Empowerment

This concern addresses the use of rights as a meaningful rhetoric to identify and specify conditions that are crucially important for a life worthy of human persons and communities. As globalization brings about a greater integration of the world community, states and societies, especially in the global South, are engaging more than before with international institutions, rules, and norms. What constitutes good or right conduct by states and non-state actors, and what is rightly due individuals, citizens, and communities wherever they are, are concerns central to the blurring of domestic and international politics. Shifts in the fulcrum of world power raise new questions on what common values underpin international society and define human well-being, on how they are pursued, and on the consequences for developing states and societies. Redoubling this complexity, local polities and national, sub-regional, and regional institutions mediate these influences and pursue their own normative approaches and agendas. Innovations to address persistent underdevelopment, political instability and human vulnerability must understand and navigate this changing political terrain. Project topics on the so-called second-generation rights, that is, social, economic, and development rights, will make empowerment their central animating goal. Research questions include:

- What are the national and transnational dynamics of the politics of identity in ethnically and racially divided societies?

- What is the significance of the current backlash against multiculturalism in the Western world? What are the implications for the rights of religious minorities, women, and other discriminated groups?

- How does mass immigration change course and affect refugee and asylum rights?

- How are the population and migration consequences of macro-environmental change to be addressed, including their gender and generation consequences? How are human rights and citizenship rights understood and vindicated in the midst of such large-scale change?

- In what ways can this research empower women and minorities regarding issues of persistent poverty, inequality and development, including the access to resources?