

## ELITES AND PHILANTHROPY: REFRAMING MODERN GIVING THROUGH A HUMAN-CENTERED LENS

Anita Budziszewska

This paper explores the evolution of the concept of philanthropy and current debates on its humanistic roots. Contemporary discourse perceives philanthropy within its economical dimension -the concept of philanthrocapitalism; outcomes of neoliberal social order; an element of social elitism, whereas the original idea of philanthropy refers to a form of altruism derived from 'love of humanity'. The paper aims to reflect on: how has the perception and definition of philanthropy evolved over time and how culture, politics and history re-shaped this concept? How much of contemporary philanthropy is rooted in the human-centered approach?

## RE)DEFINING VALUES OF LIFE: SUDANESE CULTURAL HUMANITARIANISM

Katarzyna Grabska

Humanitarian policies and research often overlook the role of local and translocal cultural actors—artists, curators, and cultural practitioners—in war and humanitarian crises. This paper examines the role of cultural actors in responding to the ongoing war in Sudan. Since April 2023, over 12 million people have been internally displaced and more than 2 million became refugees. I explore how cultural efforts form part of humanitarian interventions. I ask how such practices can be understood and what new hierarchies of values of life beyond survival and moral economies emerge as a result, offering deeper insight into compassion, care and alternative perspectives on life's value beyond survival.

## THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM - CSA, COMPASSION AND POLITICAL WILL

Vera Lalchevska

The world of SDGs has enumerated 17 goals. Climate seems to be one of the areas that has taken the lead. Yet "the elephant in the room" is a topic of children rights and child sexual abuse. Political will is all but inexistent. And yet, the scale of the problem is immeasurable. This paper aims to bring attention to the topic by analysing the intersection between the role of political will and the human - centered concept of compassion.

## ORGANISATION :

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# DISCOURSES AND PRACTICES OF COMPASSION CONCEPTS

## WORKSHOP

NOVEMBER 20, 2025  
15H00-19H00

University of Geneva, Espace Colladon  
Rue Jean-Daniel-Colladon 2, 1204 Geneva



## 15H00 OPENING REMARKS

### 15H10 - 16H30 SESSION I. EVENTS, CONTEXTS, CONCEPTS - HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Moderator: Anita Budziszewska (University of Warsaw and Geneva Graduate Institute - IHEID)

#### **Mapping the Concepts of Compassion: Political Practices and Rhetorical Uses of Concern for the Other**

Irène Herrmann (University of Geneva)

#### **A Financial Humanity? The Interventions and the Building of the International Order in the Nineteenth Century**

Andrés Vicent Fanconi (University of Geneva)

#### **Understanding Solidarity: Experiences, Rhetoric, Symbolism (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)**

Renata Latała (University of Geneva)

#### **Roundtable**

BREAK

### 17H00 - 18H45 SESSION II. CONTEXTS, CONCEPTS AND IMPLEMENTATION - CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

Moderator: Irène Herrmann (University of Geneva)

#### **Reinventing Compassion to create New Political Orders**

Joshua Vincent Hellinger (Geneva Graduate Institute - IHEID)

#### **Elites and Philanthropy: Reframing Modern Giving through a Human-Centered Lens**

Anita Budziszewska (University of Warsaw and Geneva Graduate Institute - IHEID)

#### **Re)defining Values of Life: Sudanese Cultural Humanitarianism**

Katarzyna Grabska (University of Geneva)

#### **The Elephant in the Room - CSA, Compassion and Political Will**

Vera Lalchevska (Geneva Coalition)

#### **Roundtable**

## 18H45 CLOSING REMARKS

## ABSTRACTS

### **MAPPING THE CONCEPTS OF COMPASSION: POLITICAL PRACTICES AND RHETORICAL USES OF CONCERN FOR THE OTHER**

*Irène Herrmann*

This paper explores the diverse ways in which compassion and concern for the other are named, conceptualized, and even instrumentalized within the political sphere. By mapping these overlapping yet distinct notions, it seeks to reveal how variations in the language of compassion shape political discourse and moral legitimacy. Ultimately, it questions how such concepts are mobilized rhetorically to define, justify, or contest political action.

### **A FINANCIAL HUMANITY? THE INTERVENTIONS AND THE BUILDING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

*Andrés Vicent Fanconi*

Interventions lie at the core of international politics from the early nineteenth century. Interventions were and are usually legitimised and even driven by humanitarian concerns. In fact, the adjective “humanitarian” and the noun “intervention” form such an inseparable marriage that usually seem like one flesh. Likewise, interventions have always been major business opportunities. The reflection upon the origins of interventions sheds light on the historical connection between the rise of humanitarian concerns and the expansion of capitalism.

### **UNDERSTANDING SOLIDARITY: EXPERIENCES, RHETORIC, SYMBOLISM (19<sup>TH</sup>-20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)**

*Renata Latała*

The aim of this paper is to understand how social actors (groups and individuals) use the idea of solidarity and what vision of social life they promote through an analysis of the rhetoric and symbolism they employ. Studying various discourses on solidarity considering specific historical experiences will also allow reflecting on the partisan, political or ideological use of the idea of solidarity. The main question is what bond underlies the various experiences of solidarity.

### **REINVENTING COMPASSION TO CREATE NEW POLITICAL ORDERS**

*Joshua Vincent Hellinger*

Compassion is enshrined as a core value and moral imperative in numerous ancient and indigenous societies, as well as the main world religions. However, in today's international world, it remains mostly an optional or private act, for instance as charity, philanthropy, donation or volunteering. My intervention explores the potential of reinventing compassion as a robust guiding principle for building a new international order.