

Needless to say, the simplest solution is that corporations refrain from engaging in activities with countries in volatile situations or who are internationally recognized for severe human rights violations. Corporate decisions to intervene in conflict necessarily come with the responsibility to constructively influence the situation.

At the broadest level of the global political economy there is a positive relationship between direct foreign investment by MNCs and better human rights conditions in less developed nations. However, disaggregating MNCs as a group and focusing on the national level will display some behaviour inimical to rights. These commercial leviathans possess the size, technology, and economic reach to influence human affairs on a global scale. The increasing interdependence of the global community, the prominence of human rights issues amongst states and civil society, and the socio-economic impact of corporations have made moral claims and responsibilities legitimate to corporations as they are to individuals and governments. This is especially relevant when oppressed communities perceive multinationals as the most visible manifestation of foreign governments. While the objectives of multinationals are aimed at the maximization of profits and efficiency, global transformations require that multinationals look beyond short term opportunities of engaging with repressive regimes towards a long-term betterment of human rights conditions. Behaving as ethical corporate citizens does not entail interfering with the sovereign responsibilities of governments, but can include a range of activities and at a minimum the option for multinationals to choose the more ethical alternative. Given the steady growth of global economic interdependence, it is unlikely the near future will bring a halt in the rise of international consciousness. In order for the human rights regime to develop beyond its current parameters, the burden of morality can not only be shouldered by states but must be shared by all of humanity.