures assume. Indeed the connotation and the value may differ in the cultures.

Nanotechnology promotes the idea to improve the conditions for a good life. These aspects may be valued per se in every culture, but different cultures put different relative weights upon them, what is considered as a major improvement in one culture will be less important in another. Moreover, an improvement in one aspect could be at the expense of other aspects. Improving physical health to the extent of prolonging life by Nanobiotechnology could simply increase the rate of mental disorder through the dementia of life-prolonged patients; it could also undermine traditional strategies for social wellbeing, from social relationships between generations to systems of social insurance. Or, improving intellectual performance through Nanotechnological devices could go at the expense of other mental capacities. Taken this into account, we can observe, what might be considered as an improvement in one culture could raise concerns in another culture. Therefore it seems to be a major problem to discuss the ethical issues of nanotechnology, because of different leading concepts of a good life.

I will discuss in my presentation the questions which are raised above