

# Globalization



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Topic: Globalization Human rights are not a form of cultural imperialism because their foundation is based in the common morality that binds all religions and cultures. Individual natural rights should take precedence over the collective and cultural rights in advanced economies due to the dangers of hegemony and the powers of the State. Nevertheless, in developing nations there is a danger to indigenous worldviews such as the Mayan that are based on different fundamentals than the processes of modernization of society through Western science, technology, and industry. That these Western values may be “universalized” in a way that represents the economic and cultural hegemony of the neo-liberal system rather than any inherent or natural validation is a critical view. Following this, human rights can be seen as a projection of the collective opinion of human nature in an idealized form which is culturally conditioned by the bias of the historical era. (Speed, 2007) Indigenous cultures such as the Tzotzil, Tzeltal, or Lacandon Maya of Chiapas may have an entirely different way of seeing reality and organizing community, but this may not be known because of the hegemonic aspects of media communication, education, or political control that characterize modernity. (Speed, 2007) Nevertheless, a review of the broad nature of human rights and their protections, both in the individualistic sense and in the collective, show that there is a strong basis for these rights in the common morality shared by all cultures. The integration of identities within the human rights frameworks highlights the dangers of neo-liberal hegemony, as shown by Shanon Speed in “Rights in Rebellion”. (2007) Speed develops a framework that differentiates between individualistic rights and collective rights. Problematic in this definition historically is the manner through which the advanced economic economies and their political control

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groups in the West consistently promoted individualist rights frameworks but simultaneously denied collectivist outlooks emphasizing economic parity.

This relates directly to the Cold War and the refusal of America to tolerate Marxism, Socialism, or Communism as legitimate forms of self-organization, even when communities themselves chose this path autonomously, as in Chiapas. Furthermore, there has been no action on meeting the Millennium Goals or the economically driven requirements of collectivist rights, and 3 billion or more humans may live without adequate access to food, clean water, sanitation, education, health care facilities, or electricity. The lack of any attention to these aspects of human rights by the West, despite their importance in reflecting a genuine standard of living, is symbolic and indicative of the way human rights can reinforce cultural imperialism.

(Speed, 2007) Individual rights are important to the freedom that is implied in Western democracy through free speech, freedom of assembly, and protection against unwarranted arrest, search, and seizure of property. Individual rights fit with a libertarian view of capitalism, and the view that elevates the individual's self-expression to the highest goal. Other social organization structures that are based in culture and history may prioritize human rights in other ways. Most in the West would agree that the economic foundation of basic utilities, sanitation, health care, and education are required as a basis of a standard of living and provide the foundation on which the individualistic rights are enjoyed in free communities. Similarly, without the social justice of economic rights at the bottom of the foundation, equally shared by all in society, some will be inevitably unable to participate in the individualistic rights. For example, this can be seen in the illiterate who cannot engage in civil society on a discussion of issues as required by

citizenship, the ill or unemployed who cannot enjoy free and equal expression due to financial limitation. The distribution of wealth required in egalitarian pictures of social justice linked to world development issues and poverty is considered a non-starter by Western societies which simultaneously base their foreign policy on a type of human rights idealism that is often shallow and empty, lacking a real sense of feeling for the suffering of the world's poorest. The issues of State power relating to privacy and individual rights should be pre-eminent in advanced industrial economies where the standard of living is more or less equally shared by all, but in developing nations, these individualistic rights cannot be expressed without a basis in the collectivist human rights related to social justice and economic freedom. Thus, more attention should be given to building the common basis for a shared standard of living world-wide that is related to economic development within the framework of human rights understanding.

Sources Cited: Speed, Shannon. *Rights in Rebellion: Indigenous Struggle and Human Rights in Chiapas*. Stanford University Press, 2007.