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Edited by Gro Nystuen, Andreas Follesdal and Ola Mestad

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## Human Rights, Corporate Complicity and Disinvestment

How can businesses and their shareholders avoid moral and legal complicity in human rights violations? This central and contemporary issue in the field of ethics, politics and law is of concern to inter-governmental organizations such as the UN, and to many NGOs, as well as investors and employees. In this volume legal scholars and political philosophers identify and address the intertwined issues of moral and legal complicity in human rights violations by companies and those who invest in them. By describing the legal aspects of human rights violations in the corporate sphere, addressing the complicity of companies with regard to such norms and exploring the influence of investors, the book provides a thorough introduction to corporate social responsibility. Human rights and corporate complicity will set the research agenda on socially responsible investment for years to come.

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How, when and to what extent can corporations be held responsible, morally or legally, for human rights violations? These issues concerning corporate complicity in human rights violations have received much urgent political and academic attention lately. Among those concerned is the Council on Ethics for the Norwegian Pension Fund – Global, which has pursued several discussions regarding corporate complicity as a basis for recommending exclusion of companies from the Pension Fund.

The idea of writing and publishing this book emerged at an international conference in Oslo in 2006, initiated by the Council on Ethics, on ‘Corporate Complicity in Human Rights Violations’. The conference was very productive and helpful for the Council on Ethics, and we three editors – members of the Council on Ethics – decided that the various implications of human rights abuses in relation to businesses needed to be elaborated and explored even further. That challenge was taken up by the different authors. This book has been written after the conference, by some of the participants at the conference, and about the main topic of the conference. It aspires to describe and analyse the key issues in a critical, coherent and comprehensive manner.

We would like to thank our Editorial Secretary, Kamil Zabielski, whose contributions, both substantive and administrative, to this book have been invaluable. Indeed, it would not have materialized without his very considerable efforts.

Finally, we thank all the authors who have contributed to the book, as well as fellow members of the Council on Ethics and our excellent Secretariat for support in many different ways. Anonymous referees at Cambridge University Press provided much appreciated suggestions for improvement.