

HERRENHAUSEN CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 13-15, 2020

## GOVERNING HUMANITARIANISM:

## THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF GLOBAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

HERRENHAUSEN PALACE, HANOVER, GERMANY

Humanitarian organisations across the globe face growing challenges in delivering aid, securing funds and maintaining public confidence. Trade-offs between sovereignty, democracy, security, development, identity and human rights have become highly complex. Self-appointed guardians of the public conscience are now also major sub-contractors of governments, sometimes critics of the very institutions they rely on for funds. The Herrenhausen Conference “Governing Humanitarianism” interrogates present issues and future directions for global humanitarian governance in relation to its pasts, highlighting lessons to be learned from historical events and practices. It asks if humanitarian expansion has come at the expense of core values and effective intervention, and how the pursuit of global equity and social justice can, and has been pursued through shifting global and local power structures. How can we rethink the future direction of humanitarian governance in the world? How can shifting power relations be reconciled with the pursuit of global equity and social justice? What would a different way of working, more attuned to the realities now faced by leaders of big global organisations, actually look like? What will be the characteristics of successful humanitarian international NGOs in ten years' time? The Herrenhausen Conference seeks to bridge the various gaps between disciplines, scholarship and practice as well as the national, international and global spheres of analysis. It actively involves early career scholars and established academics with leading members from the field of international action in the debate on the past, present, and future of global humanitarian governance. Please visit the conference website for [more information](#).

### SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

MONDAY, SEP 14, 2020

10:30 A.M. PART I

#### Humanitarianism as Global Networks and Activism

The first part approaches humanitarianism as global networks of humanitarian actors entangled, at the same time, in local, national, international and global spheres. This approach emphasises the connections and nodes rather than different levels of activities and separate institutional or national settings. It integrates societal actors from countries affected by war and crises in the analysis

## SESSIONS

### 11:45 A.M. PART II Gendering Humanitarianism

The second part on gendering humanitarianism will inquire how key concepts, such as professionalization, internationalisation or (de-) politicisation, as well as practices in crises and relief have been affected by asymmetrical relations between men and women. The debate will deal both with notions of femininity and masculinity and it will investigate donors and beneficiaries.

### 2:00 P.M. PART III Humanitarianism and International Law

International humanitarian law provides a specific frame for humanitarian governance, with origins reaching back into the early modern period. Notions of sovereignty between states and within states will be at the centre of this third theme but also the role international organisations. What mechanisms and formats based on legal ideas will prevent and resolve conflicts that have caused sustained suffering? In which way has the emergence of humanitarian norms influenced and still contributes to the global acceptance of an international law regime?

## TUESDAY, SEP 15, 2020

### 9:00 A.M. PART IV Humanitarian Political and Moral Economy

Humanitarian relief and human rights can be seen as part of humanitarian political and moral economies. This part of the conference therefore addresses the issue of the changing global economic order during different periods and regimes (imperial, capitalist, socialist and liberal) since the nineteenth century, and how these interact with evolving humanitarian sentiments. The relation of humanitarian aid and development policy will be an important topic as will be the public/private funding of humanitarian organisations. This theme will also encompass tensions between humanitarian political and moral economies connected to questions about social injustice and contemporary moral crises of humanitarianism in the wake of various scandals and new forms of commodification in contemporary humanitarian campaigns.

### 10:30 A.M. PART V Media and Humanitarianism

Media and humanitarianism have had a close connection since the early years of humanitarian activities for the abolition of slavery. Long-term patterns of representing 'victims' and humanitarian relief work may be observed, often shaped by religious imagery. The ethics of showing

## SESSIONS

humanitarian suffering have triggered historical and contemporary debates, particularly with ne social media-based campaigns. Not only technological change but also the media as organisations and actors with specific interests evolved over time. What have been their links with international organisations? How do humanitarians handle media relations and how should they do so, particularly with the rise of digital humanitarianism?

1:30 P.M. PART VI

### Humanitarianism, Development and Global Human Rights

Humanitarianism, development and global human rights have a troubled relation. All embodied different notions of humanity and humanitarian practices. As notions and demands for rights were changing historically, the boundaries between relief, development and rights have always been blurred despite efforts by social scientists and policy makers to draw clear lines between them. Both contemporary and historical debates have highlighted the shifting relationships between rights, development and humanitarianism: sometimes competing, sometimes synergistic. This theme will interrogate the problems and possibilities inherent in these relationships, from the role of humanitarian organisations in colonial development work during counterinsurgency campaigns to how the language of rights has been mobilized to promote the expansion of humanitarian action.

## ORGANIZERS

STACEY HYND, University of Exeter

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## INSTITUTIONS

