

# BUSINESS, SOCIETY & ETHICS

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## Human Rights in the Value Chain

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

### Reading

- UN Clears Qatar Over Treatment of Migrant Workers. (2017, November 8). *Al Jazeera News*. Retrieved November 21, 2017 from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/clears-qatar-treatment-migrant-workers-171108145003698.html>.
- Technical Cooperation Between ILO and Qatar on Workers Rights. (2017, October 27). *Migrant-Rights.org*. Retrieved November 21, 2017 from <https://www.migrant-rights.org/2017/10/technical-cooperation-between-ilo-and-qatar-on-workers-rights/>.
- United Nations. (2011). *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*. Retrieved November 23, 2017 from [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf).
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (n.d.). *Responsible Business Conduct Matters*. Retrieved November 23, 2017 from [http://mneguidelines.oecd.org/MNEguidelines\\_RBCMatters.pdf](http://mneguidelines.oecd.org/MNEguidelines_RBCMatters.pdf).

### Questions

1. In a period of slow growth and potential downsizing, can we reasonably expect companies to advance human rights while working responsibly with their value chain?
2. What responsibilities do companies have when it comes to respecting human rights? Or are such responsibilities best left to the government?
3. What should a company do with respect to human rights when there is an absence of local regulations but a flourishing of international standards and declarations?