

Book Notes: Defining Rights and Wrongs: Bureaucracy, Human Rights, and Public Accountability, by Rosanna L. Lander

Rosa Kang

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Book Note**DEFINING RIGHTS AND WRONGS: BUREAUCRACY,
HUMAN RIGHTS, AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY,
by Rosanna L. Langer¹**

ROSA KANG

FOCUSING ON THE complaints process used by the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Rosanna L. Langer provides an account and analysis of the processes involved in the enforcement of human rights. Specifically, Langer examines how the lay understanding of human rights, values, and expectations influences the outcomes of human rights cases.

In Chapter 1, "An Overview of Public Administration of Human Rights Enforcement of Canada," Langer provides an historic overview of the development of human rights policy from discriminatory practices to the implementation of human rights legislation in Ontario. She also looks at justifications for present approaches to human rights by reviewing statutes, cases, and international materials. Langer notes that the common expectation of state enforcement systems has been shaped by popular knowledge of the historical development of human rights. People have also been influenced by the idealistic language used in human rights documents.

In Chapter 2, "The Roles of Frontline Staff and Independent Lawyers in the Public Administration of Human Rights Enforcement," Langer examines policy documents and the views of frontline staff and professional intermediaries in order to explore the institutional context within which the administration of human rights takes place. In Chapter 3, "Transforming Human Rights Complaints into Cases," Langer questions whether the interests of different bodies—the complainants, the intermediaries, and the operational agencies—are being actualized as each participant in the human rights process

1. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) 224 pages.

asserts and contests a personal construction of human rights. In Chapter 4, "Publics, Counter-publics, and the Public Interest," Langer identifies the public interest in the realm of human rights enforcement by studying materials from administrative agencies and case law, and field study interviews of lawyers, Ontario Human Rights Commission inquiry and intake staff, and complainants. After defining public interest, the author examines whether the public interest is being met in our current system.