



# Humanitarian Intervention: Confronting the Contradictions

*Michael Newman*

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## **Humanitarian Intervention: Confronting the Contradictions** Michael Newman

If a state carries out or sanctions atrocities on a mass scale within its borders, is there an international right, or even duty, to intervene in support of the victims? Or does this notion undermine state sovereignty at the expense of weaker states? These are key questions in the debate on humanitarian intervention, which has become increasingly polarised in the twenty-first century. Many now view this as little more than a rationale for Western neo-imperialism, while others uphold it as a crusade for liberal democracy and individual rights. This book seeks to establish an alternative position. It critiques current international policies by examining their impact on developing and transitional countries, and it also argues that military interventions have had limited success in building sustainable peace. But it endorses the notion of a "responsibility to protect", suggesting that a more progressive future would be possible if this were interpreted radically and combined with an enlarged conception of "humanitarianism" that addressed issues of global inequality and poverty. This work will have particular resonance for those who have opposed recent Anglo-American policy, but have simultaneously believed that "something must be done" to save those threatened with genocide or other atrocities. Drawing on a range of disciplines and offering a distinct approach, it is aimed at all those who wish to understand a complex issue of contemporary importance. It will be particularly useful for students of international relations, contemporary history, peace and conflict studies, international law, politics, and development studies, and those working in NGOs.

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