

WHO SHOULD INTERVENE?

Distributing the duties of humanitarian intervention

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Abstract

Many theorists argue that there can be a duty to intervene militarily in order to halt massive violations of basic human rights in other countries. But less is known about how this duty should be assigned to particular agents. Given that dispersed duties tend to invite inaction, and seeing as some agents are likely to have stronger duties than others, examining how the duties of intervention should be specified has both practical and moral significance. In this dissertation Fredrik D. Hjorthen seeks to fill this gap in the literature by answering questions such as: What role should historical responsibility play for the assignment of the duty to intervene? Who should commit their military forces to carry out the intervention? How should the economic and material costs of intervention be distributed? What reforms should be implemented to ensure that the duty to intervene can be effectively discharged and the burdens shared fairly? To answer these questions this dissertation provides a systematic analysis of morally relevant criteria and how they should be combined. Consistent with previous work, the ability of potential interveners to intervene effectively is of central importance. But as this dissertation shows, this is not all that matters. There are sound moral and practical reasons why more attention should be paid to distributive fairness among prospective interveners and concerns of historical responsibility. A framework is provided that takes this into account both when it comes to the question of who should undertake intervention and when it comes to who should bear the economic burden of intervention.

Keywords: humanitarian intervention, responsibility to protect, duty to intervene, international justice, historical responsibility