

Book reviews

makes the case for what he calls 'moral minimalism': rules common to all societies in addition to those that are particular and possibly idiosyncratic. The moral minimum finds expression in the injunction to respect basic human rights, including life, liberty and minimal levels of subsistence. Intervention from the outside is justified—and even morally obligatory—when those rights are massively violated by governments or contending factions. Walzer discusses individual cases, among them, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Uganda, noting that humanitarian intervention is often undertaken for reasons that are not necessarily altruistic. He has no objection because intervention is risky, and a multiplicity of motives make it more likely to occur. The problem, in general, is not too much intervention but too little. As for the invasion of Iraq, he faults US unilateralism, but also criticizes European irresponsibility, arguing that France and Germany were willing to appease Saddam.

Works must be read in context. It is inexcusable that the editor fails to tell us when and where individual essays were published. On the positive side, every essay is thoughtful, carefully crafted in argument and language and generally recognizes singular answers to problems are almost certain to be wrong.

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Human rights and ethics

Human rights and structural adjustment. By M. Rodwan Abouharb and David Cingranelli. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2007. 276pp. Index. Pb.: £17.99. ISBN 0 521 67671 7.

The structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) administered by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been criticized for decades by academics and activists for promoting economic policies that lead to unsustainable and ecologically damaging growth that both deepens poverty and undermines the full spectrum of internationally recognized economic, social, cultural, civil and political human rights. This grave assessment is based on the perceived damage to the poor and marginalized caused by the liberalization and privatization policies demanded by the World Bank and IMF. These SAP policies include the privatization of public services (health care, education and so on); the elimination of subsidies for farming, education, health care and water; and the liberalization of trade, which often results in the withering of domestic infant industries which are unable to compete with foreign (and often subsidized) firms.

Defenders of SAPs, however, argue that these charges are misplaced, and the issue in most less developed countries is that the governments have not really followed through on the policy advice of the IMF and World Bank. These supporters also claim that since the World Bank and IMF are working in the most difficult and underdeveloped countries, negative outcomes in human development in these countries cannot necessarily be attributed to SAPs, but rather are a result of many other factors, including corruption and ethnic violence. These neo-liberal advocates believe that these countries would be much worse off without the interventions of the IMF and World Bank. And finally, these SAP defenders question the methodology behind global comparative studies (like the one here by Abouharb and Cingranelli) and doubt that such approaches really demonstrate whether or not structural adjustment measures have been correctly and effectively implemented.

Human rights and structural adjustment provides us with the tools and methodology to assess these competing narratives on the consequences of IMF and World Bank SAPs. Simply put, Abouharb and Cingranelli present the most comprehensive, sophisticated and illuminating research on the impact of World Bank and IMF policies on human rights accomplished to date. The book provides a convincing and compelling account of the impact of SAPs on poverty, democracy and human rights. The authors' careful quantitative and qualitative analysis will be hard for conservatives, liberals or radicals to dispute.

This work is one of the few global comparative studies to focus so sharply on the impact of SAPs on human rights. Based on an analysis of outcomes in 131 developing countries between 1981–2003, Abouharb and Cingranelli show that, on average, structural adjustment has led to less respect for economic and social rights, and worker rights. Overall, compliance with structural adjustment

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requirements pushes governments to lower their respect for economic and social rights to decent jobs, education, health care and housing. Pressures to create a 'business-friendly' environment, lead further to a reduction in worker protections, including a denial of core workers' rights, such as the freedom of association at the workplace and collective bargaining. And finally, the need to implement unpopular economic policies leads to civic unrest, followed by repression and a denial of civil and political rights. The poor and civil society groups protest harsh economic conditions, which often leads to government repression, including murder, torture and disappearances.

Yet, paradoxically, 'countries under structural adjustment conditionality the longest have better-developed democratic institutions, have elections that are more free and fair, have more freedom to form and join organizations, and have more freedom of speech and press than countries with less exposure to structural adjustment conditionality' (p. 221). The findings on the positive effect of SAPs on democratic institutions and civil liberties are important in a number of respects. As Abouharb and Cingranelli summarize, 'First, they contradict the prevailing view in the case study literature. Second, they illustrate that our mostly negative findings do not result from our choice of methods. Finally, they demonstrate that the World Bank and the IMF can have a positive effect on the human rights practices of developing countries' (p. 5).

To correct for the failures of structural adjustment, the authors call for a human rights based strategy of development centred on 'equitable economic development', defined as 'the simultaneous achievement of economic growth and advancement in protections of economic and social rights of citizens' (p. 227). The authors believe that respect for 'some physical integrity and civil rights and liberties will lead to faster rates of economic growth and progress in achieving respect for economic and social rights to such things as health care, education, and housing' (p. 227).

Abouharb and Cingranelli irrefutably prove that World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programmes lead to less respect for economic and social human rights; violent anti-government rebellions and demonstrations; the torture, disappearance and murder of citizens; and an assault on basic workers' rights and protections. The debate on the impact of SAP policies is now settled. The World Bank and the IMF thus have a moral imperative to move away from neo-liberal policies and instead adopt a framework of 'equitable economic development'.

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Ending slavery: how we free today's slaves. By Kevin Bales. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 2007. 261pp. £14.95. ISBN 0 520 25470 1.

Kevin Bales is President of Free the Slaves, a US-based organization that works on issues of contemporary forms of slavery. *Ending slavery* is his challenge to the world at large to act now to end slavery. In this book, he goes beyond setting out the problem of slavery, identifying the potential solutions which are many and varied. Each chapter of the book sets out a clear list of action points for individuals and states. Some of the wide range of research underlying the book's argument comes from Bales's personal experiences with anti-slavery campaigns, and *Ending slavery* is a very personal book. It is enriched by his experiences, including his frank admissions that some of the tactics he has employed in the past were not always the best ones. He allows us to learn from his mistakes as well as from his extensive expertise.

Crucial to the book is Bales's definition of slavery. He removes the connection with ownership used in some of the older international treaties and emphasizes that the defining feature of slavery is control through violence (pp. 10–11). As a result, he argues that there is no distinction between slavery and forced labour (p. 145). While this is a controversial position (the European Court of Human Rights in *Siliadin v. France* was careful to maintain the two categories), the blurring of the distinction between slavery and forced labour can be seen in some decisions of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Ending slavery begins with two chapters setting out the problem of slavery today. Here and throughout the book, Bales provides detailed examples of how slavery occurs and how slaves can be freed and rehabilitated. He then goes on, in chapters 3–6, to show how individuals, communities,

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