

# Business and Indivisible Human Rights?

A Critical Examination of Indivisibility Theory and Potential Inconsistencies in the Business and Human Rights Domain

**Research Question:** How can the principle of indivisibility be justified, and to what degree are these justifications reflected in the conceptions of human rights within the Business and Human Rights (BHR) domain?

**Minimal definition of indivisibility:** The idea that "no right can be achieved in the absence of the others" (Soiffer and Rowlands 2018)



The climate crisis, construed as a human rights crisis which jeopardizes *all* rights, underscores the significance of indivisible human rights in the face of emerging challenges. Source: Oxfam Germany

*“All human rights are universal, **indivisible** and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis.”*

Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993)

## Business and indivisible human rights?

*“An authoritative list of the core internationally recognized human rights is contained in the International Bill of Human Rights (...), coupled with the principles concerning fundamental rights in the eight ILO core conventions (...). Depending on circumstances, business enterprises may need to consider **additional standards.**”*

UN Guiding Principles on BHR (UNGPs), commentary on Principle 12

“à la carte approach”? Bernaz (2021)

## Contribution to the BHR field

This study provides a conceptual analysis and addresses existing gaps which have received only brief attention within the evolving BHR discourse.

## Potential levels of examination (Pollmann 2005)

historical-political	positive-legal	ethical-moral
History and Politics	(International) Law	Human Rights theory

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**Relevant Experiences:** NGO Work (Amnesty International, SOS childrens villages, and others); Activism (climate justice, human rights); Project Work in Development Cooperation (GIZ, ASA-Global, and others)

