



# The Oxford Handbook of Economic and Social Rights

Malcolm Langford & Katharine G. Young, editors

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## Abstract

*The Oxford Handbook of Economic and Social Rights* examines the socio-economic dimensions of human rights from philosophical, historical, social scientific, and legal perspectives. Part I presents contrasting theories on the nature and justification of such rights, drawing on moral, political and critical schools of thought, and their implications for democracy, equality, and global justice. Part II collects historical accounts of the emergence, mobilisation, and appropriation of economic and social rights, from pre-statist human rights history to the postwar international order, traversing decolonization, demands for social citizenship, and the distinct regional trajectories in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe. Part III provides an account of the enmeshment of these rights in political debates and institutions, tracing shifts in economic development and international relations, competing social welfare state and neoliberal models, and processes of constitutionalization and judicialization. Part IV examines the significant developments in national and international law and the legalization of economic and social rights, including doctrines of proportionality and reasonableness and the recent rise in accountability mechanisms, innovative remedies, and extraterritorial obligations. Part V analyzes selected rights including social security, health, education, labour, food, water, sanitation, housing and healthy environment. It also addresses the economic and social rights of indigenous peoples, children and persons with disability, and their gender dimensions. Part VI explores the effects of large-scale trends on rights protection and conceptualization, including development goals, climate change, technology, urbanization and migration. With its cross-disciplinary breadth, the Handbook maps the plural and systematic shifts underway in rights theory and practice.

## Keywords

economic and social rights – socio-economic rights – theory of human rights – human rights and development – human rights and political economy – constitutionalization – social welfare – human rights and equality – human rights law – history of human rights

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