

Yves MENANGA KIZITO, *Dignity and Empowerment. Humanitarian Theory and Practice in the Light of Cosmopolitan Justice*, Academia Verlag within Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, Germany, 2020, 312 p.

This book was initially a doctoral dissertation the author defended at the Munich School of Philosophy in December 2016. The book intends to provide philosophical foundations for one of the most crucial global practices, namely humanitarian action, in view of current developments in international ethics. Indeed, in a globalized world, the suffering of many people has become more tangible and therefore also a philosophical and global political puzzle. Since the first phases of the globalization, in which the founding of the Red Cross falls, humanitarian action in form of various assistance and support services emerged as a cross-border concern. After the Second World War, humanitarian actors have significantly expanded their activities and also increased their size. Simultaneously to the emergence of humanitarian practice, a differentiated humanitarian theory has emerged, which intended to provide foundations for this commitment and determine its principles.

From a philosophical point of view, it is crucial to investigate which forms of ethical foundations and normative goals underlie this development and how, in view of various philosophical traditions, these developments are to be interpreted. This book argues that the philosophical theories of

cosmopolitanism, understood as theory of global justice, provide an interpretation framework that allows to critically apprehend the normative implications of humanitarian practice and its political consequences. The work is thus not only politically, but also in the context of the current intensive debate on cosmopolitan justice highly relevant and offers an important contribution to the attempt to philosophically unveil the normative and philosophical-political implications of a central global practice.

While the current revival of cosmopolitanism, as a theory of global justice, emphasizes solely the objective aspects of cosmopolitanism, namely institutions, traditions, common political commitments and legal procedures, the subjectivity of the victims is hardly brought forward in the forefront of debates. To fill this gap is the aim of this book, which claims that condition for a fundamental humanitarian theory and practice requires that victims be treated as fully moral and political subjects, rather than mere passive recipients. Thus, the book adopts the perspective of the victims by highlighting a twofold subjectivity of the victims, namely the moral and political subjectivity.

The moral subjectivity of the victims is articulated, using Martha Nussbaum's capability approach, which brings out the dignity of victims, while Rainer Forst's theory of justification, which sees the question of power as the first question of justice, is used to ground the political subjectivity of the victims. Dignity and justifiability, which I propose to understand as empowerment, are therefore highlighted as inherent components of justice when it comes to articulate humanitarian practices and theories. In relation with justice, the two principles are termed *dignifying* and *justifying* (or empowering) justice.

The implications of both theories for a thicker humanitarian theory and practice are drawn in a dialectical movement. In the deconstructive phase, the *dignifying* and *empowering* justice allows to criticize humanitarian practices, language and power relations, which are based on the politics of pity without seeing those affected as active actors. In the constructive phase, the *dignifying* and *empowering* justice allows to extend to the traditional principles of humanitarian action the philosophically based principles of dignity and empowerment that present victims as fully moral and political subjects.

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