

Humanitarianism and Human Rights

This book explores the fluctuating relationship between human rights and humanitarianism. For most of their lives, human rights and humanitarianism have been distant cousins. Humanitarianism focused on situations in faraway places dealing with large-scale loss of life that demanded urgent attention while human rights advanced the cause of individual liberty and equality at home. However, the twentieth century saw the two coming much more directly into dialogue, particularly following the end of the Cold War, as both began working in war zones and post-conflict situations. Leading scholars probe how the shifting meanings of human rights and humanitarianism converge and diverge from a variety of disciplinary perspectives ranging from philosophical inquiries that consider whether and how differences are constructed at the level of ethics, obligations, and duties, to historical inquiries that attempt to locate core differences within and between historical periods, and to practice-oriented perspectives that suggest how differences are created and recreated in response to concrete problems and through different kinds of organized activities with different goals and meanings.

Michael N. Barnett is University Professor of International Affairs and Political Science at the George Washington University. He has written critically acclaimed books on global ethics, humanitarian intervention, and humanitarianism, including *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* (2002) and *Empire of Humanity* (2012), and edited *Paternalism Beyond Borders* (2016).

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Humanitarianism and Human Rights

A World of Differences?

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