# Individual Freedom in Rural Communities

*As it is in Heaven* is a movie that was directed by Michael Nyqvist and Kay Pollak. The movie portrays a passionate contrast between the rural and urban lifestyles and cultural practices as well as the individual freedom that is experienced in both environments. The film also touches on the issue of neighbour support as it is portrayed in both rural and urban settings. The movie predominantly deals with two distinct cultures and contrasts several aspects of the two cultures including the social values, cultural beliefs and economic practices preferred by people from the two diverse cultures. The setting of the film is done in Sweden where there is the urban region which is mainly inhabited by the elites and the reasonably educated people while the rural is inhabited by the natives (Pollak Et al., 2009). Notably, the differences between these two cultures are too strong, and the theme of self-independence is evident in both of them.

The rural areas are usually inhabited by people who are conservative and less enlightened on issues such as human rights and freedoms as provided by the constitution. This makes them to be less concerned with standing up for their own liberation when it comes to political, social and even economic issues. Independence as perceived by people living in rural areas is quite different from independence in the urban areas. To begin with, rural areas require discipline and self-control in order for one to survive. The cultural beliefs and practices held by the people living in the rural areas are quite restricting even on issues which are considered as normal social issues in the cities (Gigler, 2015). For instance, issues like abortion or divorce are viewed as taboos in the rural. These restricting practices force people in these areas not to gain equal freedom as the people dwelling in the cities.

Secondly, personal freedom in rural areas is limited by the lack of access to sufficient information and services that may enhance understanding of personal rights and freedoms. Rural areas are usually secluded and lack proper facilities that can bring the people together to fight for individual freedoms (Gigler, 2015). For instance, there are very few non-governmental organisations that venture into the rural areas to educate the people on matters such as gender based violence or enlighten them about their personal freedoms.

Traditions which are practiced by rural communities tend to come up with a new form of governance which makes people in the rural areas disregard the fundamental rights and freedoms which are granted by the law. These people adhere to the traditions which at times may require them to accept violation of their personal rights. Lack of knowledge and loyalty to the traditions makes these people become unable to fight for their personal freedoms (Mentan, 2014). Besides that, there are no proper institutional frameworks in the rural areas that can facilitate the search for personal freedom. This leaves people in these areas with no options other than accept the freedom provided by the traditions of the society (Gigler, 2015). All of these things foster a view of government that encourages hands off policies and encourages people in the rural areas to adhere to the policies and regulations governing the society.

The rural areas are generally characterised by lack of diversity and domination by narrow interest when compared with the urban areas. This narrow scope and lack of diversity affects the rural societies economically, socially and even politically. In most cases, the rural societies have only a few dominant interests that everyone is usually focused on. This limits the thinking and reasoning of the people and they at no point think that they have freedoms that they do not exercise. Small towns are far less diverse than urban areas, and are consequently dominated by a few narrow interests (Gigler, 2015). The interest that in most cases dominates the rural areas is a conservative one. For instance, if a rural area is dominated by a certain religion the small town will be dominated by a narrow socially-conservative viewpoint. This is so unlike urban areas which have many people with different ideologies who lead to the rise of conflicting interest. These varied interests enhance self-discovery and realization of personal freedoms in the urban society.

 The social composition of the environment in the rural areas is quite different from that of the urban areas in that, the rural areas besides encouraging conservatism lack information on some of the modernised ideologies that people in the urban areas are already used to (Mentan, 2014). A good example is the issue of customs that tend to restrict personal problem and control the decisions made by a person in the society. The urban dwellers have no respect for customs and can therefore go to all lengths to fight for their rights freedoms. For instance, it more likely that young people will not engage their elders in arguments even after the elders have wronged them (Gigler, 2015). This is one of the ideologies that limit personal freedom in the rural areas.

Living in the rural areas tends to give people a limited view of the society at large. The rural areas tend to give a person an understanding of just the immediate society. This prevents people from learning about current political and social issues happening in the entire nation and world at large that might have an impact on their personal freedoms. For instance, despite most of the laws allowing for divorce, most rural societies still have very strict policies regarding the issue (Mentan, 2014). City dwellers are at a better position to exercise their personal freedoms more as they see the failures of the policies set up by a country besides understanding of the emerging issues and current debates up close. Notably, the city dwellers have a first-hand experience of social and economic issues and they know the importance of some of the policies rural people may not understand (Gigler, 2015).

In conclusion, a person cannot see the reality close and personal and fail to take necessary action to protect their freedom. People dwelling in rural areas lack exposure and knowledge on the contemporary issues affecting their freedoms thus are unable to fight for their personal freedoms. There is nothing wrong with being a conservative, however their degree of conservatism affects their liberation from issues such as culture and traditions. Lack of awareness in the rural areas reduces the application of positive sense of self-preservation thus making the people to ignore important freedoms that might be of benefit to the entire society. This makes the people in the rural to lack strong self-defense measures and freedom to act appropriately to preserve their independence when it is required.

References

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