

# REVISITING LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC UNIVERSALISM: A CRITICAL RHETORIC OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC WORLD ORDER

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*Abstract:* Liberal democracy has become the predominant political regime in the 21<sup>st</sup> century even in countries that have little or no history of 'democratic structures and practices'. However, it seems as though setting up a functional, stable, and viable democratic state is harder than overthrowing autocratic rulers. This rhetorical criticism explores gridlocks that hamper the development of universal liberal democratic values by emphasizing the Western hegemonic status of defining what liberal democracy is. It is pertinent to look into this dominant role considering that it is through these values that actions, policies, and other values are to be construed and judged. This paper aims to (1) highlight the role of moral cosmopolitanism as the initial step of Western hegemony, (2) identify the paradox of defining liberal democracy as universal but treating it as a particular, and (3) discuss the ironies of democratic imperialism and its hindrance to self-determination. This paper hopes to shed some light in the importance of various interpretations, definitions, and adaptations of liberal democratic values depending on the context of the society incorporating, its culture, its values, and its identity, in order to find a more comprehensive definition of democracy.

*Keywords:* democracy, hegemony, ideology, liberalism, sovereignty.

## INTRODUCTION

Liberal democracy has been put on a pedestal following the cold war, with the United Nations (UN) claiming it as a universally recognised ideal. An on-going wave of democratization has been apparent since the 1970s with some 100 countries having undergone transitions to democracy followed by roughly 40 countries having done the same in the 1990s and early 2000s (IDEA 2006). Particularly in 2005, a wide variety of countries experienced political change with elements of democratization in varying degrees such as Egypt, Hong Kong, Georgia, Liberia, Ukraine, Togo, and Lebanon (IDEA 2006). In spite of the widespread democratization in contemporary history, the *Democracy Index 2015* by the Economist Intelligence Unit reported only 20 full democ-

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racies, 59 flawed democracies, 37 hybrid regimes, and 51 authoritarian regimes<sup>1</sup>. The full democracies identified by the report are composed of mostly western nations particularly those from North America, Europe, and Australia with an exception of 2 non-Western nations taking the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> place (Mauritius and Uruguay respectively). In another report, Freedom House, claimed that in 2015, 89 countries (46%) in the world are ‘Free’<sup>2</sup>. After looking closely at the regional trends, the report shows that only the regions of Europe and the Americas have a majority of ‘Free’ countries, while the Middle East and North Africa, which is composed of mostly Muslims, and Eurasia, which is mostly post-Soviet countries, have a majority of ‘Not Free’ states. It does not go without saying that these two regions have had a history of conflict with the West particularly those of the religious and political kind, respectively. The other two regions, Sub-Sahara Africa and Asia Pacific, which were predominantly colonies of European empires, were reported to have 20% and 41% ‘Free’ countries. In 1900-1901, leading newspapers announced that the twentieth century was to be the century of democracy and in 1920, a prominent authority on political systems could write that democracy no longer had any challengers; however, the two reports mentioned seem to claim otherwise (Gastil 1990).

David M. Black, in an occasional and commissioned paper by the Library of Parliament of Canada, stated that “the end of the cold war rivalry between Western countries and blocs of communist countries saw the rise of interest in and attempts to encourage the development of democracies in countries with little or no history of democratic structures and practices” (Black 2006). Due to this kind of background, the celebration of the collapse of an autocratic regime is followed by the realization that overthrowing a dictator turns out to be much easier than setting up a functional, stable, and viable democratic state for the people. “The new regime stumbles, the economy flounders and the country finds itself in a state at least as bad as it was before” such as what happened in the Arab spring, and also in Ukraine’s Orange revolution a decade ago (The Economist 2014). According to the International Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)’s publication *Democracy, Conflict, and Human Security*, “the process of introducing democratic practices is inherently troubled” because these transitions “rearrange political competition, alter structures

and power relations, and often exacerbate social problems rather than ameliorating them” creating a political reform that is actually destabilizing (IDEA 2006). While democratization is ideally intended to function as the ultimate conflict management system for a society and help promote human security, at times, the process itself can stimulate conflicts creating the opposite effect (IDEA 2006).

This paper invites its readers to revisit the liberal democratic values and to keep an open mind in understanding what may cause drawbacks in the acceptance and the establishment of a political system that claim to be grounded on universalistic values. This rhetorical criticism aims to emphasise the Western hegemonic status of defining what liberal democracy is, which is pertinent to the world today considering that it is through these values that actions, policies, and other values are to be construed and judged. It will do so by (1) highlighting the role of moral cosmopolitanism as the initial step of Western hegemony, (2) identifying the paradox of defining liberal democracy as universal but treating it as a particular, and (3) discussing the ironies of democratic imperialism and its hindrance to self-determination. The paper aims to highlight the importance of creating an approach that is more comprehensive in such a way that it takes into consideration the diversities of societies today instead of overlooking them.

## MORAL COSMOPOLITANISM AS THE INITIAL STEP FOR WESTERN DOMINANCE

The idea of Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist theorist and politician, of the hegemony works in such a way that certain kinds of ideology or culture are imposed by the ruling elite as the “preferred form, which happens through a process of consent – the ruled-over classes tend to internalise the ideology or dominant culture and behave as if that culture is their own” (Nye 2008: 61). Although it does not prohibit alternative forms, these are regarded as having a lower status than that of the dominant one. This concept “suggests that political relations are a process of struggle, through which the ruling group have to negotiate with and impose – by force and by other means, such as through education – their particular cultural views, standards, and practices” (Nye 2008:

61). Certain subaltern groups, instead of resisting and challenging the hegemonic culture or ideology, may seek to engage with the hegemonic culture and make it their own in attempt to get some power for themselves (Nye 2008: 61). This ideology or culture serves as a vehicle to exert power in which those who are ruled begin to participate in their own exploitation by taking on the cultural trappings of the powerful (Nye 2008: 61-62). Moral Cosmopolitanism has done the same through its assertion of universal norms.

During Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser's lecture entitled *How Universal are Universal Values?* in Bait el Hikma, Carthage, Tunisia last 2012, he mentioned Francis Fukuyama's assertion that "liberal democracy and its values are the endpoint of humanity's socio-cultural evolution" because "we have reached the ultimate form of organizing social life, of articulating the social contract" (Al-Nasser 2012). Recognizing the realities of the world today as well as the particularities of each society, he claims that "it is possible always to strive constructively towards the utmost level of universality" since "the journey of humanity moves endlessly towards the universality articulated by Emmanuel Kant, who dreamt of perpetual peace" (Al-Nasser 2012). This Kantian notion that peace depends on both the existence of republican constitutions within states and a pacific union among liberal states prevail in the global system of today with the high worth placed on liberal democracy fuelling democratization movements. However, Amitav Acharya posed a critical question: "Did Kant recognise the right of non-European societies to choose their own political systems?" The fact that Kant denounced colonialism does not necessarily mean that he allowed for peaceful long-lasting association between states who are liberal and not (Acharya 2007: 18). "On the contrary, he allowed for liberal states engaging in what Hume called 'imprudent vehemence' (in Hume's words) against non-liberal states" or what can also be characterised as aggression against or enmity towards non-liberals because peaceful restraint seem to only work between liberal states (Acharya 2007: 18). Whether this Democratic Peace Theory has found all the right paths to truth or not is besides the point but rather whether it has acquired a Gramscian hegemonic status due to the dominance of Western power over the last few centuries in such a way that it operates largely unconsciously in the minds of others regardless of

whether the theory is correct or not (Acharya 2007). And, it seems to have done so.

Universal norms, codified in international law, protect individuals through bypassing nation-states claiming an enforceable legal status as citizen of the world. The political subject of universal norms needs to be legitimated and founded through movements and parties of world citizens, which is a requirement for a neo-Kantian prescription to hold (Parker 2003: 161). In dissecting the dimension of ‘moral cosmopolitanism’ by Acharya, it can be seen how certain norms come to be universal: 1) the norms being propagated should claim universality or cosmopolitanism; 2) the agents spreading such norms should be transnational agents, moral entrepreneurs, or social movements; 3) the norm diffusion should rely heavily on ‘moral proselytism’ and pressure, in such a way that through shaming over framing, and sanctions over saving face according “little space to positive action and voluntary initiative by the norm-takers; and 4) the resistance to cosmopolitan norms are illegitimate or immoral, which emphasises conversation rather than contestation” (Acharya 2007). Through this mechanism of hegemony, the success of liberal democratic norms are rooted from that fact that “universalistic claim about what is good are considered more desirable and more likely to prevail than norms that are localised or particularistic” and is “rooted from a well-known dislike of cultural relativism serving as a pretext for Third World dictators and human rights violations” (Acharya 2007).

## THE PARADOX OF TREATING THE UNIVERSAL A PARTICULAR

Amartya Sen claims that today “a country does not have to be deemed fit for democracy; rather, it has to become fit through democracy” (Sen 1999: 4). These universalistic claims seem to be suspect because all societies have their own definition of what democracy is – let alone what liberal democracy is. One country may call itself liberal democratic but another may disagree. Authority on a definition, which creates a monopoly of truth, cannot be had by one state – or one entity alone – because it would have the tendency to be biased. The fact that one would have to under-

stand the medieval Western conception of society that preceded the liberal era in order to understand liberal political philosophy shows that Western values shape the liberal democratic theory that are promoted to be universal today. Liberalism was largely reactionary to medieval thought, which was a philosophical opposition to traditional authority based on divine wisdom, religion, and the common law (Cobbah 1987: 312). “In particular, competing cultural perspectives tend to undermine each other’s priorities and, in the process, to diminish the prospects of developing truly universal standards of human rights and more effective mechanisms for achieving them” (An-Na’im 1992: 1). The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore, Mr. Wong Kang Seng, in the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna highlighted the dangers of a universalistic recognition of the ideal of human rights if “used to deny or mask the reality of diversity”, most especially since “the gap between different points of view will not be bridged if this is ignored” (Seng 1993). He corroborated this claim by stating that “when the Universal Declaration was being formulated in 1947, no less an authority than the American Anthropological Association cautioned that ‘what is held to be a human right in one society may be regarded as anti-social by another people’ and that ‘respect for differences between cultures is validated by the scientific fact that no technique of qualitatively evaluating cultures has been discovered’” (Sen citing The Statement on Human Rights issued by the American Anthropologist in 1947). He identifies the reality of competing states and contending interests that lead to an inevitable difference of opinions over human rights (Seng 1993). The current and foreseeable hegemonic universal values that liberal democracy hold, unless designed and expressed within the widest possible range of *Weltanschauungen* (world views), cannot be seen truly universal.

Freedom House, in its Freedom in the World survey, provides an annual evaluation of the state of global freedom as experienced by individuals, wherein the survey measures freedom, defined as the opportunity to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of the government and other centres of potential domination, according to two broad categories: political rights<sup>3</sup> and civil liberties<sup>4</sup>. By discussing the two core values of liberal democracy, which are freedom and individualism, the rest of this section aims to highlight the importance of acknowledging

diversity in framing universal values. The real issue that Sen identifies is not whether these non-freedom perspectives are present, but whether the freedom-oriented perspectives are absent (Sen 1997: 17). This seems to be a good starting point in proving the universality of these values, which creates an open atmosphere for diversity and free interaction of ideas immune to the dangers of imposition.

Asian values have often been seen as hostile to democratic principles and political rights due to traditionally valuing discipline and not political freedom (Sen 1999). However, there have been various cases on which democratic values are evident in Asia. The first example is the idea that Asian values, particularly teachings of Confucius, espouse blind allegiance to the state putting the state first before the individual. However, Sen writes that “Confucius himself did not recommend blind allegiance to the state”, which can be seen when Zilu asks him ‘how to serve a prince’ (Sen 1999). Confucius replies that he should tell him the truth even if it offends him, which goes to show that he does not forgo the recommendation to oppose a bad government tactfully, if necessary: “When the [good] way prevails in the state, speak boldly and act boldly. When the state has lost the way, act boldly and speak softly” (Sen 1999). In addition, “Confucius provides a clear pointer to the fact that the two pillars of the imagined edifice of Asian values, loyalty to family and obedience to the state, can be in severe conflict with each other” (Sen 1999). Sen writes that Confucius acknowledged the tension between the two; and, when a governor praised the unbending integrity of a son who denounced his father for stealing a sheet, he stated: “Among my people, men of integrity do things differently: a father covers up for his son, a son covers up for his father – and there is integrity in what they do” (Sen 1999).

The second example would be on the absence of freedom in Asian values. One example given by Sen is India’s Kautilya, the author of *Arthashastra*, which can be translated as economic science<sup>5</sup>. While it is true that “Kautilya is no democrat, no egalitarian, no general promoter of everyone’s freedom”, he espouses happiness of subjects and order of kingdom through other means such as effective administration, disaster prevention, and support for the less fortunate in the society (Sen 1997: 21). While freedom is had only by the upper classes in the society, he highlights the

importance of free exercise of these capabilities, which contrasts the governmental duties to the lower orders, making this limitation not far from the Greek concern with free men as opposed to slaves or women (Sen 1997: 21). An emphasis on freedom may not have been made by Kautilya as much as that of his European counterparts but nonetheless this value was still present in his political works.

In addition, Sen cites a few examples of religious tolerance in Asian values. He recognises how Islam is often portrayed as fundamentally intolerant of and hostile to individual freedom. However, he writes that “the presence of diversity and variety within a tradition applies very much to Islam as well” citing the examples of Akbar and most of the other Moghul emperors (except Aurangzeb) in India, Turkish emperors (who he claims were often more tolerant than their European contemporaries), as well as the rulers of Cairo and Baghdad (to whom the great Jewish scholar Maimonides sought refuge from an intolerant Europe, where he was born) (Sen 1999). Akbar, to cite a more concrete example, issued various enactments at this juncture of history, and some of these focused on religious tolerance, including the following:

No man should be interfered with on account of religion, and anyone [is] to be allowed to go over to a religion he pleased. If a Hindu, when a child or otherwise, had been made a Muslim against his will, he is to be allowed, if he pleased, to go back to the religion of his fathers (Sen 1997: 23).

Moreover, upon exploring outside the Asian context, there are some cases in which the understandings of certain values do not necessarily follow the ‘universal’ definition of individual human rights. James W. Zion wrote about a different kind of understanding of human rights, in the book *Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspectives: A Quest for Consensus*. He points out that North American Indians understand human rights as families, groups, and Peoples, neither separating the individual from the group nor separating religion from secular life (Zion 1992: 207). “Human rights laws, which are supposed to be based upon ‘universal’ human values, are presently largely irrelevant to Indians”<sup>6</sup> (Zion 1992: 207). To cite an example, “Indians of the United States seldom use discrimination law, as is reflected in the law reports and human rights agency caseload statistics; and Indian litigation reflects their overwhelming concern about their group



rights, rather than individual rights” (Zion 1992: 207). Josiah A. M. Cobbah, in his article entitled *African Values and the Human Rights Debate: An African Perspective*, also wrote how Africans emphasise groupness, sameness, and commonality (Cobbah 1987: 320). By citing John S. Mbiti’s work *African Religions and Philosophy*, Cobbah wrote that the philosophy of existence for the African could be summed up as: “I am because we are, and because we are therefore I am” (Cobbah 1987: 320). “A comparison of African and Western social organization clearly reveals the cohesiveness of African society and the importance of kinship to the African lifestyle”, contrasting how “Westerners are able to carry out family life in the form of the nuclear family and often in isolation from other kin” while “Africans do not have the concept of a nuclear family and operate within a broader arena of the extended family” (Cobbah 1987: 320). Instead of a rather Western notion of survival of the fittest and control over nature, “the African worldview is tempered with the general guiding principle of the survival of the entire community and a sense of cooperation, interdependence, and collective responsibility” (Cobbah 1987: 320).

Instead of obscuring the reality of particularities through conceptual analyses that seek to superimpose Western derived individualistic paradigms, it is imperative to explore the implications of the diverse character of these worldviews and how it would be possible to accommodate non-Western values in our understanding of liberal democracy. This does not mean that this paper opposes the idea of a universal definition of liberal democracy but rather a broader more accommodating kind would do it more justice than a narrow ethnocentric one. This approach would strengthen the universal claim of liberal democracy instead of treating societies that do not consent or subscribe to the Western hegemonic definition of liberal democracy as hostile to it.

## THE IRONY OF DEMOCRATIC IMPERIALISM

What seems to happen in the world today is a phenomenon that has been called ‘democratic imperialism’. It was defined by Filip Spagnoli in *Democratic Imperialism: A Practical Guide*, as “the imperialism of an idea, not of territory or power” (Spagnoli 2004: xiii). He continues his definition by adding that “the pur-

pose is not the creation of a political and territorial empire but the establishment of the empire of democracy and human rights, although not at the expense of political, territorial, cultural or economic independence” and “it does not imply the wish to colonise the world, civilise the uncivilised, or assimilate other cultures” (Spagnoli 2004: xiii). However, this does not seem to be the case. It is important to note that an imperialism of an idea is just as dangerous as that of territory and power and it may even be more dangerous than the latter two. A certain core assumption of a state’s inability to fulfil its obligations as civilised sovereign nations (which is one of the core reasons for humanitarian intervention) has resulted to the international community’s toleration of frequent violations of their sovereignty for the sake of some ‘high principles’ that leads to democracy.

Certain efforts aimed at humanitarian intervention in the name of democracy and human rights “assumes the inability of the non-Western countries to fulfil their obligations as civilised sovereign nations” (Acharya 2007). As pointed out by Jia Qinguo, “weaker, developing countries, legitimizing international intervention entails loss of, damage to, independence, sovereignty, political stability, and people’s welfare” (Jia Qinguo, p. 30, in “Humanitarian Intervention: The Evolving Asian Debate”, cited in Acharya 2007). While it claims to be for the common good, it is important to know that “humanitarian intervention is not as universal a principle as its Western proponents make it out to be, because the problems that justify such intervention are not problems for the West” (Acharya 2007). Stephen D. Krasner, in his book *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, recognises the reality that national power and interest, instead of international norms, continue to be the most powerful explanation of the behaviour of states today. In an interview with Harry Kreisler for the Institute of International Studies in University of California, Berkeley, Krasner describes the phenomenon of organised hypocrisy as “when states say one thing but do another; they rhetorically endorse the normative principles or rules associated with sovereignty but their policies and actions violate these rules” (Kreisler 2003). These arguments have been used in favour of interventions highlighting certain impulses of old-fashioned militarism and imperialism under the cloak of a crusade for justice, democracy, and peace despite the unapproved intervention of NATO (Parker 2003: 161).

Emmanuelle Jouannet strengthens such claim by emphasizing the formal, ideological, and universal character of democracy as an on-going process of legalised imperial hegemony of Western values through international law, which combines “a universalist façade with discriminatory and imperialistic practices” (Jouannet 2007: 382). She claims that “if we understand imperialism to mean domination and the imposition on others of one’s own legal and economic systems, it cannot be denied that classical, Eurocentric international law both accompanied and legitimated this imperialism” (Jouannet 2007: 382). Due to decolonization and a desire a new justification for continuous European subjugation of non-Western territory, a new body of international law emerged stating that “a sovereign statehood required a ‘delimited territory, a stable population, and most importantly, a reliable government with the will and capacity to carry out international obligations’ none of which non-Western states are in possession of due to being what W.E. Hall describes as ‘differently civilised’” (Jackson, p. 61, cited in Acharya 2007).

Certain scholars such as Omar G. Encarnación have also subscribed to the term ‘democratic imperialism’ when describing certain countries’ obsession with its role as a global moral crusader for bringing freedom and democracy to autocratic countries. Encarnación, in his article entitled *The Follies of Democratic Imperialism*, cites that certain democratic crusaders entail the creation of democracy through undemocratic means in such a way that the imposition of democracy requires a foreign entity to intrude in the political affairs of a state “robbing democracy of its indigenous legitimacy” (Encarnación 2005: 56). He claims that arguably “the most intrusive step in the imposition of democracy is the creation of an interim or provisional government”, which are “designed to meet short-term interests, such as securing political order, rather than the more complex task of developing democratic institutions” (Encarnación 2005: 56). This has occurred as early as after the Second World War, where communist leaning leaders were often challenged and if successful, replaced by installing a non-communist leader who is just as autocratic (and even debatably more autocratic) than the previous one. This, in itself, hinders democracy to flourish because instead of letting allowing nations to foster their own path to democracy, its imposition creates political unrest and a rather superficial ineffective democratic order,

especially to nations that refuse to give its consent to the hegemonic ideology.

Instead of facilitating conditions that enable nations to embrace democracy on their own free will such as promoting human rights, alleviating poverty and building effective governing institutions, some nations have taking a rather more coercive, heavy-handed approach (Mentan 2015: 149). Farid Younos, in *Democratic Imperialism: Democratization vs. Islamization*, writes that “Muslims believe that the West through a political system of government wants Muslims to be subjugated, ripped of their cultural identity”, by “installing a corrupt and secular person in their country of domination or bringing back to power their own puppet” (Younos: 48). He claims that self-determination is ironically deterred by democratic imperialism. “Once a society is stripped of its cultural identity, it is very easy to dominate, to exploit and to carry on an imperialistic agenda”, because it does not have to consider the ingredients and nuts and bolts of subaltern societies such as that of Muslims. The stripping of the subaltern’s identity paves the way for the their consent to embrace the hegemonic ideology undermining one of the very backbones of liberal democracy and international law, which is self-determination.

## CONCLUSION

Through this rhetorical criticism on the western hegemonic status of the definition of liberal democracy, it has explored certain aspects of liberal democracy in that, first, the Kantian notion of moral cosmopolitanism has provided the initial step of Western dominance by asserting a universalistic definition of liberal democracy that puts all other alternatives in question and hostile; second, liberal democracy, despite of its universalistic and cosmopolitan claim, seem to treat this value as a particular through its adherence to Western values and rejection of non-Western perspectives of it; and lastly, this democratic imperialism hampers nation’s self-determination, which serves as one of the backbones of the ideology itself.

These put into question the democratization mechanisms used today because of their rather discriminatory idea of what liberal democratic universal values are. The promotions of liberal

democratic values seems to be particularistic in such that it disregards the different societies, different cultures, and different belief systems the world has. These subaltern societies have liberal democratic values but they simply are not in the form of which the hegemony construes them. By disregarding diversity, a rather particularistic interpretation of this ideology has pushed for universal legitimization, which justifies its imposition on subaltern nations giving birth to violence, resistance, and atrophy. The development of democracy from outside does not give birth to genuine, stable, and strong regimes. It should be fostered through a genuinely universalistic definition of liberal democracy that starts from within a nation.

There seems to be a need to remember US President Herbert Hoover's promise to promote democracy by example rather than by force, particularly to Latin America, when he said: "True democracy is not and cannot be imperialistic" (Mentan 2015: 149). Should liberal democracy be the end point of humanity's socio-cultural evolution, like what Fukuyama, has asserted, then it should happen organically, genuinely, and wilfully making it free from outside imposition. It has to evolve through its people, in its own way, and within its own context. Although democracy is often believed to have come from Europe, particularly in Ancient Athens, there have been suggestions that democratic forms of government have existed in other areas of the world well before the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C either through tribalism or what scholars now call as primitive democracy. This allows a broader definition of what democracy is considering the numerous kinds of societies the world has today with their own peculiar history that one can never be the same with the other. This should limit the imposition of one overarching hegemonic definition of what democracy is and allow various interpretations depending on the context of the society incorporating, its culture, its values, and its identity, instead of discriminating against subaltern alternatives to the hegemonic standards of liberal democracy.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit's index of democracy, on a 0 to 10 scale, is based on the ratings for 60 indicators, grouped into five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. Each category has a rating on a 0 to 10 scale, and the overall Index is the simple average of the five category indexes. Full democracies are countries in which not only basic political freedoms and civil liberties are respected, but also tend to be underpinned by a political culture conducive to the flourishing of democracy. The functioning of government is satisfactory. Media are independent and diverse. There is an effective system of checks and balances. The judiciary is independent and judicial decisions are enforced. There are only limited problems in the functioning of democracies (The Economist 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Freedom in the World 2015 evaluates the state of freedom in 195 countries and 15 territories during 2014. Each country and territory is assigned two numerical ratings – from 1 to 7 – for political rights and civil liberties, with 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free. The two ratings are based on scores assigned to 25 more detailed indicators. The average of a country or territory's political rights and civil liberties ratings determines whether it is Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. The methodology, which is derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is applied to all countries and territories, irrespective of geographic location, ethnic or religious composition, or level of economic development. Freedom in the World assesses the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals, rather than governments or government performance per se. Both state and non-state actors, including insurgents and other armed groups, can affect political rights and civil liberties (Freedom House 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Political rights enable people to participate freely in the political process, including the right to vote freely for distinct alternatives in legitimate elections, compete for public office, join political parties and organizations, and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and are accountable to the electorate (Freedom House).

<sup>4</sup> Civil liberties allow for the freedoms of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state (Freedom House).

<sup>5</sup> “First, Kautilya is a consequentialist of quite a narrow kind. While the objectives of promoting the happiness of subjects and order in the kingdom are strongly backed up by detailed policy advice, he depicts the king as a benevolent autocrat, whose power is to be maximized through good organization. Thus, Arthashastra presents penetrating ideas and suggestions on such practical subjects as famine prevention and administrative effectiveness that remain relevant even today, more than two thousand years later; yet at the same time, it advises the king how to get his way, if necessary through the violation of freedom of his opponents and adversaries. Second, Kautilya seems to attach little importance to political or economic equality, and his vision of good society is strongly stratified according to lines of class and caste. Even though the objective of promoting happiness, which is given an exalted position in the hierarchy of values, is applied to all, the other objectives have clearly inegalitarian form and content. There is an obligation to give the less fortunate members of the society the support that they need to escape misery and enjoy life – Kautilya specifically identifies as the duty of the king to ‘provide the orphans, the aged, the infirm, the afflicted, and the helpless with maintenance’, along with providing ‘subsistence to helpless women when they are carrying and also to the [newborn] children they give birth to’. But recognizing that obligation is very far from valuing the freedom of these people to decide how to live – tolerating heterodox” (Sen 1997: 21-22, citing Kautilya's Arthashastra, translated by R. Shama Sastry).

<sup>6</sup> Zion stresses the importance of understanding how the fact that communist regimes claim the same understanding of human rights as that of the Native American Indians as a substantiating force in not opening up lines of communication and hearing Indian views.

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