

The idea of universal applicability of human rights has been a symbol of hope that peace and justice in the world is possible, since the late 1940s. Although it is a fiction, and anthropology can prove this bringing countless evidence, strong general awareness of this idea still inspires many in their strive for freedom and dignity as well as opposition to violence. The aim of this thesis is to bring two controversial examples, illustrating how and why value-driven struggle for promotion of human rights fails. The aim is nevertheless not to compromise this noble idea but to contribute to its more thorough understanding as well as more effective implementation.

A chapter on so called female genital circumcision (also known as female genital mutilation) offers critical analyses of the international campaign for eradication of this practice, led by international feminist movement since the late 1970s. The attention is drawn mainly to manipulation of facts and unfair argumentation, thanks to which the so called female genital circumcision was labelled cruel practice of backward societies serving degradation and control of women, making more structured understanding of reality impossible.

A chapter dedicated to abortion tries to see political and cultural influences hidden under the surface of debate on toughening the current abortion legislation in Poland. Although not entirely related to the topic of the debate, these influences shape fundamentally the participant's attitudes.

The research has been based on analysis of texts, both written and spoken, of wide range, starting with official documents and political statements, through texts of expert or persuasive purpose, ending up with media articles and informal conversations as well as posts from internet fora.

The thesis brings two examples to illustrate the fact that human rights often substitute other topics in the debate that cannot be (from multiple reasons) articulated and that the aim of the debate is not always held higher and better protection of the truly or seemingly oppressed. Both selected topics are related to situation of women and both conducted analyses prove how little are the opinion, stand and interest of the concerned women taken into consideration.

Based on the results of the thesis, following conclusions can be drawn: (1) It is impossible to fight for human rights without inclusion of those, whose rights are concerned, although this is what mostly happens. International human rights discourse is dominated by methods of political marketing, which are quite efficient in drawing attention to a particular issue and mobilization of public opinion. The very same methods however obscure both the substance of the problem as well as the way to its constructive resolution. This is unfortunately also owing to human rights organizations and activists. (2) The only possible solution of value

conflicts in society is often a compromise that is capable of taking account of both utmost positions as well as current understanding of social (public) interest. It is indispensable to see human rights also as a convention that works in a context of current morals rather than not exclusively a reflection of absolute values.