



Human rights and Young People, Summer 2022



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Introduction

This summer at the University of California Ethics Center, students in the Human Rights and Young People module led by instructors Professor Andrada Costoiu, Isabelle Dastgheib, Hannah Dastgheib, and Max Razmjoo addressed a fundamental need among researchers and academics concerned with ethics and morality. As proven by recent events in the United States and across the globe, human rights are either under attack or are not mutually agreed upon by all forces. As such, this general lack of understanding can apply not only to adults in the world but also to future generations. While often ignored in this realm, the global youth have wide-ranging opinions and perspectives regarding human rights issues. For example, youth leaders in human rights include Malala Yousufzai, who fought for educational and women's rights in Pakistan as a teen, and teen advocate Greta Thunberg, fighting for environmental justice and other climate initiatives. Both women demonstrate the power of youth voices and activism in addressing critical human rights issues.

Our module started with lectures on human rights presented by our mentor Andrada Costoiu, which led us to understand the history of human rights and took us on a virtual trip to comprehend what human rights look like in our diverse world. Then, we sought to zero in on young people's ideas regarding human rights. We used a general human rights survey developed by Isabelle Dastgheib, Hannah Dastgheib, and Max Razmjoo geared toward young people, which sought to gauge perspectives on human rights regarding that demographic group. After discussing these results with the module, interns sought to create surveys specialized in specific issues and record their findings. These areas focused on specific human rights issues, including political, environmental, social, civil, economic, and cultural rights. Participants acted as data



collectors, researchers, and problem-solvers through their work. Finally, they discussed their findings among their groups and collaborated in sorting the data and writing their paper.

This module aimed to empower youth and draw attention to a lack of academic discussion regarding youth voices and human rights. The ongoing debate and discourse surrounding human rights issues will have far-reaching implications for future generations. Thus, gauging the ideas of Generation Z and beyond is crucial in fostering discussion and tackling these issues as a collective society.

Civil Rights

Authors: Abigail Hwang, Stella Goodman, Isaac Lin, Evan Razmjoo, Ryan Zargari

Background:

Many people understand civil rights as rights that humans are entitled to under the law. With that comes human rights that are given to people under civil rights. Ever since our nation granted citizens civil rights, women were often left with limited freedoms, and their civil rights were ignored. Dating back to 1848, the Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention was one of our nation's first early organized movements (Eisenberg & Ruthsdotter, 1998). From then on, there has been a continuous fight for women's rights throughout America. To this day, amendments and movements, such as the Equal Rights Amendment, have still yet to pass in the United States, which makes it even harder to ensure quality in our nation. In the current day, though improvements have been made, the overturn of Roe v. Wade sets back the clock about 50 years. The overturn of Roe v. Wade in America allows the states to choose whether or not abortion is legalized. Though states like California, Nevada, Oregon, and more have publicly confirmed that legalized abortions will be available, other places like Alabama, South Dakota, and more have



already made abortions illegal, and some have even criminalized the procedure. Not only is this dangerous to women who need it, but it is a massive violation of women's fundamental and constitutional rights. (UN Women, 2022)

Why is this topic important?

Many women worldwide lack fundamental human and civil rights, which include the right to education, equal pay, the right to own property, etc. Even with voting, women in different parts of the world are not granted this right. For example, in Syria, women have been cut off from political engagement, making it harder for them to attain this right (Amnesty International, 2022). On a day-to-day basis, women are trying to fight for these rights worldwide. This topic should be emphasized because it has been a dehumanizing aspect of our society, and while it has gotten better over the years, many regions still discriminate against women's rights. Some say recent infringements of women's rights stem from religious beliefs interfering with political decisions. This raises serious questions about the future of constitutional privacy rights and the establishment clause in the United States.

Data Analysis:

We compiled a survey with a series of questions that pertained to civil rights, mainly aiming more toward women's rights. As we received about 20 responses, each was anonymous. However, we did ask for age, gender, sexuality, political position, etc. We asked individuals to rank on a scale of 1-5 for how important they believed some rights or situations were as a pressing human rights issue. This included the right to abortion, the right to universal healthcare, the right to education, equal racial rights, gender rights, or subjects such as gender pay gap and workplace discrimination. As we started by asking individuals taking the survey whether they thought human rights were the same as civil rights, 75% responded with "Yes"; however, 25%



responded with "No." The question that left the highest number of individuals to respond with a "5" was about equal racial rights. 90% of the 20 participants in the survey believed that equal racial rights are a pressing issue in our society. Participants were also asked what they believed were today's most common civil rights violations. The majority responded with racism, racial discrimination/exclusion, and gender discrimination.

The main topic our group focused on was women's rights. Many women around the world lack fundamental human and civil rights. Nevertheless, daily, women are trying to fight for these rights worldwide. When it came down to a question talking about how equal gender rights is a pressing human rights issue, our survey concluded that 75% of our respondents believe that it is at a 5 for being a pressing human rights issue, while 15% put a 4, and 5% put a 3, 5% putting a 2. Additionally, when asked about the right to abortion being a pressing human rights issue, 75% put a 5, 10% put a 4, 5% put a 3, 5% put a 2, and 5% put a 1. The data exemplifies women's problems and how important their rights are.

We also asked whether the respondents believed the gender pay gap and workplace discrimination are pressing human rights issues. As for the gender pay gap, 60% of the individuals believed that it is a pressing human rights issue, 25% put a four on the scale, 10% put a 3, and 5% put a 1. As for workplace discrimination, 50% put a 5, 35% put a 4, and 10% put a 3, leaving the remaining 5% to 1. When asked which individuals believed the least significant, these two issues were the most popular for this category. Seven individuals put workplace and gender pay gap to be least significant, five put a different answer, and 4 put either "N/A" or a simple "IDK," leaving four individuals to not respond to the question. This shows that many individuals find the unfair treatment between genders less critical when it comes down to various other listed factors. However, at the same time, most of the reasons that were put forth for why these were least important were simply because it has been a problem for such a long time now, and it is a choice for an individual where to work.



Though factors such as the political affiliation an individual is in can also play a role when deciding the importance of various rights and situations, it can leave individuals with a biased perspective on a subject/right. As 50% of our respondents were identified in the left wing, 5% in the right wing, 15% on the far left, 15% in the center-left, 10% on the center-right, and the final 5% being centrist, this could have played a role when individuals were deciding how necessary rights like the right to abortion were as a pressing human right. On top of that, 80% responded with being a part of the Democratic Party, leaving 5% to be identified in the Republican Party, 5% in the Libertarian Party, 5% in the Socialist Party, and finally, the last 5% in the Non-partisan Party. This shows that with this group of respondents, a majority would support women's rights to abortion. This is important today because of the Supreme Court's overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. Most of our respondents, roughly 40%, were also ranging from the ages of 16-20, and it has been identified before that the younger generations will be more supportive of abortion.

We concluded our survey by asking the participants if they believed the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*, by making abortions illegal, would infringe on women's right to life, health, equality, and privacy. While about 14 individuals strongly believed it would infringe on women's rights, about two people believed it did not, stating that it was never a constitutional right, and others did not respond.

How can we improve this area of human rights?

Our society can improve civil rights by continuously raising awareness about this topic among other people. People have been fighting for civil rights, specifically women's rights, for over 170 years, and it has been improving steadily every time. It dates back to the Seneca Falls Convention, which was the first form of protest for social, political, and religious rights for women. In today's society, women are allowed to vote, and the gender inequality gap between



men and women has decreased over time. Women have access to so many more opportunities than they did back then, which shows how much this area of human rights has been improving. Getting involved in women's rights can include empowering voices or even bringing this topic into conversations more often. This can be a heavy topic when talking about it around others, but by doing this, people can change so many lives and positively impact how women's rights are viewed. Many famous women's rights activists had to participate in many acts of protest to fight for women's rights, and many of them were harmed in the process. Empowering voices is also a significant factor in improving civil rights. If we can empower voices to talk about this topic, it will educate other people, and they will start to be involved in fighting for fundamental human rights.

Getting involved in raising awareness for civil rights can also include things like signing petitions, volunteering, and donating to specific organizations that support these rights. Educating one another about this topic is super important, and all three of these examples are perfect in doing so. Especially things like signing petitions and volunteering can significantly impact women's rights and change the future. Another critical factor in raising awareness is educating future generations about this issue, which can help them gain knowledge and fight for women's rights. All of these factors will help contribute to the future of civil rights and positively impact our society as a whole.

What can young people do?

Educating others, especially older generations, is crucial to educate them about today's critical challenges. Contributing to causes, participating in demonstrations, casting ballots, and raising awareness of these issues are beneficial strategies to encourage change. To start advocating for these changes is to raise your voice. It does not matter what age you are; if you have the concern you do and are passionate enough to make a change and make your voice



known, then it can happen. Women's rights are still a fighting cause to this day in different parts of the world, and with the help of the younger generation, we can establish a more aware and mindful community around us. Another way young people can contribute positively is to be conscious of minor improvements that can be made in every situation they are subject to—for example, being supportive of each other. Younger generations in school grow up with gender norms and are gender segregated in many ways, like having boy's and girl's lines. Having kids be more integrated with each other at a younger age could benefit how they view the opposite gender in a way that they might be more open to socializing and having more friends of the opposite gender at a younger age.

Social media makes it simple to stay interested, informed, and active in the battle for change in the modern technological era. Furthermore, with younger generations so heavily intertwined with social media, it is easy to spread messages and get them around fast. For younger people, addressing women's civil rights issues on social media could be an excellent way to get your message out, especially if you have a decently large follower count. The things you post can then be reposted by someone who also wants to contribute and spread the message. You start a chain for people to continue, which in turn causes change as more and more people will see it. Also, posting on social media to meet up with other advocates to protest for these rights is an excellent way to get the message out because you are orchestrating a small group of people who want to see a revision in our society, which can then be seen and posted on social media. Ultimately, gathering more and more people to support women's rights and make it more comfortable for people who do not have a voice to step in and contribute to advancements being made together as a society.



Conclusion:

From the 1848 Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention to the present day, many new opportunities and chances have been granted to women. However, this does not speak for all women around the world. Different countries have different definitions of women's rights, so some may not have as many advantages as women in different nations. It is essential for the younger and future generations to continue spreading information and awareness about civil rights, especially women's rights, as with the Supreme Court's recent decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. This is also key to do because individuals need to stay involved constantly. This can be through social media, volunteer work, signing petitions, etc. With the data we received from the 20 respondents, situations like the gender wage gap and workplace discrimination are still problems many face today. Just because a problem has been happening for a long time does not mean it becomes less important. Many today still go through a wide range of unfair gender payment, especially in sports. Workplace discrimination is a rising issue, so it is crucial to keep this conversation going. It was interesting to see all the different issues that individuals believe are less important, more important, or still civil violations.

Economic Rights

Authors: Maddie Kuan, Kingson Mak, Minki Beak, Cameron Etefagh, Linda Woo

Background

According to americanbar.org, Human rights, by definition, are universal and encompass all rights connected to human dignity. As a result, the universal commitment to upholding fundamental rights commits the government to be proactive in its action or inaction toward promoting human dignity. While international human rights legislation strengthens national



governments' fiduciary responsibility to safeguard their inhabitants' human rights, the universality of human rights also allows for a broad interpretation of how they might be followed. This interpretation is sometimes operationalized subjectively. Human rights academics identify five main types of rights stated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights but which are rarely observed in their entirety. More specifically, social rights frequently deal with allocating and distributing resources, which is a prerogative reserved for the government. They are considered "second-generation" rights that the government safeguards to assure the fulfillment of fundamental requirements such as food, shelter, education, health, and work.

Economic rights are not legally "justiciable" today, which means there is much debate over whether independent courts should redress a breach of the right by declaring government action or inactivity illegal and, to some extent, mandating legislative or executive reaction. Economic rights requirements must be treated in the same manner that civil and political rights commitments are. These include granting freedoms, placing requirements on the state concerning third parties, and imposing obligations on the state to take action or accomplish a specific goal (International Commission of Jurists, 2008). Economic rights enforcement is critical to alleviating the pervasive and destructive economic problems at home and abroad.

Humanity has devised any method to provide for its material needs as an economic system. Given the numerous cultural arrangements that have defined human civilization, one may anticipate a wide diversity of such systems. It turns out that is not the case. Only a relatively limited number of fundamental provisioning modes can be found below this variation, even though a vast range of institutions and social conventions have been connected to the economic operations of society. There are only three of these types of economic systems that history has produced: those that are founded on tradition, those that are centrally planned and structured under command, and the very few, historically speaking, in which the market serves as the primary organizing mechanism.



Our first step in recognizing good economic and human rights is recognizing the dominant economic system. For a long time, humans have sought a "neutral" economic system. However, this modern system has undoubtedly made it harder to recognize economic and social rights. Rights also provide a language that we can communicate through, connecting with people with similar ideologies and aspects of the economy and social life that we all respect. Thus, economic rights can slowly alter the method of the economy as the people come to a consensus and slowly shape the system into a system more suited to an economy that the people agree on. Many young people and adults believe economic rights are only about money. However, this is not entirely accurate. This was because economic rights are not purely money. For example, education and the right to food, water, and other resources all fall under the category of economic rights. Economic rights should be considered more broadly, as they closely tie in with the overarching right to life. Our survey also determined that economic rights should be considered in various ways. Many people answered "money" or "cash." We live in a free country. Here, we can practice our economic rights, and we take these rights for granted, so we are not able to notice them. For example, our parents' right to go outside and work to support their families are also examples of economic rights. The right to earn a wage and find employment are all encompassed by the general economic right. It is also essential that people are not risking their lives to work and should be provided with a suitable environment to earn a living. A recent example would be the African mineral mining industry, where people are risking their lives in narrow caves to earn a living. Thus, in this country, we should be grateful that we are provided with the right to work and find employment in suitable environments.

Why is this topic important?

Basic economic rights protect those within the economy and are necessary to keep it intact. Whether they know it or not, all people rely on these rights to maintain economic stability



and an adequate standard of living. Furthermore, these rights defend employees' hard work by ensuring they receive fair wages and by granting unions the ability to fight for even more. In a sense, economic rights also maintain the growth of society. It supports the motivation of young people to pursue careers that will benefit themselves and the world, knowing their efforts will be fairly rewarded. Without having certainty that their success will bring money, they would find no reason to continue. The economy's growth would be halted, and nothing would be accomplished. Therefore, economic rights are a crucial part of society's success, protecting the ordinary person's work efforts in everyday life.

Data Analysis

One of our group's questions asked whether students found the economy fair. More than 77% of students surveyed found the economy unfair. This was indicated with either a score of a three or under. On the other hand, many students also found equal education rights fundamental. A score of four or better indicated this.

The responses fit well into our predictions, as most students would value their access to education as they are still students under the protection of their guardians. However, there was one part of the data that we did not expect. Such a great majority of people thought that the economy was unfair. This was intriguing, as all the people we surveyed were students, and most students would not have much experience with the economy as they are under the protection of their parents. Thus, we further considered why students thought the economy was unfair. We looked at the minimum wage, and most students thought that the wage should be increased. Currently, the minimum wage in California is between 14-15 US dollars. The most common amount that students wanted as their minimum wage was close to 17-18 US dollars. Thus, from the younger generation's perspective, we could deduce that most students thought the economy was unfair as they were being paid much less than adults. Social standards and norms have set



students much lower than adults, thus making it much more difficult for younger people to compete economically with adults. It is comprehensible that adults would be paid much more as they have access to a more extensive plethora of experiences and knowledge. However, this limits younger people, as they are forced to earn much less due to their "incompetence."

Several people could not answer the question when asked what economic rights mean to you. Since people under 18 mainly filled out our survey, we found it highly troubling that many were unaware they had economic rights. For young people to stand up for themselves within the economy, they must become educated on how these rights unfold. It is up to us to teach our peers the protections that economic rights provide. Many of those who answered the question compared them to social rights such as access to food, education, health, and security. They also believed that these rights grant the ability to work and make a reasonable wage. Specifically, one of the most agreed upon rights was that gender and ethnicity should not factor into one's ability to get a job. Since all of our survey participants were people of color, it makes sense that many believe ethnicity should not factor into job opportunities or salary. Economic rights support all within the economy, which makes it extremely important that today's young people understand their worth.

According to the survey responses, the most common age range of people who filled out the survey were teenagers aged fourteen to seventeen. Out of twenty-six people, two of them were fourteen years old, five of them were fifteen years old, twelve of them were sixteen years old, and seven people were seventeen years old. By looking at these similar age ranges, we could infer some of the reasons behind their responses. For example, teenagers are often affected by what their friends and family think and care about their education.

Based on the survey responses, most participants were Asian, and one was Mexican/Black. So we see a constant response in their family income from the 80,000-140,000



range. Another trend in the survey was the age group being around 16, which is why many of them are unemployed.

An exciting trend during the survey had to be the almost unanimous decision that education is a fundamental economic right. As mentioned earlier, the responses tended to be from students in high school. Their age could account for the perceived importance. In this modern economic climate, a college degree is becoming essential. Many people hope to find a job with better pay and benefits by procuring a degree. This can speak to the broader economic climate that many young people find themselves stuck in. Adolescents feel one way to lift themselves higher on the social ladder is through education. The right to education is a fundamental economic and human right. Higher education allows people to pursue a better future. By funding more money towards education in lower-income areas and developing countries, citizens can finally use all of their potentials.

What can young people do?

The youth plays a vital role in ensuring the future of economic rights. One can look no further than the controversy surrounding the women's soccer team. A couple of years ago, reports surfaced that the women's soccer team did not earn the same pay as their male counterparts. Soccer players like Megan Rapinoe and her teammates became vocal critics of economic inequality. They took parades demanding equal pay after they won the world cup. With the help of social media, people across the country began supporting their quest. As pressure grew on the soccer governing body, the rules were changed to grant equal payment in May 2022.

Young people can take similar approaches to help create a more fair economic system. For example, spreading messages on social media has become an effective way to garner public support. For example, human rights activists have been using TikTok to reach young adults and



teens in their quest to create a better world. The rise in social media has allowed information from all corners of the globe to reach the hands of millions of people. By using social media to point out unjust economic practices, young people can sound the alarm and pressure elected officials to benefit all members of society.

Although social media is a great way to spread awareness, it cannot always be a reliable source of information. Once interested in a topic, it is essential to conduct independent research to find the facts behind it. Finding credible journalists or research papers is a great way to get facts. After researching, it is vital to organize your thinking clearly and concisely. By organizing specific facts, young people can find trends or patterns that can lead to a broader problem in the economic system.

After completing reliable research, committing to a minor cause is vital. It is easier to tackle a single source of economic inequality rather than try to change an entire nation's economy. By finding something small that people can try to change, young people will get the satisfaction of making the world a better place and tackling an important issue. For example, tackling economic inequality in the United States is quite large and challenging. Instead, try to spread your ideas to local communities and create a grassroots movement for change.

Even with a small cause, tackling change might take a while. In order to help facilitate growth, young people can try to find an interest group or a club. By sharing their research and ideas, a club allows people to challenge their notions and use critical thinking to solve economic problems. If clubs are not present, consider starting your own. A great way to obtain new members could be through a school-related event of having meetings following school guidelines. Young people could also join national organizations like UNA-USA, which focus on promoting human rights and international peace through the United Nations.

Ensuring everyone has equal access to economic and human rights in an ever-evolving world is vital. Young people are essential in spreading the message and becoming a catalyst for



change. Older generations enacting policies are shaping the future we as young people have. If we stand by and allow for change without much consideration of economic and human rights, our future might be slipping away. Fortunately, this generation looks keen to upend the status quo to create a more fair and free economy.

What can be done better? How can we improve this area of human rights?

Economic rights can be adjusted as the economy is constantly changing. As the future generation, we can improve this right by researching public policy, so we can have a better understanding of the economic issue so we can prevent it in the future. Online surveys, questionnaires, and flyers contribute to better research for professionals to analyze. So people's opinions can be heard through the surveys and questionnaires they answer.

The public can also raise awareness about the low wages for workers and make sure the company notices the issue with actions like protests, usage of social media, and signing petitions to increase the chances of higher wages for workers. Higher wages can ensure stable employment for workers as they can think of long terms with the company rather than constantly looking for better pay at different companies. As immigrants in America are increasing yearly, their job opportunities are limited due to language barriers, cultural differences, and working experiences. However, that is not the case for all immigrants, and providing the same opportunities to immigrants just as a regular citizen would have is only suitable. Immigrants can have experiences from their past countries, which can benefit the company in some way. Especially immigrant workers can help out companies as they know another language to help communication for the company.

The Declaration of Human Rights is the document that addresses each person's freedom in America. In the document, article 25 (DOHR) states the "right to a standard of living adequate



for the health and well-being" of each person and their family, including basic food, medical care, social services, and security in the event of unemployment or disability."

This is important because this ensures the basic safety of human beings living in America.

Another way of improving economic rights is providing education to developing countries to ensure that future generations will have better opportunities. With better education, developing countries will have more knowledgeable students and will be interested in moving to universities and colleges, which will help more kids succeed and find better opportunities in other countries.

Social rights

Authors: Ava Bohn, Sabrina Kim, Justin Pollack, Kyle Shih, Vivian Lee

How Do Young People View Social Rights, And What Shapes These Views?

Historically, human and social rights were legally and generally nonexistent everywhere. Within the last 200 years, however, many drastic changes have been made that impacted the legally and socially recognized rights of minority demographics worldwide. The first observed governmental establishment of women's rights was in 1893; New Zealand became the first nation to enshrine full female suffrage, though women were not allowed to stand for election until 1919. Former Sri Lankan Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the first woman to lead a country in 1960. Over the past 200 years, women have gained status as accomplished scientists, world leaders, famous actors, and artists, and overall, have been empowered through equality. However, other areas of the world have been less progressive in their push for social rights for women. For instance, Saudi Arabia allowed women to vote for the first time in local elections in



2015. While the struggle for women's rights is still ongoing, much progress has been made to reach equality and establish equity.

LGBTQ+ Rights, an equally important cause, have been a form of social rights that is much less widely observed or accepted. Looking at the history of self-advocacy, in 1924, Henry Gerber, a German immigrant, founded the Society for Human Rights, the first documented gay rights organization in the United States. However, legally, LGBTQ+ Rights were only much more recently established; in 2001, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands signed into law the legalization of homosexual marriage, establishing marriage equality for the LGBTQ+ community. Regardless, LGBTQ+ Rights are much less widely accepted globally, with the death penalty, stoning, and life imprisonment included as legal punishments in many non-Western countries and only 31 nations legally recognizing LGBTQ marriage.

A deeper dive into the modern-day attitudes toward human rights shows that, gradually, equality is a concept supported by most U.S. adults. Some statistics include 79% of respondents (U.S. Adults) agreeing that women must have equal rights with men (PEW Research). Furthermore, surveys show that about 60% of Americans support marriage equality so that gay couples may wed. Less than a decade ago, that proportion of Americans opposed gay weddings (NIH). Lastly, one more focal point of data displays that 57% of respondents believe our country has not gone far enough with granting equal rights to women as have been granted to men (PEW Research). Social rights becoming a mainstream topic of concern and interest can be seen throughout time, ranging from women's suffrage movements and the stonewall riots to more modern movements, such as the #metoo movement and the various social campaigns that take place through social media.



Furthermore, it can be seen that social media has been a tool to advocate for human rights and increasingly influence our lives, laws, and social atmospheres. Significant change can be seen through the self-advocacy that takes place online. Our paper examines young people and their views on social rights, and we examine how social media, school, and social settings influence the next generation of rights advocates.

Why is this topic important?

Social rights show significance as the historical basis of social solidarity and inclusivity in modern-day activism. Gender rights have always been essential for social solidarity in diverse inclusivity. The traditional idea of patriarchy has been a critical factor in preventing progress from being recognized for the rights of women and minorities worldwide. Accordingly, social rights are fundamental because the insurance of human rights guarantees access to equal opportunities, social services, and goods for specific populations beyond the demographic of people who are not within the target of prejudice.

It is essential to acknowledge that over the past few years, society has moved towards a time of social networks and platforms that allows younger generations to become more involved and active within organizations and programs that acknowledge such social rights. With the rise of trends regarding activism involvement through social media movements, we are in the generation of accessible movements that could have unlimited potential to reach populations beyond imaginable ideas. For example, 64% of women in low-income families in the United States report yearly that they have difficulties affording menstrual products. The widespread access to programs and ensuring basic health products for women is essential for society, and social movements exist to acknowledge such difficulties for specific populations who need a



representation of their voices. The primary objective of social rights is to ensure that those in positions of authority treat individuals with respect and dignity.

What does the data you collected tell us about it?

To collect data to see "how young people view social rights and what shapes these views," we conducted a survey with various questions about this topic. The survey reached thirty people, with the majority living in Irvine, Laguna, or San Juan Capistrano, while a few were located outside of Southern California (two people were in London, and one person was in Huston, Texas). The age of the people who responded to the survey ranged from 15 to 21 years old, with most respondents being either 16 or 17 years old. Respondents' race and ethnicity were mainly white, Asian, and middle eastern.

Next, we asked questions about respondents' sexual orientation and gender identity. First, we asked what respondents' sexual orientation was. Half of the respondents stated that they were heterosexual, 26.7% stated that they were bisexual, 6.7% stated that they were homosexual, 6.7% stated that they were queer, 3.3% stated that they were asexual, 3.3% stated that they were omnisexual, and 3.3% stated that they were still learning about themselves. This shows that most respondents were either heterosexual or bisexual. The next question that we asked was what respondents' gender identity was. According to the responses, 60% of people identified as cisgender female, 30% identified as a cisgender male, 3.3% identified as genderqueer, 3.3% identified as genderfluid, and 3.3% identified as transgender male. This shows that most respondents were cisgender females.

The next set of questions pertained to how different environments have affected and supported respondents' views on gender and sexuality and their personal experiences with it.



When asked if respondents have felt discriminated against based on their gender or sexual identity, 40% of respondents answered that they rarely feel discriminated against, 20% answered that they feel discriminated against fairly often, 16.7% answered that they sometimes feel discriminated against, 16.7% answered that they have never felt discriminated against, and 6.7% answered that they feel discriminated against very often. Most respondents rarely feel discriminated against because of their gender or sexual identity. The next question asked was whether respondents feel that their family/household environment shapes their gender and sexuality rights perspectives. According to the responses, 43.3% believe that it somewhat shapes your perspective, 40% believe that it shapes your perspective, and 16.7% do not. This information shows that most respondents believe that family/household environments somewhat impact your perspective on gender and sexuality rights. When asked if respondents' schools support and include gender minorities, 43.3% of respondents answered yes, 43.3% answered somewhat, and 13.3% answered no. This shows that many respondents' schools include gender minorities. The next question asked respondents if they actively participate in gender/sexuality rights-related activist clubs/programs. The responses were that 55.2% do not, 24.1% do, and 20.7% sometimes participate in clubs or programs related to gender or sexuality rights. The results show that most people do not participate in clubs or programs related to gender or sexuality rights.

The following questions we asked respondents to answer concerned their opinions about discrimination, prejudice, and self-expression based on gender and sexuality. The first question asked respondents if they have ever experienced discrimination based on gender or sexuality among people other than themselves. Responses showed that 70% of people had experienced discrimination based on gender and sexuality, 26.7% have rarely experienced discrimination based on this, and 3.3% have never experienced discrimination based on this. This shows that most people experience discrimination based on their gender or sexuality. The next



question asked was about respondents' opinions about prejudice or intolerance against one's gender over the past five years. The responses were that 43.3% of people feel that it has increased, 30% feel that it has decreased, and 26.7% of people feel that it has stayed the same. This shows that the majority feel that prejudice and intolerance against one's gender have increased over the past five years. The last question we asked respondents was if they think people avoid expressing their gender through their physical appearance and clothing for fear of being assaulted, threatened, or harassed. According to the responses, 63.3% of people answered that people often avoid expressing their gender, 13.3% answered that people always avoid expressing their gender, 13.3% answered that people rarely avoid expressing their gender, and 10% of people answered that they do not know if people avoid expressing their gender through physical appearance. The statistics above show that people often avoid expressing their gender through physical appearance for fear of being assaulted, threatened, or harassed.

Our survey also included five open-ended questions: how has social media affected how you view gender/sexuality rights, how has your school environment shaped how you view these topics, what are some good practices for supporting gender rights, and what do you think are the priorities in terms of promoting and enforcing gender equality, and is gender equality a concern for men. Responses to how social media affected views on gender and sexuality rights were mostly positive. Most respondents said that made them open-minded and has helped spread awareness. One of the respondents stated that they "have found a lot of new information and concerns regarding gender and sexuality rights through these platforms, so it has opened up my knowledge and perspectives on the topic." When asked how their school environment has shaped how they view these topics, most responses were either that it did not affect their perspective or made them more open-minded, with few responses being that it had negatively affected their views. Respondents who answered that school has little effect on their perspective stated that their school environment "made me a little more open-minded about other



people" and that they have "noticed people who have the same view as me." A respondent who answered that school had negatively affected their perspective stated, "while many school environments 'claim' to stand for gender and orientational equality, many people still hold hateful views and have made me feel abnormal for supporting equality and rights." The following question respondents answered was what they believe are good practices for supporting gender rights. Most people state that you should support your friends and be open-minded. Others stated that you should talk about it and inform people to create an accepting environment. Following that question, respondents were asked their opinion on what they believe the priorities are in promoting and enforcing gender equality. Respondents' answers ranged from "instilling the morals in younger generations that older generations have failed to teach," establishing "equal gender pay for men and women," and "ensuring equal rights and safety for everyone." Most responses related to ensuring an even playing field for all genders and identities. Finally, when asked if gender equality is a concern for men, most respondents stated it is. Most stated that men are dangerously overlooked, and the toxic mentality that men should be masculine has caused discrimination. Some respondents, however, stated that it is not a concern as men still have their rights and are not mainly being targeted. This concludes the data and analysis gathered through the survey created.

How can we improve this area of human rights? What can be done better?

Many areas of social rights have only recently begun to be adequately addressed and acted upon. Especially today, the fight for social rights has started upon a new wave with wider platforms being utilized, intentions becoming blunter, and voices more eager. However, just as this may be, there is still a long road ahead of us in the journey to advance social rights, and still many ways in which we fall short. Moreover, it is crucial to acknowledge these shortcomings to



move forward more effectively; people that carry the most authority and ability to dictate the 'whats' of our society, the systems that regulate the 'hows' of people: the government. Starting at the underlying base, an overlooked aspect of the political world that restrains the progress of social rights today is the absence of a foundational will. Looking a bit further back in our history, there is a lack of mention of socio-economic rights in the U.S. constitution. The U.S. Constitution is the blank canvas or seed that has led to much of our political makeup. And even if we do take notice of the weak backbone for social rights in the written words of government and history, there is a lack of political will to enforce them. The irony is almost laughable as the whole idea of social rights promotes inclusivity in our society, yet enforcing these rights contradicts inclusiveness. The majority of social rights enforcement by the government is aimed to aid the people of the middle or upper classes, but not the lower classes. Even though those of the lower classes are the most in need of a powerful form of support, aiding those of higher classes helps people of authority gain more social credit. Not only that, but even when we see enforcement (sometimes even aggressive) by the court, it rarely does anything in our society's social transformation, which leads to the point that we as people also have many shortcomings in the advancement of social rights. Such includes violent attacks and verbal abuse directed at people who identify with a different sexual orientation, discriminatory treatment in different settings (workplace, family, hospitals, etc.), and more. All claims were made even more spotlighted by the survey results.

So how can we improve from here? What can we do better? Well, a very noticeable change in the actions made to aid social transformation has already started to take precedence-- social media. A digital platform that used to be utilized exclusively for flaunting overdramatized lifestyles and personal images is now starting to be seen from a different perspective. Now, the advantages of social media, which includes its immense popularity and ability to reach a



universal audience quickly, are being used to address the issues of our society and spread worldly news. People come together to participate in activist and social events on this digital platform, to provide a digital space for meaningful conversations, debate, and more.

Furthermore, the next step from here would be to improve upon the risks of this new change: miscommunication. Because such important topics are being brought upon a digital platform, there are more and more chances for false information to be spread, lies to be told, exaggerations to be made, and sensitivity of the people to be increased. So to build a more reliable, harnessed, and safe system within the social media platform would help significantly in this development. Stemming from here, improvement in social transformation can also take the form of supporting minority-owned businesses, creating more in-person safe spaces for social conversation, making known the hotspots of social discrimination, and more.

What can young people do?

As society advances into a more progressive future, young individuals often fear and question the systems that older generations have created and left behind. When speaking up against change, this group immediately becomes silenced by those in power. It only seems fit that this younger generation should change the narrative and take action to create a more inclusive, equal, and equitable society. Within the survey, those who participated were questioned on practices that can support gender rights and make a change. The answers varied across the board, given that those who responded were of extremely different demographics. An answer that can be applied to every young individual is to become more open-minded, treat others with respect, and avoid singling out an individual because of prejudiced opinions. The underlying truth that can be revealed from this answer is the idea that change can start from within. For this young generation to propose a clear message, it must eradicate the contradictions



from within. Further, before taking action in a physical manner, individuals must change their mindset to accept new perspectives, ideas, and cultures.

As one matures into a more accepting and unbiased individual, one can outwardly take action and spread the same message. A response that was repeated several times was participating in a protest, rally, or march. These all serve as an effective way to communicate a message and challenge a business, corporation, or system. One of the most effective protests was the March For Our Lives movement, which was in support of gun control legislation. On March 24, 2018, around 1.2 million people walked the streets of Washington, D.C., making it one of the largest protests in American History. What is even better about this demonstration is that it was all student-led. This event is an inspiring example of young individuals' possibilities and power. On a smaller scale, starting a school club that promotes equality of gender and sexuality is another way to make an impact. This is an easy yet effective technique that creates an audience. These club members can then actively spread the message that the club is trying to communicate. If starting or joining a club or protest is not of interest, the individual can still be actively making change. Another typical response seen throughout the survey was speaking up and calling out gender intolerance when seen. There should be no exception for discriminatory behavior with friends, family, and colleagues. Other options for taking action involve conducting a survey, starting a social media account to share information, and leading by example.



Cultural Rights

Author: Jaya Gandhi

Out of all human rights sectors, cultural rights are the most disregarded and overlooked. They were first introduced to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on January 3, 1976, in article twenty-seven.¹ They were established almost thirty years after the original declaration was first written. Since the term "culture" is vague, various liberties may fall under the cultural rights umbrella. Protections include religious freedoms and expression, the right to learn and speak native languages publicly and privately, cultural art, traditions, and practices, the creation of private education institutions, and the enjoyment of scientific, artistic, or literary progress. Unfortunately, Droits often defend minorities more than majorities, which leads to their neglect. This neglect allows infringements to fester and grow in even the most liberal states.² The general lack of knowledge about cultural rights feeds into modern society's raging cultural rights issues.

Culture is the backbone of humanity. It provides community, among others, and therefore a sense of belonging. Cultural rights are vital because they protect elements of culture that should not be taken, persecuted, or forgotten. The most vibrant culture in any place is historically found in minority groups. Majority groups often oppress minority groups and attempt to cut them out - this may refer to racism, homophobia, and other ingrained hatred. These communities find ways

¹ "Chapter IV Human Rights," United Nations Treaty Collection, July 18, 2022, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-3&chapter=4#:~:text=3%20January%201976%2C%20in%20accordance%20with%20article%2027.

² Janusz Symonides, "Cultural Rights: A Neglected Category of Human Rights," University Information Technology Services, n.d., <https://anthkb.sitehost.iu.edu/a104/humanrights/cultrights.htm#:~:text=The%20first%20instrument%20adopted%20by,Assembly%20on%2010%20December%201948.>



to build flowering culture amidst all the discrimination that threatens to squash them. As a result, oppressive structures begin to see the culture of these minority groups as another thing to dismember. Cultural rights protect the beauty of culture. They allow community, belonging, and language to flourish without threatening adulteration or eradication. For this reason, cultural rights must exist - to preserve the closeness that culture creates and the identity of those who find themselves a piece of it.

A survey was conducted among a sample group to observe the consensus on cultural rights. Respondents were asked identifying questions (age, gender identity, political leanings, etc.) and, more significantly, questions pertaining to cultural rights. The objective of the survey was to determine whether or not cultural rights were a commonly known subject, if respondents could make an educated guess as to what "cultural rights" meant, and if respondents were able to conceptualize an imaginary situation in which cultural rights were infringed upon after being provided with a brief definition, and if respondents could identify cultural rights issues and defend their choices.

The survey was dispersed among twenty-seven respondents, resulting in obvious sample bias because all respondents were California residents. California is one of the most liberal states in the United States of America. The grounds for this are the ethnically diverse population and proximity to the coast. The ocean brings new goods and people, forcing Californians to expand their horizons. Additionally, a majority of those surveyed identified as Asian. The percentage of Asian Californians is around 15.9%, and the difference is vast compared to the 77.8% of Asian respondents.³ Asian culture in California presents itself in delicious food, vibrant celebrations, and more.

³ "QuickFacts California," United States Census Bureau, July 1, 2021, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-3&chapter=4#:~:text=3%20January%201976%2C%20in%20accordance%20with%20article%2027./CA.



The first three questions were written to gauge the extent of the population's knowledge about cultural rights. First, respondents were asked, "Are you familiar with the term 'cultural rights'?" and given three choices that indicated the extent of their cultural rights knowledge. Then, after answering that, they were questioned, "Cultural rights are...(if you are unsure, make an educated guess)". Again, three possible answers were options: cultural rights are the rights of people within a culture, cultural rights are the right for people to form new cultures, and cultural rights are the rights for people to enjoy their culture, language, and religion. Finally, respondents were given a brief definition and asked to describe a cultural rights issue after answering those questions.

Results of the first question stated that 40.7% of survey participants were familiar with and knew the meaning of cultural rights. A majority of 51.9% were familiar with the term and unaware of the meaning. 7.4% were unfamiliar with both terms and definitions. After being asked to make an educated guess on the meaning of cultural rights (the second question), 81.5% of the individuals questioned could choose the correct answer out of three options. 18.5% chose an incorrect answer - that cultural rights were the rights of people within a culture. None chose the second option - that cultural rights are the rights of people to form new cultures. Around 81.5% of those surveyed provided a clear, concise, and descriptive cultural rights issue after being provided with a definition. Another 14.8% were able to give a response that was acceptable but too general. 3.7% of responses were incorrect.

At first, most respondents were aware of cultural rights but did not know what they were concerned (as expected, due to a lack of awareness). After being enlightened about the meaning of cultural rights, they could provide a scenario in which cultural rights would become effective. This unexpected learning curve is wondrous to observe - the quick change from unawareness to a fundamental understanding within minutes is remarkable. The connection between lack of basic



knowledge and cultural rights is illustrated beautifully here, as is how spreading awareness can speak volumes.

The next question was formulated as a way of seeing how much traction a raging international cultural rights issue had gotten with the news and social media - essentially, it was meant to show how much awareness of cultural rights issues received globally. Participants were asked, "Are you aware of the recent legal controversy over hijabs and niqabs (face/hair coverings that some Muslim women wear) in France?". The last two questions were penned to understand whether cultural rights are an easy concept to grasp quickly and if surveyees could immediately identify cultural rights issues after they learned what they were. The first read, "In your opinion, is this [the face/head covering ban] a cultural rights issue?" and given the options, "Yes," "No," and "Not Sure ." The last directive told them to defend their stance.

After being asked if they knew about France's head/face covering ban, 66.7% of surveyees reported that they had at least heard of it. The other 33.3% had not. 85.2% identified the ban as a cultural rights issue, and 14.8% of respondents were unsure. None of the respondents selected "No ." When asked to defend their stance, 81.5% of participants pointed out that Muslim hijab/niqab wearers were being prohibited from freedom of religion. 7.4% gave general or vague defenses. 11.1% of respondents either did not answer the question or waver whether the ban was a cultural rights issue.

The data from the head/face covering ban illustrates a majority recognition - but this is not enough. The minority group was sizable - exactly one-third of the respondents. This speaks to the lack of awareness about cultural rights issues. There have been many protests and the like in opposition to this ban.⁴ Less of the world should be ignorant of it. The answers to the next

⁴ Ishika Garg and Sanvi Bhatia, "Hands Off My Hijab: Tracing The Effects Of France's "Anti-Separatism" Bill On Education And Freedom Of Choice," Human Rights Pulse, May 11, 2021, <https://www.humanrightspulse.com/mastercontentblog/hands-off-my-hijab-tracing-the-effects-of-frances-anti-separatism-bill-on-education-and-freedom-of-choice#:~:text=Home->



question invite a more optimistic outlook. Although many participants had learned about cultural rights mere minutes before, a lofty majority were able to identify a current cultural rights violation, instantiating that respondents could quickly learn and apply information regarding cultural rights to real-world situations. They could see the injustice, and when the results of the final question were observed, they defended their stance. A majority of surveyees showed a thorough understanding of cultural rights by the end of the survey, an impressive feat when compared to how they started.

As previously stated, although the majority of survey respondents were aware of the cultural rights violations occurring in France, one-third were uninformed. This statistic showcases how cultural rights can be improved by raising awareness. The most debilitating issue for implementing cultural rights is the lack of knowledge about them. The term "cultural rights" lives only in the Universal Human Rights Doctrine. There is little other use for it, and for this reason, many citizens are unaware of what cultural rights are, what they protect, and how (at times) they are being violated.

Additionally, cultural rights infringements should be mended. Policies should be passed to protect cultural rights and edicts that breach the cultural rights articles in the U.N. doctrine. Finally, majority groups should learn tolerance. Many laws antagonize cultural elements of minority rights stemming from ignorance and fear from majority groups. Furthermore, cultural rights are attacked because of generalizations. For example, as mentioned in the survey, Muslims in France are being banned from wearing their religious garments. This ban is rooted in Islamophobia and the generalization that all Muslims are terrorists and all terrorists are Muslims. Harmful policies like this would be nonexistent by teaching majority groups to combat fear with

[.Hands%20Off%20My%20Hijab%3A%20Tracing%20The%20Effects%20Of%20France's%20%E2%80%9CAnti.Education%20And%20Freedom%20Of%20Choice&text=Under%20the%20garb%20of%20promoting.5.7%20million%20Muslims%20in%20France.](#)



knowledge. Overall, cultural rights derelictions would be few and far between if the people were educated about them.

Young generations are both the faces and the voices of the future. 88.9% of survey participants were under the age of eighteen. If these people begin to spread awareness and speak out, a tidal wave of reform will follow. As discovered by the survey, limited information and awareness are spread about cultural rights. Young people can reach global audiences through social media sites such as Instagram and Twitter. A small post, story, or tweet can inform the public of injustice. In terms of more active approaches, young people can take to the streets. By marching in or organizing a protest, teenagers and similar generations can reach lawmakers and even prominent news outlets. Another way young people can help stop cultural rights injustices is by signing petitions. Signing petitions can kill the problem at the source - by reaching out to lawmakers, and real change can be made. Finally, young people should continue practicing their cultural rights. Culture is what makes humanity so miraculous and diverse. That is the significance of cultural rights - protecting the love, community, and the very nature of humanity.

Environmental rights

Authors: Arya Rawal, Zara Tahir, Nayan Pettime, Vince Pieri, and Charlize Chen

Background

Environmental rights have never been considered a particularly urgent topic of discussion in our world's fair share of issues. First established in the mid-1960s, a sudden spike of man-made environmental disasters sparked the discussion on human advancement and its effect on



everyday life. Air, water, wood, and other necessities for human sufficiency were evidently at risk; in turn, the EPA, or the Environmental Protection Agency, was established, sparking a turning point in the world's perception of environmental rights. Environmental rights mean any proclamation of a human right to environmental conditions of a specified quality. Human rights, for example, cannot be enjoyed without a safe and healthy environment; hence, the importance of environmental rights and their preservation. There are several established human rights related to the environment. Environmental rights are substantive (fundamental rights) and procedural rights (tools used to achieve substantial rights). However, like human rights, environmental rights are not enjoyed by everyone equally worldwide, more often due to not those individuals themselves- but their surrounding perpetrators. For instance, due to dramatically rising sea levels, many countries off the coast of Australia (New Guinea, New Caledonia) are threatened. Hence, they requested Australia to stop using coal or at least deplete the amount of coal they use. They were met with near immediate rejection. In all, countries more susceptible to climate change are, in turn, the ones affected by this phenomenon the most. Due to the "modern world's" value of material goods, most of the world's inhabitants lack fundamental human and environmental rights. For now, the brunt of the environmental consequences is experienced by people outside the realm of consumerism. With claims of these rights needing to be a top priority, it is essential to understand the importance of environmental rights and why such ideals are needed for a prosperous, functioning society.

Why is the topic important?

Climate change and environmental crises have been linked to various global effects that could have disastrous consequences for the human population. Health concerns are one example



of this. Certain aspects of the climate have been linked to physical sickness. One instance of this is the correlation between air pollution and lung damage. Additionally, global warming, which can lead to extreme heat in some areas, causes many to feel fatigued, nausea, and fever-like symptoms. Exposure to extreme heat can also lead to heat stroke and cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. There are even more effects that stem from increases in ozone. In large amounts, ozone damages lung tissue and leads to inflamed airways, which can increase the severity or help the development of asthma and other lung diseases. By 2030, many predict that the higher ozone concentrations due to climate change may result in thousands of ozone-related illnesses and premature deaths in the United States. Many extreme weather events, such as flooding, storms, and droughts, threaten the safety of large groups of people. These occurrences are only made more drastic and more frequent due to climate change. Environmental crises have many other disastrous health effects, including an increase in vector-borne disease, concerns with food safety, an increase in water-borne illnesses, and multiple negative correlations with mental health—something as dangerous and life-threatening as climate change calls for an increased level of awareness regarding environmental rights.

Data Analysis

All data mentioned or referred to in this section was collected in a survey asking thirty-one individuals to anonymously answer questions regarding climate change and environmental crises within their community and the steps to address such issues. The participants were residents from ages thirteen to seventy-two living in California, most of whom were most closely affiliated with the Democratic Party (58.1%). In addition, 16.1% stated that their beliefs were most closely represented by the Republican Party, while 25.8% claimed to be of other political parties (i.e., the Libertarian Party or the Green party) or without political affiliation.



Of the participants, thirty out of thirty-one (96.8%) stated that they believed climate change exists. Twenty-seven out of thirty-one (87.1%) considered the right to a clean environment a fundamental human right. With such advocacy for climate change awareness, it becomes even more imperative that the public gain more access to resources and information centers to inform them of possible causes, effects, and what it means for people across the world. In the survey, the participants were questioned about their knowledge of aerosols, greenhouse gasses, deforestation, and pesticides concerning their negative impact on environmental stability and human health. The overall consensus was that the participants were least knowledgeable about aerosols, as approximately 67.7% ranked lower than three on a scale of one through five (with one being not knowledgeable and five being very knowledgeable). Aerosols are tiny particles within the air that are typically produced through the burning of fossil fuels. They have been linked to many health problems, including lung damage, and have been known to reduce the amount of rainfall in areas with large populations. As a result, those regions struggle with food production and get into a perpetual drought. Therefore, it is necessary for such a profound factor on the climate and the well-being of the human population to become knowledge that is easily accessible and taught to those willing to learn. Additionally, thirty out of thirty-one participants stated that they believed climate change was caused more by human activities than natural causes, which shows a rising level of awareness and environmental consciousness.

In the second part of the survey, the participants were asked about the effects of climate change on a global level. When asked if they thought that climate change affected certain minorities or groups of people more than others, twenty-eight of the participants answered "yes". Some listed examples included women, LGBTQIA+ members, working-class people, low-income people, and people of color. One participant said that all people were affected in equal proportions, while two answered that they were unsure. Furthermore, when asked if they thought climate change affected areas or regions more than others, twenty-eight members responded



"yes," two were unsure, and one answered "no ."Of members that agreed with the statement, four mentioned areas near water (specifically islands or areas at high risk for flooding), three mentioned deserts or areas prone to drought, six mentioned regions with cold climates (such as the Arctic region), four mentioned global superpowers (especially the ones with more carbon emissions and factory production), and six mentioned developing nations. Developing nations, predominantly in Africa and Asia, are unjustly targeted by climate change as they do not have the resources or technology to combat its effects. It also increases food insecurity in these nations through changes to certain agroecological zones, extreme weather events, and soil drainage and depth. Twenty-nine of the participants (93.5%) stated that they believed that already-developed countries should protect citizens' environmental rights in developing nations. The primary way to do so is by spreading awareness. Many people living in developing nations, especially in the areas with the lowest urbanization rates, are unaware of the effects of climate change on their lives and their world. What is even more outrageous is that they are unaware that they, as a part of the human population, should have environmental rights. Advocating for change could help the governments of developing nations to recognize those living without fundamental environmental and human rights.

A later portion of the survey asked the participants to discuss how climate change has affected them personally. Among the answers, there were mentions of fires in California, rising heat, disrupted travel plans, inflation, living in a drought, unstable weather conditions, sickness and effects on physical health, bad air quality, and indirect effects that occur over long periods. For example, one participant mentioned how rising temperatures have led to extreme heat, which in turn causes them to have difficulty functioning throughout the day due to fatigue and illness. Another mentioned that their city is "perpetually warm and never rains ."The effects on physical health were also widespread. One participant stated that they had a weakened immune system, while another spoke of how their allergies worsened because of the sudden shifts in the weather.



One even stated that her mother has lung cancer. Over time, air pollution and lower air quality levels destabilize respiratory function and damage the lungs. If the climate crisis continues, everyone's health will be at risk. The next question asked the participants if they had ever been personally affected by a natural disaster or extreme weather event. Many reported the drought in California, and one spoke about having to evacuate school because of a wildfire a few miles away. Another said that when they lived in Texas, they frequently experienced flooding, and it once reached up to the first floor of their home.

The last part of the survey included questions about preventative measures that the participants took against climate change and their level of awareness about other movements to combat its effects. When asked if they knew any global policies taken by organizations to reduce the effects of climate change, only six out of the thirty-one participants could name policies. Less than 20% of the participants were unaware of any, no matter how big or small, laws set into place by their country or any other country around the world. This speaks to the lack of accessibility to such information, although it is a topic that should be available to the public to learn more about at any given time. To add, when asked to choose three issues that are most important to address, the three most frequently picked were pollution (80.6%), global warming (71%), and deforestation (45.2%). The other options were waste disposal (35.5%), overpopulation (32.3%), ocean acidification (29%), and loss of biodiversity (29%). Although these areas are equally important to address, pollution and global warming are considered the most urgent of the seven options.

Additionally, the participants were asked about the sources they had heard about climate change. The most frequently picked answer was the Internet (96.8%), followed by television (80.6%), school/university (58.1%), friends/family (58.1%), environmental organizations (51.6%), and government agencies (29%). It is reaffirming that over 50% of the participants were aware of or even had a role in environmental organizations and nonprofits in their city. The



final question asked if, on a scale of one through five (one being no impact and five being a significant impact), the participants felt they could positively impact their environment. 58.1% of the participants selected a three or lower on the scale. This is an indication that it is necessary for there to be more opportunities within communities to advocate for and support movements combating climate change.

How can we improve?

The area of environmental human rights can be enhanced and improved upon. In order to make improvements, it is necessary to create awareness about this area of human rights. Considering environmental rights as human rights does not have a long history like many other areas of human rights. When asked about human rights, not many people associate environmental rights with others despite being aware of the actions needed to take care of our planet. It is paramount that awareness of these environmental rights is known. Many of these rights are linked to other fundamental human rights, such as access to food, clean water, security, and shelter. Given technology today, awareness can be brought about in many ways. The use of a variety of social media platforms can help educate those that are fortunate enough to have access to such platforms. In addition to social media, awareness can come through standard news outlets, attending rallies and conferences on the topic, and our schools. Although many citizens may not have access to the means described above, enough citizens do, and making them aware can create a "push" for more vigorous advocacy to consider environmental rights as human rights. Advocates need to make a concerted effort to make a clear association between the destruction of our planet and fundamental human rights. Although a citizen may live in an area not affected by environmental issues, they may contribute to the problem through specific actions or lack of action. This association and understanding of how we are connected across our



planet are subtle yet significant. Our actions may not affect our local environment. However, they can have a profound effect on others many miles away.

In addition to awareness, there needs to be a fundamental shift in policies in many developed nations and corporations in those developed nations. Many developed nations rely on developing nations for their goods and services and raw materials. Simply stated, developing nations have become the world's primary manufacturers. Although these developing nations enjoy growing economies necessary for their future development, it is often at the expense of their local environment or a neighboring one. Many of these developing nations do not have the financial and logistical resources to invest in cleaner and more efficient technologies. Unfortunately, they are caught between the need to grow and the need to take care of the environment. Many companies from developed nations take advantage of this, along with inexpensive labor and lax regulations, to generate higher profits. It is necessary and should become a requirement for these companies to invest in these developing nations to help them implement cleaner and more efficient technologies. This can be done in various ways, including tariffs on goods, higher lease payments, and higher property values, to name just a few. Finally, there needs to be technological advancement and innovation to drive the costs of these cleaner, more efficient technologies down. One method of achieving this would be for governments and perhaps NGOs to provide incentives for research and development. There can be technology "contests" and technology conferences where technologies can be shared and developed further together. Not every person and company will see this as a benefit. However, there are enough good ideas and ingenuity to start an effort. Moreover, the significant change will come about from initiating many small efforts that become additive and logarithmic in nature.



What can young people do?

The smaller efforts are just one impactful step youth can take to improve this situation. As discussed above, creating awareness is very important, especially among youth. The youth need to understand their choices' impact upon a broader group of people, not just themselves and those immediately around them. A few examples would include being mindful about shower length, using electricity, driving instead of riding a bike or walking, and even purchasing fast fashion. All these activities, in excess, have been documented to have harmful effects on our environment and local peoples and, therefore, environmental rights. Again, the key here is awareness. It may not affect one locally in their own neighborhood; however, it can significantly impact others thousands of miles away. The wonderful thing about being mindful is that many small efforts become additive and lead to a significant positive outcome. It is equally essential that youth inform and educate others about the impact one can have on our environment through small efforts. This can be achieved through small group discussions, the establishment of clubs at school and in their communities and volunteering to name just a few activities. This education can start at a young age so that good habits are developed, and a culture of caring for our environment becomes stronger as it will create cleaner and safer environments for others worldwide.

The youth can create significant positive change in other ways. Many youths today have access to and routinely use social media. One suggestion to help create awareness and a culture of caring is to share posts of environmentally friendly activities. These activities would include "clean-ups," recycling, riding bicycles, composting, and planting trees. In addition to environmentally friendly activities, posts could show new innovative and clean technologies that have been implemented across the world. These technologies would include cleaner ways of generating electricity and electric vehicles. Many good sources of data are present in the literature, and the youth can also begin to share much of this data through social media.



A good example is that food waste creates more greenhouse gas emissions than the aviation industry. Furthermore, as has been heavily documented, greenhouse gas emission significantly affects our environment. The idea is to make people aware of these facts, encourage them to change habits, and remind them that many small efforts can significantly positively affect all of us. The youth are the future, and the future can be very bright for everyone across the world with minor changes made by you starting today.

Conclusion

Preserving our environmental rights is not an easy task. Not only did it have a shaky start in the mid-1950s, but disagreements on its purpose and the overall forgetability of the topic also contributed to the lack of substantial progress worldwide. Frequently, those in power overlook the importance of environmental rights since their actions usually only affect less developed areas; and the value of material goods easily outweighs the value of a small country and its environmental health. In order to discover the public's view on climate change and other environmental crises, our group created an anonymous survey to collect this data. Climate change was generally believed in; however, only a small number of individuals were knowledgeable on subtopics pertaining to environmental crises and even less knew what policies to suggest when asked about potential solutions. Most importantly, less than half felt as if they could actively make a positive impact on the environment. Given that environmental crises impact everyone, it can be concluded that community advocacy should be normalized, and the masses should be well educated on the topic because, in truth, there are many ways we can improve upon environmental rights.

Awareness, advocacy, social media, newfound policies, and technology; all of these are only some examples of what can be done to combat this crisis. Affecting the environment to a great degree seems near impossible due to the lack of power given to the common public;



however, a significant change is possible with these strategies. With these tactics, it will be harder for those in power to ignore the public's concerns, driving them to make the policy change everyone wishes to create. Furthermore, advancement is evident with the puny efforts of the masses and the conjoined effort of all individuals, even those not directly affected by these challenges. With the additive efforts of the young people in our generation, who hope to see change as significantly as anyone else, our hopes and probability for a positive future burn more brightly each day. The youth have the most control over social media and its general trend and algorithm, one great form of advocacy and information quickly shared with others. That way, we share a thin yet visible bond close to any young person involved in social media, allowing events, plans, protests for change, and the like to be more widespread. Advancement is possible- but the matter of triggering it is not proven easy. With enough effort from the masses and the continued efforts of young people around the globe, we can turn around the environmental rights crisis and create a world equally suited for every individual.

Political rights

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A person's political rights refer to the ability to participate in the civil life of society without fear of discrimination. As a nation's citizens, all individuals have political rights and should be treated fairly and equally. Throughout history, the United States has implemented various laws to enhance a person's political rights. Documents asserting individual rights, such as



the Magna Carta (1215), the English Bill of Rights (1689), the French Declaration on the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789), and the US Constitution and Bill of Rights (1791), are the written precursors to many of today's human rights documents. As a result, we have advanced as a nation, and citizens of this nation can freely participate in the political life of society and are protected from infringement by government and social organizations. One of the most vital rights of citizens is the 15th amendment which grants citizens the right to vote, regardless of race, sex, or color. It eliminates racial barriers to voting and ensures that individuals have a democratic voice. The right to vote is one of the most critical political and human rights, and through voting, we can continue to advocate for better healthcare, better education, job growth, a better economy, equality and inclusion, safer schools, and ultimately a better quality of life. Citizens should utilize the right to vote and remember that every voice matters.

Politics is often associated with government and laws; however, it is much more than that. Politics affects how people live together and ensures that people have a democratic voice and are treated equally. The world is constantly changing, and unlike in the past when the youth did not participate in politics, they are now more knowledgeable about human rights and can play a vital role in the future of this nation. Therefore, the youth must be involved in political issues to express their opinions and make decisions that affect their lives and future. By empowering the youth, they become more confident and capable. As a result, they collaborate with others in society to positively impact their community. Therefore, it is essential to encourage the youth to participate in politics so they can meaningfully contribute to the betterment of society.

The Youth can help with political and human rights by having a voice and being more involved in politics. Youth are underplayed in politics, and instead of being oblivious to what is happening in their community, they can learn more about political issues through social media



platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, and Tik Tok. They can use this knowledge to become better informed about topics and issues which people are currently faced with. Although it has been argued that social media platforms can be misleading and give false information, it is the most common way that youth gain access to information. Once exposed to the political issue through social media, they should validate the information. They can then advocate for the political rights that interest them and raise awareness through their school and social media. Research on social media has shown a positive relationship between offline and online political participation. The youth can learn information from the posts of others, and this will facilitate their participation in civic issues. Through social media, the youth have an opportunity to be contacted by various political organizations and can join organizations in which they are interested. Participation is contagious among social media users, and this can lead the youth to join together and advocate as a group.

Young people can also become involved in political and human rights by getting a good education and having meaningful conversations about their community's issues. Being informed and educated is crucial for youth, and they need to learn how to read, understand, and analyze their issues. Unfortunately, schools do not incorporate political issues into their curriculums. Instead, they teach students the history of the government and how this nation progressed to where it is today. Wouldn't it be more beneficial if schools encouraged students to get involved in political issues? For instance, high school students must complete a certain number of community service hours; perhaps some of those hours should be allocated towards political issues and volunteering for an organization that interests the student, such as World Youth Alliance, Global Youth Action Network, or National Democratic Institute. Additionally, the youth can use their talents to take civic action in their community. For instance, if they enjoy writing, an individual can write an opinion piece for a youth newspaper such as LA Insider. If



you enjoy art, you can make a painting to express your political thoughts and perhaps post it on your social media to raise awareness or start a club at school. Whatever you excel at or enjoy can become your tool to become more politically involved.

Conclusion

As shown by the previous summaries and analyses of findings, data collected by the student interns proved that young people have very strong and often distinct views on human rights issues (from one another). The interns collected over 180 responses from young people through their surveys. Each student ranked the importance of each human rights issue and examined why or why not they viewed certain rights as paramount. As a demographic breakdown, on a general level, gender distribution varied between surveys and income levels, but other factors mainly remained consistent.

The results of these surveys point to a new generation with more progressive and firm views on human rights issues than others. The majority of participants in the survey indicated that their political preferences were liberal and trended toward the Democratic party. Likewise, most participants were inclined to state their sexuality as heterosexual. As a result, we can concede the limitations of our efforts and encourage more data collection in the future.

However, we believe that the data collected represents a significant step in the right direction for the field of ethics and morality. By understanding young people's beliefs on human rights issues, society can collectively forge ahead with preserving these values and communicating them to others. In today's more divided and tense world, mutual understanding and acknowledgment of human rights would encourage moral and ethical treatment of others, and such treatment could prevent future global and personal conflicts. Furthermore, civic engagement and knowledge are highly beneficial for encouraging an active and diverse



electorate to participate in civic duties. Finally, promoting an understanding of human rights issues can encourage younger individuals to communicate their beliefs on human rights at the ballot box. These individuals determine the future course of the United States and the world, and understanding perspectives on human rights (and human rights issues in general) will impact this future for the better.



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