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Argument and Change in World Politics

Arguments have consequences in world politics that are as real as the military forces of states or the balance of power among them. Neta Crawford proposes a theory of argument that focuses on the role of ethical arguments in fostering changes in long-standing practices. Analyzing colonialism and slavery, the author shows how ethical arguments helped bring about the abolition of slavery and forced labor, and decolonization. Suggesting that decolonization is perhaps the most significant change in world politics over the past 500 years, the author examines ethical arguments from the sixteenth century justifying the conquest of the Americas, through the twentieth-century debates over decolonization and humanitarian intervention. The author explicitly considers alternative explanations for decolonization and abolition, and shows that economics cannot fully account for either change. She also offers a prescriptive analysis of the role of ethical argument in humanitarian intervention.

NETA C. CRAWFORD is an Associate Professor (research) at the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown University. She is co-editor (with Audie Klotz) of *How Sanctions Work: Lessons from South Africa* (1999) and author of *Soviet Military Aircraft* (1987).

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For Rose, Greta and Robert

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Neta C. Crawford
Frontmatter
More information

Contents

	List of illustrations	*page* x
	List of tables	xi
	Acknowledgments	xii
	Introduction	1
1	Argument, belief, and culture	11
2	Ethical argument and argument analysis	82
3	Colonial arguments	131
4	Decolonizing bodies: ending slavery and denormalizing forced labor	159
5	Faces of humanitarianism, rivers of blood	201
6	Sacred trust	249
7	Self-determination	291
8	Alternative explanations, counterfactuals, and causation	343
9	Poiesis and praxis: toward ethical world politics	399
	Appendix: African decolonization	436
	Select bibliography	440
	Index	457

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052180244X - Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention
Neta C. Crawford
Frontmatter
More information

Illustrations

1 Ethical argument and new starting points *page* 108
2 Europeans in Africa in 1880 206
3 Europeans in Africa in 1914 219

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052180244X - Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention
Neta C. Crawford
Frontmatter
More information

Tables

2.1	Variations in normative beliefs and behavioral norms	*page* 92
2.2	A method of formal argument analysis	120
2.3	Informal argument analysis of ethical arguments	125
3.1	Topoi for early arguments in favor of colonialism	142
6.1	League of Nations Mandates	263
6.2	Process of League Mandate supervision	267
7.1	United Nations Trust Territories	313
7.2	International plebiscites and referenda	326
8.1	Numbers in the armed forces of Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, 1975–1990	371
8.2	South Africa's expenditures for arms acquisition	373

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052180244X - Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention
Neta C. Crawford
Frontmatter
More information

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More information

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