THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS AND THE CLASSIFICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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Abstract

This paper aims at presenting the main categories of human rights and the way in which the students and the master and post graduate students at the University "1 Decembrie 1918" of Alba Iulia relate to these. The paper consists of two parts: a theoretical part, which deals with the main classifications of human rights: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (positive and negative), the International law (absolute and relative), the European Conventions (in civil and political, respectively economic, social and cultural) and a practical part, which includes the results of a research conducted in 2019 on a group of students and master and post-graduate students at the University "1 Decembrie 1918" of Alba Iulia, research that highlighted the importance of human rights, their classification, as well as contexts in which these can be restricted /limited.

The purpose of the research was to identify the importance of human rights for the students and the master and post graduate students at the University "1 Decembrie 1918" of Alba Iulia. The objectives of the research were to:

- identify the situations in which human rights can be restricted,
- know the categories of human rights,
- classify the human rights according to importance.

The research method, the questionnaire based inquiry, was chosen in accordance with the purpose and the objectives of the research. This questionnaire was applied to the persons from the target group in order to collect the necessary information for the research. The acquired results present the following aspects: cases of violation of human rights, classification of the main categories of human rights, classification of the human rights depending on importance.

Keywords: human rights, categories of rights, restriction of rights, classification of human rights, importance of human rights.

1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of human rights is regulated after the Second World War when the United Nations issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Although it is not a legal document and cannot be imposed on its states, the Declaration has an invaluable moral value.

According to it, people have two types of rights: negative, such as the right to life, and positive ones, such as the right to health care, vote, work, etc. Practically, this classification is based on the need for state intervention: natural rights - according to J. Locke's theory - that do not require state intervention are considered negative; while rights that involve state intervention for citizens to benefit from them are considered positive.

Beyond this purely theoretical division, the second classification of rights, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is more important and it also includes:

"Conventional Civil and Political Rights Recognized by Western Society: Life, Freedom, Security of the Person, Equality of Punishment, Equal Application of Legal Procedures, Freedom of Opinion, Expression, Association and Representation. In addition, the Declaration also contains rights specific to modern-day society: protection against torture and sadism, inhuman and degrading punishment, the right to benefit of protection and asylum in the event of persecution.

Along with these civil and political rights, the Declaration includes the second generation of rights related to the issue of the industrialized society, namely Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: the right to food, the right to dispose of clothing, housing, health, security social rights, the right to work, to be paid fairly and advantageously, the right to rest and benefit of free time, the association in trade unions, the right to education " [1, pp. 47-48].
The Maastricht Treaty of 1993 states that any person in a Member State of the European Union is a citizen of the Union and must have a number of rights:

- political rights: to elect and to be elected in the European Parliament;
- economic freedom: free movement of persons, the right to work throughout the EU;
- Rights-guarantees: right to petition.

In 2000, at the European Council in Nice, the EU institutions signed the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, a document that encompasses all civil, political, economic and social rights that all EU citizens must benefit of.

2 METHODOLOGY

General information: The present research was carried out between February and April 2019 at the “1 Decembrie 1918” University in Alba Iulia. The research was carried on 111 students in the science of education, distributed as follows: 87 students, 12 master students and 12 postgraduate students.

Purpose and objectives of the research: The aim of the research was to identify the importance of human rights for students, master degree students and post-graduate students at the 1 Decembrie 1918 University in Alba Iulia. The research objectives were:

- recognizing situations in which human rights can be restricted,
- knowing the categories of human rights,
- classification of human rights according to importance.

In accordance with the aim and objectives of the research, the research method was chosen: questionnaire survey. This questionnaire was applied to focus group members in order to collect the information needed for research.

3 RESULTS

The first item in the questionnaire asked respondents to state whether there are situations where human rights can be restricted. In the first stage a response should be chosen between YES and NO, and the results obtained indicate the following:

![Figure 1](image-url)

Figure 1: Percentage of responses for each group.
There is a reversal of responses in the case of master and postgraduate students compared to the students' answers. It seems that their longer life experience makes them better acquainted with the issue of human rights and, implicitly, with the situations in which they may be restricted. It is also worth noting the high percentage of negative responses received from students, where, more than half, claim that there are no situations in which human rights can be restricted.

In the second stage respondents have to argue their answer to the first question, both the positive and the negative ones.

Those who answered Yes had to specify the situations in which human rights can be restricted. Their responses referred to natural disasters or states of necessity (3); the serious violation of the law which results in the loss of civil rights (17); mental illness (5) or jeopardize the other people’s rights (5).

Respondents who answered NO had to specify why human rights can not be restricted. Despite the many negative responses, they could not argue this answer by referring to general information, such as: rights can not be restricted in any context, rights are not questionable, it is not fair to restrict people's rights; to be equal among people, etc.

The second item of the questionnaire asked respondents to classify the main categories of human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural – depending on the importance they attribute to them. The results obtained show us the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of rights</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Master Degree Students</th>
<th>Postgraduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil rights</td>
<td>162 (1)</td>
<td>17 (1)</td>
<td>21 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political rights</td>
<td>392 (5)</td>
<td>49 (5)</td>
<td>58 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic rights</td>
<td>277 (3)</td>
<td>39 (3)</td>
<td>36 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social rights</td>
<td>172 (2)</td>
<td>28 (2)</td>
<td>25 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural rights</td>
<td>302 (4)</td>
<td>46 (4)</td>
<td>39 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By analyzing the data obtained, there is a perfect similarity in their classification within the three categories of respondents: students, master degree students and postgraduate students. The most important rights are considered the civil rights, and the least important (non-important) rights are the political ones. Practically, the rankings obtained from applying the questionnaire show the following order of human rights categories: civil, social, economic, cultural and political.

The last item of the questionnaire asked the respondents to range a series of human rights according to the importance they attribute to them. The situation as a result of data analysis is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right to life</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Master Degree Students</th>
<th>Postgraduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right to work</td>
<td>124 (4)</td>
<td>17 (4)</td>
<td>18 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to property</td>
<td>135 (5)</td>
<td>18 (5)</td>
<td>18 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to education</td>
<td>93 (3)</td>
<td>13 (2)</td>
<td>13 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to vote</td>
<td>163 (6)</td>
<td>16 (3)</td>
<td>19 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to health</td>
<td>89 (2)</td>
<td>12 (1)</td>
<td>14 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to freedom</td>
<td>93 (3)</td>
<td>13 (2)</td>
<td>15 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a particular importance given by all three categories of respondents to the right to life, which is placed first in importance. This is closely followed by the rights to health, freedom and education with small differences depending on respondents’ age. Thus the right to education is seen as the second most important, both by master and postgraduate students, while students place it in a lower position. Lesser importance is attributed by respondents to the right to work, the right to property and
the right to vote. It seems that the natural rights that John Locke was talking about are the most important for the human being: life, health and liberty.

4 CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the data we can conclude that the issue of the importance of human rights is a current one, and human rights education should be developed, perhaps even as a subject of study in pre-university and university education, not just as a theme in civic education.

REFERENCES


