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Help

The following video presents a brief interview of Mary Ann Glendon, the Harvard Law School professor who authored a study on the role of Eleanor Roosevelt in the making of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this interview, Glendon describes the spirit that led to the "miracle" of the Declaration being adopted, affirming universal values despite the fact that the world was then, as it still is now, deeply divided across a range of issues. In watching the video, **think of what arguments she puts forward in support of the universality of human rights, against the argument that the Declaration embodies values of individualism that would be specific to the Western civilization.** Share your views in the discussion below, focusing on two questions:

1. Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?
2. In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?

**INSTRUCTIONS:** In responding to the above questions, **DO NOT** click on 'New Post'. Click on 'Show discussion', and then, in the first discussion thread, called '[1.1.3] On the Universality of Human Rights', **click on 'View discussion'** and then on '**Add a response**' to propose your views to the community. If you want to comment on a peer's opinions in that thread then click on 'Add a comment' in his reponse. You can also watch the tutorial (<http://youtu.be/SINSJKdez6g>) (see also, the uptaded (<http://youtu.be/TNoOB8q19kQ>) version) in order to make the best use of the interface.

## GLENDON ON THE DRAFTING OF THE UDHR

The above video can also be directly accessed on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDLYuUB5XC4>).

Hide Discussion

### [1.1.3] On the universality of human rights

MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) 9 days ago

Pinned Report Misuse

115

New Post

After watching Professor Glendon's interview, and having considered the two questions raised above, **please express your opinions in this thread**, rather than creating new topics.

Don't forget to up-vote the opinions of your colleagues that you find most interesting, or persuasive!

Add A Response

8 days ago

txbluebonnet (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/824455)

13

You

refer to "two questions raised above", but there is no "above". Can you please clarify?

Report Misuse

Dear fellow learner, the questions are provided above the video.

-posted 8 days ago by LucasFigueira (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3371917) **COMMUNITY TA**

I do come from a region (one of the EU member states) where human rights are considered universal (although far from being respected in their fullfledged form, unfortunatel, y)and I don't think that we should or could accept the notion which is gaining ground that these are only certain Western values imposed upon other cultures with quite different values. Those values should be respected, of course, but in a way that takes into account those really most basic rights that make up the core of the conventions listed above. As for the economic and social rights, ith as been made

clear that they can only take place under the cooperation of international bodies designed for this goal.

-posted 8 days ago by KsenijaZ (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2671867)



Once we call something universal it must be inclusive and agreeable to if not by all then most of stake holders.If one see the history humanity has undergone many varied cycles. It may be socialistic approach in East and Individualistic approach in West. Each had its merits and demerits and despite however good or bad had it had definite life.So I think only change is permanent rest everything come and go. So we must respect each others views, beliefs and values, however diverse they may be.I am from India and have great regards for western views.\*

-posted 8 days ago by rameshthaken (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2229290)



In Britain the conservative party are constantly attacking the Human Rights Convention, and constantly peddling in the rightwing media that they are going to withdraw from the European Convention of Human Rights, and other extremist groups on the right also make this their slogan.

Human Rights is constantly being used to attack immigrants and migrants who use the Human Rights convention to fight for asylum in Britain. The right argue that we should not have any Human Rights, and that Britain should also withdraw from the European Union, because they interfere with Britain's national interests.

The media/press are controlling the political attitude and creating a prejudice against equality, and that people should not have any Human Rights as this is just political interference by socialists and liberals.

Human Rights is above local and domestic politics, and the global community should expose individual nations who want to undermine Human Rights for the economics of profit and greed being used to dismantle International Human Rights for all of humankind. Politics is polarized in Britain at the moment with the 2015 General Election approaching.

-posted 8 days ago by trillion (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/972099)



KsenijaZ said:"I don't think that we should or could accept the notion which is gaining ground that these are only certain Western values imposed upon other cultures with quite different values." I want to ask you to mention some of the values that are contradicting with Human Rights Declaration. Do you consider mall-treatment of women as a cultural value, or stoning, torture or dictatorship as "Cultural Values" of Asians or Muslims. Thanks

-posted 8 days ago by behdadbor (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1609664)



I think that western concept of universalism often led to catastrophic consequences. For instance, let's think about Imperialism. Imperialism, apart from a specific economic motive, had even a wider cultural ones. Eugenetic has been one of the consequences, and millions of people have been left dying for starvation in India and southern Africa. Given this, I think the only concept that can describe and make effective universalism is the "rule" (provided, for instance, by Habermas in "The inclusion of the other") stating that a law must be produced by individuals acting both as legislator (imposing) and as citizen (imposed). The universality of Human Rights stays in the evidence that no one would reasonably renounce to them for any possible reason. It is not allowed to anyone to deprive another of its human rights since the same person wouldn't reasonably accept to be deprived of the same rights. Till this golden rule will hold, human rights will be considered as universal, but, since "principles" are not eternal (think about the concept of "citizenship" before French Revolution), nothing ensure this status quo will hold forever.

-posted 8 days ago by MassimoPrivitera (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3337303)



universal. Most nations that emerged after the Declaration would have accepted the principles as worth protecting.

-posted 8 days ago by Omolokun (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/305567)



The notion of respecting human rights is becoming more and more complex as our world shrinks and vocabulary expands. In Canada we find ourselves struggling to protect rights without impeding on other's rights. Collectively and individually. I think a big challenge the world will face is finding the right balance between individual and universal protection of rights. Does an individual's right trump or bow down to the rights of a collective?

-posted 8 days ago by Kevinrstubbs (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/192674)



I don't think that the UHDR infringe on specific national, religious or cultural traditions. They are a **distillation** of most (if not all) major religious foundations. Therefore there is no inherent conflict with the best practices of mature nations, mature religions and long surviving traditions. There will be aberrations - fortunately they do not define broad based acceptance .

Do the UHDR represent some "conditions" for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve? I am not so sure - instead I would prefer to say that since the UHDR are a collection of rights that EVOLVED from the traditions (and not the other way around), there is a likely chance that MORE rights will get included into the UHDR by evolving traditions!

-posted 8 days ago by sunilguptasg (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2833519)



Please look for "Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action " <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/vienna.aspx> (<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/vienna.aspx>) Emphasizing that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which constitutes a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, is the source of inspiration and has been the basis for the United Nations in making advances in standard setting as contained in the existing international human rights instruments, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,

-posted 8 days ago by behdadbor (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1609664)



It is baffling to see that in a evolving society that trough knowledge and culture is becoming more assimilated , and in a environment that with the help of internet and all forms of modern communication should have brought more understanding and tolerance , the distorted use of religion , creed and greed has brought deterioration and not improvement and at least not as much progress to the Universal declaration of Human Rights and its principles .

-posted 8 days ago by Alepalms (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2835840)



1. I think that universal human rights are they a condition for specific national, religious or cultural traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve, because the concept of human rights is a cornerstone of our humanity. Such rights are not granted because a man is a citizen of a country or belong to a nation, but rightfully belong to all mankind. Thus, for example, the right not to be tortured states itself regardless of the country of which a man is a citizen and also that the government of that country plans. So, even if the cultural traditions of a people see as justified torture in certain cases, the notion of universality of human rights condemns this practice. Moreover, the notion of universality of human rights such as freedom of expression, can also prevent certain minority positions in a people are overwhelmed by the will of the majority.
2. In Brazil, human rights are seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings and is a very important part of our Constitution and laws. In fact, Human Rights Treaties can have the same power as a constitutional amendment and decisions of international courts of human rights are binding to Brazilian Judiciary.

-posted 8 days ago by Felipe\_Vianna (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2289821)



Universalism is an ideal worth aiming for. However it is easier to imagine than to practice. Western powers have restricted businesses in developed countries, on Human Rights considerations, however in some cases there could be valid suspicion that maybe it was to reduce competitiveness of poorer countries. USA has a laxer application of collateral damage when using drones in other countries, which they would never tolerate in their own countries, therefore 'right to life' in other countries has a different value then in their own. Therefore Universality of Human Rights, is still an ideal and hopefully it will one day bcomee truly Universal.

-posted 8 days ago by sikanderhamid (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1300462)



Speaking as someone from the USA, my perception is that we in the USA tend to view human rights as universal. That said, I believe our state (and by extension many people in our country) has a tendency to view itself as above the specific restrictions, predicated upon the notion that when we act abroad it is in support of the greater good, even if the tactics employed are sometimes condemnable. I believe we tend to view other countries as needing to have human rights enforced from the outside, while we are above that.

It's a problematic mix, weaving together arrogance, selfishness, and yet also a strong desire to be a positive force for human rights.

-posted 8 days ago by DaveWhitson (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2945811)



*Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?*

In a world of such diversity and multiplicity of perspectives there can be no universal, global position on the matter. I think that many citizens from around the world may (initially or irredeemably) feel that the DOHR (Declaration Of Human Rights) is externally imposed- particularly people who believe a fundamentalist or literal interpretation of their religion or culture. This has been my experience when engaging in dialogue with persons of this particular worldview, and the following ideas have been put forward:

1. The belief that their traditions or texts are correct and infallible and that the DOHR is modern and man made. They hold the position that should the two seem to disagree in any way, that their religious texts or traditions hold sway.
2. The belief that if man "gives rights to man", man can take them away- and that therefore a religious view of spiritual value, especially in terms of affirming "moral" behaviour (as the basis of inalienable rights) which appeals to the idea of a God to judge (in accordance with their particular religious texts) and bestow rights of a higher (more refined and superior)

nature than those penned by man and politicians.

3. The belief that a particular religion should dictate civil life and mores, and that politics and social organisation and justice is subject to religion rather than needing to be separated.

On the other hand there are a number of religious groupings within the abrahamic, eastern and other ancient religions- or originator cultures across the globe- who do not agree with the above stated literalist position and hold the perspective that the "justice, goodness and truthfulness" embodied in the DOHR (albeit imperfectly)- is in direct alignment with the essence of their religious and cultural perspectives. These persons tend to work directly through programs for social justice and the protection of universal rights in the day to day application of the DOHR within their areas of interest. A local example of this would be The Inner Circle <http://theinnercircle.org.za/> (<http://theinnercircle.org.za/>) a queer muslim organisation dedicated to "promoting Equity, Justice and Inclusivity".

Similarly, secular, civil and academic (non- religious) persons often align well with the principles of the DOHR- opposition to human rights within this segment of society seems to be of a more corporate or economic nature: the resistance to the protection of human rights when it interferes with profit making and political power. For example see this article on the intersection of human rights and business: [http://www.ihrb.org/top10/business\\_human\\_rights\\_issues/2014.html?gclid=CPnS-f3907wCFWfLtAodpS0AIQ](http://www.ihrb.org/top10/business_human_rights_issues/2014.html?gclid=CPnS-f3907wCFWfLtAodpS0AIQ) ([http://www.ihrb.org/top10/business\\_human\\_rights\\_issues/2014.html?gclid=CPnS-f3907wCFWfLtAodpS0AIQ](http://www.ihrb.org/top10/business_human_rights_issues/2014.html?gclid=CPnS-f3907wCFWfLtAodpS0AIQ))

Personally and professionally I see the DOHR as the basis of all that is necessary for national and global peace and development. I believe that through careful and considerate languaging in dialogue with those that oppose them, or do not support them, one might make strides in forging connections which can lead to real progress in protecting basic rights for all.

Humanising both the opposition to, and the intended target of, human rights work would ensure that the rights themselves would permeate any action meant to implement and realise them in society. I believe that the likelihood of their acceptance is linked to the commitment to avoid taking up stances of privilege, superiority, narrow mindedness and nationalism. I believe that holding nations and citizens accountable to the DOHR is absolutely imperative to the improvement of the health and well being of millions of people.

*In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?*

The social context in South Africa remains divided along class, gender and racial lines, and so there is no universal answer to this question. Politically we have one of most liberal constitutions in the world with rights entrenched for all irrespective of race, gender, religion, class, health or sexual orientation: we tend to take the protection of minority rights very seriously. These laws were created under our new democratic and free leadership, so they are accepted ideologically. However in reality there are still extremely marginalised groups in our society who are subject to frequent human rights abuses because at lower levels of government there are problems with implementation.

South Africa is still a very patriarchal society, which interestingly enough transcends afrikaans/ english white, african black, hindu, jewish and moslem cultures. Misogyny is endemic in much of our society. The laws of the land are almost irrelevant in day to day personal interactions: possibly believed to be imposed by the government and not a reflection of the average citizen. We experience some of the highest rates of gender based violence (GBV) and crimes against children in the world. This is an indication that although on paper we seem to accept human rights as true and worthwhile, in reality the dignity of all human beings is not an accepted cultural norm. In the provision of basic services such as sanitation or access to water, health services and education we fall seriously short. Our problem is implementation and not ideology.

Having said that we do have problems with religious and cultural literalists who have fought to

restrict freedoms in the past and who live out their cultural mores against others: the so- called corrective rape (and murder) of, mainly, black lesbians by predominantly South African black men is common and often gotten away with. Women and children are trafficked. Workers are abused. We have experienced xenophobic violence against refugees who face staggering discrimination and little protection from the law. Religious factions in South Africa still treat women and children badly, restrict their freedoms and abuse them. Sex work is criminalized and sex workers face abuse and victimization daily e.g. the police harass them, abuse them, take their condoms, want bribes, health workers discriminate when providing health services. One of the most marginalised groups is made up of transgender or intersex persons who face high levels of violence and abuse.

The gap between our constitution and our lived reality is wide and possibly the result of a (necessary) fast- tracked political process of democratization only 20 years ago, which was the first ever attempt in South African history to make just laws. The true cultural acceptance of living in a free and fair society after hundreds of years of violent oppression is doubtful: South Africans are both the oppressors and the oppressed and this will take some time to clear from our collective psyche.

On the other hand, many South Africans have deep cultural ties to an African philosophy of human rights called **ubuntu**, which to quote Desmond Tutu, states that "Ubuntu [...] speaks of the very essence of being human... It is to say, "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours." We belong in a bundle of life. We say, "A person is a person through other persons.

We are twenty years into a process of freeing people to return to their cultural roots and identities in South Africa: the hope is that as free citizens we will be able to access traditional wisdom that will prove a dependable foundation in supporting a modern culture of human rights; something restored to all of us rather than imposed by foreigners and therefore wholeheartedly taken up by all South Africans, for all South Africans.

-posted 8 days ago by cathwrynn (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3449872)



That is great analysis of DOHR. I agree that fringe religious zealots (including muslims) may have their xenophobic interpretations of Human rights. Religions teachings by their very nature can have different interpretations, but unfortunately the extremist interpretation gains the most publicity. I agree with your statement that Human Rights fails in implementation. It is not a foreign imposed ideal, because 8 of the original countries of Eleanor Roosevelt's committee were muslims. What I was referring to is that Human Rights should be implemented with the vigour it deserves, and Universality should not less universal for some and more for others. The ideal of DOHR is commendable and has to be supported.

-posted 8 days ago by sikanderhamid (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1300462)



I can imagine what would have happened if the universal human rights have never adopted, but in so many countries human rights still not adopted fully as it is ought to be...

-posted 8 days ago by Erdenes (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1939197)



In some countries the UHR have still not been adopted but do not forget that each people, each country, each tribe has its own understanding of human rights. Some of the UHR components are seen as exogenous while some are well accepted.

-posted 7 days ago by Placyde (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/107412)



, secular, civil and academic (non- religious) persons often align well with the principles of the DOHR- I Agree with that. However, the religion (not fundamentalism) was invented by humans for the very purpose since people those days were not academically evolved, the insistence on honesty, decency, charity and nonviolence through religion. Interpretations by wrong individuals resulted in egoistic fundamentalism moral policing etc. I agree with madam that education gives the right perspective and that's the way to go. But I do not agree with her that DOHR or

Universalism is western. Remember the times of M.L.King and his junior. Apartheid of SA. A tamil poet 2000 years ago has a song that tells you that all places are ours and all people are our relatives and Swami Vivekanand called out to the world in 19th century that all of us are brothers and sisters. When the west was wild and wilder the sangha period literature showed a wrong is a wrong even if committed by God. There were women poets at that time itself. However, it all drained down as ancient glory with vested interest people misguiding the youth and people in general ending up in bans and rapes. Yes, now the west is playing the pivotal role of protecting human rights and I welcome that. So definitely HR are not an infringement on religion or tradition but the basis for decent life. But as someone has pointed out, [migrants vs locals] in the absence of all round prosperity, greed and meanier emotions emerge but no justification for inhuman treatment.

-posted 7 days ago by BASKARANJR (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/537960)



As to question 1 I can see that the some interpretations of religion may have problems with universal human rights, either because of the internal view that some people are of more value than others ( this could be anything, from believers versus non-believes or making distinctions based on birth, gender, sexuality etc,) or that religuous laws rule supreme and can not be subject of critique.

I live in a EU country and that country would like to be seen as having internalized HR but I see many problems as this is not really the case, HR have few impacts on local case laws, some HR instruments are seen as "imposeing"

-posted 7 days ago by invivo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/327172)



I am from Spain and therefore human rights are accepted though in my opinion, even if they had never been written, human right are something we are born with. The right to life, eat, being able to get an education, etc. Human right are just puré common scence, the thing is human beings has lost it over the time, power easily changes the moral of an individual, and if you put more than one individuals with power together, catastrophy might appear. It's sad how in some countries women can't go to school and just have to be a housewife for all the eternity. I hope this thing change with time but...and here's a big BUT we can't impose them to do so, they need to realize it by themselves. not that i wouldn't love everyone living in harmony but when things are imposed not allways they turn out the way they're supposed to.

-posted 7 days ago by marinagalgo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3398556)



Hi everybody,I also think that universaL human rights are our basic fundamental rights and also unalienable ones.People are born with these rights,so in every country government has an obligation to provide all citizens with these rights.But of course ,people also sometimes infringe on one anothers rights.So we cannot override this fact and we also have to promote human rights among people and not to forget that our rights stops when other persons right begins.

-posted 7 days ago by ShabnamT (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2077230)



In the time of crisis in Europe human rights tend to devaluate. The other thing is a weakening role of countries and its governments. National radicalisms arise. Conservatism begins to take a prime role. Human rights (surprisingly) do not go along with conservatism. It turned out that countries in the time of crisis do not wish to support human rights, because it is too expensive. The wealthier state era seems to be over. National governance dissolves. I have a feeling that we are at a point of some revolutionary changes and human rights – as we know them - will need to adjust.

-posted 7 days ago by DominikaZ (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2967695)



There may always be a risk of human rights exceeding what is acceptable in certain countries. When this happens the very concept of 'human rights' can be undermined and de-legitimized in the eyes of a certain community or society. The solution, I feel, is to retain, as far as possible, a minimalist perspective. That is to say restraining human rights treaties and legislation withi



generally accepted bounds, the fundamental human rights, to find the highest common denominator but go no higher. For example, in many Western countries the right of homosexuals to marry is increasingly becoming a norm. But to impose this upon certain other regions of the world, places where it explicitly flies in the face of their cultural values may undermine the fundamental fight against global homophobia. Instead, human rights must find the highest denominator - e.g. homosexuals should not be imprisoned, murdered or deprived of their civil rights based on their sexuality. To go further than this, to tell Pakistan or Uganda for example that it is incumbent upon them to legalize gay marriage because of human rights may undermine the very idea of human rights in these places.

Another example may be state sanctioned executions. It may be impossible, at the present moment, no matter how desirable, to globally enforce a prohibition of the death penalty. So again, it is necessary to find the highest denominator: something like 'the State should not execute people without proper, fair and rigorous juridical process, based on established, consistent and knowable legal principles and processes, only for a limited range of the most serious crimes etc. etc.' The United States, China, Iran and all these other countries which retain the death penalty may, we hope, gradually progressive to the point where they can outlaw state sanctioned execution. But to insist, to impose a value they do not yet share, can alienate vast swathes of their populations (who may support the death penalty) from the underlying principles of fundamental human rights.

The historical context out of which the charter emerged should always be born in mind. The Universal Declaration grew out of the most deadly, barbaric conflict that human kind has known. It is to protect the people of the world from things that are so bad every reasonable person can agree it should cease and should never again occur. To impose culturally specific values, values which not all reasonable people across cultural boundaries can agree upon, muddies the water and threatens to undermine the broader principle of human rights.

-posted 7 days ago by ThomasPeak (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2808296)



I am from India, and here, I feel Human Rights have in no way infringed traditions we follow. Basic necessities have been covered by the UDHR, which seem to be requirements that one needs for a well-rounded development.

-posted 7 days ago by lAmSweta (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3503534)



I believe that the universal declaration of human rights is the necessary equilibrium between the two meta-narratives of world socialism and capitalist liberalism, it may be the way to find the sweet spot between autocratic exaggeration of real socialism, freedom and desmensurada anti social concerns of capitalist liberalism. I live in a country which generations of rights were given completely altered form of the classical Marshal. T.H pyramid, so much that civil rights are still completely disrespected.

-posted 7 days ago by Diogolitus (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/960651)



I found previous comment about millions of people starving in India very uninformed and absolutely untrue Please check your facts

-posted 7 days ago by cobrieni (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1470009)



In general, people in where I live "believe" in some universal human rights, although probably not in full agreement. However, when it comes to special issues, some people could argue that there are historical or some other reasons that some may not be fully implemented. Especially when one country is criticized by another, it is commonplace to accuse the other intruding on one's affairs.

-posted 6 days ago by honhso (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/82165)



- Universal human rights, regardless of whether they infringe on certain nation's cultural practices, are essential to the wellbeing of the population of the world. Like ThomasPeak stated above, nations have differing ideas on what constitutes human rights, however with the DOHR outlining the basis of human rights it is possible for all nations to understand what is universally accepted. I do not think nations should alter the basis of their culture to suit a global model, however, in certain countries people are suffering at the expense of these beliefs. In strict religious countries both men and women alike are persecuted for reasons that are seen by most of the Western world as minor offences. With cases like this it is not possible for the UN or any other political entity to intervene and fundamentally alter the religious and cultural beliefs of entire nations. However, the UN must find a way to prevent atrocities like this from occurring. Recent revelations of the extent of North Korean abuse of human rights (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/17/north-korea-human-rights-abuses-united-nations>) has sparked UN intervention, I think it will be highly interesting to see what unravels from this. The article above compares NK's actions to that of the Nazi's - the abuse that led to the DOHR - thus suggesting the Declaration doesn't achieve it's aim of preventing similar atrocities of WW2 in the future.

-posted 6 days ago by mattyrp (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2971929)



In my opinion, universal human rights do not infringe on specific traditions. First of all, I agree with Mary Ann Glendon that some things are so good or so atrocious that everybody must seek or reject them respectively. However, one may argue that this view stems from a Western tradition of universalism not endorsed by other cultures. Nonetheless, "infringing" on a culture's specific way of life would imply that they had been forced to follow a new set of rules. As I understand it, this was not the case for the DOHR. Rather was the Declaration the result of multinational negotiations, informal discussions and voluntary ratification.

-posted 6 days ago by Almagro (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/398597)



I agree with sunilguptasg.

-posted 6 days ago by Vessela (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2234492)



I totally agree with Mary Ann Glendon in her analysis about the universality of the Human Rights even if they infringe on certain traditions. There are some concepts (collected in the Chart) that appeal to the innate and universal ethics of the human being, mostly concerning the avoidance of suffering to others, and the protection of the less favored. If these concepts conflict with certain traditions, behaviors, laws, or even religious practices, the last are the wrong, and Humanity must disagree and condemn them wherever they come from. East or West.

-posted 6 days ago by Deboraorozco (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3472943)



i think we need to make a difference between different generations of rights, i think that most of us will agree that there is an inner core of rights that are basic, that arise or emerge from the very nature of the human beings, but there are some other, more evolved maybe, rights that can be explained better as an agreement done in highly developed societies, i mean some of the third and "firth" generation rights...

So, maybe the core (1-2nd generation) and maybe some of the third are based on human nature and dont recognize any barrier, while some other rights can be "discussed" or argued depending on the society and their stage of development.

-posted 6 days ago by Snidel (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/17336)



Human rights are those rights that are inseparably attached to all human beings as soon as they enter the living world. Their recognition guarantees a live of dignity. Therefore, their existence should not seen as infringing upon traditions of any kind. But ignorance of their existence is would surely beget mischief of every kind.

-posted 6 days ago by discipulux (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3027558)



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-posted 6 days ago by discipulux (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3027558)



Human Rights as Prof. Glendon stated is universal and that could be seen when different nations from different races had signed the bill for the declaration of human rights. To me, some sections of the Human Rights document does *infringe* on specific traditions and religions; that is clear in the Muslim's world!!! for the second question it is apparently that this Human rights are Western-oriented for what is applied in the west cannot be done in the east.

-posted 6 days ago by Nash1 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3505120)



To my mind, universal human rights constitute one of the fundamental reference for many nations, many people and religions aiming to the well-being of humanities. Even if some of human rights content infringe on certain traditions, the objectives still be the same : the well-being of humanities. However, as many of us said above the implementation of universal human rights is a big challenge for political powers which tend to abuses them. Finally, certain non governmental organisations or associations working on the field of promotion and protection of human rights own an important amount of financial aid but in reality they do nothing ; they are being rich and misuse this financial aid.

-posted 6 days ago by jean1christian (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3223898)



Since Universal Human Rights are core principles that are fundamental for all humans, then, by nature they shouldn't interfere with national culture, traditions or religions. Society itself determines what those parameters are and in fact the traditions, religion and culture of any country change with time, what is culturally acceptable today may have not been 10 years ago in the same country.

-posted 6 days ago by Yuyuba (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2791025)



I feel that the "Seeds of Human Rights" were sown with courage and a futuristic view that in the 21st. Century many Nations stand to benefit from the growth in Human Rights. It may appear Western but there are values that we can learn from each other, whether from the West or the East. What is unique is that the "seeds planted have sprouted" and needs to be tenderly cared for, so that human dignity is always sanctified. Here lies the challenge for all mankind to upkeep these rights with tolerance, respect and understanding.

-posted 5 days ago by AFERNZ (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1082833)



Diversity is a beauty, bringing harmony is a challenge.

Accepting a common set of harmonic rules can work but how do you reconcile so many Styles...

-posted 5 days ago by psam (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/758798)



In my country, Colombia, many Human rights are denied to a vast majority of the population and it is sadly a reality that the government tries to hide and ignore. It seems to me that Human rights are

just written paper unless the nations are willing to ensure, protect and provide those rights to the population. About the cultural traditions, I think the implementation of HR is an imperative, and I bring along traditions like female genital ablation practiced by many indigenous groups. Some traditions should evolve in a way that respects HR, but at the same time do no harm to the essence of those ancestral and valuable cultures. Traditions and culture itself were not created to subdue mankind but rather to complement it.

-posted 5 days ago by Maryloss (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3291714)



I believe human rights is the basic fundamental rights to people. My response to question #1 is in my country, Indonesia, we have so many ethnic groups that makes the diversity is such a present. Different ethnic groups have their own different perspective of living perhaps it is because of the religion they believe and the lesson from their ancestors. In some ethnic group, I still see a man has a power more than a woman. However, this phenomenon starts to shift into a respect that everyone has equal rights. From this phenomenon, I can draw a conclusion that these traditions started to evolve. But of course, it takes years.

To answer question #2, what I can observe in my country is that although human rights has been seen as an exogenous product, people started to reflect that human rights is a part of dignity of human beings. The question is how we keep and maintain our own identity, our own culture? In my prospective, I believe we should keep the good tradition such as respects. To be noted, traditions evolve.

-posted 5 days ago by knovatus (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2619572)



As I see it, the Declaration of Human Rights its an effort from a group of persons from all over the world to try to stop any kind of disaster with human as it is now the human trafficking, organ extraction, goverments punishing their people against manifestation of the free expression and others terms that we all know. How ever the DOHR tried to reduce these kind of disasters and to achieve such goods and needs as education,human development and others in order to mantain a lidership of the common wealth between andn in the countries no matter nationality, accepting their, cultural things, traditions, all these to try to protect people and to stop such a thing like it was Holocaust.

Question 1: In Guatemala, there was a civil war that started in 1962 and just end up in 1996. Guatemala took path of the DOHR in 1994. Untill that year guatemalans stoped been afraid to get along with each other and to show that they had diferents religions upon the most known.

Question No.2: what I do oberve in my country is that human rights was "an obstacle" to keep killing and to eliminate any kind of self expression, as the military goverments used to do. But also started to punish any intern development (economic development)because of the entry at the same time of new enterprises causing the assumption that the human rights was a bad thing in the population.

-posted 5 days ago by MeriBustamante (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3426035)



As Mary Ann Glendon says, universal human rights are multi-cultural but imperfectly multi-cultural, that is because there were only 9 countries that signed the Declaration of Human Rights that are considered islamic countries upon the 48 total signers countries. It means that the declaration is more according to the western traditions, than to the islamic and muslim ones. Some islamic traditions as the law of marriage is infringing the Article 16, because it prohibits the right to marry anyone without distinction of race, but it is a Human Right the freedom of thoughts and religion, so there is a contradiction. I live in a region where this Human Rights are saw as the basic law, I think that is because, despite the country where I life didn't signed the Declarations on 1948, the majority of votes where from countries that are similar to what my country is now.

-posted 4 days ago by ericrufas (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3516198)

Human rights are moral principles, universal and egalitarian and human rights demand constant attention and work.

-posted 4 days ago by ZoranIsrael (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1227738)

The tension between the notion that the UDHR infringes on cultural, religious and national traditions and the fact that philosophers, religious leaders and various others from across many cultural, religious and regional traditions suggests that these traditions are unequivocally accepted by all, that all those who call themselves Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, etc are united in their expression of faith (or other tradition - I am using religion as an example, not as the only defining feature of a person) or their belief in what that faith permits them to do (ownership of wives and daughters, FGM, etc). Rather, the UDHR, having so many representatives from across so many traditions, represents what many hold to be the central tenets of faiths, and so represents those prerequisite conditions for any society's growth, evolution and expression. Sadly, in the country I live in (Vietnam), is one of those that is a signatory to the UDHR and has many aspects of it enshrined in its constitution, yet regards these (at state-level) as little more than nods to international expectations with virtually no relevance to daily life.

-posted 3 days ago by cleamc (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2133528)

after watching the video, I wonder which was the perspective of a human rights imposed to the countries who entered later in the UN. Initially, cause the majority of these countries were countries under a democratic development, not only socially, but also in the legislative and government structure area. This, by all means, needs to be in consideration. As first part of the International Human Rights Treaty is a body of what we can consider universal rights, in the mentioned countries is a huge wall to jump, mostly from civil war and genocides.

Even though, at that time, countries of the world were in post-shock posture, so they were friendly by helping them to improve and protect those rights in these new members.

I funny how we give our human rights a sense of lightness even though for those who does not have them is a big difference.

-posted 3 days ago by evafrade (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3430201)

Ms. Eleonar did a great job, and the universal human rights were a big step for the planet, but we need to put them in practice, not only in a paper.

-posted 3 days ago by johalf (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2474407)

The issue of Human Rights is a very delicate one. No one can negate the fact that the document contains fundamental issues on Human Rights, but Nobody can also deny the fact that they encroach on the principles and traditions on the very existence of some people who inhabit certain part of the planet. This is self-evident from the commentaries I have read on this forum

-posted 2 days ago by joseuki13 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2768665)

Human rights can't be said to be an imposition to all the cultures. As Mary Ann Glendon puts it: "(...) education is what the declaration was all about" and she means that the main purpose of the declaration was not "enforcement" but "enculturation". The will of the human rights is intended to avoid atrocities being committed against human beings, but does not intend to attack any particular culture or tradition. That does not mean, though, that some traditions don't have to change to give a better and egalitarian way of living to the people living on them. On the other side, the fact that the UDHR was intended as a "guide" to protect the human itself, but not as a mean of action has led to many abuses because they haven't been protected properly in each country. I am from Chile and still there are many abuses from the military government that haven't been punished and many violations keep going on even from the police particularly in protection of

in situations like the "mapuche" conflict in the south. The declaration of human rights is not a finished work and there's a lot of work to be done issuing both it's theoretical conception and it's implementation in each country.

*-posted a day ago by codesxt (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/465429)*

The document is not complete (i.e. it does not mention a right to education as explained in the video) but was a good start for the international community to base its human rights law on. It does not seem to infringe on cultural, religious and traditional rights of other countries as it brought together many countries with a very rich and diverse background. You can't possibly agree on everything that's in the Declaration but reaching a consensus was important and countries understood the bigger purpose of this document.

HR are not respected pretty much everywhere at different degrees.

*-posted about 23 hours ago by Linh\_Boar (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2838903)*

The name itself says 'Human Rights', rights that every human is entitled to, irrespective of country, culture or political background. When x out of total n countries participate in creating such a declaration, it forms a basis for such rights to be put in place and practiced. Someone (or some countries) have to take the lead, and the ones signing the UDHR did. But, for various reasons, it hasn't yet resonated fully even in the countries that participated in it. Every country has set its own ground rules and boundaries as to what constitutes these rights, and they cite the very reasons posed as question here - infringement and interference. I am from India and the recent verdict on Article 377 in the Indian constitution is one such example. I feel wrong in saying that it is the UN's job to enforce human rights, because it is each country's duty and obligation to its citizens.

*-posted about 20 hours ago by TheKulkarni (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2810048)*

I am from China where people have no rights to vote, have no freedom of speech, have no rights to know how much our officials earn. I am interested in this course because I want to learn human rights and help more people to know that they live in a country where their human rights are badly ruined by their beloved government.

*-posted about 6 hours ago by alexguo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2371584)*

1. Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve? I think that human rights doesn't break any national, religious or cultural traditions, maybe could hit some practise, but at the end, we are all humans! the respect and recognize of the other as my brother is a key.
2. In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings? Well, it is a little bit complicate, here in Colombia we do not see human rights as a foreign product, but many people think that human rights should be only for good people, i live in a country with a war of 50 years, we can say that an entire generation doesn't know what peace is, so in this situation, it is difficult and almost a miracle see acts of dignity and respect for the other or accept the diversity.

*-posted about 5 hours ago by carlosmir (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1707107)*

Add a comment...

**bar0311 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3326831)** 8

25

days ago

Hey, I'm Bar from Israel, one of the most discussed about topics in the area of human right and their enforcement. Myself, I consider the human to be the base that on top of which we can build up our culture and societies in a diverse world, yet the problem is the enforcement of human rights isn't sufficient. The common people of the world, even if they do not acknowledge human right by the name of it, have no interest whatsoever to violate them. I can't imagine that someone wouldn't want to secure himself life in dignity, freedom, equality, education, healthcare etc. The problem is, though, that many time those in power benefit from violating the human right, as seen in my country for example. Sadly, I must say that most people in Israel overlook the human rights issues as a topic of mockery, this is perhaps due to that we stand at forefront of criticism (some important and is true, some is less...) but mostly i think that it is because our political system gains from the violations and educate through the formal channels for it to continue (unless of course it's Palestinians hurting Jews - then it's wrong...).

Report Misuse

Yes, the situation of human rights in every state is variable. So, the common people can only understand in subjectiv mood the situation. And the objective vision we can to have with help of Mass Medias and having a direct experiens of the reality of the rights

-posted 8 days ago by antement (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3458846)

My dear friend i am impressed by your frank views. I am from India and i think story is same. Powerful people misuses their position for self interests and overtly or covertly violet and suppress the human right of others

-posted 8 days ago by rameshthaken (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2229290)

Emphasizing the question of enforceability of HR's as well as power asymmetries between different actors on multiple levels of state governance is crucial to the discussion around the worth of universal HR's.

The Declaration is a normative basis, codified in an international document signed by independent member states. It is the basis for many claims on national level (for example migration and asylum issues), but it is also the central condition for basing oneself on an authority on international level - even one that is unenforceable between sovereign nation states. However, it was and is one of the most influential pieces of inter-state agreement forged in a time of rivalry and tensions among states in a new post-world war order.

However, there is a important difference between the 'right to benefit from things' and the 'ability to benefit from things' (Ribot & Peluso, 2003). This in a way mirrors the discussion around the indivisibility and interdependence of civil liberties and political rights (and duties) and socio-economic guarantees, as A. Sen in 'Rights and Capabilities' and Development as Freedom' has pointed out correctly.

I think there is an very important difference between rights to make a dignified living and the actual capabilities (or abilities) to make a dignified living. When it comes to institutions of resource governance, this is especially true.

In South African national law for example it is written that local communities have the right to participate in institutions that control, manage and distribute water. Law makes it an obligation for state actors to enforce it when implementing these institution. But power asymmetries, differences in resource access (social, physical, financial, natural, political) in between let's say commercial large scale irrigation farmers, resource-poor emerging subsistence farmers and mining companies, as well as (weak) government agencies monitoring the compliance to law are so huge that in reality the right means nothing in terms of practical benefit for example for rural communities.

02/25/2014 01:50 PM

That having been said, means not at all that rights are useless - quite the opposite - but without the ability or capability to actively benefit from their existence, they are 'nothing but words on paper' - that were the words of one of my interview partners from a rural area. So, without abilities to practically make use of a right, without the capabilities of individuals make an enforceable claim, the practical power of a declaration is limited. These capabilities in turn are results of many different actions, but in my south African example one of them is clearly how water is distributed (without water no capabilities). Such distribution in turn is not ultimately determined by any right, entitlement or law - although it might be guided by it - but by day to day contextual actions on a local level.

-posted 8 days ago by josh2210 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1234096)

Very interesting post, Josh. When you have longer posts like this, consider posting them as a response to the thread, rather than a commentary to someone else's post.

Keep up the good work,

Matthias

-posted 8 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**

rights to make a dignified living and the actual capabilities (or abilities) to make a dignified living. So, without abilities to practically make use of a right, without the capabilities of individuals make an enforceable claim, the practical power of a declaration is limited. I agree in toto. Water is bringing almost a war in my country as well. Dams constructed on the river between two federal states the one on the downward is deprived of water. Had this issue been dealt with by technical experts, possible solution would have been found. Politicians on both sides involved trying to make it an issue of political win. A loss to the farmers.

-posted 7 days ago by BASKARANJR (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/537960)

My concern with the UDHR is, as will almost every other movement to address fair, equal, or "universal" topic, this seems to have become a political game piece rather than a united effort on the part of the contributors to work towards a useful end goal. The United States is a perfect example of this - we have refused to fully endorse many parts of the UDHR (I'm considering 'torture' specifically) because it would limit what we consider 'our interests' in some way or another (with torture, it's the unstated argument that we must torture as it is a lesser evil to terrorist attacks). Israel has made many movements that I see the same way (I of course, do not speak as an expert, so I do not mean to offend, only offer my opinion) - it seems that Israel believes the "lesser evil" is repression of local inhabitants (mainly Palestinian and Christian populations) over the stated possibility of destruction/annihilation. It is not to say that the concern is not, in some aspects, real (as we have seen both terrorism and annihilation attempted) however, it seems to now be a game of politics rather than an action towards providing human rights. I would be interested to see if others have viewed this the same way or perhaps oppositely.

-posted 7 days ago by hmurtagh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3484661)

One issue which arises is when human rights are perceived to contradict each other. The freedoms of Israel and the freedoms of Palestine overlap, so it is difficult to enforce. The role of the UN, in such a case, should be to solicit international response to significant breach of human rights on individual and national levels which, unfortunately, leads to debates based on bias and self-interest by UN member states

-posted 7 days ago by sawnoftales (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2812945)

Moral and cultural values differ from one culture to another but in my opinion universal human rights Human rights are rights inborn to all human beings, whatever the differences are such as



nationality, color etc. We all have equal human rights without discrimination. Universal human rights are often stated and by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law and general principles and other sources of international law. In my region of the world (one of the EU member states) human rights are really important and observed by many organizations but in many areas we face a lot of problems such as the treatment of refugees and immigrants, overcrowding and harsh conditions in some prisons.

-posted 7 days ago by lidathanas (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3141707)



The recognition of human rights is considered a part of being American by most of us in the US; however, we have a long way to go. What is being said about education is so true. Human rights courses should be a part of the school curriculum starting at an early age. Our children should grow up recognizing these rights and that they are universal.

I do not feel that human rights concepts come only from Western tradition. Feeling that we or our culture is unique in that way is one of the things leading to prejudice against other peoples. All humans have the same needs, inclinations and desires. One of the purposes of human rights seems to be to respect that.

-posted 6 days ago by GlennaSue (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2592729)



human rights can not be universal if it does not take the states' specialities.

-posted 5 days ago by RemHab (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2429253)



elementary human rights are universal. Nearly all independent countries are member of the UN.

-posted 5 days ago by lifeforresearch (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1757363)



I think the universal human rights are the set of privileges inherent in the nature of the person. These rights must be recognized and guaranteed by the state.

-posted 5 days ago by georgina2015 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3347114)



Human Rights is our right to live dignity for the mere fact that we are born as human beings. In India human rights are conferred in the form of Fundamental Rights thereby forming the basis of Indian constitution. The source being The U.N Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus, the importance of human rights is just as significant as anywhere across the globe. The conflict arises when the policies of the government are not in tune with the changing mindset and the needs of the people.

-posted 2 days ago by richamathur (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1400700)



**hmutragh** said:

as will almost every other movement to address fair, equal, or "universal" topic, this seems to have become a political game piece rather than a united effort on the part of the contributors to work towards a useful end goal.

The place of 'values' in international relations is always an ambiguous one. States may, and often do, justify their actions on the international scene by reference to supposedly shared values. But it is often easy to see through their claims, because their actions directly infringe on the very same values these states claim to be upholding.

This brings me to my second point.

**sawnoftales** said

One issue which arises is when human rights are perceived to contradict each other.

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We will be discussing this in depth in later sections, but it is clear that there are situations in which multiple rights (of the same or of different rights-holders) are at stake and that it might be difficult to reconcile them. In international human rights law has developed techniques to address these issues, as we will see later on.

-posted 2 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) STAFF

Add a comment...

**abhiroop1 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1626460)** 8

10

days ago

A universal framework of rights is the starting point but definitely not the end-all, be-all of rights. It is good to have the universal framework adapted in keeping with local traditions and needs of the people. This sounds fine in theory, in reality, who decides how to tweak the universal framework in line with local needs? This begs the question shouldn't this right be mandatory for all civil society to follow, so we take out the factor of random application of something that everyone deserves.

To part two of the question, the place where I come from in the Middle East, it is easy-going for those with money, tough on the poor since the rights to basic needs are limited for them. This opens a complex system of economic factors tied to civil rights and I have no clear mandate on what's right or what's the way forward. Every standpoint on this issue seems debatable, as history points out not all people have been happy and well taken care of at all times.

 Report Misuse

1. The idea of a document that embodies universal human rights, based on the fact that there is a group of principles that can be observed in all the cultures in the world, is very positive in the perspective that some rights cannot be denied to the person and must be declared in the form of a declaration. Nevertheless, this very idea presupposes that all the cultures should abdicate from the share of their culture that enforces practices that would violate the universal human rights. This is obviously a form of infringing traditions. As professor Mary Ann Glendon said, the Declaration is about "enculturation", a word that could mean, as Oxford's Dictionary define: "the gradual acquisition of the characteristics and norms of a culture or group by a person, another culture". Therefore, even though the rights declared in the 1948's document could be seen as fundamental to the humanity, they are, certainly, a form of compel some cultures to follow western values.
2. In Brazil, human rights are seen as part of the national culture, and the 1988 Constitution, developed after 25 years of non-democratic government, expressly establishes civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, following the parameters determined in the UDHR. The two covenants that followed the UDHR were also ratified in Brazil.

-posted 8 days ago by ivanpfigueiredo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2844074)

Hi Ivan, as you said, "Nevertheless, this very idea presupposes that all the cultures should abdicate from the share of their culture that enforces practices that would violate the universal human rights. This is obviously a form of infringing traditions." - can you give an accurate example of this? I am from Europe, so I am part of the western culture, so I wonder if you had in mind an example of this "giving up of a share of culture" to "enculturate" with the western tradition. Would there be an example from Brazil? Thanks a lot, Irena.

-posted 7 days ago by Urtscha (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3488967)



Hello, Irena. What I meant with that phrase is that values like the ones endorsed by the UDHR are common to western cultures, like yours or mine. In our culture, both rooted on the western culture, rights like equality or freedom are conceived as ideals that have to be pursued by a society that intends to be "civilized" in the western definition of civilization. Therefore, when countries like Brazil, or most countries in Europe, agree to respect the rights established in the UDHR, they are not abdicating of a share of their culture, since following those rights is part of the western's idea of an ideal civilized society.

However, some cultures have particular characteristics that are not compatible with some of the "universal" rights declared in the UDHR. Maybe the Hindu caste system or strict muslim religion oriented societies do not see the equality of rights between every person as a universal right. I am not saying that discrimination is "right", but it is also not right that a group of rights should be considered an "inherent" part of the human being, and that societies that do not adopt these rights are less civilized. This kind of argument was used to justify the extermination of the indigenous cultures of the South America, that were considered "wild cultures" by the Europeans, during the colonialism era.

Whence, the declaration of a body of universal rights is not compatible with the diversity of cultures and deposits a large amount of power on the institutions that are in charge of defining the line between the preservation of human dignity in the western parameters and the enculturation of a different culture.

-posted 7 days ago by ivanpfigueiredo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2844074)



Hello Ivan, thanks a lot, I will think about the UDHR and the cast system, it might be an example! By the discussion growing I found some other examples, too. Thanks a lot!

-posted 6 days ago by Urtscha (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3488967)



Universal human rights at the moment seems to be what we can strive for but perhaps we have to have much patience. There are people and parts of countries and whole countries who are mainly at the point of trying to survive. Being human seems to mean survival first, recognition of other's human rights can then be considered. Unfortunately we have much work to do as a globe.

-posted 6 days ago by GlennaSue (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2592729)



Adopting a relativistic approach can be tricky since by establishing that all cultures/traditions are worth of respect or are equally valuable and it is wrong to criticize them, we are paradoxically setting an universal moral principle (non censure of alien cultures).

I believe, in favor of tolerance and multiculturalism, the key might be analyzing/targeting specific practices instead of cultures. Then, acknowledging that certain Western practices are better than certain Eastern ones, for instance, shouldn't be a problem because even in the West and given our History (Enlightment, cosmopolitism, secularism...) there is a huge diversity and Human Rights have been the result of social conquests through time. In Spain, not so long ago (1970s) women had to be accompanied by men in their daily lives -like current Saudi Arabia. In short, we used to have traditions that are no longer accepted. Why is it that we sometimes (in an extremely *politically correct* view) look at other countries as exotic entities and not demand change when we demand it for ourselves?

I do believe in universalism and compatibility with cultural diversity. That doesn't mean the UDHR is perfect or complete -as some people pointed out already- but it is a minimum.

The Hindu caste system is an interesting example because the Indian society is changing after the affirmative action laws passed.

-posted 6 days ago by Diane\_novi (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1060268)

I think the major achievement of the UDHR is to agree on this general framework based on education instead of enforcement. Maybe, but certainly not only, because I'm also from Brazil, I agree with Ivan when he says that "the declaration of a body of universal rights is not compatible with the diversity of cultures and deposits a large amount of power on the institutions that are in charge of defining the line between the preservation of human dignity in the western parameters and the enculturation of a different culture." There is also the important fact that the UDHR is a political document and as one was subject to the political forces and diplomacy in a particular time in history, when the world as a whole was fragilized by two major wars. This certainly contributed to the accordance from non-western civilizations to the terms of the agreement. Now that the world has changed we still see a great amount of violation of human rights, I dare say, in almost all of the countries that signed the Declaration.

In Brazil we have constitutionalized the human rights presented on the UDHR, but we still face a lot of problems in implementing them, specially social and culture rights. In our constitution these rights are seen as universal, but as Ivan correctly noted, we are inserted in the western civilization...

-posted 4 days ago by JuliaMattei (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3011002)

I believe that after the Declaration was adopted, it gave the States a chance, a chance to develop and evolve. But did they use their chance? As we can see, most countries of the world have ratified the Declaration; however, another question is whether these countries obey the principles of the Declaration. Sadly, a lot of countries still ignore even the basic provisions on human rights (e.g., right to life, freedom from torture etc.), and it's even more frustration that violations of these rights take place in the most developed countries. Double standards?? I come from one of the ex-Soviet countries where human rights have never been of major concern of the government, and I must admit that this type of behavior negatively impacts our social, cultural, economic and political life. We are still lagging behind, and to my opinion all this is happening because our human rights are being neglected. I am patriotic but I must admit that Western standards are much more progressive, and when it comes to human rights, most of the countries should follow the example of the West.

-posted 2 days ago by svetlanamari (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3505777)

Add a comment...

**lutze1983 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2867723)** 8

16

days ago

Human rights don't infringe on specific national, religious or cultural traditions, they are indeed careful to be inclusive of all these things to a point. I'd consider particular traditions that go against basic human rights as now actually infringing on human rights. Here in Amsterdam, human rights are seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings and not foreign at all, we all aspire to these rights. I'm not sure I've ever met anyone who would disagree.

 Report Misuse

It's nice to see a nation that unites effort in protecting human dignity. I could say that here, in Brazil, few people (and mostly only jurists) take the commitment to uphold human rights. People fail to realize that the protection of human dignity is not only an obligation of the government, but of ALL people.

-posted 8 days ago by Pleomax (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1164096)



I agree. If everyone could understand the notion of human rights as protecting human dignity then there couldn't be any issue with universality of human rights. Sometimes those who challenge universality do so so that the can propagate violations.

-posted 8 days ago by ModestaN (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3336079)



A great point....

-posted 8 days ago by YvonneMattei (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2054711)



I'm pretty sure the Dutch Party for Freedom has a different view on human rights than an awful lot of other people, especially on freedom of religion and immigration.

-posted 8 days ago by Firebringer (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2280614)



yeah u r right no one in their right mind would disagree. But there are the so called nationalists or fundamentalists who might brand them as western antireligious etc. When HR are basic values to humanity as u had rightly pointed out.

-posted 7 days ago by BASKARANJR (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/537960)



In some regions, universal human rights are infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions. I would think about the status of human rights of women in some African or Middle-East states. However, we need to remember who wrote the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Sub-Sahara African countries were not part of the negotiations, but they are asked to respect it. I am afraid that universality is not a universal concept but a western countries concept.

-posted 7 days ago by GenBdx (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1320793)



I thought this was interesting, that Sub-Saharan countries were not part of this discussion. I would like to see a declaration that was discussed by all countries, nationalities, & religions. However, I do wonder what these countries would have objected or added to the document. Any ideas?

-posted 7 days ago by hmurtagh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3484661)



"If everyone could understand the notion of human rights as protecting human dignity then there couldn't be any issue with universality of human rights."

Here is one of the rubs. The problem arises when not everyone agrees on what is included in the definition of human dignity. Case in point: in the U.S. there has been much discussion and legislation involving sexual orientation. There are those that believe it is a human right to be

allowed to marry same sex partners. There are those that believe it is an affront to their religious beliefs to be forced to participate in and recognize same sex unions. How are rights afforded to one group without taking away rights of another group?

-posted 7 days ago by RebeccaFromWA (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2961303)

This is a great quote in response. However, I'm not sure I fully understand why the issue of LGBT rights are at odds with UDHR. If the government doesn't force religious institutions to marry people, but allows marriage within the government legal setting and religious institutions willing to participate, this doesn't violate religious right or the larger human rights. Does this view make sense? Or could it still be seen as a violation of one?

-posted 7 days ago by hmurtagh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3484661)

Well said! I certainly do think that the concept of Human rights are laid down so as not to infringe or encroach on any specific national, religious or cultural traditions. Human Rights goes far and beyond by making such traditions all inclusive in the protection of these as a whole. This is why laws which are not compatible with the rights would fail once the matters are taken to court by way of a 'Declaration of Incompatibility'. However, we must remember that some things are easier said than done especially in theoretical and practical law. The law does try to get it right especially where Human Rights are concerned because of its fragile nature.

-posted 7 days ago by JokeShody (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3136214)

For people that have borned in the modern countries it's easy to say that they are "good" or "dignity" because their culture have produced these rights; culture and speech are the same; however, in "the other" countries and regions, this relatishion ship it's not the same. For example in America (latin america for gringos) some people don't talk about dignity, they talk about BUEN VIVIR

-posted 7 days ago by johnyx94 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2700822)

When human rights infringes on a religion or government, that is when that religion or government or one's interpretation of them have to be questioned. Much of the problem with the world's religions are not with the original religions themselves but with wrong interpretations of those religions by some people. Where the golden rule is a part of more than one religion, those same religions are interpreted by some of their members as going against that doctrine. That shows in some ways that it HR do not actually infringe on that religion but on some of the people in that religion who perhaps do not understand it appropriately.

-posted 6 days ago by GlennaSue (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2592729)

I think that the concept of universal human rights is definitely something that is hard to grasp but something that was attained when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was written. At the time so many different cultures were in agreement to follow and those countries that weren't have in some form adopted these same standards. There is always going to be that person, group or entity in some way disagrees with the idea of a universal ideology, but I think the generalities of the declaration in itself allow for it to be universal. These human rights are upholding a standard of humanity rather than limiting religions, cultures or people from acting. If there is question to these rights, I think the question lies in the inhumanity of the violations.

I think that human rights are definitely seen as felting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings from my part of the world (US). There are many times people question our involvement as a nation in certain issues but I think the basis of what we believe in as human rights and what we stand for as a nation is what causes us to get involved. As a military member there are many times our country has been in circumstances that we question why are we involved or questioning our own personal sacrifices to what we are doing, but in the end when we see what is going on in the world we know we are involved for a reason.

-posted about 14 hours ago by VictoriaMayo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3002041)

Add a comment...

**trillion (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/972099)** 8 days

5

ago

Human Rights is the most fundamental moral and political value that sustains our global community, and is a guide to humankind that we must work and structure our lives, values and cultures that inherently has Human Rights as the moral code for all human beings, and the welfare of other living species on our planet earth.

 Report Misuse

It is an interesting point you mention about 'other living species on our planet earth'. Do you think the Human Rights extent to animals as well? It was one of the things I was wondering about with regard to cultural differences: in some cultures some animals are holy (Indian - cow); should the protection of cows then be included due to the right to religion?

-posted 8 days ago by IrisNube (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1234887)

I do not think that Human Rights should so much extend to animals, but the compassion it takes to understand and sustain Human Rights would also include having respect for all life on Earth. Animals should not be protected because they are part of someone's religion so much as they should be protected in their own right as other living creatures.

-posted 8 days ago by Annzi (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2172053)

Practically the notion of respecting human rights does not exist, i invoke this because am from the great lakes region( Burundi, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda) in these countries they have ratified different conventions on the protection of human rights. But the question is this: do these countries respect fundamental rights? probably no, they simply have this law in their official gazette but do not use them where necessary. Torture, distinction based on ethnic group still an issue. In summary human rights are not respected and those super power play a great role non respect of human right.

-posted 7 days ago by EddyKing (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3375315)

I agree with you that Human Rights are not been enforced to the satisfaction of everyone from those regions you mentioned. there is the need to form more NGOs to push for the implementations for those fundamental rights. I'm from Nigeria, It gives me serious headaches to see Democratic Republic of the Congo in turmoil, and nobody says or does something to ameliorate those bad conditions there.

-posted 5 days ago by joseuki13 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2768665)

I agree completely. Just signing for the human rights does not say anything about respecting them.

-posted 3 days ago by sarah1988nijh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2826633)

I agree there is an issues with enforcing these laws/rights but at the same time it is a difficult situation in determining the time of involvement and where those resources are coming from. It doesn't seem that the United Nations is necessarily doing what they were designed to do but at the same time countries that are more wealthy or stronger are the ones looked at to constantly prevent

these atrocities that are occurring. This is a catch 22, as it is also seen as countries getting involved when they should not be or the strain this causes on these countries internally.

-posted about 14 hours ago by VictoriaMayo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3002041)



Add a comment...

**Pleomax (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1164096)** 8

8

days ago

It is undeniable that in certain countries governed by harsh cultures, the statement and evolution of human rights fosters internal conflicts, sometimes moving away from a condition of supremacy certain secular habits maintained over several generations. This, however, is not in essence a loss to national the traditions. Although, in some respects, the national dominant culture suffers with the evolution of human rights (and, therefore, with the admission of freedom under various aspects: cultural, religious, of sexual orientation, etc.), this does not spoil the maintenance of past habits. As a matter of fact, nothing prevents the peaceful coexistence of individuals with distinct customs in the same territory. One could say that, in a cultural aspect, this is the role of the human rights: to allow the peaceful coexistence of different customs. In other words, human rights do not have the intention to overcome the prevailing habits of a certain country, but only to make room for diversity and freedom of expression in all its forms.

Human rights play an important role in the modern history of Brazil. From very early on, with the national independence, emerged in Brazilian the concern for human rights, being adopted (in 1824 ) a constitution grounded in liberty ideals, removing Brazil from the era of darkness and inserting it in the era of lights . Over the years, however, the term "human rights" acquired a pejorative connotation in Brazil, serving to refer to liberals and impunity. Thankfully, despite the negativity that has been attributed to the expression "human rights", the central idea remains strong, especially in the academic and political world. There is an increasingly concern with respect for the dignity of persons, in particular of the vulnerable individuals. The dignity of the human person is a guiding criterion for the Brazilian legal system. It is one of the fundamental objectives of the Federative Republic of Brazil ( Article 1, section III of the Constitution of 1988). It requires respect not only by the government, but by all people, as we live under the umbrella of a democratic state. All individuals must join forces to respect human dignity and diversity.

Report Misuse

Add a comment...

**kashfi (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1183790)** 8 days

2

ago

Hi everyone! I tend to agree with Mary regarding the guiding principles, spirit and motivation behind the UDHR enterprise. At the same time, there can be no denying the fact that the debate surrounding the issue of universality of human rights still cuts clean across national, social, cultural and religious lines. Nevertheless, to me, this, in itself, is reflective of a healthy sign. It represents a debate among the humankind and, despite divergence of opinions, it will eventually lead to a resolution of outstanding issues and understanding among all stakeholders that the UDHR, infact, guarantees the very national, social, cultural and religious rights that some of its critics accuse it of contravening. Moreover, I also firmly



believe that it is the selective adherence to the principles embodied in the UDHR on part of the powers that be while dealing with violations of human rights at international level that encourages the affectees to question the very spirit of the UDHR document itself. Once the application of human rights' principles is dissociated from the narrow confines of national interests of the powerful states and an across the board adherence is ensured while dealing with international issues, the situation is going to register a marked improvement for sure. Insofar as the geographical region I hail from - Kashmir, Pakistan and broader South Asia - is concerned, the perception, by and large, remains highly polarized. While a significant and ever-growing liberal/progressive section continues to remain engaged in campaigning to promote the principles embodied in the UDHR, a considerable conservative section does not spare any opportunity to level allegations against the human rights' activists. The most commonly levelled allegation pertains to labelling such activists as the stooges of the West out to impose western values and culture on native societies.

 Report Misuse

Hi dear friends ! I think that universal human rights are not infringing on the specific national or cultural traditions, Universal human rights consist of the fundamental rights so they are good condition for specific traditions to thrive. I think that although UDHR is not a binding contract and just declares fundamental rights, it has launched a great era for the promotion and encouragement of human rights.

-posted 8 days ago by ShabnamT (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2077230)



Not being sufficiently knowledgeable on the values of diverse cultures and religions, it is very difficult to state with any degree of certainty how the UDHR sits with these various traditions. From empirical observation through travel in various parts of the world and interaction with people from diverse cultures (both of course fairly limited), it seems to me that there are some basic values that one can discern to be common to humanity. The extent, emphasis and expression of these certainly vary but still share a degree of generality. Help for the needy, empathy with the suffering, feeding the hungry, and generally assisting others to a realisation of their better self, are fairly common motivations in human affairs. This to me is the basis of universal human rights. Problems certainly arise in interpersonal relations relating to the selfishness and bullying tendencies of some people to others, especially in competitive situations like politics, and wealth and power acquisition. These may give the impression of an innate tendency to wickedness and a penchant for mutual destruction among human beings. But I think these tendencies reflect a negative extreme of human interaction and not the norm. In an effort to minimise these negative tendencies, societies tend to establish codes of conduct aimed at precluding their becoming generalised in social intercourse. The extension of this sentiment to a universal level is what the UDHR is all about. And the fact that it was possible for a diversity of nations to agree on the fundamental principles attests to the innate desire to have such values instilled and respected on a global scale, because they represent the basic norms of human motivations. The major difficulties relate to the sphere in which this general humane tendency is given expression and the immediate circumstances and vested interests that may be impacted at any point in time when an attempt is made to enforce them. Thus issues of immigration policy may question whether the right of an individual extends to a right to residency in a foreign country, especially if the country in question is experiencing economic hardship. In the domestic sphere, unethical leaders would quarrel with human rights issues when their proclivity to autocratic rule is threatened by the invocation of these principles. There certainly is a feeling in some quarters that fundamental human rights are Western notions, which the West itself ignores at its convenience. But while the notion of Western double standards can be convincingly argued in certain cases, the ideas underlying these values seem to me to be intrinsic to human nature, with their violations, from whatever quarters, reflecting largely the convenience of political operatives for their own reasons. The foregoing may be a simplistic expression of complex issues, but time and space would not permit a fuller articulation of the issues.

-posted 8 days ago by NatWellington (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2518799)

As I mentioned above, in commenting Josh's post, longer and well formulated opinions such as these deserve to be posted as a response to the thread, rather than as a commentary to someone else's response. It was an interesting read, in any case.

-posted 8 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**

The worthy fellow learners are requested to have a look at the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI) to have a perspective on the religio-cultural nature of the debate and contentious issues and points.

-posted 8 days ago by kashfi (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1183790)

Thanks for the suggestion Kashfi.... this goes to the heart of the problem that ultimately there is no agreed Universal Declaration of Human Rights and indeed the Executive Membership of the UNHCR includes many members who could not/ would not sign up to the most basic of Human Rights such as the equality of Men and Women. Perhaps it is time for a similar 'Western' Declaration on Human Rights and Council for countries in the world who want to get beyond issues such as the right to drive. Maintaining cultural traditions sounds like a good thing, but leaves difficult issues such as supporting the cultural tradition of suttee ... the burning of live widows on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. For UK citizens, the lack of a constitution leaves citizens seeking the protection of the European Court for human rights. Meantime UNHCR seems unlikely to promote the human rights that most of the world's peoples would wish to see. With even political, diplomatic and economic action stalled at the UNSC against genocide, currently in Syria, the most basic of human rights are not/ cannot be supported at the UN. It could be said that we have reached a point in human history where the evolution of humanity is being held back by the UN, and it may have gone beyond a point of reconciliation, with divorce being the only feasible option. Therefore a 'western' (for lack of a better descriptor) Declaration and Council might be a better option for countries whose traditions do not cut across Universal Human Rights. As the UN is not taking meaningful actions, and becoming less able to take even a stance, at least it would be an opportunity for people in those countries to take actions against their own governments disregard of human rights and to develop practices in line with fundamental human rights.

-posted 7 days ago by ChristineHerbert (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2970117)

Add a comment...

**IrisNube (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1234887)** 8

10

days ago

I am currently conducting voluntary work in the Gambia at a school for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. One of the things that strikes me the most is that a lot of the parents neglect their child, to a point where the child gets less (or no) food, no educational materials, no fees to pay school or transport with. They claim the deafness is a punishment from God.

I see two human rights against each other here: the child has right to food, shelter and education (and love!) but the parents also have the right to their religion.

 Report Misuse

this is a case of education being able to change the perception of the parents. Only when they understand the cause of deafness can they act in the interest of the deaf child. Therefore in my

opinion the parents have a right to education and the child has human rights to dignity. A right to religion does not come into the equation at this point.

-posted 8 days ago by Wibbs (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/923459)

Many, many religious traditions reject education, even in my own country, the United States (the Amish refuse to give their children more than a primary education, evangelical Christians fight against teaching evolution in schools, etc.). How does one recognize the right to raise one's children in one's own religion without simultaneously rejecting the right of the child to have an education?

-posted 8 days ago by Firebringer (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2280614)

Firebringer, I think that is such an interesting, but tough, question. Indeed, what if one person exercises their right to raise their children in a particular religion and halts their education level (like in the Amish example you provided), but when the time comes, the child grows up and exercises their own right to choose a different religion? That person has not been given the full opportunity to pursue education, perhaps to their detriment, because their parent was exercising the right to their religion and interfering with their children's right to education.

-posted 7 days ago by CindiePal (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1679701)

I would argue that the right to believe in a religion that is inhumane is not a universal or natural human right (if such rights exist), hence our understanding of it as "inhumane".

-posted 7 days ago by dgarf7 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2032278)

How then do we determine which religions are inhumane? Some people (Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, etc.) have argued that teaching children to believe in ANY religion is inhumane. Religious adherents, of course, would think it inhumane to NOT teach their particular doctrines of salvation. How do we balance?

-posted 7 days ago by Firebringer (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2280614)

firebringer, great point, one that I was expecting (hoping) to see brought up, as it is the natural starting point for anyone claiming that certain religious practices simply need to be removed. One thing that I think needs to be demarcated is the justification of humaneness by religion on the one hand and radical atheism (harris, dawkins, hitchens, dennett, and others) on the other. What separates these camps in an astonishingly obvious split: one reverts to an age old text to explain a transcendental and objective good, while the other camp clings to the virtues that initiated the Enlightenment, namely an honest search for this Truth that comes neither from authority no revelation but research. In my opinion, we need to take a pragmatic viewpoint that says something along the following lines: "Look, when we had no better explanation for such an occurrence as deafness, a religious explanation sufficed in its ability to fill a hole of ignorance that would otherwise have been left unfilled and been a burden to the people's faith. But now, with progress being made to the point where we can help kids in these situations more than ever because we understand more than ever, the old model that appealed to our ignorance can be safely discarded in light of the new, more useful theory." It should not go unnoticed that religious fundamentalism, strict adherence to the texts, is seen by the West as simply wrong. The West regards religious fundamentalism, of any kind, as simply backwards. In other words, what I'm saying is that the Enlightenment, by filing down the claws of religion, has already set in place a process that allows us to both have religion and simultaneously believe in an Old Earth, believe that the subjection of women and homosexuals is wrong, and believe that religious tolerance is a sign of institutional strength and not weakness. We balance as we have been balancing for the past 350+ years: simply get rid of what doesn't seem to work, on both the religious and scientific side.

-posted 7 days ago by dgarf7 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2032278)

no religion tells us to expel our children

-posted 6 days ago by Nash1 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3505120)

no one said expel, but if some religion says that deafness is a "punishment from God" and should therefore not be addressed or overcome by certain means, then yes that should be thrown out. Also, a brief survey of ancient eastern religion (which still, obviously, permeates today's thinking) will show how tacit the understanding was that having a baby girl was a failure while having a baby boy was a success.

-posted 6 days ago by dgarf7 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2032278)

On that point, it's worth noting that in some Western countries, such as the UK, it is only very recently that girls have been valued as much as boys to the point of being given as much food (and there are still families in which this doesn't happen). I was born in 1973 and in my generation it's the norm for men to be a head taller than women. In twenty year olds in the same country, the height difference is only about four inches. We used to think the differences in physical prowess between men and women were entirely natural, but now, as they fade (which is not to say they'll go away entirely), we can begin to see how much they were affected by cultural prejudice.

-posted 3 days ago by JennieKermode (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/164980)

## HEADING

-posted 3 days ago by Bibeka (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3533848)

It seems to me that some rights should receive priority over others. Not all rights are created equal. The right to eat and remain alive is more fundamental than the freedom to practice a religion, for what good is the latter right without the former? We must look at who would be harmed more greatly by having their rights taken away. Is it the child who may be malnourished, denied an education and the opportunity to make a decent living? Or is it the parents who believe strongly that their child is cursed and must be punished accordingly? Does the child believe that God wants her to live a less dignified life and be discriminated against? Once the exercise of freedom of religion tangibly hurts another person who does not have similar beliefs, the freedom to exercise religion loses priority.

-posted 3 days ago by Bibeka (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3533848)

The UHR despite its good intentions, could to an extent be said to infringe specific national, religious or cultural traditions. This could however be attributed to the fact most of these traditions were not very balanced at the time the ancestors were putting them in place, and the UHR aiming at bringing some level of equality, could not help but infringe some of such traditions. Also, because the UHR was inspired by western culture which is mainly different from other cultures, it just had to infringe on some tradition. However, it promotes some traditions to thrive to express themselves. Speaking of education, it definite is a big right to look into for just as IrisNube speaks of his experience in Gambia, and how educating the parents about deafness would be of great importance. Same goes with the part of west Africa where I come from, where female genital mutilation is thought of a prestige and in most cases considered a pre-requisite for belong to a particular prestigious group of person. little wonder therefore that the Universal Declaration was basically aimed at educating so that through education, the rights stipulated therein would become a reality as Ann Glendon made mention.

-posted 2 days ago by GraceTabi (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3524443)

Add a comment...

8 days ago

5

**IoannaGkogkou (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2972283)**

believe that human rights are universal, regardless of national, cultural, regional traditions. They provide with a framework, a minimum standard, of the rights that all human beings in each and every corner of the world are entitled to. In other words, different cultural or religious traditions cannot devaluate and justify the violation of human rights, such as the right to life, to dignity, to liberty etc. The latter provide the basis and fundamental conditions for their development and promotion within the different regions and states. The diverse cultural, social or religious traditions can be embodied in each case in the universal framework of human rights. The former can give some guidelines how the human rights can be adapted to the specific society and be implemented by taking into consideration the specific cultural or religious features of a region. This is also proven by the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has influenced many different national constitutions dealing with human rights. Moreover, the participation in its conclusion of delegations from many states all around the world - and not only from western countries - shows the global consent on the promotion and protection of human rights and their recognition as universal, despite the various cultural, social, economical, religious etc traditions. Consequently, it is demonstrated that human rights are not considered to be a new, foreign product, but, instead, a self-evident, perpetual acquisition of human beings which addresses the international community's concerns and needed to be declared, so as to be framed and remove its ambiguity.

Report Misuse

I agree with you, as I too, do not believe, that universal human rights infringe anybody's specific national, religious or cultural traditions.

Being born in Germany after the German Grundgesetz (constitution) came into power 1949, I grew up with the idea of human rights and human dignity, which are core parts of this German law. But in 1949 it must have been seen as a foreign product by many Germans. Only education could change that view.

-posted 8 days ago by Wibbs (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/923459)

That's such a great statement. After spending many years studying genocide (with a foundation built upon the Holocaust), it is my belief that the majority of participants human rights atrocities, specifically ethnic cleansing and/or genocide, are in fact, 'educated' to believe in such a way that they will willingly perpetrate these acts (I am not excusing actions, only sharing a well researched and substantially supported view on war crimes, specifically pertaining to the Nazi's in regard to the attempted elimination of the Jewish, Roma, disabled, and homosexual populations as well as the subsequent genocides in Burundi & Rawanda). It would only follow education is of the utmost importance in preventing and (Inshallah) eliminating human rights offenses.

-posted 7 days ago by hmurtagh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3484661)

I also fully agree that UDHR does not infringe anyone's national, religious or cultural traditions.

I am from the republic of Georgia. My country has recently launched the strategies towards preventing the human rights offenses. The education is the most important, as through the education it becomes possible to raise the awareness among different societies on different human rights. In my country I consider the most important is rights of women and children. The less

protected part of the community in the country.

-posted 3 days ago by TammyKarchava (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2774812)



When it comes to genocide and similar levels of hate, one of the things we frequently see is the dehumanisation of the stigmatised group - language comparing them to vermin and disease is common, for instance. This recalls a lesson the US military learned: when trained with ordinary targets, a high percentage of its soldiers would deliberately shoot to miss when placed in real combat situations, but when trained with human shaped targets, a higher proportion would go on to aim to kill. It highlights a weakness in human rights law. Most of us are born with a strong instinct not to harm other humans, but that category of 'human' is psychologically mutable.

-posted 3 days ago by JennieKermode (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/164980)



Add a comment...

8 days ago

2

**ArvinDelaVega (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3490039)**

Human rights are shared cultural products. In my country, the Philippines, the declaration of human rights is seen two ways. The unique blend of cultures in the country have influenced the view of human rights by the Filipino majority.

In conservative circles they are viewed as an exaggerated import brought by liberal thinking in the US, that are deterrent to the economic and social and social progress of the country. The particular cultural concern is the 'leniency' of human rights which are frequently blamed in the loss of discipline among the masses, thereby producing the ongoing surge of criminality in the country. However, liberal and Catholic (Christian) intellectuals have argued that it is innate in the Filipino culture to adhere to the universally accepted human rights. The main argument is that Filipino culture, which is a hybrid of East Asian, Hispanic and Native cultures, have adopted the humanitarian approaches on their laws and code of ethics

On the argument that it is universal, based on the Philippine setting, it could be seen as merely relative.

Report Misuse

Can you explain why, based on the Philippine setting, human rights would be merely relative? Do you mean that they are relative because there are two dominant positions in the Philippines?

-posted 8 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**



I didn't understand exactly what you meant by this, but I would say that The Universal Declaration of Human rights, though adopted by the Philippines, goes much against its culture and religion.

The Philippines being a very catholic country have very narrow views on gays and lesbians being married for example. Men are the head of the family while women mostly stay at home. Women in the workplace are often discriminated against and earn less than men.

The corruption in the Philippines is also an issue and the great class division rarely equates to equality or any kind of "fairness".

I would say that to the masses - human rights are a completely foreign concept, but to the educated, well travelled 1% of the population, it is innate.

-posted 7 days ago by Stephaniefjeld (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1921038)



I'm also from the Philippines and I agree of Arvin's comment. Filipino people are aware of the word Human Rights but do not have a full understanding of it. The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights is being taught in primary school up to university level but it is not given emphasis. Since most Filipino considered themselves as religious, they believe that taking consideration of Human Rights is embedded in Filipino values. However, the sad reality is that most of the convicted people are using Human Rights as an escape of their wrong doings.

With regards to the issue of LGBT, it is not a priority issue of Human Rights in the Philippines. There are many TV personalities who are open about their relationship with the same sex. It is not true that majority of the women stays at home nowadays. Women are also not discriminated at the work place since there is an equal right to get promoted in the company. Many companies have lady bosses. Most Filipina women are being career oriented and not home oriented.

The major issues of Human Rights in the Philippines deals with extrajudicial killings, tortures, disappearances, child labor, human trafficking, and freedom of the press.

-posted 7 days ago by purplecandy (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1799685)



Interesting views, I understand somewhat better what **Stephaniefjeld** meant. Do you agree as to which human rights issues are most pressing in your country?

-posted 5 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**



I am also from the Philippines. In a way, media in my country has played a vital role in ensuring that Human Rights are not being violated. However, recently, the Supreme Court upheld the legality of the libel clause of RA 10175 or Cybercrime Law. There is now a question mark as to whether or not the freedom of the press will prosper, or will there be lesser freedom in expressing one's views in terms of governance. The Media (Print, Broadcast, Digital Media, may we also include Social Media) has been very active in educating people in the Philippines about the kind of governance the people are getting. The kind of service the government should be rendering the public. Now that the libel clause of the Cybercrime Law has been upheld, it is still unclear how this will affect freedom of speech.

-posted 5 days ago by ChristineDelfin (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1453446)



Add a comment...

8 days ago

3

**Loneranger\_Brazil (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2350696)**

Hi People, I'm Igor from Brazil. In my view, the UDHR was fundamental, if not absolutely essential, to create a proper framework for international cooperation in the decades to follow the immediate post-war period. Even though, there have been various and diverse conflicts around the world since 1945, without the basic common ground reached with the UNHR, it would have been much more difficult for countries to reach significant understanding in the international arena. I dare to suggest that the UNDR is the Magna Carta of the 20th century.

Thus, my critique is based on the seemingly western approach to the document. If we consider that the pursuit of individual freedom is mostly a western historical process dating to Greek and Roman times, we forget to take into account more collective and group-oriented societies. In this case, when we think of China, for example, the right to self-expression might attack collective and traditional values based on the Confucian philosophical tradition. Therefore, although the UNDR has been a landmark in legal and

political terms, it may have neglected the history and values of some non-western societies where the collective comes before the individual, as the search for harmony, cohesion and mutual respect in a collective structure might come before the needs and desires of the individual ordinary citizen.

 [Report Misuse](#)

I do not agree with you. Having completed the first two parts of Harvard's ChinaX, I cannot see, how the Confucian traditions come into this. Making the people feel collectively, was caused by communal punishment and welcomed informing on each other in the first dynasties. This helped the bureaucrats to rule with a small number over a vast population.

-posted 8 days ago by Wibbs (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/923459)



Isn't the whole point of human rights to say that there are some things that every individual deserves and the collective be damned?

-posted 8 days ago by Firebringer (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2280614)



Hi Igor--Is it possible to have a declaration of human rights that also guarantees certain rights to the collective? What would this look like? (This is a genuine question--I'm wondering if it's possible, never mind desirable, to balance both.)

-posted 8 days ago by DaveWhitson (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2945811)



I think that human rights treaties and declarations generally contain language recognizing that individuals are part of larger societies and have obligations to them, too. For instance, Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says (in part): "(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society."

-posted 5 days ago by Mary3 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2160158)



Hi Igor, I believe to assure the minimum rights is exactly what the UDHR is all about. Although you might think that some rights are not culturally extendable to all people in China, due to its culture, there are clearly people fighting for it. Should we deny them their rights due to their culture?

-posted about 16 hours ago by FelipeAreia (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/924832)



Add a comment...

**Rahuldeo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/780624)** 8

days ago

1

Universal Human rights may not be possible in the current context. As there are cultural diversity, internal problems associated with a state. We may envisage a bare minimum human rights which should be applicable for all the countries or say societies in the world. We can take an example of Indian subcontinent where majority of the state are suffering from anti national ante. Take an example of Sri Lanka who handled the situation with hard handed, although it was beneficial for the country but in this process they have gone through a number of violations. We may quote numerous examples but above all we need to find a way out of it which would be applicable and acceptable to all.



I agree that keeping our cultural social and economic rights in mind we should look at it as the minimum and do more/adapt it to our circumstances. Good law is not static.it grows and adapts to fit the society.the law is made for us we are not made for the law.so despite its imperfections at the root is the basic right that we are all human we are equal and we deserve to live free

-posted 6 days ago by amaranamara (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2492766)



Add a comment...

**Canadian16 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2367288)**

2

8 days ago

When there are contradictions between human rights and a national, cultural, social tradition it is easy to say that human rights should prevail or that it never occurs. However, the latter is untrue as it does and continues to happen throughout the world and when something threatens tradition it is seen as negative to society. These two may at times counteract each other and can be root causes to one infringing on the other but nothing justifies violating human rights as they progress society and humans even if they may forestall a cultural point of view that is considered acceptable in a community. The upholding of human rights communally throughout the world even with minor traditional perspectives adapting should not be hindered as it promotes basic rights that should never be broken.

Where I have resided, in Canada and Western Europe, I have not seen human rights being considered foreign although they may have been broken for reasons such as upholding public order, whether the use of contravening them is acceptable is another debate. Human rights are seen as bridge-stones to the betterment of human life and should be shared with each and everyone of us from most of my experiences. The implementation of this is a much more difficult task though resulting in sometimes the violations on foreign sole being overlooked.

Report Misuse

I live in Canada. I find it interesting that the Rights that the UN wrote are not legally binding, but this makes sense after 911 and how governments are dealing with terrorism. What I am finding interesting is watching the rights of gay and lesbian couples evolve over the past few years. I am watching the attitudes of Canadians change with those of alternate lifestyles. While I myself have a traditional marriage it is wonderful to see my co-workers starting to have the same rights and benefits that I have taken for granted.

-posted 3 days ago by Loralyn (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2004964)



Add a comment...

**ModestaN (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3336079)**

8

days ago

In most African countries culture is highly valued. Anything that is contrary to the cultural practices is usually viewed with suspicion in the specific community where the tradition is practiced. Universality of human rights is seen as a 'western' concept so to speak and therefore the communities practicing some

harmful practices will not hear anything about the notion of human rights. Cultural relativists have continuously propagated the notion that universality of human rights is a 'western' idea. This has greatly contributed to the violation of human rights because some communities uphold cultural practices and traditions that violate human rights. I understand that international human rights is supposed to prevail but I'm not sure this is the case where culture leads to violation of human rights.

 Report Misuse

I like Dalai Lama's speech on universality of human rights <http://cosmicharmony.com/Tibet/DalaiLama/DalaiLama.htm> (<http://cosmicharmony.com/Tibet/DalaiLama/DalaiLama.htm>)

-posted 8 days ago by ModestaN (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3336079)

We were discussing this aspect of the universality of human rights today in the context of Uganda's homosexuality law. It wasn't that long ago that people in the U.S. & Britain considered people with dark skin to be property to be owned, abused and killed at the owner's whim. It took others to step out of line and say, "Wait! These people are people, not property! People are entitled to certain rights whether they are born in London or Luanda, regardless of the complexion or national origin, etc." Of course it took a long time for that idea to gain traction. But homosexuals need that sort of intervention today. It's ironic, to me, the truth of what you have written here.

-posted 8 days ago by TomRizzo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1021859)

TomRizzo, great point. I agree that the debate on gay rights needs more players involved. Lets get it resolved. However, I think we need to be careful about comparing the suppression of gay rights with the black slave issue (exception being Uganda and a few other places). I just watched the movie "12 years a slave" and the basic rights violations that were committed toward blacks, were much more repressive and saddening than what is happening currently to the gay community. Their lives and freedom for self determination, for the most part, is not denied them.

-posted 8 days ago by bigEZ (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3006211)

bigEZ, you have a good point, but I would ask for caution before making such broad statements as, "the basic rights violations that were committed towards blacks, were much more repressive and saddening than what is happening currently to the gay community." If you're discussing only within the view of more liberal western countries, this may be a true statement. However, Uganda is not the only country where homosexuality is punishable by death, and there are unfortunately many places in the world (even within the liberal western communities) where homosexuality does not have to be a state crime to get you beaten, raped, or dragged to death behind a car. How many communities regularly see the "corrective rape" of masculine, gay, or transgender women (just as one very small example). These two horrors in the history of humanity are not exactly comparable, however the fear, degradation, and destructive life quality certainly is. In the U.S., LGBT youth are more likely to commit suicide, be homeless, be involved in drug use or abusive relationships than any other demographic. Not exactly a great statistic for a country leading (that is to say, one of many countries where citizens are actively involved in championing the rights) LGBT rights.

-posted 7 days ago by hmurtagh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3484661)

As a ugandan I can appreciate that the issue of LGBT rights vis a vis human rights and foreign culture is very real and very much in need of discussion and resolution. 1st of all let me say that the proposed law aside the situation on ground is really more of don't ask don't tell. also LGBT rights are rejected as being foreign and with the threats to deny the country aid it is cementing this view with the ordinary man on the streets. I believe that the application of the law should take into consideration the society. if they are unreceptive to the LGBT idea as a society let us get them to where if I do not agree with your life style I do not discriminate against you on that basis. the universality of the sanctity of human life at least is something ugandans might and will understand better than threats. let us take into consideration african culture and how they feel about this issue

is being forced down their throats. I believe if we return to the basics of right to life, equality and non-discrimination the issue of gay persecution would be solved.

-posted 6 days ago by amaranamara (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2492766)



Very interesting comments! I wonder if we could all agree that homosexuals are human beings? If so, are they not entitled to human rights? The basic premise is a human being is entitled to the same "universal" human rights whether that person is in Kampala, Delhi or Denver. Or are heterosexuals more human than homosexuals, and thus deserving of more rights?

-posted 6 days ago by TomRizzo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1021859)



aranamara - as I understand you, you certainly have good points. I would not argue that gay rights should be "forced down their throats." There are many countries and regions of the world (certainly true in the US) where LGBT rights are not the norm, but that doesn't mean your lifestyle should be allowed to be punishable by death. Although living a "closeted" life is not ideal, nor do I feel it's acceptable as a human right, however, I don't think there would be such an international response if it were not for a large legal initiative to make this a crime punishable by death.

-posted 5 days ago by hmurtagh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3484661)



Why do so many people feel that LGBT's rights are infringed upon? Their quest for equality in marriage is not the same as them not being able to cast a vote, being considered three-fifths of a human, or being locked away in concentration camps during Korean and World Wars.

They have rights and they exercise them adequately. They have had more progression in 10 years than any other group of people that lived and continue to live in oppression.

-posted 2 days ago by NBentley (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2059925)



**rambro (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1678906)** 8 days ago

2

If you ask many different individuals what the content of human rights should be, you will get many different responses. No matter how representative the original group were who came up with the UDHR, you will always be able to point out a number of groups/traditions/etc are excluded from its makeup. Ms Glendon notes the absence of sub-Saharan African voices, for example. However, the fact of the UDHR's wide acceptance since its drafting is a pretty compelling argument that the baseline norms represented therein is a pretty good one. In addition, in the sorts of places where you are most likely to encounter the culturally relativist canard that HRs are western interventions with no applicability to their cultures, you will see a strong correlation with anti-democratic regimes who consequently cannot be said to represent their respective societies' views at large. In addition, these very places will have robust civil society organizations appealing to the principles of the UDHR in agitating for their situations, which to me, rather suggests that it is a very useful yardstick against which one is to judge one's domestic situation.

I live in a British Overseas Territory, so the UK maintains responsibility for our foreign affairs. Nonetheless, we have a robust constitution with a strong bill of rights, and the European Convention of Human Rights has been extended to cover us and is frequently cited by the courts in their decisions. So they are definitely not seen purely as exogenous products. Certainly, given our long British tradition, and the almost frontier-like mentality we've had as a colonial outpost, we tend to focus more on civil and political rights than on economic and social. But HRs play a very important part in my community.

 Report Misuse

Add a comment...

**DSouzza (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1983862)** 8

2

days ago

In my opinion, universal human rights are a condition that allow other cultures to express themselves and to evolve. The UHR exists in order to guarantee dignity (at least in a basic level - although that may lead to a discussion on what is "dignity" and what is "basic") to every human being. So, I think it's important to ponder whether it's more relevant/important to "respect" certain traditions under the argument they represent "cultural events" or to guarantee that everybody has the right to a minimal level of protection, no matter where they may live in. I personally think UHR intends to harmonize different cultures, religions, traditions with the respect and protection that should be intrinsic to all human beings.

 Report Misuse

Human rights are universal at least the basic ones are. In Uganda, The Constitution guarantees Human rights stating that they are inherent and not guaranteed by the state, that everyone is equal before the law and that there is freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex, race, colour, ethnicity, tribe, creed, social or economic standing, political opinion or disability. it provides for freedom from torture as well and particular freedoms such as from torture, slavery and rights to habeas corpus and a fair hearing are non-derogable. while Uganda's human rights track record has come a long way from the days of Idi Amin, we still come under fire for several abuses in particular lately attacks on openly gay person which have resulted in at least one death by mob justice. the issue is that while the rights of LGBT people are protected under the constitution under general non-derogable rights to life and nondiscrimination, due to african cultural pressure and other religious factors, ugandans refuse to recognise the LGBT culture as legitimate and this is a human rights issue that is sensitive and that the average Ugandan sees as the West trying to impose their cultures on Africa in the guise of human rights, what im saying is that basic human rights are universal but some rights especially social-cultural ones are affected by culture, society especially in Africa.

-posted 6 days ago by amaranamara (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2492766)



One of the things the Ugandan example makes clear is how easily notions of tradition can be manipulated. There is ample historical, anthropological and archaeological evidence of gay people being accepted in Ugandan cultures in the past (albeit not necessarily understood in the terms Westerners would use); it was colonialism which introduced homophobia. Even then, Ugandans were not particularly hostile towards gay people until a decade or so ago, when American evangelical organisations began to preach there about homosexuality being a terrible thing. Exploring the records of those organisations reveals that this was a deliberate strategy to export "the culture war" that they felt they were losing at home.

There is nothing specific about Ugandans that makes them more vulnerable to this type of thing. We see moral panics happen all over the world, often with deliberate agency behind them. Exploring the myths many Ugandan people now believe about gay people is interesting. There is, for instance, a widespread belief that gay people are paedophiles. If you thought somebody was going to rape your child, wouldn't you be hostile towards them? This is why education is so important. The same myth used to exist in my own area (Scotland and the UK) but people no longer buy into it, and this

is partly because they can analyse for themselves the research that disproves it. Uganda needs two things: access to this opportunity for understanding, and a general calming of the debate so that people feel able to reconsider their positions.

-posted 3 days ago by JennieKermode (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/164980)



Add a comment...

**betabile (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/506335)** 8

1

days ago

Human right is worldwide accepted but may be not feasible in some countries when the government deal with anti-government groups or the minorities. The human right abuse can normally be found in those response from the government. We may need a minimal declaration which has no exception under all circumstances. I came from Thailand and we had National Human Right Commission. But in my opinion, people rarely recognize about it and maybe not widely been educated to the citizens nationwide

Report Misuse

Working with stigmatised minority groups, one often discovers that they are not aware they have human rights (i.e. that such a concept exists). When they understand this, it can be massively empowering. A key factor in getting states and other citizens to recognise members of minorities as equal human beings is enabling those stigmatised individuals to recognise *themselves* as equal human beings themselves, giving them the dignity they need to attract respect. This is partly why education is so important, and not just for those in power.

-posted 3 days ago by JennieKermode (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/164980)



Millions of the "stigmatized individuals" and "minorities" view themselves as equal human beings. Those in power who do the oppressing are the ones who need education! More importantly they need to educate themselves on humanity and respect for ALL humans.

-posted 2 days ago by NBentley (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2059925)



Add a comment...

8 days ago

13

**JOHNRATHNAM (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1865573)** 1

live in the United States and it is interesting only the United States and Somalia have not ratified the "Rights of a Child". How hypocritical!

Report Misuse

I found that shocking too! I live in NJ....

-posted 8 days ago by YvonneMattei (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2054711)



Somalia at least has the excuse that they don't have a government. Our excuse is really just "fundamental Christians."

-posted 8 days ago by Firebringer (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2280614)

These abovementioned countries also didn't sign and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women...

-posted 8 days ago by Piye (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2576890)

The conservative mistrust of the United Nations in general is a major factor in this. It is sad, I agree. Does anyone see the situation changing in the next few decades?

-posted 8 days ago by TomRizzo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1021859)

The U.S. wouldn't want to limit its ability to pursue its "national interests."

(Says someone from the U.S.)

-posted 8 days ago by Caelligh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2320386)

I was interested in this point also. My initial thought was that perhaps it would have been redundant since the children and women would already be given these rights in the constitution. However, if that were the case, why wouldn't they just sign to show solidarity? I think I will look it up. I think that the U.S. also keeps lonely company on the global vote for Palestine to have a state. I think the last vote was every country in the world "yea" vs Israel, U.S. and a couple of island states in the south pacific "nay".

-posted 8 days ago by bigEZ (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3006211)

I think the reason the U.S. would not sign and ratify the "Rights of a Child" is due to a legal technicality. Unlike the majority of the member countries, the U.S is a federal government and composed of 50 states, each of which have their own state constitutions and a court system. Although, of course, Federal Law (Bill of Rights, etc) pervades in all states and no state may have any legislation enforced that is in contradiction to the U.S (federal) constitution, each state may adopt laws where the coverage and protection are broader in range. In that sense, probably one maybe several states do have their own Child Protection Laws, enforced within their legal jurisdiction that are broader in nature compared to the UN's and that adopting and agreeing on a narrower set of rights at a federal level would limitate the individual state laws, leading to less protection in those states that do have the broader definition...

-posted 7 days ago by aycaozkur (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2860952)

It is also interesting for me, why the USA have not ratified them yet.. From the mass media of my country ( that of course can probably be not very correct and exact) I've learn that some non-government organisations in the USA claim that after ratification the government would have too many opportunities to interfere in the nstitution family. On the other hand, I always think that people in the USA are quite satisfied with their government so I hardly imagine the real reason for "not ratification"

-posted 7 days ago by KseniaParneva (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3491393)

I think aycaozkur is perfectly right.

-posted 7 days ago by AgaFab (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3504190)

I found this interesting as well so I did some research and came up on this link on Amnesty International about why this might be the case: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/children-s-rights/convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-0> (<http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/children-s-rights/convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-0>)

Keeping in mind that Amnesty International is an NGO working to forward its own mission 02/25/2014 01:50 PM

conveying information as such on their website, its still an interesting read. Like aycaozkur said, it is a legal technicality. Some opposition groups are hesitant to let the ratification go forward because the Convention is seen as undermining parental authority and dictating how parents can raise their children.

I'm not saying I agree with that, just wanted to share that link!

-posted 7 days ago by CindiePal (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1679701)

As an American who would like to see my country ratify the CRC (and CEDAW and the ICESCR, for that matter!), I see a general hostility toward almost all international human rights law coming from the political right. There is a lot of rhetoric about sovereignty, and a stated reluctance to subordinate US interests to any "outside" principles. So, some reasons may be given for failure to ratify the CRC — but those reasons do not apply to our failure to ratify the convention on disabilities and other human rights conventions...

-posted 7 days ago by LeeRyan (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2714507)

Very true LeeRyan, and interestingly although they are posited as opposites, a view that in practice is shared by Russian Federation who likewise fail to sign or ratify on the basis of the oft repeated cry 'intereference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign nation'. All of our nations have problems, but the constant cry of the US about violations of human rights elsewhere is well out of sync with its own stance. The US (and Russia and China) are not signed up to International Criminal Court either. With irony, one could say that at least China do not preach on human rights elsewhere, and Russia continues its stance of sovereign power outranking human rights.

-posted 6 days ago by ChristineHerbert (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2970117)

Interesting points, all of you.

**@LeeRyan:** I believe the hostility of some political forces in the US to international law applies to far more than *human rights* law. They still haven't ratified the Convention on the law of the Sea, for instance, and numerous environmental treaties. There is indeed a deep mistrust against 'world government' which is the transposition, onto the international scene, of the deep mistrust that many Americans feel with respect to their own federal government.

The technical point raise by **aycaozkur** is important: as a federal State, the USA must make sure that its own commitments on the international scene are applied throughout its entire territory, and the strong federalism of the US Constitution limits the capacity of the federal government to ensure the respect of these international treaties. But that situation arises in many federal countries (Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Brazil...), and these states have opted to ratify and to gradually seek to align their laws at all levels of the federation. Why won't the US do the same?

-posted 6 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**

There is a great difference between the States and Somalia... It is hard for me to understand truly reasons why USA did not ratify The Convention on the Rights of the Child. They put such a great effort for UDHR, but now it is hard to ratify this one Convention? USA is "special" also when it comes to the issue of the capital punishment.

-posted 2 days ago by NatalieCroatia (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3520027)

That not all states have managed to fit into a Western template of human rights is not altogether surprising, but I think that it will come with time. What is more disappointing is that many of the 'Western Democracies' themselves do not live up to these lofty ideals. After WW1, Woodrow Wilson's dream of universal rights was wrecked by his early death and the selfishness of European Imperialism. Towards the end of WW2 Franklin D. Roosevelt died, a man who might have helped to change his wife's dreams into reality. All you hear is it is or is not in our interests. Unlike Prof...

Glendon, I think the fact that people are still striving for basic human rights since 1948 is nothing less than a scandal.

-posted about 23 hours ago by MPC44 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2710888)



@MatthiasMS: I would like to add that the States themselves cannot enter into a treaty, only the federal government can. Therefore, there is a circularity in the legal problem. I believe that at least several states in the U.S. would ratify U.N. treaties themselves if it were up to them. N.J. certainly would. No death penalty, for example.

-posted about 17 hours ago by BrianES (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2221493)



@MatthiasMS: Another reason that citizens of the U.S. are concerned about some treaties is that we are the self-appointed policeman of the world. This role makes us nervous about agreeing to too many limitations that could potentially be used against America or American citizens. Example: concern that the International Criminal Court might indict American soldiers for war crimes committed while trying "to make the world safe for democracy."

-posted about 17 hours ago by BrianES (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2221493)



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8 days ago

2

**AlvaroAraujo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3440863)**

Human Rights, as I see it, is based on the idea of Natural Law, as it was well explained at the video. A very large number of countries can easily see it as a minimum that should be assured to everyone, and a maximum that shouldn't be applied to anyone. So, even if it might, sometimes, infringe religious, cultural or any other national matter it will still remain as our main tool to allow ourselves to keep dreaming about a more peaceful world in the future.

About the situation of HR at Brazil I guess is one of that "you sit where you stand" situation. If you are a conservative/righty person you will most certainly consider "outrageous to protect those who their lack of morals or will (very often both) is the bigger problem"; on the other hand, if you are a socialist/lefty, in spite of our laws (if not THE most modern at HR issues, certainly among the most modern ones) there is still a long way for us here to consider ourselves a country that truly respects Human Rights.

I believe that virtue lies in the middle.

"Neither a life of anarchy nor one beneath a despot should you praise; to all that lies in the middle a god has given excellence." Aeschylus

Report Misuse

WHICH SHOULD WE CONSIDER AS UNIVERSAL? Human dignity or Human Rights, should we further say that these concepts have the same meaning? which should we consider promote and urge others to do same?

-posted 8 days ago by frino (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3450329)



I find the idea of human dignity wider than HR. Enforce and promote HR is a way to promote and defend Human Dignity

-posted 8 days ago by AlvaroAraujo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3440863)



I cannot take this class as it is being offered by a Catholic University. I have experienced numerous Human Rights offenses by Catholics including the murder and torture of my parents and just recently the use of a tazer to disable an Olympic athlete from completion. Until the Catholic church stops using murder, torture, and lies about wars, I cannot attend a Catholic University to study any legal matter. The Catholic Church in my experience does not recognize the humanity of all persons, preferring to label many dissidents as animals or subhuman objects like mattresses or furniture. Such a fascist minded Church cannot teach the humanities in my opinion, much less human rights. If the Catholic Church confesses to its many crimes and repents and speaks out against dehumanization, murder, torture, ethnic cleansing, and lies about the nationality of US citizens and wars, then I would be glad to welcome them to the university community and to a classroom on human rights. Those who routinely practice dehumanization, cannibalism, and fake sports competition have no business teaching this subject.

-posted 7 days ago by SueTamminga (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1795618)



Whilst I respect where you're coming from, Sue, I fear it's not a position that advances us very far. Ultimately, the work of improving human rights always involves dialogue with people we may perceive as monsters because it is only through dialogue that we can change hearts and minds. Anger and rejection, though they perhaps ought to make people second guess their behaviours, rarely do - they are more likely to convince them that they were right all along.

Further to this, I think your argument highlights a key problem facing human rights advocates, which is helping people to distinguish between a group and its members. There are manifold reasons why an individual may remain a member of a group without agreeing with its actions. One effective way of changing the behaviour of a group can be working with such individuals to help them educate others. A group is the sum of its members but an individual member is not a holographic facet of the group.

-posted 3 days ago by JennieKermode (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/164980)




8 days ago

3

**Shehzadanwer (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2022497)**

Human Rights make us "Human Being". it gives us right to live freely according to their style and wish.

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Hi, Friends, I am Ansar Abbas, from Pakistan. Dear, Shehzadanwer I agree with you. But Furthermore Human Rights apprise us not only of our rights but also they accentuate on the duties upon us. Human Rights are basically, the keeping of balance between rights and duties, and never sacrifice one's rights without hampering other's rights.

-posted 8 days ago by AnsarAbbas (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2841434)



Hi Shehzadanwer and Ansar Abbas, I am Mohamed and am from Spain. I want to say that I agree with both answers, but specially with what Ansar Abbas said "the keeping of balance between rights and duties, and never sacrifice one's rights without hampering other's rights." because that it is what UDHR said in the article 29 paragraph 2 "In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society". Imagine an

example that it might happen, a president of a country said "we have a democratic government, because we respect what people think or say, they are free to choose a specific religion or belief" (he said that at the international level, news, etc.) but when someone wants to enforce the "law" he can't because of the government or the president of that country say "You have to do what I want and nobody can't say anything else". So, that's why we have to respect UDHR and specially some articles like 29.

-posted 6 days ago by Mohlaoua (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3029396)



Agreed. The gap between laws and realities can be a big one. There are socio-cultural shifts that need to be brought about (and I can't think of a country where this doesn't apply), as well as legal ones; but in the meantime, the law does what it can and the existence of the law provides a useful cultural reference point for people thinking through their own positions.

-posted 3 days ago by JennieKermode (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/164980)



So, if I understand you correctly you believe that Human Rights give us the right to live freely according to our own style and desires. There is a danger to that. If we choose to live that way, anyone can become a danger and threat not only to themselves but also to others. Laws exist for a reason, they can be pictured as a phrame to a picture. We know what we can do within the law and stand up for human rights and if we cross the line there will be consequences.

-posted 3 days ago by Fredrika (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3362459)



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**Tiffany01 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2574452) 8****2***days ago*

I think that human rights is a good ting. People should all have the same rights. It should not matter where you came from, what you believe in, what your gender is, your skin colour and many more stuff. Of course it should not be abused. But it be a shame that not in all people are treated like people in some country's. Just because they are little bit different from yourself. In end of the day all people are the same.

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I agree with you.

-posted 6 days ago by DevoraMarques (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3214124)



I strongly agree with Tiffany. The more organized and developed a country is I would say that in it the human rights are more respected. Unfortunately this is not an ideal world and even in the most developed countries there is a discrimination of some sort. However I think that the human rights are at its core universal regardless of religion or skin color. I live in Serbia that is still striving to improve the status of human rights. Lot of human rights are not respected in everyday's life because the state is unorganized in many domains. However, people tend to get more aware of their rights everyday.

-posted 4 days ago by Pesica (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2179499)



In countries where human rights are comparatively well established, we always see sympathy for them decline at times of economic hardship (the recent recession provides a good opportunity to observe this). This is one reason why the "we should stop foreign aid to this country until it recognises human rights" argument is so dangerous (though a good case can be made for diverting

such aid to non-state aid organisations). If we want to increase the chance of poorer countries recognising human rights, we have to help them develop economically. This reduces social tension and means that for instance, children can go to school and develop a more sophisticated understanding of the world.

-posted 3 days ago by JennieKermode (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/164980)

I do agree with you that at in the end of a day all people are the same. But at the same time shouldn't we be a bit different from each other? I mean, how much more different does a person need to be in order to find out what rights they have to be treated fairly? It could be so that an individual is different with special needs and requires a spokesperson to find out what rights he is entitled to.

-posted 3 days ago by Fredrika (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3362459)

Add a comment...

8 days ago

1

**Irene\_Alunni (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1129528)**

believe that if these human rights were really universal, then all the countries in the world should have ratified. Unfortunately even today there is disagreement on this; I would like to think that every human being is naturally endowed with those rights but in reality I have witnessed so many violations where people don't even react and just feel hopeless that maybe these beautiful principles were only the production of a specific historical moment due to the post world war 2.

 Report Misuse

I agree with you. But I wonder does a failure to ratify the treaties negate their value? It's like when people realized the world was round, not flat. Those who refused to believe it was round didn't make it flat, it just made them be on the wrong side of reality.

-posted 8 days ago by TomRizzo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1021859)

And the video made a good point, the UDHR's goal was not about enforcement, but about education/inculturation, creating a general framework that every individual could say: "i think that is just, that's how i would like to be treated", and then have a grassroots approach to make that a reality(see video 2), every individual starting to apply it in their own sphere of influence.

-posted 6 days ago by Idpttoti (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3448673)

Psychology tells us that there are many reasons why people don't react when they see rights violated. For what it's worth, it doesn't mean that they necessarily think those violations are justified.

-posted 3 days ago by JennieKermode (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/164980)

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**Tiery14 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1803375)** 8

14

days ago

I come from a very multicultural part of Africa, and for us human rights is seen as a very legitimate concept and not a alien one at all.

Human rights is a very wide-ranging concept so there is bound to be some infringement, and as Mrs Glendon put forward, even the UDHR is imperfectly multicultural. Nevertheless, the rights of one stops where the rights of another one starts. Limitless liberties would arguably be dangerous. Even then, don't we live in a globalized world? Eventually, I think that with the integration of cultures, the legitimacy of human rights will only get stronger.

As some of my colleagues above have pointed out, Human Rights is not solely about implementation or enforcement. Its also about how we internalize this concept in our everyday lives. Mrs Glendon argues that the UDHR was specially about education. Furthermore, E. Roosevelt put emphasis that Human Rights start in small places nearer to home that we actually think about it.

 Report Misuse

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6

**YvonneMattei (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2054711)** The

first question depends on which area of the world that you live in. In general, I think it forces certain areas of the world with quite a challenge. There are still areas of the Arab world in which women are still held hostage by religious traditions regarding basic human rights.

I live in the US, but basic rights for women, blacks, and homosexual are still evolving behind the model of the white anglo-saxon male.

 Report Misuse

try australia, where today people considered "aboriginal" are treated much worse than any female in the UAE

-posted 8 days ago by kintrala (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/891241)



Great point....

-posted 8 days ago by YvonneMattei (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2054711)



I am really exited after going through this very important introductory lecture in this course I realized the universality of human rights could play I great role in Governance and democracy. However, It has also given me the real of why the countries like the United States of America Cherish the freedom and rights of individuals no mater where you come from. Meanwhile, the Universality of Human Rights has always been a subject of debate especially to the so called fundamentalist who see human rights as western tradition or way of introducing another form of neocolonialist strategy to control the so called developing world like Africa. Frankly I believe the idea of the universality of Human rights is a good mechanism to salvage the oppressed. Many countries have sign to this conventions but has never bordered to domesticate or merger with their domestic laws for a freer society in other the good democratic values. I hope to see more coming

during the course.

-posted 6 days ago by Buyajammeh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3207486)



This is a great point. I live in the U.S., and while the rest of the world keeps on turning, another young, unarmed black man was shot by a middle-aged white man for "playing music too loud". A similar case involving the death of a young black man at the hands of a white man occurred last year, and both times the white man was declared not guilty in a court of law. To virtually everyone, this seemed like an incredible human rights violation. How dare anyone be acquitted of murder because of the color of their skin and the ingrained prejudices that pervade american culture. Regardless of your personal beliefs, at the end of the day, 2 men are dead, and no one has been imprisoned for it. If the skin colors were reversed the shooter would be serving 30 to life if not on death row(as is deserving for a murder case). But for so long we have turned a blind eye toward these glaring and horrifying injustices, and the toll is exacted in the blood of the innocent.

-posted 2 days ago by DoYouEvenBanana (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3543452)



Add a comment...

8 days ago



2

**Graphinya (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2531828)**

From

my point of view human rights is something that cant be truly universal. Different people, different nations, different societies, traditions and religions. Something that is natural for Muslims cant be accepted by Christian.

Report Misuse

why is everything hating on islam. EDUCATE YOURSELF!

-posted 8 days ago by kintrala (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/891241)



That is why the whole world is frightened to go the Olympics.

-posted 8 days ago by YvonneMattei (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2054711)



I see no hatred, just an example. And if you think there isn't something particular about the Islamic view of human rights, you need to Google Raif Badawi, who is facing a death sentence for apostasy. You'll note that in the materials, Saudi Arabia abstained from the human rights covenant expressly because it allowed people to change religions.

-posted 8 days ago by Firebringer (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2280614)



People come from different society and belief, For a certain society right thing to do might not be same for another society. That is what Graphinya is trying to say. I believe there is no religion which truly promotes hating and violence, if fact i think all the religion of the world is to guide a rational being to live better spiritual life which cannot be achieved simple life like of an animal.

-posted 8 days ago by desertpenguin (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2381306)



Please keep it civil, learners. No one made a specific attack on any religion, so there is no need to react as if there was such an attack. Indeed behavior acceptable to certain religious, social or ideological groups might not be acceptable to others. Nothing about this singles out this or that particular belief system.

-posted 7 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) STAFF

Sorry to differ with you Graphinya, but I believe the nature of human rights goes deeper than religions or cultures. The human rights are born from the human nature itself, and its that same nature what makes the declaration of human rights so universal. If you read the list of rights you will see that for both Muslisms and Christians are all acceptable. On the other hand, at the political level, maybe some governments have abstain to ratify the human rights declaration or covenants but those decision are made because of political reasons in order to achieve national interests in political agendas. But this does not mean that human rights cannot be universal. So my answer to the first question would be yes, human rights tend to infringe on specific national, religious or cultural traditions on the political level,(governments use those thinks to control and have power over societies) but in the individual level, humans rights are instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve precisely because human rights are related to the dignity of human beings.

-posted 7 days ago by MarceR (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1466712)

I have to disagree, MarceR. Some of the rights in the covenant include the right to privacy (including consensual sexual activity, even homosexual activity), which is strongly objected to in many countries (i.e. - Russia, Iran), often on religious grounds. There is also a freedom of religion, something objected to in Saudi Arabia (and forbidden by both the Qur'an and the Bible). Now most predominantly/legally Christian and Muslim nations have agreed to these rights, but there is still that fundamental conflict.

-posted 7 days ago by Firebringer (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2280614)

This is an interesting discussion.

Some of the rights in the covenant include the right to privacy (including consensual sexual activity, even homosexual activity), which is strongly objected to in many countries (i.e. - Russia, Iran), often on religious grounds.

The list of countries which outlaw some sexual conduct is far broader. Texas only decriminalized consensual sex between men a few years ago. The UK was condemned by the European Court on Human Rights, in *Dudgeon*, for having provisions in its statutes that allowed for the punishment of homosexuals.

The question isn't simply that certain States violate certain rights, but rather that the border between what is protected under the right to privacy, and what is not protected varies considerably across countries, and through time. We'll see this in greater detail in **Section 2** of the course.

-posted 6 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) STAFF

Now this takes us to the issue of religious fundamentalism. Much as the universal human rights declaration guarantees the freedom to religion, we should not forget that the fore fathers did not give religions a limit. Some religions dictate what the followers should or shouldn't do which is totally against human rights.

Okay, i am personally a christian, but have we all ever asked why ladies are never leaders in the catholic church?

Some religions abuse the right to marriage by dictating the marriage partners of their saints or followers. While, others are sexist where women are never accepted to say any thing during worship!

Sincerely, the fore fathers of the principle of the universality of human rights forgot to draw lines on particular issues like culture, religion amongst others

-posted 6 days ago by JoyUga (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3463574)

Por Lo Que él podido entender SI HABLAMOS De Los Derechos Humanos de Podemos Decir Que hijo direction derecho Universales de ser e así, hijo IGUALES PARA TODOS, ya Que de Tenemos libertad de religión, Ahora los Derechos Humanos hijo Importantes Para Qué CADA persona en sí el Realice e interactue Con las demás La respetándose mutuamente. El individualismo, Es el amor y el Respeto Mismos Por Nosotros, es Buscar Nuestro Propio Bienestar en TODO Momento, es ACTUAR en Consecuencia estafa Nuestra libertad, aire meet Nuestros sueños. Pero pecado sobrepasar a Las Personas Demas.

-posted 6 days ago by Lexito (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3398312)

Please use English so that all participants can appreciate your point of view. If you are not fluent in written English, write simple phrases in your own language, and then use an automatic translator (Google Language Tools, Tradukka, etc.)

-posted 5 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**

As a Christian (at least raised as such) living in a predominately Muslim country, I have found that I share the same values and beliefs about our human rights with my neighbors. We all want safe homes for our children, to be free from religious persecution, and to be able to have good quality of life. Christians tend (this is clearly an overstatement, but meant to show how "Christian" opinions are shared on mass media, particularly in the US) to demonize Islam, but in fact, Islam has many more protective rights for women than Christianity does (traditionally). I think it's more important to focus on the way governments use religion as a tool of oppression or to confine people's rights (homosexuals, women, ethnic/religious minorities). When used as a political tool, the UDHR is very important, as it ensures the freedoms and safety of those whose governments would use religion as a political weapon against them. I would however, like to strongly and respectfully disagree with "Graphinya." I believe there is nothing fundamentally different about historical Islam and Christianity in respect to human rights. Islam is often criticized for it's treatment of women and it's position on changing religions; however, Christian texts also punish homosexuality by death, you can sell your wife, and if you can't have children, it's appropriate to rape your slave to conceive offspring. Although human rights does shouldn't be a religious debate, it's important to acknowledge the "facts" (if such things exist in religion) and consider our equal rights without making broad or generalized statements regarding religion or ethnic origin.

-posted 5 days ago by hmurtagh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3484661)

In my personal opinion, being mexican and living in a country rich in cultures is really difficult to talk about an universality of human rights When there is a huge variety of conceptions of the world. I think that if we want to be defenders of human rights we have to adopt a relativist posture towards the different cultures and also to try to create a plural society where there's not only a sense of tolerance but of acceptance to the differences we have between countries.

-posted 5 days ago by ArantxaSainz1 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3490908)

I see that there is no hatred .But the speaker wanted to say that there are differences between religions.From earlier times the relationship of muslims and chritians is a good one.But divergence in opinion does not mean hatred.we respect all religions with their specifities.When someone has a bad behaviour , we should not generalise and blame his religion for his behaviour.Please be mature in your discussions.We are here to share in a peaceful manner.Do not be extremist.Be open-minded.

-posted 2 days ago by RemHab (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2429253)

personally, i find most religions denigrate the human soul, culture and advancement. we must move forward! we need to move on. these "laws" were passed 1400 - 2000 odd years ago. we have

moved on if you ask me. correct and inform me if you disagree.

-posted 2 days ago by stedun (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1957997)

I would dissagree that human rights cannot be truly universal, just because there are so many differences in variuous fields. This is proved by Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Participants of the working group had the same opinion because they come from different countries, cultures etc. but in the end they all agreed. I believe that noone would disagree with me when I say that every man has THE RIGHT TO HUMAN DIGNITY? No matter on one´s race, gender, religious or political views etc. So if it is possible to agree on this point that means that there is something that can be universal.

-posted 2 days ago by NatalieCroatia (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3520027)

I was waiting to see if anyone had forgotten the human dignity stamped into every one by natural law and the fact that this dignity is not diminished however distressing the behaviour or physical attributes of the person. And for those who do not espouse this basic Christian doctrine, they would agree that human persons do transcend the world of things. Human beings Christian or not are able to reason, to hope for a better world to appreciate what is beautiful wherever they may be. This is also a firm basis for recognising human dignity. The fact that I can hope for a future when the UNDHR can be truly followed more in observance than in the breach, the fact that I can seek knowledge on human rights with this MOOC, and the fact that I have within me the ability to make a choice to do this or that, remind me how useful the 1948 Declaration can be for a global reality where we can be more safe and united. It is a process!

-posted 2 days ago by Athenscorp (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/914044)

Add a comment...

Help

8 days ago

1

**Josh\_Hawkins (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2010212)**

They may be infringing on a few Religions or Cultural Traditions (such as in the Middle East where they treat women as property) but I think they're right to collectively come together and make it known that they don't support/agree with them.

I live in Canada. in Canada, we are very passionate about Human Rights. We were one of the first to have same-sex marriage and since we are so multicultural, I feel like everyone is welcome to come and be themselves and not have to be concerned about discrimination.

 Report Misuse

omg read the koran.

-posted 8 days ago by kintrala (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/891241)

Kintrala, I see your point, but you can certainly explain it better to those who do not know as much about the Koran, or about Islamic culture and law. I invite you to respond factually. For instance, "Women are not treated like property under Islamic law. The Koran says...".

-posted 7 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**

I agree, could you, please, give some piece of text proving your point of view? Once I was translating a report on the situation of Muslim women and I had to find exact translations for quotes from 2014 01:50 PM



Koran, and I should say it's not an easy thing to read it for a person not used to it.

-posted 7 days ago by MariaLesk (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3253683)



I suggest those people who don't know much about Koran to study it more carefully before making declarations. As already mentioned above according to Koran women are entitled to a lot of protective rights (for instance, when facing divorce) The other thing I would like to mention that conflicts international human rights is the prohibition of same-sex relationships in Koran

-posted 3 days ago by MinaHuseynova (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3449452)



Koran may advocate more rights to women but how it is interpreted by the clergy there and enforced alone counts.

-posted 2 days ago by JEBAKUMAR (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2169743)



Hi there,

Allow me to quote from the forum guidelines ([https://courses.edx.org/c4x/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/asset/Louv201x\\_ForumGuidelines.pdf](https://courses.edx.org/c4x/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/asset/Louv201x_ForumGuidelines.pdf)):

*don't presume that your readers share your background, or that they hold religious, political, or ideological beliefs similar to your own; with nearly 18.000 learners from over 170 countries, this virtual classroom is tremendously diverse, and can only function properly if participants accept this diversity in a spirit of tolerance and open-mindedness. This too is part of learning human rights.*

I would say that people should abstain from making generalizations about other people, their culture or beliefs. Indeed, persons who are not well-informed about Islam, should avoid making generalizing statements about Islam.

In the same vein, there is no need to call for others to '*educate themselves*' about Islam or the Koran (or any other belief system): if you think that discussants are not well informed, *you* should contribute to the debate by clarifying what the position of Islam is on the discussed topic.

So here, I see the contributions of **MinaHuseynova**, and of **JebaKumar** as attempting to do just that: clarifying that Islamic law has a number of provisions for the protection of women, and that the interpretation given by clergy is a very important factor.

Factual statements of this sort help us to clarify the parameters of the debate, and that is what we should seek to do.

-posted 2 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**



Add a comment...

**kintrala (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/891241)** 8 days ago

1

I find it beautiful that a common thread unites all nations regardless of any previous beliefs.

We share the common dream of freedom, comfort and availability, and this formulated a document detailing basic Human Rights with the help of people who could articulate it for everyone to agree in concert.

I love that a smile breaks down all barriers of every civilization on Earth.

 Report Misuse

I love how simply you have put what the UN started out to achieve - a common denominator to bind nations and its people. How the UN has room for all requirements, provides not only basic outlines, but also facilitates the building on the outlines is remarkable.

This is globalization at its very best.

-posted 7 days ago by IAmSweta (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3503534)



Add a comment...

8 days ago

3

**NikolaMilenovic (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2359501)** |

believe that Universal human rights in some way violated national and religious traditions in the past of humanity. However, during the process of globalization they became primary principle and condition for development every country in the world. I come from Serbia, a member of the former Yugoslavia, in which was a lot of human rights violations during the war twenty years ago. Now, this is country where are human rights respected and that tends to solidarity, respect for diversity and equality.

 Report Misuse

Add a comment...

**Epiphane (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2150610)** 8

0

days ago

1. I think universal human rights in their whole do not seek to infringe on specific national, religious or cultural traditions. If applied, they can help human society to thrive and allow individuals to express themselves. However, as Ann Glendon put it, is impressively multicultural but imperfectly multicultural. 2. Views are not the same whether you find yourself with people of some education compared with people with no education and information about the main goal of Human rights. For many people in my working and living sphere some articles (not all) continue to be considered as a foreign product as they contradict the cultural practices which have been the backbone of our civilization. like not 'beating you child' when s/he or misbehave CRC

 Report Misuse

i agree with you. In Africa especially there are several rights that are rejected outright as being an imposition of western culture and foreign to african tradition and beliefs and christian and islamic beliefs. these can not be said to be universal as the different cultures take them differently. i think on the whole the basic rights are universal.

-posted 6 days ago by amaranamara (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2492766)



**rivepa (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3490275)** 8 days

1

ago

I think that universal human rights don't infringe national traditions; on the contrary, they are the highest aspiration and achievement of the entire humanity. In my country (Italy) human rights are seen as a shared value

 Report Misuse

What about abortion? Most countries view it as a murder but the pregnant mother views it as her right. Often times these same women rob the fathers of their right to keep the child.

-posted 2 days ago by NBentley (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2059925)



**Firebringer (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2280614)** 8

3

days ago

1. Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?

They absolutely infringe on national, religious, and cultural traditions. That's why a covenant was necessary. The history of these "traditions" is mostly one of depriving out-groups of rights

respect, and of punishing those who leave the in-group. It was only a realization that we are all a part of an out-group to some other group, and desire for reciprocal respect. It's an idea that has been fighting for respect for thousands of years, and has slowly won out in the free market of ideas, but still faces profound resistance, even in notionally progressive nations like Western Europe.

2. In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?

I live in the United States, which prides itself on being a torch bearer in the evolution of human rights through our Constitution (even though it was based on the ideas of Greek and French philosophers). Even so, there still exist certain groups who believe that some human rights (like a secular society) are being forced upon us by foreign sources.

 Report Misuse

I think Firebringer raises an important point: The declaration on Human rights is not "natural", it is a philosophical construction which is self-evident only after it has been accepted. I struggle to formulate this, but I think that the implied polarisation between cultures that see human rights as "exogenous" or "a shared concern related to the dignity of human beings" (question 2) might be slightly problematic. I was born and raised in an EU country where the human rights charter is fundamentally non-exciting reading - "How could it be different? Of course everyone has the same rights to human dignity". At the same time, even in the most egalitarian and politically correct societies on earth, inequalities of treatment still persist. Because regardless of social systems and political discourse, inequalities in power relations do exist, as well as fine-tuned pecking orders which implicitly attribute value and determine who will be first served and who will have to wait for their turn when scarce resources are distributed. As a concept, the universality of human rights should serve as a corrective to the perceived normality of status quo. I would argue that universal human rights are mostly disruptive in terms of **tradition**; they disrupt institutional arrangements that work perfectly fine for everyone except those whose needs are traditionally being discounted. At the same time, they are a condition for **societies** to evolve and rebuild their institutions to achieve shared goals in a better way.

-posted 2 days ago by joorel (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1370830)



Add a comment...

**Hvolgaard (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1252210)** 8

0

days ago

1)Traditions in society has out the history been cruel to the individual and marketed for a greater good, (in my opinion to control populations). But it has changed to the respect of the individual human and are now the condition that nations, governments, religions and cultural movements has to base them selv upon.

2) In my region, I see human rights as the basic of mankind in modern society. The law of human rights is the shared concern, that an instrument is needed to react upon violation of human rights.

 Report Misuse

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**JanhaviJoag (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3473302)** 2

8 days ago

Universality of Human Rights denotes that people of different religions, races, castes, people speaking different languages, people having different cultures, people sharing different histories, people residing at varied geographical areas should strive for the protection of human rights. Universality in simple language means the same code for everyone despite the differences. It has a very intense meaning and I think it is a far fetched aim yet to be achieved. Today, we are still fighting over individual differences. It is yet a long way to go to achieve Universality in it's true sense. Man has to think beyond his region, religion and caste, sex etc. We must see a fellow friend as a different individual and combinely work with cooperation to seek protection of human rights and gain the status of Universality on the International level. The UNHRC is working hard on that status achievement. But there are certain shortcomings. We must have a more friendly and cooperative approach instead of the present selfish and expansionist approach.

In India, Human Rights has attracted the attention of many thinkers in order to end the discrimination which has its roots since olden times. The literacy rate being relatively low, most of the rural population is unaware of the basic rights. Politicians are so busy in fighting for power that they fail to educate the people about their basic rights. Hardly 40% population lives in cities which in turn renders the remaining 60% to be illiterate regarding such important concept like Importance of human rights.

For developing countries like India,there's still much to be achieved. Developing a feeling of universal brotherhood, solidarity and respect for the fellowmen will gain an impetus for achieving the same.

 Report Misuse

I considerer this a good comment because universal human rights represent the hard-work consensus of the international community, not the cultural imperialism of any particular región or set of traditions.

-posted 5 days ago by bambi2008 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3347034)



Add a comment...

**HJS13 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1878419)** 8 days

1

ago

With regard to the first statement, basic human rights such as the right to life and the right of women and children are still being suppressed in some cultures around the world. For example, the right to life is not upheld in countries that still make use of the death sentence. Child labour is another example of this. In a country like South Africa, some cultures still view the woman as an possession of the father, until she is married, where she becomes the property of her husband. The question with regards to this is whether culture should supersede human rights, or should human rights abolish cultural practises that infringe on human rights. This is a sensitive matter, as for some culture is the very most important aspect of life.

 Report Misuse**FransH (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/966244)** 8 days

0

ago

Universal human rights are in my opinion not infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions, because even though traditions provide a rich cultural history of certain people or areas in the world, it should be noted that if such a tradition is treating women as slaves, abusing power or using tradition to treat oneself better than the rest, universal human rights are needed to protect or prevent such events. I see the human rights not as an infringement but as an opportunity to provide stability and equality for all human beings, whether or not traditions are to be broken.

In Europe, human rights are important and needed, however the human rights declaration is lacking LGBT rights which is reflected upon marriage equality not only in Europe (Croatia for example) but also in the world. Even though people have the right to religion it should also be interconnected with the right of equality for all.

 Report Misuse

**ShirinM (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3423367)** 8 days

2

ago

Universality is a fundamental concept of human rights. The question is not in discussing whether human rights should be universal in *law* but whether they *are* universal in fact. In reality, although codifying a universal doctrine of human rights is the first step in working towards a common goal to end human rights abuses, the lack of implementation of human rights in many of the UN member states means that we are further from our goal of ending human rights abuses.

 Report Misuse

Add a comment...

8 days ago

4

**Rustom1986 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2829975)**

Hi,

Discussing the Declaration can be a very complex issue. It is certainly biased towards a Western and Liberal perspective. This alone questions the idea of it being universal. Additionally, the Declaration was initially formed as a response to fascism which was certainly more relevant in the 1940's than it is today. With many states having different cultural attitudes (towards women, children etc) which were not included in the formation of the Declaration, it is hard to see how it can be effective.

Another point to take into account is that the Declaration can only be effective if the member states adhere to its principles. It can be argued that the idea of human rights was not a main issue amongst many states from the 1940's onwards. There were wars of ideologies, religion and economy which took precedence over human rights. Within these wars, all nations committed atrocities without regard for human rights. Therefore, can it be argued that the Declaration - since its formation - has actually been quite irrelevant as a state will only adhere to it when it suits them?

 Report Misuse

I totally agree with you.

-posted 8 days ago by RemHab (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2429253)



I agree with your arguments makes a lot of sense

-posted about 2 hours ago by LisaGraham (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2955550)



Add a comment...

**Francis1302 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/249788)** 8

0

days ago

I live in Spain, a country located in the South West of Europe. As a nation who is a state member of the EU, Spain strictly respects the principles of the Universal Declaration, therefore its legislation has been carefully adapted to these statements. I honestly believe that, as the European citizen I am, each

being needs to be guaranteed some basic rights - without discrimination of origin, sex or religion. However, it is a fact that some extremist postures do not acknowledge this urgent necessity and therefore pretend to eradicate any attempt to create a more equal society.

[Report Misuse](#)**RemHab (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2429253)** 8

1

days ago

I think that human rights are trying to be universal ,but they are not applied to some countries.In Morocco , human rights are still ink on paper.The notion of human rights is not touched.Labour child in this country is an example of human rights and precisely child rights violation.Women stii suffer from men's authority.I can say society is patriarchal.Employments rights are also infringed for we have a huge number of graduates suffering from joblessness yearly.Demonstrations and strikes are faced by military forces.Each demonstrators near the parliament are beaten by the order of the government.Most of our rights are not got.Speech freedom is very limited and corruption is widespread if a citizen wants a paper from the administration.Even health service is affected by the fact of paying money if you do not want to wait in a long queue.In my opinio , we need more ten years at least to avoi such behaviours and get ones rights properly.The discussion of one's rights means non submission or revolution against authority.The people especially poor ones suffer from the domination of some bourgoiesy class.

[Report Misuse](#)**Kaba7 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3363337)** 8 days

0

ago

The universal human rights are more infringing more on other national, religious or cultural traditions than African ones. I think they must be reviewed to integrate some African rules useful for mankind. In Guinean juridical system, most of UDHR are recognised. They're not perceived as totally exogen but partially. It means Guinea had 2 old charts not used essentially in UDHR.

[Report Misuse](#)**cathwrynn (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3449872)** 8

5

days ago

*Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?*



In a world of such diversity and multiplicity of perspectives there can be no universal, global position on the matter- and never has there been.

The history of the DOHR (Declaration Of Human Rights) given in the lecture, the role Eleanor Roosevelt played in negotiating its creation, and the interview of Mary Ann Glendon show that both the development and the uptake of the DOHR was not perfect, was not easy and was not quick. 60 years have passed since this process was begun and full agreement with the highest provisions of the DOHR, and its articles and treaties is still not achieved.

For me the most striking thing is how much progress *has* been made despite the lack of full global consensus- and the astounding progress in getting previously unsupportive countries, such as South Africa, to become involved progressively over time.

I think that many citizens and politicians from around the world may (initially or irredeemably) feel that the DOHR (Declaration Of Human Rights) is externally imposed- particularly people who believe a fundamentalist or literal interpretation of their religion or culture. History shows that this can change, no matter how repressive the ideology concerned. It also shows that not everything *needs* to change for there to be substantial improvement in the standards of living of large numbers of affected peoples e.g. women and children.

In previous dialogues with persons of a particularly literal worldview, the following ideas have been put forward:

1. The belief that their traditions or texts are correct and infallible and that the DOHR is modern and man made. They hold the position that should the two seem to disagree in any way, that their religious texts or traditions hold sway.
2. The belief that if man "gives rights to man", man can take them away- and that therefore a religious view of spiritual value, especially in terms of affirming "moral" behaviour (as the basis of inalienable rights) which appeals to the idea of a God to judge (in accordance with their particular religious texts) and bestow rights of a higher (more refined and superior) nature than those penned by man and politicians.
3. The belief that a particular religion should dictate civil life and mores, and that politics and social organisation and justice is subject to religion rather than needing to be separated.

On the other hand there are a number of religious groupings within the abrahamic, eastern and other ancient religions- or originator cultures across the globe- who do not agree with the above stated literalist position and hold the perspective that the "justice, goodness and truthfulness" embodied in the DOHR (albeit imperfectly)- is in direct alignment with the essence of their religious and cultural perspectives. These persons tend to work directly through programs for social justice and the protection of universal rights in the day to day application of the DOHR within their areas of interest. A local example of this would be The Inner Circle <http://theinnercircle.org.za/> (<http://theinnercircle.org.za/>) a queer muslim organisation dedicated to "promoting Equity, Justice and Inclusivity".

Similarly, secular, civil and academic (non- religious) persons often align well with the principles of the DOHR- opposition to human rights within this segment of society seems to be of a more corporate or economic nature: the resistance to the protection of human rights when it interferes with profit making and political power. For example see this article on the intersection of human rights and business: [http://www.ihrb.org/top10/business\\_human\\_rights\\_issues/2014.html?gclid=CPnS-f3907wCFWfLtAodpS0AIQ](http://www.ihrb.org/top10/business_human_rights_issues/2014.html?gclid=CPnS-f3907wCFWfLtAodpS0AIQ) ([http://www.ihrb.org/top10/business\\_human\\_rights\\_issues/2014.html?gclid=CPnS-f3907wCFWfLtAodpS0AIQ](http://www.ihrb.org/top10/business_human_rights_issues/2014.html?gclid=CPnS-f3907wCFWfLtAodpS0AIQ))

Personally and professionally I see the DOHR as the basis of all that is necessary for national and global peace and development. I believe that through careful and considerate languaging in dialogue with those that oppose them, or do not support them, one might make strides in forging connections which can lead to real progress in protecting basic rights for all.

Humanising both the opposition to, and the intended target of, human rights work would ensure that the rights themselves would permeate any action meant to implement and realise them in society. I believe that the likelihood of their acceptance is linked to the commitment to avoid taking up stances of privilege, superiority, narrow mindedness and nationalism. I believe that holding nations and citizens accountable to the DOHR is absolutely imperative to the improvement of the health and well being of millions of people.

*In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?*

The social context in South Africa remains divided along class, gender and racial lines, and so there is no one answer to this question. Politically we have one of most liberal constitutions in the world with rights entrenched for all irrespective of race, gender, religion, class, health or sexual orientation: we tend to take the protection of minority rights very seriously. These laws were created under our new democratic and free leadership, so they would seem to have been accepted ideologically. However in reality there are still extremely marginalised groups in our society who are subject to frequent human rights abuses because at lower levels of government there are problems with implementation.

South Africa is still a very patriarchal society, which interestingly enough transcends afrikaans/ english white, african black, hindu, jewish and moslem cultures. Misogyny is endemic in much of our society. The laws of the land are almost irrelevant in day to day personal interactions: possibly believed to be imposed by the government and not a reflection of the average citizen. We experience some of the highest rates of gender based violence (GBV) and crimes against children in the world. This is an indication that although on paper we seem to accept human rights as true and worthwhile, in reality the dignity of all human beings is not an accepted cultural norm. In the provision of basic services such as sanitation or access to water, health services and education we fall seriously short. Our problem is implementation and not ideology: although it might be argued that under delivery on such urgent priorities is itself a matter of ideology.

We do have problems with religious and cultural literalists who have fought to restrict freedoms in the past and who live out their cultural mores against others: the so- called corrective rape (and murder) of, mainly, black lesbians is common and often gotten away with. Women and children are trafficked. Workers are abused. We have experienced xenophobic violence against refugees who face staggering discrimination and little protection from the law. Religious factions in South Africa still treat women and children badly, restrict their freedoms and abuse them. Poverty exacerbates everything.

Sex work is criminalized and sex workers face abuse and victimization daily e.g. the police harass them, abuse them, take their condoms, want bribes, health workers discriminate when providing health services. One of the most marginalised groups is made up of transgender or intersex persons who face high levels of violence and abuse.

The gap between our constitution and our lived reality is wide. We of necessity fast- tracked the political process of democratization only 20 years ago, which was the first ever attempt in South African history to make just laws, for all people. The true cultural acceptance of living in a free and fair society after hundreds of years of violent oppression is doubtful: South Africans are both the oppressors and the oppressed and this will take some time to clear from our collective psyche, and our economic reality.

On the other hand, many South Africans have deep cultural ties to an African philosophy of human rights called ubuntu, which to quote Desmond Tutu, states that "Ubuntu [...] speaks of the very essence of being human... It is to say, "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours. We belong in a bundle of life. We say [that] person is a person through other persons."

We are twenty years into a process of freeing people to return to their cultural roots and identities in

South Africa: the hope is that as free citizens we will be able to access traditional wisdom that will serve us well.

dependable foundation in supporting a modern culture of human rights; something restored to all of us rather than imposed by foreigners and therefore wholeheartedly taken up by all South Africans, for all South Africans.

 Report Misuse

I can relate with your second answer, actually. As a person who also lives in developing country, sometimes no matter how just the law in the country, the real problem lies with the officials who run the office. And of course, the problems of the classes and poverty just can't simply disappear. This is a classic problem, I think. Between identity of country and the people and the government, yeah, I can relate with it.

-posted 7 days ago by lrz-a (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3290426)



It does seem like class and access to power is at the basis of most of our problems. Race and class in South Africa were very linked for so long it will take a long time for class issues to get better, I think. And good governance, as you say is critical to actually delivering on human rights. Thanks for commenting. I hope that those of us from developing or two thirds countries can discuss a lot together.

-posted 6 days ago by cathwrynn (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3449872)



I agree with your point of view, and keep my fingers crossed for South Africa. Thank you for sharing.

-posted 4 days ago by Sylwiaa (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1613558)



Add a comment...

**Hillsman (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2381713)** 8

1

days ago

Just as Mary Ann Glendon rightly explained, this declaration is far from being something complete, but it is what we have today as a world of a lot of mixed races and cultures. The declaration isn't perfect, but it has gone a long way to putting some sort of respect through education in our world. Today in some different parts of our world, some aspects of the declaration could be seen by some people as positive in some instances and in other instances seen by some other people and negative. Although nations have ratified the declaration, we can still see governments, groups and people going against and infringing the laws of human rights in many countries.

 Report Misuse

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8 days ago

2

**aktiviteiten352 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3341323)** 1)

Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?

IMO universal rights do absolutely infringe to these traditions. Everything infringes to everything, the key

is to balance everything out, as we saw earlier these human rights are the fruit of many many discussions, as sound they seem at first sight, these rights are only a compromise between all the parties.

Many traditions even feel to be completely opposed to the values of universal human rights.

Most traditions of course can build up to human rights to evolve themselves in a healthy way

2) In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?

Here (Europe/Luxemburg) I strongly believe human rights is the standard, I never heard anyone criticize them. Indeed Human Rights are seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings.

cheers,

Larry

 Report Misuse

Add a comment...

**Pablo1981** (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1832665) 8

0

days ago

I live in Spain, and we incorporated the Human Right in our constitution, so, if somebody wants to change this, he has to change all the Spanish law. Everybody has the same rights, and if you are discriminated, you can go to different Spanish institutions, or, you can go to European institutions.

The human rights is only a minimum, for this reason nobody can say that this declaration is working against a religion, race, sex,....

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**Apoorv1994** (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3488447) 9

9

8 days ago

Hello, fellow learners. I'm from India, and here the way each region reacts to the idea of rights is at a whole different level. When the question of whether they infringe any rights on any plane arises in the case of a country as diverse as ours, I do tend to realize how education is important, and how the sanctity that rights have acquired are in the hands of people. The fact is that the UDHR is a document that certain people agree and certain people see as an infringement. In the Indian state of Haryana we have these extrajudicial bodies which have no legal sanction but work out of the will of the people. Their judgement is final for the village. They hunt and kill couples who marry or love without the consent of the village elders and even consent doesn't matter if the person belongs to the same caste. They carry out other activities that violate fundamental rights of a citizen. Female foeticide is another such activity.

proudly by the khaps. Funny case of how the Hindu religion is misinterpreted and how in the process human rights are violated. But the point I want to make is that these are the people who would, as asked, would believe an infringement in the implementation of Human Rights. There are things that are generally agreed on, but certain things are just not accepted. Of course such a tradition needs to be nipped in the bud. In the wordings of the UDHR lies a truth of universal nature. The document helps foster life, and lays out a universal way to enrich it, with education being the key point of emphasis. Most people of India are oblivious to the existence of such a document but the nature of the document is such the statements contained are already widely accepted norms. Of course each culture would like to add something that they could relate to, but they are generally seen as upholding the standard of living a person would aspire to, a right to live in the way the person wants, within the boundaries of law. Human rights, in general is what the Indian culture at large reflects, as any great civilization did. Of course there are anomalies, exceptions within the system. Human conflict will always remain. I do not believe a document to satisfy every need can ever exist. People want it to be according to their individual needs, collective wants but it has to be something for society at large, while safeguarding the individual interest which the UDHR has achieved. Notice how the lady's eyes light up when she speaks of the emphasis on education and how that can be a tool to achieve whatever the document stands up for. It is what empowers and connects us today, doesn't it?

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Agree. Even a Supreme Court of India ruling on declaring Khap panchayat illegal has no effect.

-posted 2 days ago by JEBAKUMAR (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2169743)



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Precisely. its a law in its own

-posted about 3 hours ago by Apoorv1994 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3488447)



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**MatusH (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1401960)** 8 days

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ago

The UDHR as Mrs Glendon put it is imperfectly multicultural. It was forged in the times where the establishment of the principles that would enable our cultures to continue to live in peace was paramount. They are, however, so much more than just mere tool of keeping our nations in peace. They express the freedoms, and needs of every individual regardless of what society he/she has been born into. The universality of human rights is based on what we as individuals perceive as paramount to our free and unrestrained existence. In return, if we were to abandon these rights, we would not be able to defend our national, religious and cultural specifications.

In central Europe, the countries have experienced the changes of regimes that were harmful to the ideals of human right number of times, from Nazi occupation, to Communist totality. Despite these, citizens were always able to put up an opposition proving there will always be certain rights embedded in them deep enough to try to achieve them in spite the regimes denying them. This, in my opinion proves the universality of the rights anchored in the UDHR even if sometimes people are not specifically able to express them all at once.

 Report Misuse

**oYo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2712937)** 8 days ago

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**The universal human rights do not infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions, because these rights are made to have a effect "erga omnes", and not against a specific national, religious or cultural traditions. The universal human rights are about convergence of different cultures to a peaceful development.**

**In my country, Brazil, the human rights seen as reflex shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings.**

 Report Misuse

Do you think that maybe Africa, where there is a strong religious influence, and where children and women have the right to education, it is completely normal. How then can we talk about the fact that human rights are for all and all?

-posted a day ago by misanecka (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3270514)



But Africa is to become their opinions and I am afraid that despite the help of the United Nations will continue his country and do not let anyone influence.

-posted about 7 hours ago by mishka91 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3555955)



*ago*

I believe that the UN Declaration of Human Rights though crafted by representatives of certain countries is a good foundation to establishing these fundamental human rights on all cultures, countries and regions of the world. As mentioned by Ms. Glendon, it was created through a thought process which considered inherent good and inherent evil or bad and how these things relate to each man, woman and child. If the UN Declaration of Human Rights promotes the rights of a man, woman or a child - sometimes against cultural traditions (or tribal traditions) then perhaps it will enable society as a whole to move forward towards a better standard of life for each human being. For instance, the culture of genital mutilation in some African states is a cultural tradition however it goes against the fundamental human rights of a woman. By protecting a woman from that tradition, the UN Declaration allows that culture to leave behind the less 'good' aspects of its traditions and as such evolve into a better form.

I come from Sri Lanka and this is a country that is currently rampant with human rights violations. The UN Declaration of Human Rights and most of its covenants are ratified by Sri Lanka however with freedom of speech and media curtailed, significant levels of abductions, treatment of refugees very much a grey area, we struggle to achieve the levels proclaimed by the Declaration. I agree with Ms. Glendon in that education is the key for this Declaration and its subsequent covenants in being implemented. If an ordinary citizen of a country did not know they have a right to complaint to the UN if their rights were being grossly abused, then that citizen does not benefit from the Declaration of Human Rights no matter how well intentioned its creators were. Perhaps the next step for the UN is to ensure each country that has ratified these treaties will educate its citizens to truly understand what their rights are - and what consequences will befall the violators of these rights on an international stage. Then that brings us to the question - what consequences does befall the violators of these rights? From history, I don't see that much!

 Report Misuse*8 days ago*

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**chrisoconnell (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2968606)**

I do

come from an EU country that purportedly recognises the universality of human rights. It is my belief that this universality is underpinned by the knowledge and understanding that there are NOT different types of human, being human is a universal experience. History has shown that this understanding was not always the case, with African, or other 'remote' tribes being classified as sub-human. Even today in some Islamic countries it is recognised under law that there is no equality between men and women, with women being seen as less equal. These prejudice's are divisive. The arguments around universality should take into account the anthropological and philosophical data that clearly shows the universality of emotions, reactions to stimuli etc that demonstrate that whatever language or country/culture you have been brought up in, you will share the same sets of emotions as anyone else on the planet. For that reason alone it is important to recognise the universality of human rights

 Report Misuse

**AGIglesias (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3263671)** 8

1

*days ago*

The first question makes no sense. If human rights are universal, there should not be such thing as human rights infringing on national traditions, but national traditions infringing on human rights. The problem is whether the UHRD is strictly composed of universal rights which I think is not the case.

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Greeting AGIglesias, I responded to the first question as follow, After viewing the video and listening to Ambassador Glendon, I agree with her reasoning that it's all about education. The present condition of universal human rights continues to thrive, and continue to express themselves as cultural traditions and religion evolve. In my region of the world (USA), human rights is seen as a reflection shared with personal care and concern for the rights of neglected and abused children, and women. There is very strong support related to the dignity of human beings. What are your thoughts?

-posted about 19 hours ago by Sonya55 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2676593)





**FadySZ (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3100024)** 8 days

1

ago

Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?

Both questions are wrong:

First question is indicating that UHR is the party that can either infringing or not infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions, although the other way around is what is really happening, that a specific national, religious or cultural traditions is infringing on UHR. Many examples: KSA and Iran where Sharia is the law, and Islam and its Sharia is against each and every article in UHR.

Thus, the second question is wrong as well, because these traditions that are against UHR will die.

In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?

As for my region of the world and based on my previous answer of course, human rights are seen as an exogenous/foreign product, and people like me Coptic(native Egyptian) that support UHR are seen as enemies and foreigners.

PS: The term Human Rights can be very loosed, for an example in KSA according to Sharia the cut the hand of person committed a theft and they call that a Human Rights cause it is Allah (the name of the Arab God) that had ordered this law so it must be a Human Right!

 Report Misuse

8 days ago

3

**genevievearaque (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/834272)**

*Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?*

I think the answer to this question is: both. It limits those traditions that oppress others, and yet protects those groups from oppression by others.

*In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?*

In my region, human rights are fairly well accepted rhetorically, but they are not well understood, and many actually disagree with them when they are explained.

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**Becaboo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3497233)** 8

0

days ago

I think that we do have who and who can't do things. Still to this day we do it. I don't think that we will quit doing it for a long time. It stands out what everyone can and cannot do. How I see the world is a lot better I think of everyone as the same. I don't think that everyone isn't the same, are bodies and are mind is the only thing that is different.

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**Masadv (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2952449)** 8 days

0

ago

This video shows the diplomatic skills of Eleanor Roosevelt, who sprang from his conviction that the problem of human rights is primarily a matter of concrete pesosas and their ethical convictions . Is important to see that it is impossible to overcome ideological differences , or existential pessimism of postmodernism , has much to learn from the creativity , willingness , perseverance and ability to engage with what the drafters of the Universal Declaration , led by E. Roosevelt acted between autumn 1946 and approval of the document in December 10, 1948 . In my opinion , although the infringing Featured cultural traditions , human rights are a compromise , so that we can evolve and prosper , because when it hits the other with respect and education , we can achieve the peace and universal justice . is very bad but in my region in Brazil human rights are still seen as a foreign reality in which many people confuse with protecting the criminals.

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**aedenp (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2552463)** 8 days

0

ago

1. I think in theory—in "spirit"—universal human rights do not set out to infringe on those of others. In practice, even with something as highly universalistic as "human rights", depending on the application, one might see them as infringing... I definitely think viewing them as a "condition" for certain traditions to thrive is the correct one; the issue is negotiating the points at which they come into conflict, and who is in the right...One might say the idea is long on rhetoric and short on an account of how this might actually work—and it is, clearly as we have seen in ensuing decades, the hard work.
2. In the US, where I currently reside, human rights are hardly an exogenous notion. In Malaysia, where I am from, I don't know that everyone considers them "exogenous" to the land, so much as they are often seen as political tools used by those who wield outsize power in global institutions. But that, I think, gets more to perceived hypocrisy of applying the principles that are facially neutral, than necessarily issues with the ideas themselves...

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8 days ago

2

**SanchezAlvaro (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3393673)**

1. In my opinion Human rights don't infringe on specific national, religious or cultural traditions, what i do think is that some traditions go against the UDHR and those conducts are now actually infringing on human rights.

2. I'm from a latin american country, and human rights are seen as a reflecting concerns related to the dignity of human beings, therefore in my particular case, Human rights play an important role in our actual social reality and that can be seen in our constitution.

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I agree sometimes certain traditions violate human rights.

-posted 8 days ago by sharonalieuwon (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3469271)



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8 days ago

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**sharonalieuwon (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3469271)**

1. Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve? I think that universal human rights are not infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions. It is because of Universal Human rights that we are able to take on any religion we chose and to express it. These rights are the reason why we can voice our opinion without living in fear of oppression. These rights make it possible for people around the world to accept and respect each other no matter what their national, religious or cultural background. I would rather say that they are the fundamentals for creating a better world if we actively implement them and promote them in every corner of the world. Let it be known that world peace can be achieved, and that there should not be a reason to shed any more blood with fundamentals like these.
2. In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings? I live in Suriname , South America and to be honest the opinions here differ. Some people think and say that human rights are a product of western cultures. A way to have control over ex colonies. Most political leaders in this part of the world have violated a lot of human rights and still are for example presidents. Like in my home country our president was going on a trial for the murder of 15 civilians on the 8th of December 1980. But when he became president he let the parliament draft and accept an amnesty law within a record time of less then three days. Thanks to this amnesty law he and 15 other suspects can walk free away from murder committed during their military dictatorship. When human rights organizations said that they did not approve of this law, the public was told that it is a trick from western cultures to try to stop the development of my country and that they wished to do that to steal our natural resources and riches again. However thousands of people protested, saying that this was a violation of civil and political human rights. Unfortunately the

protest did not result into anything. And the case is at what looks like a dead end. So you could say that in my region the opinion on that is diverse.

 Report Misuse

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Interesting points Sharon. You say that:

Some people think and say that human rights are a product of western cultures. A way to have control over ex colonies.

Can you explain why human rights are seen as a 'means of control'? And do you think any of this argument is true?

*-posted 6 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) STAFF*



I think this argument that human rights are a way of western cultures to control others is a way of pleasing the masses since people can relate to the history of colonialism, but in reality I think it is sometimes corrupt leaders who do not want to change or face responsibility for their action. It can be trick to deflect the heat that come from violating human rights.

*-posted a day ago by AnitaSweden (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3431619)*



Add a comment...

**Riddthy (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2010661)** 8 days

0

ago

After watching the video presented by Dr. Glendon, I think there was no such thing as the Declaration of Human Rights mechanisms in place, not until after World War II. The idea came from Eleanor Roosevelt in regards to the violations that have taken place during World War II to the Jewish Holocaust. Facing the incredible violations of human rights that victims of World War II suffered, the UN established a Human Right Commission, with Eleanor Roosevelt as one of its members.

Although there might be an infringement of human rights violations due to the differences of cultures and traditions, but the common values of its human rights principle ought to remain the key issue for the preservation of the universality. I strongly believe that the human experience from the wars and the atrocities were key factors that contributed to the idea of the declaration itself.

Cambodia should be the prime example of how the Declaration of the Human Rights is violating exponentially. I appreciate and hope that there will be more people like Eleanor Roosevelt in this world to bring about leaders of other nations and hold them accountable for crimes against humanity. If you believe that the declaration of human rights are exogenous or a product of Western civilization, then you have not lived in China, North Korea or Cambodia. I have never taken my freedom very lightly, but I believe that this freedom is coming from those who are standing and watching the borders across the globe for the preservation of peace and freedom. They strongly believe in peace, thus, they are sacrificing their lives to protect what they truly stand for. The dignity of just simply a human being and nothing more should be the focus of creating and preserving the Declaration of Human Rights into Universality.

[Report Misuse](#)**RodrigoADV (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2792254)**

1

8 days ago

Um meio termo esta deve ser a expressão correta para aplicação dos Direitos Humanos em nações distintas, devendo levar em foco a aplicação com motivos verossímeis para o questionamento cultural de outras nações e assim aplicar as devidas sanções.

A Constituição Brasileira em seus direitos fundamentais traz em sua essência a aplicação dos direitos humanos, no entanto devido a uma politica governamental precária grande parte da população brasileira não tem seus direitos que estão postos na Constituição Respeitados.

[Report Misuse](#)**EstebanL88 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3005278)**

0

8 days ago

We have to understand that, in this case, universality is a political discourse that genderize the power relationships in the world. What I mean by this, is that countries acknowledged as part of the so called

first world, are those who mainly decide over the countries of the third world: the masculinity that normalizes, over the feminity that accepts, for it must be defended. In that direction, more than an infringement of the cultures, what occurs is a normalizing process under "universal" codes of ethics and morality, which not only defy the established national frames of reference but also, favour the construction of newer ones. This would be a great success toward a regularization of the international justice, but still carries the inconvenient paternalistic perspective of the intellectual, academical and political place where it is originated.

On the other hand, current situations like the middle-east's, south America's and South Africa's, mainly threatening the human right of life, and other kinds violence (for instance, discriminatory acts regarding class and gender), which are still present and unregulated over the whole world. Meaning that even the authority given to the UN, is not universally recognized.

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Hi **Esteban88**,

In my response to **sharonalieuwon** above I asked if she thought that human rights were a technique of control of the west over the rest. You seem to think that it is a patriarchal tool of domination.

Can you explain why? These are interesting and important points, and deserve being developed.

-posted 6 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**



Help

**AnMaGaOs (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3468120)** <sup>8</sup>

0

days ago

el dialogo judicial de los derechos humanos cobijan a todos nosotros igualitariamente porque se crearon partiendo de la premisa de incluir a todos los paises miembros y el desarrollo del individuo en una sociedad en paz, infundiendo el respeto por la vida digna, la libertad y justicia; el problema del dialogo judicial sobre derechos humanos es una falancia cuando en la práctica no se respetan, pese la evolución histórica que ha surgido y la pretensión de permitir a la persona realizarse en condiciones humanas respetando distinciones en cuanto: religión, raza, política opinion, origen nacional , posición económica etc.

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**MariaFranke (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3333158)** The

problem of a universal document is in it's simplicity and complexity. It's lenghts, restriction and goals has to be simply enough not to offend a certain country's characteristics, like cultural traditions, and complex enough to provide the dignity of a human being.

I believe that UDHR is in the middle, emphasizing the necessary rights and suiting to almost every nation around the globe, but with almost none disrespect to any belief. Like Glendon said in the video, education is the right path, and with the time, people will lean to a more tolerance posture, with less extremism, and the UDHR will be respected in the countrys that now ignores it.

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1

**Carlos Aguirre (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2926895)** Hi I

am Carlos Aguirre from Mexico, I believe that human rights protection policies, establish the basis for the development of the human being, but in some places or cultures where most of the people follow the same customs, in some cases complying the respect of a human right contained at the International Declaration of the Human results contrary to such customs. Notwithstanding, I truly believe that if a State promote and take actions to respect and guarantee human rights, it gives a platform for its society to become better, living with dignity following the direction of evolution.

Here in Mexico, human rights are legally protected starting from the Federal Constitution, and throgh its regulatory laws, and there is a special juridistcional procedure called "Amparo" for the special purpose of protecting all the people under the Constitution protection, against authorities violation of the human rights, and the reach of such procedures are to bound the autorithies to respect or restore as applicable the human rights violated. I may conclude that in the legal frame, humans rights are protected by the Mexican laws, but there is a lot of work to do to make this more effective and useful for all people.

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**ekearney (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/366196)** 8

3

days ago

1. Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?

I don't believe that universal human rights infringes on any things. It does however; enhance human relations, compelling all to behave with the appearance of being civilized toward each other.

1. In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?

In region where I live, the people will fight for the health and rights of dogs before the fight for the rights of people of the minority race. In my regions human rights are for the would be majority.

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rights of citizens

-posted 2 days ago by Jekyjendo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2768155)



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1

**ManuelaPMurphy (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3447753)*****1. Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?***

In relation to this first question and after watching the video, these are my conclusions: I strongly believe that the universal human rights do not infringe national, religious or cultural traditions. As Mary Ann Gledon said in the video, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was not created to be a enforcement, it's was created to set the conditions to ovoid future atrocities to happen. These days, as she said, we experience a very considerable advance in the recognition of rights that before might not be even considered. As I had the extraordinary opportunity to work for a few months in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights at the OAS, I realized that the argument of "national issue" or "national interest" many times are used as a tool for violation of basic human rights, such of the right to life or the right of non-discrimination (for whatever possible reason). I think that it's very difficult to make governments understand that the recognition and the respect of universal human rights are not a way to enforce a different way of thinking, or a way to change a culture or religion, but for me they are intimate related with the simple word "tolerance". With this I mean that the countries doesn't have to change the traditional values, but yes to accept the differences and to not punish the people consider "different" and because of that, not a human being worth to have the same rights that "the majority" has.

***2. In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?***

I'm from Argentina, so I can say that because of our history of atrocities we suffered after the dictator leadership and all the amount of families and people victim of force disappearances, after the Democracy returned we were very committed with human rights. These few years we recognize many rights that before where not even considered, such as the same sex marriage or the recognition and liberty to decide about our sexual orientation or gender identity. Also we created a national law to try to prevent human trafficking and we consider in our Penal Code that to kill a person only for gender reasons or a sexual orientation is an aggravating to the crime of homicide, and because of that, the punishment is higher. All this national changes we had these recent years are related to the fact that in 1994 we change our Constitution and we gave the Human Rights Treaties/Conventions the same hierarchy as our Charter. For that reason, now a human right violation cannot be only have the consequence of being a reason for a claim in an international organization, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, but also they are rights that our State compromised to protect. Consequently, our Supreme Court applies in many resolutions, our Charter –and because of that- the international conventions, and also very often they use has a reference jurisprudence of international cases that have been solve. With all of this I'm not trying to say that these days we do not suffer human right violations, I'm pointing out that because of all the things I previously said, I can conclude that in my country, human rights are not seeing only as a foreign matter.

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-posted 6 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) STAFF

Read any religious book and you will realize that they do not agree with the present day human rights like same sex marriages etc. However your article is quite nice.

-posted 2 days ago by JEBAKUMAR (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2169743)

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**paulhunda1** (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1073625)

1

8 days ago

*Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?*

I agree with those before me who have pointed out that it is specific national, religious and cultural traditions that are infringing on Universal Human Rights rather than the other way around. UHR are endogenous to every person. I believe that these are inalienable rights of all people and to the extent that cultures and traditions conflict with those rights, it is the cultures and traditions that need to change. I know this is a bitter pill to swallow for some cultures but we can't water down what human rights are in order to be acceptable to cultures and traditions that conflict with them otherwise we are throwing out the baby with the bath water. For example Sharia Law is not compatible with UHR and will always conflict with the UDHR. How can one justify the death sentence for converting out of the Muslim faith? How can one justify the extreme institutional discrimination against women under Sharia Law? Ultimately the answer may be yes to both parts of the first question. Yes UHR conflicts with some cultural and religious traditions but it also sets the conditions for survival in the future because we are hopefully heading towards a world where institutional discrimination against women and laws that prevent you from choosing a different religion will not survive. Only those traditions that are consistent with basic universal human rights should survive and thrive IMO.

*In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?*

In Canada the principles of UHR are now deeply embedded in our culture and tradition I am proud to say. However this wasn't always the case. Canada has a horrendous history of institutional racism and cultural genocide of First Nations people of Canada. My father and grandfather were barred from voting until 1948 because they were of East Indian descent even though they were Canadian. I note that the laws changed in Canada to give them the right to vote the same year that the UDHR was made. I assume the Canadian government saw the hypocrisy of their own laws and changed them. Those same laws barred my father from entering the professions even though he was university educated. The law profession and others openly barred people of East Indian and Chinese descent from admission to the professions by making it a requirement that they had to have the right to vote. Since the laws in Canada prior to 1948 barred Canadians of East Indian descent from voting, they were barred from the professions as well.

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Good comment.....the human rights are the assertion of human values but without impose one cultural, religious or national standard.

-posted 5 days ago by bambi2008 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3347034)

I saw this quote in a press release from the UN News Centre quoting the Secretary General of the UN.

02/25/2014 01:50 PM

"Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appealed for the complete and universal decriminalization of homosexuality, still a criminal offence in some 76 countries, stressing that human rights must always trump cultural attitudes and societal strictures." February 24, 2014

This would seem to confirm my position that yes indeed human rights infringe at times on cultural traditions and I certainly agree that they must always trump them.

-posted about 4 hours ago by paulhundal (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1073625)



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8 days ago

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**Miguel02david (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3469019)**

First: The international human rights aren't one form that infringes anything, how the religious or cultural tradition, because it must respect it all that the human have been working, the freedom with respect at the differences.

Second: In my región,Colombia, we're respecting the human rights or some people try to the protect it. However, some things don't help us, for example; the conflict, the corruption, etc. We have a big problem with that. If the Power Public don't do anything, we can't have human rights really.

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8 days ago



6

**stillclock (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2251760)** In order

to try to understand the questions posed, I have tried to think about how the category of human is defined. In order to be worthy of rights and protections granted by those rights, an individual must first be recognized as a member of that group to whom rights have been granted. The capacity to deny "human rights" and protections is wrought through the mis- or nonrecognition of populations deemed unworthy or unqualified for inclusion in the universal. So here, for me, is the problem presented by Western philosophical tradition that can identify an individual and then organize those individuals into groups upon which rights can be bestowed. The problem is not whether the declaration of individual, universal rights infringes upon something called tradition, but rather how that definition of universal can be applied and to whom it is applied. I think Prof. Gelndon tries to get there when she talks about agreements between delegates about "good acts" and "atrocious acts" but in the world genocide happens in situations where there is a failure to recognize a group as human, as worthy of rights at all.

I am Canadian. While the defence and promotion of human rights is lauded and in some cases enacted, we have a system of patronage for our First Nations people that perpetuates a 500 year genocide and cultural evisceration. It's a democratic country increasingly formed by the will of corporations over people. I have an inkling of how fortunate I am to live here, but I also know we cannot rest on the laurels we think we have achieved. Corporate interests threaten life on this planet, and our resource companies are some of the worst in the world.

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02/25/2014 01:50 PM

Very interesting points, **stillclock**. You said:

In order to be worthy of rights and protections granted by those rights, an individual must first be recognized as a member of that group to whom rights have been granted

We will be discussing acceptable and unacceptable forms of distinction between individuals, under **Section 6** which focuses on the issue of discrimination. But indeed, the question of who belongs to a community and therefore 'deserves' rights, and who is 'outside' the community and could therefore be denied certain rights is a crucial issue in human rights law.

However, doesn't universality provide a tentative answer? Can any individual be 'outside' of the human race?

-posted 6 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**

Animals like Dolphin,Shimpazee,Elephant ...Humans have an self.( the ability to destiguish oneself from the others. The undefined self that "we" have in common can be called "xeno-self".Defining humans into a group does not grant humans animal rigths.Non the less ,animals human rigths.

-posted 4 days ago by yngvarbjartveit (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3435874)

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**desertpenguin (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2381306)**

The UDHR is fairly a new concept, when looking back at the evolution of culture, society or civilization. Since mankind has evolved in different geographic of world with different culture and understanding about meaning of freedom and rights, The UDHR might infringe one's understanding according to national, religious or cultural traditions. So the purpose of UDHR is (should be) to promote universal path for a society to evolve their understanding of individual rights. I am from Nepal (A developing country) in our country as of my understanding human rights are seen as foreign product. In fact I think most of the population are unaware of UDHR or have no or very little knowledge about human rights.

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**sawaisman (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1822182)** 8

1

days ago

As an student of anthropology I find the first question incredibly hard to answer conclusively, but nonetheless I belive that as they are today, human rights have yet to take into account several aspects that constitute the religious and cultural identity of certain groups. We can't impose the views of the west in every one of the subjects involving human rights. Fortunately, with improvements in communication and with globalization the path to create human rights where every national, cultural and religious identity can thrive seems to be a bright one. I have utter trust that in time a more inclusive, less

westernized definition of human rights will be utilized. I am from Argentina, a country which had different issues with violations of human rights, in particular with what trasurred during the military dictatorship of 1976. Here people usually consider human rights to be something that involves cocnrns common to everyone, a pillar for a better world for everyone. People are usually quite complementary to the people who defend human rights, and even get involve in different types of organisations that promote them, so pretty much they are held in quite high regard.

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**Eungyu (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2899242)** 8 days 5  
ago

I apologize in advance for any generalizations, stereotypes or assumptions that I may express. If anything, I would say it is evidence of the socialization that denies anyone of merging universality with tradition without compromise.

To any individual, the interpretation of human rights differs, and to consider any one definition universal requires enforcement and practicality. These views come from an upbringing under cultural, religious, and national traditions; therefore, our traditions are infringing on human rights, not the reverse. Certain rights can be conditions for the exercise of some traditions (i.e. freedom of religion). Some rights will infringe upon some traditions will infringe upon some practices (i.e. woman's right over body: abortion v. child's right to live). These examples are then viewed through lenses of tradition (i.e. a Muslim's view on what is a human right will differ from some atheists). So tradition-biased views will, at times, come into conflict with universal human rights.

I live in the US. I personally believe that we are quick to agree with the necessity of the enforcement of human rights. However, our acceptance of it as a seeming norm in our country has made us largely uninterested in the daily fight for it in other nations. Furthermore, the arrogance stemming from individualism clouds over our judgment and prevents us from cataloging certain local violation of human rights as human rights (i.e. homelessness). Rather, we see it as an impingement of our rights. Our concerns are superficial.

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having read your answer, i am of the view that fundamental rights of citizens are basic rights and therefore would not infringe on tradition, religion or whatsoever. freedom of religion means right of citizens to choose a religion of his or her choice and therefore the interpretation of human right in this regard would not be conflicting.

-posted 2 days ago by Jekyjendo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2768155)



**DominicK65 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/935881)** 8 days ago 2

There are certain claims that are so fundamental to the nature of human beings that their deprivation or violation not only degrade the individual victims but also devalue the dignity of humanity; and thus imposes a duty to protect on society as a whole. Because these claims are so fundamental to the basic nature of human beings that they transcend the differences of cultures, political convictions and religious beliefs.

These fundamental rights set the conditions for society to function so that individuals can each enjoy their rights without interference from one another.

Generally, in the U.S., the principles of human rights are accepted as universal, but there are concerns on the enforcement of such rights by international bodies.

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**Annzi (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2172053)** 8 days ago

3

As cultures, traditions and religions naturally evolve over time, the adding of Human Rights to their core values, even if it is initially at odds, can only serve to improve the communities involved. All societies change over time.

In my country, the United States, which was founded on the freedoms of the individual, all citizens profess that it is very important for every person to be allowed their human rights, but it is all too often conveniently and dangerously forgotten when the society is, or perceived to be at risk. (As with the Japanese internment camps of WWII, and more recently, to my shame, Guantanamo Bay.) So, while it is something integral to our culture, excuses are made to avoid or justify not giving every person their due Human Rights.

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Well said!

(says a fellow American)

-posted 8 days ago by Caelligh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2320386)



Did you notice in the material the reference to "rights of children"? That your country and Somalia were the only ones to not ratify it? This has me very curious to find out the reasons why. Perhaps because they felt it was redundant and that children are already protected under the constitution? Though I can't see why they wouldn't sign just to show solidarity. I am very curious now.

-posted 8 days ago by bigEZ (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3006211)



I would like to know as well. I can imagine a few cynical reasons, unfortunately.

-posted 8 days ago by Caelligh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2320386)



Everything that I have read about this has either the argument is that the US Constitution already covers those rights of children or that it will interfere with US sovereignty. But as with other cultures, we will have to also evolve and let go of our fears of not being able to control our own society especially when it can impinge on someone else's rights. It is scary, especially to an American, to have a larger body (as the UN) dictate what one can and cannot do, even if it is the

right thing. (Of course, I cannot speak for all Americans, it is simply a feel for the society at large.)

-posted 8 days ago by Annzi (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2172053)



I am also very curious as to why the US has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of Children and has not fully ratified most of the HR Conventions, that is- accepted the establishment of independent monitoring bodies and individual communications with them. Annzi brings up a very persuasive argument and so far it is the best i can think of, but as an American i am still unconvinced that the US would resist such universally ratified and overwhelmingly *American* treaties. Fear of large governmental bodies is at the base of American thought and an international one holding sway over American lives is especially scary but how can we expect any other country to hold true to this great work of law if we don't? Especially the ones we so forcefully 'liberate'? I think that the question of whether the UDHR steps on cultural toes is being taken in an East v West route, with the East being the resistant one and the West being the very drafter and therefore most agreeable to its articles but the irony of American resistance is remarkable and changes the whole argument for me.

-posted 6 days ago by ClareAriel (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3471130)



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### Caelligh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2320386) 8

days ago

3

trillion said this in a post above:

*"Human Rights is above local and domestic politics, and the global community should expose individual nations who want to undermine Human Rights for the economics of profit and greed..."*

He/she was talking about the U.K., but the statement applies to the U.S. as well. I think Eleanor Roosevelt would be aghast to see what the leadership of the U.S. is doing nowadays. From warmongering to NSA mass surveillance to drones to torture to Guantanamo Bay to obscene airport security measures to a major political party routinely attempting to deny rights to certain populations, U.S. leadership is violating human rights without even a pang of conscience. U.S. leadership links most of the specific actions I have listed to national security, but it is not really about national security. It's about power and profit. For example, see this article ([http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/16/us/eavesdropping-ensnared-american-law-firm.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/16/us/eavesdropping-ensnared-american-law-firm.html?_r=0)) about the NSA and its partners spying on a U.S. law firm involved in a trade dispute with Indonesia. Where are the terrorists in that?

I will focus the rest of my ranting on Matthias's questions now. ;)

*1. Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?*

Universal human rights should be the guide as traditions evolve. They should be the underpinning. Do they infringe on some traditions? Yes--but primarily on those that do not meet the high standard set by the UDHR. I think the UDHR is a fantastic document. When I first read it, I was shocked to discover that it was adopted in 1948. That is almost 70 years ago, yet it reads as such a modern document! Examples: Article 12's language about privacy is perfectly valid in a world with the Internet and e-mail. Article 19 says that the right to free expression applies to "any media." Wow!

*2. In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as*

*reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?*

In the U.S., I believe most citizens like to think that the U.S. is an exemplar of human rights (and thus "human rights" is not a foreign concept). I think these citizens are blind. I think their blindness originates in complacency and misplaced confidence in U.S. leadership. It is as if Americans have forgotten history: Human rights can be taken away, and *it can happen a small step at a time*. It is happening a small step at a time... and U.S. leaders are not listening to the small part of the population that says warmongering, mass surveillance, etc. is wrong.

I am going to mail Barack Obama a copy of the UDHR, with select articles conveniently highlighted. It will not do any good, but I will feel slightly less powerless for a couple of hours.

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Thanks for these interesting points. You mentioned:

That is almost 70 years ago, yet it reads as such a modern document! Examples:  
Article 12's language about privacy is perfectly valid in a world with the Internet and e-mail. Article 19 says that the right to free expression applies to "any media." Wow!

Indeed there is something in the way human rights are formulated that allows them a certain plasticity, they can be reinterpreted according to current needs and circumstances. Is that always a good thing though?

-posted 5 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**



Well, it's an interesting point especially in Europe, with the re-interpretation of the Charter through the one developed by the European Union, for example the right of marriage - can "between a man and a woman" be reinterpreted as to cover homosexual marriages as well? I'd like to meet the lawyer who can argue that!

-posted about 11 hours ago by TeodoraR (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2782110)



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**bigEZ (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3006211)** 8



5

days ago

I am biased. Growing up in Canada we are, for the most part, taught universal human rights. Mostly through our culture as opposed to through a formal education. We grow up knowing that we and all are granted universal rights.

Religious and cultural traditions throughout the world are affected by UHR both for good and for bad. There are some cultures currently restricting rights and others seeking them. We cannot paint all cultures with the same brush. We could argue that imposing UHR upon a culture would be for the benefit of the individuals involved but not necessarily for their traditions. And this is a highly western view (as I said, I've been biased).

One problem I foresee with drafting a declaration of human rights that can attract the most universal acceptance is that during the give-and-take negotiations, there are rights that may get watered down in order to get states to sign on. Wouldn't it be a good exercise instead, to draft a higher standard and get as many states to sign on as possible, then draft one with a minimum standard to get the rest

Every state improving from their current status should be the goal. Each state that commits to increasing HR translates into millions of people with increased HR.

A final thought. In the video, Ambassador Glendon says "It came out from many different religions and cultures that there are some things that are so good that no one would decent from them and there are some things that are so atrocious that everybody would condemn them". I disagree with this finding. If there were some things that everybody would condemn, and I'm assuming torture or murder are among them, then why are there actors throughout the world that have systematically implemented them? This is a great variance in values that keeps these rights from being universally accepted.

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Interesting points there **bigEZ**,

If there were some things that everybody would condemn, and I'm assuming torture or murder are among them, then why are there actors throughout the world that have systematically implemented them

When States kill or torture people, do they claim to be doing *just that* or will they say they are doing something else? Would it make a difference either way?

-posted 6 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**



In short, the U.S. is notorious for this, and there's nothing that can be done about it.

-posted 6 days ago by NatalieWitt (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3364068)



Let us remind ourselves that violations of human rights do not amount to degradation of the concept itself. Perhaps the most important aspect of the educational message of the UDHR could emphasize on this particular point.

-posted 2 days ago by neetee (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1799306)



I believe that the UDHR only identified the problem, but we still have a long way to come to change mentalities. The most dangerous thing is indeed claiming to protect human rights through "un-human rights" means, but then we have to come with alternate solutions if we want the situation to change.

-posted about 11 hours ago by TeodoraR (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2782110)



Add a comment...

8 days ago

1

**antoniohdz82 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3454345)**

Based on introduction and watched videos I consider that human rights strengthen and give the nations, religion, cultures and human beings ability to express and safeguard their political, civil and economic rights, in order that all have a good quality of life. There's no doubt that times that we are living it Human Rights have more importance in our societies and guarantee our freedom.

In my personal opinion some people believe that Human Rights are a product of western countries as many of them have taken as a flag to intervene around the world and also to create political or economic sanctions in countries that hurt their population. In the case of Mexico, country where I live, Human Rights are taken into account of the political and legal institutions however during the last two administrations



authorities have not respect the Human Rights of their society.

 Report Misuse

Hi, i am Juan from México too, i considered that the mexican government really try to be respectful with the human rights but remember that in the last two adminstration (Fox and Calderon) and i add the actual administration (Peña) the country has problems of Public Security so they focus on this but the CNDH has improved his legal capabilities. Concluding, i think the defense of human rights in Mexico has been improve over the years.

-posted 6 days ago by JCVELASCO (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3360500)



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**sereia (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3314132)** 8 days

0

ago

The existence of the enforcement of human rights, is the condition that allows societies to evolve and progress in ways that do not infringe on the dignity its people. Traditions that violate the essential rights mentioned in the Declaration, usually are the ones that impede societies to become a more just State and that is why I believe that activist movements (not solely based on western ideals, but on their cultural sense of justice) are created and attempt to challenge the traditions and cultural norms that they grew up with. As Mary Ann Glandon notes, human rights cannot be merely "western rights", while western beliefs might be said to be inflicted upon other cultures around the globe, some rights just seem to be so essential, that is it difficult to not regard them as human rights that should be universally applied. In American culture, human rights are seem as the core of the harmony in our society, this might be a generalization (given that I was not raised with a traditional American mindset) but I believe that the respect toward human rights is rooted in our belief system.

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**SerenaC123 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3433453)**

1

8 days ago

1. Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve? Universal human rights do not infringe on specific national, religious or cultural traditions, universal human rights challenge those traditions. Most national traditions are a combination of historical beliefs and economic self interest. For example, the subrogation of South Africans was not only based on a historical belief that blacks were inferior, but also on the economic self interest of the ruling minority. By limiting access to education, upward mobility and the full inclusion of economic mobility, a minority government was able to control a majority population. Only by challenging the status quo, as well as advocating the principals of universal human rights, were the people of South Africa finally able to obtain self determination and were allowed to express themselves and begin the evolution of South Africa. The condition of self determination and freedom of the individual to live, learn, feel safe and secure allows for the evolution of both the individual and the state.
2. In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they

seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?

In my region of the world human rights are seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings within the construct of political debate. Here in the United States human rights are seen as basic principals of democracy while at the same time, in the political sphere, rights of some individuals are considered more important than the rights of others. It is this tension that plays out every day in our judicial and political system. In theory, my region of the world sees human rights as a reflection of shared concerns, while in practice, human rights are the reflection of the tension between the individual and the state.

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**tgadgil269 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3197173)** 7

2

days ago

Every individual is born with certain inalienable rights. These basic rights are called human rights. The question that arises is what are these human rights? Defining them is the challenge. Every individual will define them differently. Some may have a conservative definition whereas others may give a wider, more inclusive definition.

States therefore, have matters complicated with respect to defining human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has codified the human rights. But even so, the implementation of human rights has not been universal. There are still certain states that do not grant basic civil liberties to their citizens. Economic and Social Rights take a back seat in the vast majority of the world.

Mere declarations will not work. Effective implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is essential. For that to happen, certain crucial steps need to be taken. What these steps are is a matter open for discussion.

I come from India where the best and worst of the world's rights situations can be found. In states like Maharashtra and Gujarat (fairly prosperous states) the state of human rights (both political and economic and social) is far better (although not universal) when compared to states such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (where rights (both civil and political as well as social and economic of a large section of the population) are infringed upon on a regular basis.

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**JoBox (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3492407)** 7 days

4

ago

1. Universal human rights as a conceptual ideal do not attempt to infringe on national, religious or cultural traditions and should serve to foster their growth and recognition, as Glendon suggests through acknowledging that we live in "societies of difference". The UDHR attempts to articulate universal principles for all people. The idea of universality, that is all people are one, should lend itself well to encouraging individuals and collective States to express themselves, to have and to show respect, to grow and to develop. I like the idea that no matter our differences we can all agree

in principle on "good" and "bad" for all of us. However, in practice it is difficult to facilitate universality, what Glendon suggests when she speaks of the UDHR as "imperfectly multi-cultural". Some of the reasons it is difficult to put universality into practice is because of power imbalances (both within and across states), differing perceptions of "other", individual levels of awareness (with education key to awareness-raising) and the established pattern of oppositional dynamics which views people through an "us and them" lens. The universality of human rights should allow people to act and interact as free thinking individuals, within the context of collective constraints, with the good of the individual and the good of the State receiving equal merit.

2. In my region, where I live in Australia, human rights would not be considered an exogenous product, however, more broadly in the region there would be the perception that human rights is such a product. Internally Australians have been coming to terms with their past treatment of their own Indigenous people and how to atone for that history, balanced against an outward facing commitment at an international level to human rights as a global issue. While we have committed to international human rights issues, we still need to do some work within our country to improve Indigenous rights. Australia is also in somewhat of a unique position given its geographic location as a "western" culture within a largely "non-western" region located with States with a different viewpoint. This places Australia in a delicate position, and means the need to tread carefully at a regional level in supporting our neighbours to support the concept of universality of human rights. I like to think that human rights are in principle something which we will continue to work upon to encourage greater acceptance of our shared dignity as valued people of the world.

 Report Misuse

I am also from Australia and not only can you look at Australia's past - as JoBox noted above - with our appalling treatment of indigenous Aborigines (which unfortunately still continues) but one simply needs to look at the current Government's policy of boarder protection to note human rights abuses.

Nations may claim to support the 'shared concerns relating to the dignity of human beings', however when politics are involved the argument of the 'sovereign state' always comes into play. Our Government certainly isn't considering the dignity of human beings when turning away desperate people on boats in our waters. Nor are they doing a very good job of, as stated by JoBox, 'tread[ing] carefully at a regional level in supporting our neighbours to support the concept of universality of human rights'. Unfortunately we are not leading by example.

This is also a fantastic link, examining treatment of asylum seekers in Australia: <http://serco-story.theglobalmail.org/> (<http://serco-story.theglobalmail.org/>)

-posted 7 days ago by sfoxton (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1612305)



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**kerubo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1970830)** 7 days

0

ago

In my country, Kenya, human rights are respected. There is no discrimination along racial or religious line. Although there are a few instances, the situation is contained

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7 days ago

1

**HasanulMusanna (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3488738)**

WE really need to set up a standard which will define the international human right. We also need to solve why people be treated differently?

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**josebalix (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/430479)** 7 days ago

2

ago

According to Glendon " the Declaration of Human Rights was impressively multicultural but imperfectly multicultural". Implying that the bill was inclusive of all cultures considering their religious national and cultural traditions,hence not infringing the universal human rights to specific groups listed.She urges that the most amazing good about the drafting of the declaration is the scholars agreed that their things that are so good that no one would dissent from them and those which are so bad that everyone will condemn them.

On the other hand she urges that it was imperfectly multicultural primarily because the idea of universality is western term. The fact that at its adoption in the 1948, the Sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the world were not included it negates the idea of universality, thus making it to be a document endorsed to test the other parts of the world that have not adopted the bill. The Declaration in its larger sense conditions many religious, traditional and and cultural practices to thrive and to evolve. Glendon highlights that in 1948, representatives from Asia and nine cultures of a predominantly Muslim population, Latin America and Europe signed up to those universal principles and later every constitution that has a bill of rights in it is influenced by the the UN Declarations of 1948. she strongly urged that the bill was not an enforcement but an acculturation, it was about saving the horrible conditions and atrocities that could be reduced.

The Declaration of Human rights bill primary purpose was education, this was to act as an engine to elevate nations through training, the founders of the bill considered education to be the only way to integrate culture and religious beliefs so that a bill of humans rights is made a reality even in those strict of cultures or religious communities. It was a future fathomed in undertaking that later this will be a competition among those who embrace the Declaration of Human Rights.

In my opinion truthfully NO, the human rights are not exogenous, even before they were called human rights our fore fathers were practicing them, even though in an imperfect way, they knew the right and wrong about humanity and co-existence. however what made human rights more confusing before were the traditional religious practices which required in my culture (mostly human sacrifices) and this made it more complex and a whole confusion emerged, am not surprised that when it was adopted, the bills primary objective was education.

For today like in my country we know very well we are born free and being born free it means its a right in itself, only we require intervention of institutions to polish or make us understand what having a right of freedom, education, to life and property means and what is at stake when they are violated. besides knowing that these rights are not imported, we have a great influence of rights being observed mostly in East africa down the line of our cultural beliefs and religion.

The current wave of homosexuality in Uganda is driving many Europeans and US administrations crazy and spend sleepless nights thinking of why Uganda can endorse such a bill, however to understand why such is going to be adopted we do not need to be taught about the rights of others but to understand why a certain individual is engaging in homosexuality of which Ugandans based on their religious practices and culture can not agree that gay is right to any human being in existence or in the after life (AM NOT AGAINST GAYS).

Ugandans respond to this kind of practice as a culture planted by US and Europe to destabilize Africa or Uganda, even the elites of the country fight the that sexual orientation. So is that exogenous I also cant find the answers i want to answer those questions . if really someone can be born gay, and this is a major research in which human rights activists have to address this issue through consultation, many people have to be aware of the reason why certain things are that way. A person with a disability is not less than a person without.

All I see is that human right advocacy is a shared concern among governments or institutions to propagate peace co-existence and justice that dignity of human beings is upheld. every country is striving to get there, Uganda will not be US in a day Syria or DRC will not be Japan in a day all we got is to put a possibility of hope so we over come those atrocities to human dignity through reason.

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**Alepalms (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2835840) 7**

days ago

1

Mary Ann Glendon certainly explains in clear words the philosophy at the base of the Original Declaration of Human Rights .

As for the question of Human Rights possibly infringing in specific National - Religious or Cultural Traditions , I would say that due to the general nature of this declaration ,which is based mostly on philosophic principles and with great attention to specific details , they are certainly a important instrument for understanding and evolving and progressing in a maner that accomodates all cultures and helps them to thrive and improve each one at a different pace but towards the same goal .

Fortunately I was born in a Country were Human Rights are at the core of our understanding and Civilisation but history proves that in certain conditions people can revert to less understandable and commendable behaviors (Fascism and the latent Red Brigade movements ) but I also lived for a long time in apartheid South Africa and I have seen with my eyes what a distorted doctrine can do to society and what a mislead population can blindly accept when it is convenient .

I would say that nothing is granted and every freedom has to be defended every day by everyone .

 Report Misuse

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**ginescb (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/241376)** I think **5**

the clash is not between those so-called individual-oriented rights vs. cultures with a different sense of the relationship individual-community. Communities enrich always on the diversity of opinions and contributions made by individuals, that's a fact I guess... But allow the participation of individuals in the community's institutions seems to be felt by the elders, the power-holders or the oligarchies as a threat. So, I think it is not always the representatives of a culture, but the representatives of the institutions (those more conservatives, which consider remaining the same to be the best mean to preserve themselves functional or influential) which usually address this speech that claim the Human Rights Declarations to be "western-ish". I'm from Spain, a country suffering these days a recoil in civil and political freedom (women's decision right for abortion -and all economical and social issues drawn with it- or right to protest have been threatened) while the Government prepares a law to undercut its obligations on international laws. I sincerely cannot imagine which of my country's traditions or cultural benchmarks could be threatened by assuring the access of every citizen to these rights and values. And I'm saying this being conscious of how conservative is my country, but still cannot see the conflict of interest. What I see indeed is that life is going to be worse in Spain if those threats become legislation.

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**LitiaD22 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3283769)** 7

**0**

days ago

Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?

I think that it does infringe on religion and culture in the sense that it questions many religious and cultural teachings and norms. That is why, i believe that IDHS should be conditions for these cultural traditions and religions to be able to evolve. Many religious teachings and cultural traditions are very violent ( in the sense that punishments are extreme) and also sometimes they are degrading ( in the sense that women are considered inferior and still subject to atrocious abuse )also they limit freedom ( in the sense that same sex marriage is still illegal and frowned upon in many countries).The conditions set by the IDHR should be considered by cultural traditions and religious orders so that they may evolve or change for the betterment and survival of peace and equality.

In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?

I come from a tiny, third world country in the South Pacific, that is under military rule at the moment - Fiji. The amount of people that have knowledge and understand human rights in my country would depend on education. Human rights may seem foreign to rural fijians because they would not have had the proper education or awareness to do so. In contrast, urban fijians would know much more about human rights as they would have had more awareness and education about it. However, one cannot fully take advantage of or fully enjoy those rights as they have been limited by the govenment of the day.

 Report Misuse

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7 days ago

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**okundij2005 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1979723)** In

Kenya the civil society are always attacking the police when extra judicial killings occur but do nothing when a policeman is killed by thugs. The government also often ignore universality of human rights when fighting terrorism.

Human Rights is above local and domestic politics, and the International community should put pressure on individual nations who undermine Human Rights for the economics Purposes.

 Report Misuse

7 days ago

1

**HasanulMusanna (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3488738)**

Like most developing countries, Bangladesh too has its share of human rights issues and problems. While fundamental freedoms are enshrined in the constitution regardless of race, gender and religion, there are many instances where the rights are often ignored and at worst trampled.

 Report Misuse

7 days ago

2

**MariajoseBelmonte (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1766974)**

I believe the Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains in itself ideals or values that are not only western, as Mary Ann Glendon pointed out, representatives from various regions of the world agreed with the proposal and eventually signed the document, which make me think that these are values the whole international community could agree on despite religious, ethical or geographical differences. Despite this, I do think the way of expressing those ideals or values and the way of grading them in importance (what to be included and what not) was surely influenced by western models and ideas, which does not affect to the content of the document per-se. From my point of view as an European citizen living in Finland but born in Spain, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights do not represent a foreign product or imposition rather than inner values that should be respected, protected and promoted.

 Report Misuse

But even in Europe, people have a problem with the respect for human rights in relation to other races and cultures. it might seem that Europe has the most universal attitude of human rights.

-posted 5 days ago by SabinaP (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3225984)



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7 days ago

0

**Elsa-Catarina (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3190412)**

Hello, This is my very first exprience; I`m portuguese and yesterday I read some posts here. Just occurs to comment this: Nowadays We still see millions of people starv to death, and other millions in a luxury live, who cares? And free violence? Well where are de basics Human rights?

 Report Misuse

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**hmurtagh (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3484661)** 7

0

days ago

1. As a westerner, living in an eastern society, (and a lot of interest, but no formal training in law or international human rights) it has always appeared to me that many of the discussions and thoughts on the UDHR are 'western' or at least leaning somewhat in that direction. However, without specifically infringing on religious or cultural traditions, the UDHR does give both freedom and direction for the evolution of specific practices. The idea of education, if implemented, would certainly seem to force the evolution of particular traditions by giving an understanding to (willing or forced) participants that they hold certain international privileges, which are inalienable.
2. I am currently living in a changing country. Certain rights that have been accepted in Turkey (although in many ways not practiced or ultimately not enforced) are now being painted as "other" or "foreign" along with many topics that the elected government dislikes and fears. It will be interesting to see what happens – many human rights organizations, particularly Amnesty International, have become very involved in pointing out Turkey's shortcomings – in the future.



**Ferojas (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2648181)** 7 days ago 0

Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve? It is clear the universal human rights is a real condition for these traditions, because without this rights the tradition has no sense. I think the human is above the traditions; if these traditions are dangerous for the humans, it will be a must follow the universal human rights. In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings? In Spain, we see them as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings. But, some people don't know anything about human rights, and the declaration of universal human rights. Thus, these people think that these humans rights are exogenous product.

 Report Misuse

**EmmaCP (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1035623)** 7 days ago 0

I'm American, and I don't really know how to answer this question in regards to the US. I haven't really had any conversations about it there, or thought of it as being exogenous, or not. Goes to show that it isn't always easy to analyse your own culture. However, I think this is a product of the fact that, as Glenden said, the form of the UNDR is a bi-product of the West, and thus seems more indigenous to Americans. Even though people may be insulted when the concept of "human rights" causes US policy to be called into question, I don't think it's ever a reaction to the concept of human rights themselves, but rather a disagreement over the exact definition thereof.

I contrast this to where I live, in Georgia (the country) where the concept of human rights is something that is talked about frequently (I assume that's partially due to the crowd I run with, but they aren't that different from my American friends). I think there are two different opinions in Georgia, the educated elites I think would agree that human rights are universal and are reflective of Georgian culture. But I don't know if those in villages would agree. I think they might be viewed as a foreign product infringing upon Georgian culture.

 Report Misuse

**Alicehirwa (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3488280)** 7

0

days ago

1. Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve? No ;to my view, the concept of universal human rights –its self is a compiled list of fundamental rights wich are common by their nature; The Human Rights Committee in its General Comment 24 (1994) has summed up the rights which can be assumed to belong to this part of international law which is binding on all states, irrespective of whether they have ratified relevant conventions, and to which no reservations are allowed: [A] State may not reserve the right to engage in slavery, to torture, to subject persons to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, to arbitrarily deprive persons of their lives, to arbitrarily arrest and detain persons, to deny freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to presume a person guilty unless he proves his innocence, to execute pregnant women and children, to permit the advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred, to deny to persons of marriageable age the right to marry, or to deny to minorities the right to enjoy their own culture, profess their own religion, or use their own language. And [...] the right to a fair trial [...]. Although this list is subject to debate and could possibly be extended with other rights not in the field of civil and political rights (for instance, genocide and large parts of the Four Geneva Conventions on International Humanitarian Law), the Committee underlines that there is a set of human rights which de jure are beyond the (politically oriented) debate on the universality of human rights.

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**cotemy (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2194928)** 7 days

1

ago

1. The idea of human rights inherent to all people. It lies in all of us, regardless of ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds. Philosophers, religious and cultural figures, representing all countries and territories of the world, participated in the drafting and adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to take into account the interests of all people in the world. While, racial discrimination questions, discrimination against women and children, were very relevant. And they were delivered to the forefront. All these facts are very convincing in disputes against statements that the Declaration embodies values of individualism that would be specific to the Western civilization.
2. I live in Israel. People here, especially young people, are very passionate about the principles of human rights, however, most of them are very superficial. They just try to talk to each other, but in reality they are very little justice to each other. Although, I think this problem is related to our time in general. This is the case not only in Israel, but also worldwide.

 Report Misuse

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**zardi (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2254100)** 7 days ago

1

Universal human rights are a way to help peopole live with a consience that everyone else on the planet of earth is as equal as he is as free as he is as human as he is. It is a point that eliminate all the differences

that wa might live with. In Tunisia, people are aware of the necessity of the implantation of human rights, because we lived in 56 years of opression and dictator ship without knowing the very simple right.

 Report Misuse

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7 days ago

 3

**Lorelarius (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1005217)** 1. Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?

It's a very complex question. When I was working in Latin America I learned something interesting about penal indigenous system, for this communities the physical punishment isn't a form of punishment is a form of healing. Where is the limit of the right to self-determination? I'm not sure, but in my opinion human rights like right to life and prohibition of torture are absolut rights and they have no limits.

 Report Misuse

Interesting point **Lorelarius**:

for this [indigenous] communities the physical punishment isn't a form of punishment is a form of healing

Is there a point where traditional practices cross a line, though? Should some forms of punishment be considered excessive, regardless of what the local community thinks is the proper punishment, or the adequate rationale for punishment?

-posted 6 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**



Add a comment...

**Runyararo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3469676)** 7 0 days ago

I think while it can be argued that human rights infringe on specific cultural traditions, the perceived infringement may in fact provide conditions for the traditions to evolve. Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights. Every human being has the right to culture, including the right to enjoy and develop cultural life and identity. Cultural rights, however, are not unlimited. The right to culture is limited at the point at which it infringes on another human right. That said, human rights should be flexible enough to respect and protect cultural diversity and integrity; this can be done by establishing minimum standards necessary for the protection of human dignity. For example, I live in Zimbabwe; we have a cultural practice called "roora" (bride price). I do not see how roora (practiced in its purest form) affects my rights as a human being or as a woman. If my future husband pays roora for me I doubt that I will feel like I have been sold to the highest bidder. Roora is nothing more to me than a traditional ceremony that allows the families to get together and build a relationship. Obviously, if roora is abused and is used to objectify women and is used as an excuse to perpetuate domestic violence and men then feel

own their wives etc -then it becomes a problem. However, I do think that it is possible for cultural practices to evolve and thrive to the extent that the culture does not violate human rights. Also, culture is not or rather should not be static and sacrosanct. Culture is constantly evolving, responding to both internal and external stimuli, and it is possible to outgrow and reject certain practices. That said, culture should not be cited as a defence for not adhering to human rights.

In Zimbabwe, as in many developing countries, some human rights are simply not relevant to societies and in such cases are seen as a foreign product far removed from the lived realities of the people. However, because of the awareness and education surrounding human rights nowadays, the citizenry will sometimes take ownership of those rights that are perceived to be of foreign origin and apply the rights to their own situations. The latter situation has often formed a basis for changes in oppressive laws and policies. The contexts in which the rights may have originated may be different but the principle being protected is often the same or similar.

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**poolercita (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2841784)** 7

0

days ago

I have read some of my colleagues' comments and some of them are very inspiring. I am from a western country, Spain, so for me is very interesting to read the thoughts of people who were born and live in countries with different traditions, cultures and even values.

We are talking about the universality of Human Rights and the possibility that despite our differences, we could converge in basic common views about human rights. As far as I read, most of the differences that we consider to stand in the way of the universality of Human Rights are found in the cultural or religious background. From my point of view, these aspects evolve continuously and so, there is no reason for anybody to feel attached to them to the point of blurring our capacity to think by ourselves. I really think that empathy with other people would help us in our search for universal human rights: Instead of think about them as western ideas or as infringing on culture or religion, let's try to think what we would like for ourselves or for our loved ones to be a basic right? I am sure, that in this way, which focuses more in a positive question, we may come up with some common points. Always is better to ask positive questions, because they allow us to reach common positions, while if we start focusing on a negative question, what is going to arise are our differences.

We have seen a video about Eleanor Roosevelt capability to look for common points among very different actors, I think that should be our aim, look for what join us together. Tolerance, respect and empathy should be the pivot concepts which lead the search for universalism of certain rights. Let's think out of the box!

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Is the idea of universality is specific to western countries? What's about this concept in Chinese, Indian or Arabic culture? Mary Ann Glendon (in the interview) advocated on the fact that all those 18 experts from all around the world were agree with a "Jus Cogen", with idea that there are Universal Human Rights? Without any influences of the culture, religion, society, some human rights are recognize like obligatory for states. And what's about the two conventions in 1966 on the Economic and social rights and political Human rights? Can we accept the idea that those rights are "wertern", resulting to an individualistic vision of society where civil freedom is the top priority? If we are looking on sources on the Universal Human Rights Declaration, the Magna Carta, The US constitution, The DDHC of the french revolution, The Bill of Rights, the Altantic charter... Many of declarations from Europe... 2. I'm coming from France, and of course, Human rights are "Universal" for us. But are really their ?Because of the UN is resulting to the desire of states, and because, normally, this international organisation should be not an obligation, we can accept the idea that Human Rights are universal. But what's about the concrete application of those Human Rights? Are their still universal? France signed the convention on prison, but this country was condemned by the international Court of Justice many times, accused to not receipt the convention on life conditions prisoner. With this example of a country who does not respect Human Rights, can we say that Human Rights are universal? Thank you for E. Roosevelt's speech, and more specifically when she declared that Human rights started at home,in our common days.

 Report Misuse

**Kaldygul (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3450492)** 7

1

days ago

While watching the interview of Mary Ann Glendon, I recognized that this woman speaking so confidently and based on knowledge. But there is a little confusion in my head about implementetion of Human Rights everywhere. So, the case of Pussy Riot seems to me a purely western fruit. All International Organisations even the International Amnesty Organisation use all time and resouce and focusing on Pussy Riots, while there are so many grave cases happening in Russia or different edges. Precisely such acts makes a person think about veracity of International Organisations which fight for human rights. So I want to ask you a question is Human Rihgt universal or Western product.

 Report Misuse

**Alicehirwa (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3488280)** 7

0

days ago

1. In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings? In the country I come from , the human rights concepts are just kept in office book-chefs ;especially the freedom of expression, right of association, right of demonstration , arbitrary arrest, poor detention places and conditions, extent , where the media is not independent to report government abuse; for the people of this great lakes regions, human rights is considered as foreign products ,even its awareness among communities is critical.

7 days ago

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**olookmkenya (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/431748)**

human rights have and will never infringe on our cultures, traditions or religion. however, these three mentioned paradigms have been acting in contravention of late.

 Report Misuse**tmc009 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2459453)** 7 days ago

0

1) I don't think they infringe on cultures, traditions, etc because I think the UDHR is a set of ideals, goals, guidelines for states to evolve toward. It will take some countries longer than others to adopt the rights, but it is a process. Even the UN has amended it. And it will continue to be challenged as technology and globalization bring new challenges to states and their people. 2) Here in the San Francisco Bay Area (California) human rights are seen as fundamental, inherent, organic, elemental and inalienable to each individual.

 Report Misuse

**arkskon (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/566435)** 7 days

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ago

Does it really matter? The UDHR was a response to the incomprehensible phenomena of a genocide conducted by German regime on industrial scale. It was aimed at limitation of human rights violations across the globe. Was it really effective though? On one hand we have structured protective mechanism honored individually by 192 countries but effectively controlled by the UN Security Council. Not only UN fails to prevent genocide (Rwanda, Kosovo or more recently Palestine) but gives mandate to perpetuate genocide in places like Afghanistan. We may note some success of the UDHR regarding violations committed on individuals in so called "civilized countries" but it is being dwarfed by violations committed on a mass scale. I live in Europe and human rights as such are taken seriously, however, the recognition of human rights breaches is very difficult ascertain, in fact respect for human rights has it's price... literally... most often determined by financial backup.

 Report Misuse

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**motrippy (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1316104)** 7

0

days ago

I think that the UDHR does provide conditions for different national, religious and cultural traditions to thrive and evolve. However when specific traditions violate universal human rights, i believe it could be a sign that certain practices/ideals should evolve as well -- either change or cease to exist in order for all humans to a live of dignity. As many fellow learners have expressed, while traditions and culture will always be a part of a people's history and character, the only constant is change. People have to adapt and evolve in order to take advantage of all that humankind has and can achieve; to learn from the past and improve the future; to keep moving forward instead of going around in circles, or being left behind.

I would say that universal human rights is not seen as a foreign product here in the Philippines. I believe we've fought for it long through our history (even before the UDHR)- from the Spanish colonial times, to the WW2 Japanese occupation, to the ouster of the dictator Marcos through People Power -- even now we are struggling against poverty, corruption, and natural disasters. While there will always be conflicts between religious beliefs and progressive or modern perspectives on various contentious topics (The pending Reproductive Health Bill being a prime example), i think debates are a good sign that people are passionate about achieving things that are for the good of everyone, however different their approaches may be.

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**SvenjadvW (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2328313)** 7

0

days ago

As Professor Glendon mentions in the video, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is designed as a sign, almost like a fork in the road where member states can essentially pick the road that allows their

cultural traditions to flourish. As a German immigrant to the United States I would agree that human rights are definitely a reflection of a universally shared concern. If they weren't it never would have been possible to pass the Declaration of Human Rights in the first place.

[Report Misuse](#)

7 days ago

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**angeladicosta (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2840907) 1.**

**Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve?**

I don't think that the document infringes on people's rights, I do however feel that the governments in place do not always remember that people have these universally ratified rights. You need to look beyond the document, to the people of the world, I personally don't think these rights take away anything from people. I do understand that westernized ways of thinking and that we don't always understand or accept other ways of thinking. As a personal belief I like to think that everyone is equal and my goal is to treat people as they wanted to be treated, but I also understand that everyone is different and has different religious and cultural traditions. We need to be aware that although others may not follow that westernized way of thinking they are not wrong in their belief's nor their traditions. The document does not infringe on their rights, we as a society do and that is where the change needs to be made, by this day and age we should be able to accept everyone as they are and it need not matter if we understand anyone else, the only thing that should be focused on is equality for regardless of religion or culture, only then can we truly be equal and allow other's to believe in what they wish and maintain their own cultures apart from what we believe is for the best.

**2. In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings?**

I certainly don't think human rights are seen as foreign here in Canada. I feel that here in Canada people have come to expect to have those rights. In comparison to other places in the world, we have it pretty good here. Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms is very thorough and anything that is felt to be unconstitutional can be challenged in our courts. With respect to the other nations of the world, we have managed to stay well liked by most and we've maintained the rights of our people even with all the conflict happening in the world and in our own backyards. I think Canada has a very respectable set of rights and for the most part, most of our citizens are aware and even expect these rights that have been afforded to us. Were certainly luckier than most to live in a place that we need not second guess having rights.

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Hi, I'm Indy from Indonesia. I'm going to give you my own opinion about the questions :)

1) I think human rights, as an imperfect product that doesn't represent all of the culture and people in the world (especially UDHR lacks some of representation of other country), can be potentially infringing. From the previous answer I read, I found some interesting and fascinating answer on how the culture has a different, even contrasting idea with the human right. In my country, for example, given the conservative culture and belief, people still find gay/homosexual people unacceptable and they still got stigma here. Their belief make them think that those person are sinners. Looking at this, it actually creates a new question: what if a human right conflicts with one another? In my example, the right to held on to the personal belief conflicts with the right to be equal regardless of their sexual orientation. These rights are supposed to be interdependent and indivisible, yet sometimes there are times when these rights conflict with one another.

However, 'culture', in the end, has never been stagnant. "Culture" was made up of people, and when people develop, the culture will develop. Most of cultures also known to borrow some 'good parts' of other culture. To sum up my point, I think, in the end, human rights can positively affect and develop culture, nations, or religions. And anyway, while there are some 'details' in human rights that conflict with the way culture manifests itself in real lif, there are a huge overlap on the "virtue" (or the "value") of the culture with the human rights.

2)It is an interesting question.

Indonesia has quite a past with human right and human right violation, actually. When Indonesia declares the independency, it has been a debate on whether the words of 'human right' should be explicitly written in the constitutions or not. Some of them found 'human right' as a product of Western, and Indonesia, who still tries to 'build its own character' tries to differentiate Indonesia from Westerns. In the first version of Indonesia's constitution, human rights are not specifically explained because of this discussion.

Because it is not something specifically regulated in the constitution, there are a lot of violation of human rights in the past, such as the disappearing protesters, the limitation of doing political activity, etc. The current government has tried to eradicate this problem and solve this problem, however, the effort on solving these cold cases still remain stagnant. Indonesia, which still tries to develop itself, can't still truly escape the past, especially given the fact that some of the officials in the current government actually took a part on the violation of human rights in the past. However, there are signs of the human rights progressing in Indonesia and while it is still not perfect, the government start to realize the importance of human rights, for example, by amending the constitution to include human rights.

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**Gemma77 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3426898)** 7

1

days ago

Certainly, Universal Human Rights are a condition for national, religious or cultural traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve because since when Universal Declaration was created and adopted by a group of 80 people, they were sure that universal human rights didn't infringe specific national, religious or cultural traditions. So, universal human rights are the key to close the serious conflicts of different countries and, consequently, to evolve. For these reasons, it's important to fight for its protection.

On the other hand, in Spain human rights are promoted and emphasized by different political parties especially in election campaigns. However, I think this happens in many other countries of the world. But the reality is very different because many of these rights are violated. For example, lobbies try to avoid the protection of some rights. Therefore, sectors of civil society are essential to pressure states.

 Report Misuse

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Gemma77, could you explain, please, why it is this situation with violation of human rights in this country? Unfortunately, in some countries it is really so. And my country is sad example of this..The main problem of my country is that many people do not know their own rights, do not want to use legal tools as courts to protect their rights..

-posted 7 days ago by KseniaParneva (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3491393)



Hi Ksenia,

Thanks for your comment. The same that you say happens in my country (Spain). As you say people don't want to use legal tools as courts because there's corruption and professional intrusion. But corruption not only exist in courts. In addition, there's corruption in state administrations, institutions... In Spain there's a general corruption and this violates the rule of law and democratic state.

-posted 7 days ago by Gemma77 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3426898)



Hi Gemma, I just wanted to express you my agreement about both questions!

I come also from Spain and it seems people know they (well, let me say "we") have some human rights that must be upheld, from my point of view; but because of this corruption the situation is difficult... I understand the need of doing some reforms, and I think some of them are already done, but the problem is also that in general, the citizens do not or do not have too much to do for changing the system, the basis of our system - which is promoted and in some aspects even forced by the EU, and which I think it would be really important to change too-, because of our culture, that it is not "lazy" as some europeans say, it is just different, with other weakness but with some other strenghts too. In conclusion, I do not know what should we do to defend these rights we are supposed to have, but I am sure lot of us know about them.

-posted 6 days ago by LopezGabarron (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2709612)



Hi Gemma from my point of view, It's still possible to improve situation. For example, in recent years some social advertisement has appeared in my country. How do you think, it would work to advertise some information about natural rights on TV, in the Net and so on? May be if people just knew this information,they would not ignore it?

-posted 5 days ago by KseniaParneva (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3491393)



Hi again Ksenia,

I agree with you. I also think that's possible to improve this situation. As I said people and society in general must pressure states (in this case, Spain). Of course and firstly, to do that, people have to know all their human rights and all relevant information about these rights. So, promote the existence of human rights is essential. For example, through TV ads, popular newspapers, etc. In addition, schools must participate and publicize human rights. Consequently, if people knew this important information, they wouldn't ignore violations of human rights and they would create a state of justice and without corruption.

-posted 4 days ago by Gemma77 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3426898)



Hi Lopez,

Thanks for your comment. I'm completely agree with you. Spain needs a change of system!

-posted 4 days ago by Gemma77 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3426898)



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**MariaLesk (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3253683)** 7

5

days ago

1) As Glendon said, UDHR is not about enforcement, it is about inspiration and education. If you see it not from the perspective of specific laws and traditions, but from the perspective of general attitude of people towards each other, you'll see clearly it cannot infringe on any national values and laws. Human rights are just an official expression of what is truly universal - kindness and care about people around us. Humane attitude is desired by all nations that's why it's universal, and if we see human rights from this viewpoint, they are universal. To prove this vision of human rights, I want to give a quote (<http://www.ohchr.org/RU/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11917&LangID=E>) of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay: "We know from experience that you don't eliminate prejudice by changing the law alone; you must change people's hearts and minds as well".

2) I think that situation in my country is similar to that in some other countries. Human rights are gladly recognized by the authorities but recognition alone is not enough. Implementation of human rights at local level is a hard thing to do since even local authorities are not considerate towards needs of ordinary people, since comfort brought by power builds a wall between authorities and citizens. Some officials (especially at higher levels) could have never experienced problems of those whose human rights have been violated. And consequently they may not even think of it. Statistics they have cannot replace a true experience. So, in this country you do have human rights officially but in practice people should fight sometimes for their rights to get them realized.

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I like your post. You are focused from an internal perspective of the human being. Nice quote too.

-posted 7 days ago by IvanHerrera (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3491243)



Hi Maria, I agree with what you wrote, though I'm not sure if I would put it as strongly. Would you really say that humane attitude is desired by all nations? I would maybe argue that it is desired by all people, even if is repressed by some states and therefore the desire can not be shown or acted upon publicly. I would, however, argue that some states, if you see state as the political class and not the whole of the people, do not desire a humane attitude. Instead, it is power and personal freedom irrespective of the rights (and freedom) of others that they crave. Would you agree?

-posted 7 days ago by Chris247 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3452417)



I've just thought about your words and first I decided that I used the word "nation" mistakenly there, since you combine people and authorities in this notion, I have looked it up in Oxford Dictionary and you were right, nation is a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory, so we cannot make authorities separate from the word. But the problem is not in their lack of desire to treat people humanely. People themselves may perceive humanity in their special way. Some community may have a practice deeply entrenched in their traditions and culture but violating the right to health, for example. A representative of this community would rather get his or her right to health violated rather than be an outsider, not respecting ancestry. So here we come to the conclusion that

actually UDHR may infringe on national laws, traditions and culture.

-posted 7 days ago by MariaLesk (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3253683)



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**TinaJ2 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1152017)** 7 days

0

ago

Yes human rights are universal and there can be little doubt when we consider core rights such as the freedom from torture. It gets more difficult when we look beyond those core rights and this tends to be when the different ideological viewpoints and cultural norms kick in to raise problems in gaining consensus. The world is becoming a more homogenous place and so in the future this may become less of a problem

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Hi TinaJ2, I read your comment and I would like to say that I'm totally agree when considering the core rights such as freedom from torture, because in short words, if they are imposed, how we can say they give us "freedom"? but I just wanted to ask you what do you exactly mean when you say or you consider that "the world is becoming a more homogenous place". I found this sentence a little bit "strange" for the times we are living, the economical and financial crisis that generates many differences between countries and even between people from the same place, then, from my point of view, we are increasing the heterogeneity of the world; and it also shows us that there are people, and not just few people, who just don't care about the homogeneity of the world and who acts according to this mind. What do you exactly mean by this homogeneity? Just to consider more points of view! Thanks!!

-posted 7 days ago by LopezGabarron (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2709612)



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**Consu91 (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3383466)** 7

0

days ago

I think that Universal Human Rights are, in fact, made to promote the evolve of society. Under that perspective, Human Rights are a kind of condition of change to some traditions and elements of some countries culture which could be a brake to society's evolution. Anyway, I think that the concept of Human Rights that we know, is a very western notion and is necessary to make some efforts to make more universal the application of them, specially in countries with traditions and cultures opposed to western ones. Now, In my country, Human Rights have been taking many importance since the end of a Civil Conflict that we lived at the 80's, there have been many organizations and efforts to apply them; but, there are always some factors which break the clear and complete application of Human Rights, as the use of them by politicians in order to gain followers in electoral periods.

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I am partly agree with you. However, how do you think may be human rights are not a western notion, western countries only have started the creation of society (state) governed by the rule of

law much earlier than the eastern countries ( because the some driving forces like the French revolution or some "conflicts" against dicrimination)? Personally I hope that the human rights are province of all mankind..

-posted 7 days ago by KseniaParneva (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3491393)



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**albaluz2014** (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3433798)

0

7 days ago

FIRST QUESTION: According with the inspiration, influence, structure and topics introduced on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in my opinion, the International Bill of Human Rights are not infringing, limiting or restricting the individual sphere or society globally organized under its traditions, values and culture, as mentioned in the first question. Instead, The Declaration is observed by individuals, community and diverse religious groups, human rights organizations, governments, including the United Nations. In this context, governments perform and accomplish themselves and their people to evolve, develop and achieve measures or steps which assured the UNIVERSAL and EFFECTIVE acknowledgment, observance and fulfillment of the Human Rights established in the Declaration. Likewise, the Declaration has served as the inspiration for configuration of a essential growing national and international laws, treaties and several organizations to be able to promote, protect and achieving self confident and self determination on the global society. So that, this fundamental document binding universality, because it is a powerful legal instrument that develop essential freedoms and human rights. On the other hand, I would like to mention about the greatest contribution and strategic role of ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, in the formulation of a nonbinding code defining human rights, which, binding treaties could generate later on. Also, the inspiration claimed that the respect and priority based to human rights are diverse in many cultures. Eleanor Roosevelt gave a light to the process of structure of the Declaration. She pleads proficiently for the declaration's universal character and validity. Despite, the key point is if the declaration has had a significant effect in practice, because in many parts around the world, human rights don't exist in this sense, even when they have legal binding through laws, constitutions or treaties. Other critics think that the Declaration represents like a wonderful DREAM difficult to come true, not a reality.

SECOND QUESTION: Definitely, my country has a formal and legal commitment about HUMAN RIGHTS. We has been a member of the United Nations since 1945; and is party to a variety of international agreements, protocols and conventions about human rights. Also, the Constitution of 1991 allows the protection of human rights under national constitutional law. The government has a special protection program However, we have had serious and several systematic violations of Human Rights by diverse parties in conflict during many years. Likewise, there are reports concerning arbitrary detentions of human rights defenders. So that, our country has a latent concern and struggle for respect of human rights in favor of constitutional principle to HUMAN DIGNITY.

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**Alepalms** (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2835840) 7

0

days ago

I repeat this response in the right place .

Mary Ann Glendon certainly explains in clear words the philosophy at the base of the Original Declaration of Human Rights .

As for the question of human rights possibly infringing specific national-religious-cultural traditions , I would say that due to the generalistic nature of the declaration which is based mostly on philosophic principles and with the great attention paid to specificities , they could instead be an important instrument for understanding ,evolving and progressing in a manner that accomodates all cultures and helps nations to thrive and improve ,each one at his own pace , towards the same goal .

Fortunately I was born in a country where human rights are at the core of understanding and civilization but history proves that in certain conditions, nations and people can revert to less understandable and commendable behaviours (fascism and red brigade) but I have also lived for a long time in South Africa during the appartheid time ,and I have seen with my eyes what a distorted doctrine can do to society and what a mislead population can blindly accept especially when it is convenient .

I think this is happening even today in some troubled areas of the world , with a quiescent blind eye from the International community .

I would say that nothing is for granted and freedom has to be defended everyday by everyone .

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Alepalms, thank you for reposting your response here. That's the perfect attitude.

-posted 6 days ago by MatthiasMS (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1917784) **STAFF**



PREVIEW

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**KarenWest (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/341562)** 2

0

minutes ago

In regard to question 1: Are universal human rights infringing on specific national, religious or cultural traditions? Or are they instead a condition for these traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and to evolve? --I am from the USA, and my understanding is that Universal Human Rights do NOT infringe on national, religious or cultural traditions, and are instead a condition for those traditions to be able to thrive, to express themselves and evolve. However, I have noticed the following difference in what are viewed as human rights, interpreted by my country, the USA, where we live, and the country from which my husband is from, the UK. In the UK, they consider the "right to free healthcare for all citizens" a human right guaranteed by the UK government. However, in the USA, it is not viewed that way, and we do pay for it here, and there are those who do not have it. I think most countries adopt a certain set of what they agree upon are human rights for all, but within a country, they may differ on certain things that are considered a human right that is not universal. Another difference I've observed in the US Constitution that is debated about as a "right" in the USA, that for example, the UK does not consider a "right", and that is the "right to own a gun or fire arm". I don't want to say anything about my opinions here, but rather point out that although both of these 2 particular countries, and other countries too, might agree on a basic set of Universal Human Rights that we all adopt, there are still major differences

within each country that are considered rights. I don't think the Universal Human Rights on which we all adopt do not infringe on any specific national, religious or cultural traditions.

In regard to question 2: In your region of the world, are human rights seen as an exogenous/foreign product, or are they seen as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings? --In the USA and in the UK where my husband is from, both regions of our worlds consider human rights as reflecting shared concerns related to the dignity of human beings, but as mentioned above, there are some differences in even these 2 countries consideration of what our "rights", although we share the same Universal Human Rights. However, I have seen abuses of things that should be a human right, even in the USA, and people shockingly get away with not treating all human beings with equal dignity, even when we all know that it should be that way, but I do think that most people in our regions want to treat all human beings with equal dignity.

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## The universality of human rights amongst different faiths/ cultures and social cleverages in this world

0

**carrphilippe** (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3059498) about 2 hours ago

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Following the discussion of Mary Ann Glendon and the Universality of the Declaration of Human rights, I feel that there is a general acknowledgement...

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## le rôle des droits de l'homme

**Mohamed1960** (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1609075) about 4 hours ago

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**Human rights****Vbardhaj (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2775858)**  Report Misuse

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*about 6 hours ago*

Human Rights plays a role in everyone's life, but not everyone realizes it. It's involved in every comment you make that includes someone different....

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**Wiki 1.3****AyelenAmigo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2725543)**  Report Misuse

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*about 6 hours ago*

I'm having problems trying to post the exercise 1.3 at Wiki. I don't know if there is a general problem or I can't find the right way to do...

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**objective point of view against subjective point of view****ChuchoLaw (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3508560)**  Report Misuse

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*about 15 hours ago*

The Universal Human Rights currently are the most important rights around the world. These joint of principles are recognized by any state. It...

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**The human rights in my region****racilo (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2115917)**  Report Misuse

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*about 24 hours ago • This thread is closed.*

Due to the particular situation of my country The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the relationship with the United States from 1898 to date (almost...

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**Slavery, excision contradict the principles of Human Rights in some African countries****waha (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1555238)** *a day ago • This thread is closed.*  Report Misuse

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*thread is closed.*

The principles of Human Rights protects the human being against injustice and lead the human being to a path of freedom and self respect. Hence,...

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**ABOUT NEXT DATE OF THIS COURSE****vivisalamanca (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3460346)**  Report Misuse

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*a day ago • This thread is closed.*



Human Rights topic and I want...

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**personal opinion****Juampagaviria (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/2134941)** a day ago • This thread is closed.

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1.I believe that there are to put specially attention we talk about other religions or cultures very different our.  
Should have respect for all...

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**Similarities across cultures****SundeeppKR (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/3544113)** 2 days ago • This thread is closed.

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In my view across all cultures and religions there is a certain spectrum of people who priortise human  
development and understand the need for...

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**What an odd question.. Off course there is bound to be cultural differences, but what does that have to do with it.****SunnyNoel (/courses/LouvainX/Louv2.01x/1T2014/discussion/forum/users/1164937)** 2 days ago • This thread is closed.

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3

Just to widen the picture and take a more anthropological view on it, offcourse there would be many cultures  
around the world where practises...

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Help

**COMPLETION CHECKBOX** (1 point possible)

I have watched the video, considered the questions and interacted in the forums.

Check





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