18. The right to self-determination

This chapter examines the right to self-determination in international human rights law. It traces the origins of this right and considers issues characterizing the current debate on the future of self-determination. The chapter suggests that while self-determination is acceptable for divesting States of colonial powers, problems can arise when groups that are not the sole occupants of a State territory choose to exercise self-determination. The right to self-determination may sit uneasily with respect for territorial integrity of States. Various forms of modern self-determination, including partial or full autonomy within States are emerging.
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