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Chapter 2 - An overview of social responsibility dimensions in international business

Noemi Sinkovics
Lecturer in International Business and Management
The University of Manchester, Alliance Manchester Business School
Booth Street West, Manchester M15 6PB, UK.
Noemi.Sinkovics@manchester.ac.uk
http://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/Noemi.Sinkovics.html
http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5143-6870
and
Temple University, Fox School of Business, Department of Strategic Management
Alter Hall, 1801 Liacouras Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19122, USA

Rudolf R. Sinkovics
Professor of International Business
The University of Manchester, Alliance Manchester Business School
Booth Street West, Manchester M15 6PB, UK.
Rudolf.Sinkovics@manchester.ac.uk
http://www.manchester.ac.uk/research/rudolf.sinkovics
http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4471-5054
and
Lappeenranta University of Technology
Skinnarilankatu 34, PL 20, 53851 Lappeenranta, Finland
and
Temple University, Fox School of Business, Department of Strategic Management
Alter Hall, 1801 Liacouras Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19122, USA

Jason Archie–Acheampong
Postgraduate Research Student
The University of Manchester, Alliance Manchester Business School
Booth Street West, Manchester M15 6PB, UK.
jason.archie-acheampong@manchester.ac.uk
http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6822-0179
Abstract

This chapter aims at taking stock of business-responsibility-related studies in international business (IB) research. Key features of this literature review include (1) a broad search strategy capturing both positive and negative aspects of responsibility, (2) not imposing any constraints on the time period, and (3) extending the search to all IB journals included in the Web of Science database. By incorporating both responsible and irresponsible behavior in the search strategy, we are able to provide a holistic map of responsibility-related research in IB.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, corporate social irresponsibility, responsible business
1 Introduction

Peter Buckley’s (2002) seminal paper examining the relevance of international business (IB) research marks the start of an opening towards more critical topics inherent to the nature of IB, such as labor issues in foreign locations, managerial ethics, and corporate social responsibility (CSR). One and a half decades later, Buckley, Doh, and Benischke (2017) suggest that the discipline is in a unique position to focus on the grand challenges of our time and contend that IB scholars can contribute by investigating how multinational enterprises (MNEs) are responding to pressures created by these grand challenges. However, MNEs are often seen as part of the problem rather than the solution (cf. Sinkovics, Hoque, & Sinkovics, 2016; Wettstein, 2012). As a consequence, the concept of social responsibility may be better conceived of as a continuum, or as degrees, rather than a discrete concept. This is in line with Sinkovics et al.’s (2015) proposition that, when it comes to social constraints, MNEs have three main strategies for responding. They can either attempt to benefit from the existence of these constraints, try to bypass them, or leverage their resources and/or business models to eradicate/reduce them (Sinkovics et al., 2015; Sinkovics, Sinkovics, & Mo, 2014). Therefore, the continuum of socially responsible behavior stretches from irresponsible and at times malevolent conduct to meaningful action geared towards tackling the symptoms and/or the root causes of grand challenges. Against this background, the objective of this chapter is to take stock of how the IB literature has engaged with the degrees of responsible behavior that make up the continuum of social responsibility. This stock-taking exercise is important for a number of reasons. First and foremost, there are more and more scholars wishing to incorporate responsibility-related aspects into their research endeavors. Yet, this area is relatively new for many IB scholars. It is thus important to know which topics have been covered within the field and to what extent. Furthermore, uncovering areas that are under-researched provides suggestions for future research. Hence, this chapter seeks to provide
researchers who are new to this topic with a starting point, and others with inspiration for future research.

The extant literature is not short of reviews on the role of businesses in addressing social and environmental problems (e.g. Doh & Lucea, 2013; Egri & Ralston, 2008; Holtbrügge & Dögl, 2012; Kolk, 2016; Kolk & van Tulder, 2010). While these studies make valuable contributions, they are not without limitations, which arise from (1) the narrowness of the search strategy (e.g. Holtbrügge & Dögl, 2012), (2) constraints imposed on the time period (e.g. Doh & Lucea, 2013), and (3) limiting the number of journals investigated (e.g. Kolk, 2016). To this end, the present review attempts to address all three of these limitations and offer a comprehensive literature review. Our search strategy covers a wide range of search terms, aiming at capturing the different degrees of responsibility. We also extend the search to 14 IB journals that are listed in the Web of Science database, arguably making up the universe of IB journals (cf. Tüselmann, Sinkovics, & Pishchulov, 2016). Lastly, we do not impose any limits on the time period covered.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. The next section introduces the reader to the methodology we adopted. This is followed by a discussion of the findings, organized into eight sub-sections according to the overall themes that emerged from our analysis. The concluding remarks summarize the main observations and the limitations of this study.

2 Methodology

We used the Web of Science database to perform our search. We downloaded the abstracts and the associated bibliographic information including the list of all cited references. Tüselmann et al. (2016) categorize 16 journals as IB journals. However, only 14 are included in the Web of Science: Journal of World Business (JWB), Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS), International Business Review (IBR), European Journal of International
Management (EJIM), Asia Pacific Journal of Management (APJM), Asia Pacific Business Review (APBR), Journal of International Management (JIM), Management Organization Review (MOR), Management International Review (MIR), Critical Perspectives of International Business (CPOIB), Thunderbird International Review (TIR), Global Strategy Journal (GSJ), Multinational Business Review (MBR), and Journal of East West Business (JEWB). Neither Transnational Corporations nor the Journal of Asia Pacific Business is currently available in Web of Science. As we needed the bibliometric information to be in the same file format for the bibliographic coupling analysis, we concentrated our search on the former 14 journals excluded the latter two from the analysis. The search string included a wide range of key words (see Appendix 1) ranging from corporate social responsibility to humiliation and crime. We cast the net as wide as possible in order to identify studies spanning the different degrees of responsibility. Search terms related to corporate irresponsibility were inspired by Tillman et al.’s (2008) operationalization. The remaining search terms were the outcome of an iterative brain-storming process including the consulting of previous review papers and the skimming of preliminary search results. The final search yielded 689 articles. Subsequently, the authors judged the relevance of each article. This process left 484\(^1\) in the sample. The main selection criterion was whether or not the article was of relevance to business responsibility. This relevance could be broad or narrow.

The analysis process followed two steps. First, the freely available VOSviewer software (www.vosviewer.com) was used to perform a bibliographic coupling analysis. In such analysis, the relatedness of items (academic publications) is determined based on the number of references they share (Van Eck & Waltman, 2014). The underlying assumption is that articles on a certain topic will build on prior research related to the topic of the manuscript. As a consequence, the more references two publications share, the stronger is the

\(^1\) The list of references can be obtained from the authors.
expectation that certain commonalities will exist between them. We intentionally set the threshold for the number of shared references at 0 in order to obtain broad themes and assign each publication to a cluster. As the next step involved a textual analysis in NVivo, this very broad clustering was deemed appropriate for our purposes. The analysis yielded 20 clusters in total, of which 12 contained only one publication. In other words, 12 publications did not have any references in common with any other publication in the sample.

After we had determined which article in our sample belonged to which cluster, we imported the abstracts and the bibliographic data into NVivo. The bibliographic information was assigned to each article through the source classification sheet. We supplemented this data with the cluster information obtained from VOSviewer. This allowed us to conduct cross-cluster comparisons. We then performed a more fine-grained thematic analysis in NVivo. While the overall clusters provided an overview of eight general themes in the sample, the NVivo analysis allowed us to drill down and identify sub-themes. By utilizing the source classification sheet, we were also able to draw direct comparisons between journals and examine the development of certain themes over time. The remainder of this chapter will discuss our findings.

3 Findings

Table 3.1 provides an overview of the distribution of relevant publications across journals and clusters. The last row shows the total number of relevant papers in each cluster. The last column indicates the total number of relevant papers in each journal. The largest cluster includes 105 studies related to ethics, management, and contextual factors, followed by the cluster containing 87 papers concerned with the antecedents and/or outcomes of CSR. The next three clusters encompass papers on foreign direct investment (FDI) and economic development, institutional dynamics and non-market strategies, and business models and
entrepreneurship in developing countries, with 65, 61, and 59 papers respectively. Studies linked to corruption-related issues (38 papers), the drivers, implementation, and outcomes of non-market strategies in host countries (37 papers), and articles displaying a critical and/or novel angle (20 papers) represent smaller clusters. The remaining 12 papers do not share any references with other papers. We subsumed them under the category “other”. Table 3.2 offers an overview of the clusters and the main themes and sub-themes that emerged from the NVivo analysis.

Our temporal analysis furthermore revealed that 2006 marked the beginning of a new trend that saw a significant rise in responsibility-related publications. Before 2006, the number of papers across all clusters ranged from one to three, with the exception of 1999, 2004, and 2005 with five, six, and four publications respectively. In 2006 there were 19 publications across the clusters. The annual number of studies published peaked in 2015 at 79. The rest of this section will discuss each cluster in more depth.

<INSERT Table 3.1 and 3.2 ABOUT HERE>

3.1 Ethics, management and contextual factors

This cluster can be subdivided into six distinctive themes: (a) leadership, (b) human resource management (HRM), (c) the impact of context and culture on responsible business, (d) marketing ethics, (e) entrepreneurial morality, and (f) theoretical integration efforts.

Studies examining leadership address the contextual antecedents shaping leadership. They furthermore look at the relationship between leadership behavior and business ethics. Results indicate country and industry effects on the nature of business ethics (Schlegelmilch & Robertson, 1995), implying that managers in more modernized contexts are more inclined to recognize ethical and unethical behavior (Redfern & Crawford, 2010). The literature depicts different types of leadership, including transformational, ethical, and paternal
leadership, as well as subordinate influence ethics. In doing so, studies examine the antecedents of leadership behavior and its impact on business ethics.

Transformational leadership is expected to encourage pro-social values among employees, as seen in behavior such as cooperation and volunteering (Muethel, Hoegl, & Parboteeah, 2011), improve firm performance (Muethel et al., 2011), facilitate authentic relationships between employees and their leaders (Bramming & Johnsen, 2011), and encourage employee voice (Wang, Hsieh, Tsai, & Cheng, 2012; Yang & Liu, 2014). Paternalistic leadership is shown to be characterized by the compassion of leaders (Wei, Zhu, & Li, 2016). However, further studies have highlighted the ambiguity of paternalistic leadership, as it can take the form of either benevolence or exploitative behavior across different cultural contexts (Mansur, Sobral, & Goldszmidt, 2017). Subordinate influence ethics examines how the ethics of subordinates influences the behavior of superiors within organizations. Studies uncover a range of relevant macro- and micro-level factors (Karam et al., 2013; Ralston et al., 2009a; Ralston, Egri, Casado, Fu, & Wangenheim, 2009b).

Ethical leadership within an organization can be derived from a firm’s cultural settings (Wang, Chiang, Chou, & Cheng, 2017). Other studies on the topic emphasize group harmony as an aspect of ethical leadership (Chen, Unal, Leung, & Xin, 2016). Further evidence suggests that ethical leadership positively influences employee voice behavior, with organizational identification and organizational trust respectively mediating and moderating this relationship (Yang & Liu, 2014). Lastly, in other studies, intercultural competencies such as self-management, perception management, and relationship management are found to be important factors in effective global responsible management (Miska, Stahl, & Mendenhall, 2013).

Studies subsumed under HRM can be broadly categorized into (i) equality, diversity, and fairness, (ii) working conditions, (iii) representation, and (iv) employee retention.
In the area of employee retention, intrinsic rewards lead to an increase in the latter (Tymon, Stumpf, & Doh, 2010). Furthermore, psychological ownership - which refers to the level of connectedness and commitment an individual demonstrates - is used as a tool for talent management in terms of retaining highly skilled employees (Olckers & Du Plessis, 2015). In other studies, psychological ownership explains why shareholders remain aligned and participate in their family businesses (Lepez-Vergara & Botero, 2015). Finally, in the area of employee attractiveness, Newburry, Gardberg, and Sanchez (2014) find that marginalized groups are more attracted to internationally inclined firms that have foreign headquarters.

Within the sub-theme of employee representation, employee voice behavior is depicted as being influenced by organizational socialization (Wu, Tang, Dong, & Liu, 2015), with associated grievance management systems also influenced by the history and ownership form of the firm, and contributing to productivity and enhanced relationships (Cooke & Saini, 2015). More nascent theorizing on conflict avoidance demonstrates that employees with high closure needs demonstrate greater tendency towards conflict avoidance (Zhang, Wei, Chao, & Zheng, 2017). Representational predicaments arise in employees when subordinates experience a lack of employee voice, a lack of vertical feedback channels, and an authoritarian leadership style. Within the area of unionization, early studies detail the role of nationality in the likelihood of unionization but find no relationship effect (Sanyal, 1990). They furthermore address the role of unions in gaining collective bargaining contracts in foreign-owned firms (Sanyal & Neves, 1992). Research also shows that the cultural orientation of an employee and the organizational culture of the firm impact on employees’ attitudes towards union membership (Sarkar, 2009), with trust, cooperation, and honesty depicted as key facets in enabling productive employee-management relationships (Mirowska, 2008). Furthermore, at the firm level, evidence shows that transnational corporations (TNCs)
strategically enable shifts in organizational and geographical boundaries in order to weaken the bargaining power of unions (Ietto-Gillies, 2017).

The third sub-theme within HRM deals with equality, diversity, and fairness. The role of religion is explored in order to determine its impact on how diversity is managed (Soltani, Syed, Liao, & Shahi-Sough, 2012) and the workplace affiliation of ethnic minorities (Rao, 2012). Within the theme of gender discrimination, religion is drawn upon to depict how the cultural dynamics of Islamic societies influence gender equality through both informal and formal institutions (Syed, 2008). The formal structures of governmental policies also contribute to the tackling of gender discrimination within the workplace (Patterson & Walcutt, 2013, 2014). To address gender inequalities, gender quotas are proposed as a means of creating an effective talent management strategy (Tatli, Vassilopoulou, & Ozbilgin, 2013). Furthermore, on a macro level, utilizing the global social tolerance index, Zanakis, Newburry, and Taras (2016) undertake scale development for the measurement of social tolerance, thus drawing upon gender equality. Innovation and HRM are also examined through the lens of creative capital, as firms manage the diversity of skills and knowledge in order to enhance their overall innovation performance (Veenendaal, van Velzen, & Looise, 2014). Finally, studies find that diversity management has a positive effect on organizational commitment when mediated by employee perceptions of procedural justice (Magoshi & Chang, 2009).

Within the theme of justice and fairness, distributive justice influences an employee’s overall level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Leung, Zhu, & Ge, 2009). From a negative perspective, procedural injustices during promotion processes harm employee commitment and job satisfaction (Wan, Sulaiman, & Omar, 2012). Furthermore, research has shown how procedural and interactional injustices can exist between host-country managers and foreign managers within strategic alliances (Gomes, Cohen, & Mellahi, 2011). The link between CSR and global talent management is made in order to depict the
institutional and cultural variances in managerial competency when it comes to addressing CSR issues (Kim & Scullion, 2011).

Subsumed within the category of HRM, the working conditions of employees are also explored. Evidence shows that work-life balance is influenced by gendered norms, as ideas on flexibility are treated differently across men and women (Gatrell & Cooper, 2008). Lam, Walter, and Ouyang (2014) address employee well-being by exploring the impact emotional display rules have on job performance, with further studies offering cynicism on the relationship between the happiness of a nation and its overall productivity (Kessler, Taylor, Levine, Wiley, & Kessler, 2008). Gendered nuances on job satisfaction are evidenced in the overall job satisfaction of female employees and managers, who are more likely to experience conflict as a result of work than family factors (Ren & Foster, 2011). Collings, Scullion, and Morley (2007) call for the need to design adaptable HRM processes that take into consideration the complexities involved in global staffing. Studies pertaining to employee working conditions address differences in the emotional management of men and women, showing that men tend to demonstrate anger and women sadness in response to hurtful events (Li, Ashkanasy, & Mehmood, 2017). Studies in this area consider the contextual variances of HRM and have also depicted the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) expatriates who face personal risks when working in dangerous locations (McPhail & McNulty, 2015). Relational-based psychological contracts are also used as means by which managers deploy a duty of care towards their subordinates when operating in high-risk environments (Ramirez, Velez-Zapata, & Madero, 2015). Research has found that, in the case of addressing child labor, MNEs not only follow internationally agreed norms but also deploy HRM practices that are ‘multi-domestic’(Kolk & Van Tulder, 2004). In the area of employee protection, the political orientation of the government and the electoral system have been shown to influence the extent of firm-level redundancies (Goergen, Brewster, & Wood, 2013).
The third wider theme is concerned with the role context and culture play in firms’ responsible behavior. Studies exploring the interface of religion and business ethics call for a greater level of recognition and understanding of the religious and spiritual context as a pre-determining factor in ethical decision making (Ananthram & Chan, 2016; Liu & Stening, 2016). Other studies have sought to determine the relationship between the economic context of the firm and work-related values (Froese, 2013), with results showing that economic liberalization has led to higher uncertainty avoidance in firms. Furthermore, using the new institutional economics framework, von Staden (2016) shows that ideology impacts on business ethics, with further research on cultural dimensions finding that societies characterized by conservatism enhance the level of dividend payments in firms (Shao, Kwok, & Guedhami, 2010). The negative implications of culture are also addressed when examining the impact of close guanxi parties. Although close relationships may foster cooperation between guanxi parties they may also create negative externalities, such as reducing organizational social capital and limiting cooperation between guanxi and non-guanxi parties (Chen, Newburry, & Park, 2009). In detailing the value systems of entrepreneurs in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), findings demonstrate how entrepreneurial values are derived from embeddedness within the local environment (Del Baldo, 2013).

Although calls have been made to improve research generalizations made on cross-cultural measurements (Franke & Richey, 2010), the sub-theme of cross-cultural variations notably explains how national cultural differences impact on firm behavior. Studies have addressed the impact of culture on unethical negotiation tactics (Al-Khatib, Malshe, & AbdulKader, 2008) and moral behavior (Husted, Dozier, McMahon, & Kattan, 1996), and have found that cultural differences and diversity influence the contents of codes of conduct and the moral climate of a firm (Langlois & Schlegelmilch, 1990; Macklin, Martin, & Mathison, 2015; Singh, Carasco, Svensson, Wood, & Callaghan, 2005). In determining the
evolution of entrepreneurship in ethnic communities, research finds that the contextual entrepreneurial culture influences subsequent entrepreneurial activities (Li, Young, & Tang, 2012). Amongst these studies, ethical values and beliefs at the firm level are also addressed from a cross-cultural perspective (Lovett, Simmons, & Kali, 1999; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1997). In light of differences in the ethical values of different nationalities (Whitman, Townsend, & Hendrickson, 1999), Forsyth and O'Boyle (2011) demonstrate that the ethical position of a country’s inhabitants can impact upon the overall ethical position of a firm (Forsyth & O'Boyle, 2011). Furthermore, findings on the business goal profiles of managers and professionals show a move beyond goals based solely on growth and wealth, and a greater emphasis towards societal responsibility (Hofstede, 2009).

Findings that emerge from the category of marketing ethics focus on consumer views and attitudes towards online advertising (Wang & Sun, 2010), cross-national comparisons of sales personnel’s ethical and work values (Dubinsky, Jolson, Kotabe, & Lim, 1991; Whitman et al., 1999), and the incorporation of sustainability practices into firms’ overall marketing strategies (Gupta, Czinkota, & Melewar, 2013). Ethics and trust are found to have an impact on marketing relationships within international marketing channels (Spais & Kaufmann, 2016). In other studies, the integration of social marketing and social entrepreneurship within educational courses is also examined (Spais & Beheshti, 2016). In the exploration of unethical marketing behavior by exporting firms, evidence indicates that, when participating firms demonstrate synergy in their values and similarity in ethical codes, the nature of their working relationship is enhanced (Leonidou, Leonidou, Coudounaris, & Hultman, 2013).

Studies in the category of entrepreneurial morality explore entrepreneurship from an ethical and moral perspective (Petrovskaya, Zaverskiy, & Kiseleva, 2016), and investigate how entrepreneurial values are derived from a firm’s historical, cultural, and social context (Bitros & Karayiannis, 2010).
Finally, in the sixth category efforts are made to contextualize business ethics including historical perspectives (Lie, 2016; Rowley & Oh, 2016a).

3.2 Corporate social responsibility

The NVivo analysis yielded eight sub-themes within this cluster: (a) antecedents and consequences of CSR, (b) the role of CSR and stakeholders, (c) corporate political activity, (d) CSR and brand-related issues, (e) environmental responsibility, (f) governance, (g) sustainability, and (h) attitudes towards CSR.

Within the sub-theme of antecedents and consequences of CSR, a number of studies deal with the organizational benefits of CSR (Gupta & Kumar, 2013; Munoz, de Pablo, & Pena, 2015). Findings show that CSR contributes to firm performance through its influence on the marketing competence of the firm (Zeng, Li, Zhu, Cai, & Li, 2013), with marketing competence also being shown to play a mediating role in the relationship between CSR and firm performance (Bai & Chang, 2015). The interaction effect of CSR and innovation on business performance is also explored, with Costa, Lages, and Hortinha (2015) finding a positive effect of CSR on exploratory innovation. Although studies have found an effect of CSR on financial performance (Cui, Liang, & Lu, 2015; Munoz et al., 2015), Hou, Liu, Fan, and Wei (2016) find that CSR has more of an influence on operational performance than financial performance, and that environmental CSR is more beneficial for the bottom line than socially oriented CSR.

In this cluster, the concept of legitimacy is often used in conjunction with financial-performance-related arguments (e.g. Aguilera-Caracuel, Guerrero-Villegas, Vidal-Salazar, & Delgado-Marquez, 2015; Zeng et al., 2013). Legitimacy also plays an important role in foreign markets, where new entrants often engage in host-market CSR to overcome their liability of foreignness (Maruyama & Wu, 2015). Furthermore, within emerging economies,
philanthropic behavior is adopted by firms in order to acquire legitimacy with outside
stakeholders (Zheng, Luo, & Maksimov, 2015), demonstrating the use of CSR as a strategic
tool. The relationship between CSR and legitimacy from a governmental perspective is also
examined, and findings show that CSR is used to gain political legitimacy from the host-
market government (Marquis, Yin, & Yang, 2017) and that the CSR disclosures of MNE
subsidiaries are used to gain legitimacy and reduce the liability of foreignness (Riaz, Ray, Ray,
& Kumar, 2015).

In other areas relating to the business case of CSR, it has been shown to contribute to
value creation (Husted & Allen, 2009), with responsible supply chain management having the
potential to improve relationship commitment between lead firms and their suppliers, as well as
improving the sustainability performance of suppliers (Lee, 2016). Further research also
highlights that firms tend to adopt a more business case approach to CSR, focusing on market
gains rather than on their employees (Cooke & He, 2010). From a more critical perspective,
Labucay (2015) proposes a revision of the business case approach to incorporate both social
and economic efficiency.

Studies exploring the antecedents and consequences of CSR also draw upon firm-level
attributes that impact upon the overall degree of social responsibility. In the area of labor
protection, research has found that state-owned enterprises demonstrate a greater tendency to
implement pro-labor protection mechanisms than non-state-owned enterprises (Han & Zheng,
2016). However, state ownership has also been found to weaken unabsorbed organizational
slack and therefore a firm’s overall contribution to corporate social performance (Xu, Yang,
Quan, & Lu, 2015). In terms of international diversification, its impact upon firms’ CSR
behavior remains varied, as firms demonstrate both responsible and irresponsible behavior
during such times (Strike, Gao, & Bansal, 2006). Furthermore, from a leadership perspective,
research finds that ethical leadership affects CSR through its moderating effect on firm
reputation (Zhu, Sun, & Leung, 2014), with intercultural competencies regarded as important in addressing CSR demands within communities (Miska et al., 2013).

Beyond firm-level characteristics, institutional pressures impact upon the CSR behavior of the firm (Judge, McNatt, & Xu, 2011; Young & Makhija, 2014), with evidence showing that institutional differences inherent in liberal (LMEs) and command (CMEs) market economies impacting differently upon firms’ CSR behavior (Purdy, Alexander, & Neill, 2010). Furthermore, findings show that firms from LMEs communicate more regarding CSR than do firms from CMEs (Carrasco-Monteagudo & Buendia-Martinez, 2013), with the governing environment of a country (whether rules-based or relation-based governance) significantly determining the degree to which firms communicate about their CSR practices (Li, Fetscherin, Alon, Lattemann, & Yeh, 2010). Li et al. (2010) find that firms from rules-based countries tend to communicate more on their CSR practices.

Beyond formal institutional factors, informal cultural dynamics and norms impact upon CSR. Evidence demonstrates that a religious atmosphere strengthens CSR (Du, Du, Zeng, Pei, & Chang, 2016), cultural systems influence social performance (Ioannou & Serafeim, 2012), human values impact upon overall consumer and entrepreneur perceptions of CSR (Gonzalez-Rodriguez, Diaz-Fernandez, & Simonetti, 2015), and the cultural context of a firm impacts upon its overall social and environmental responsibility (Lynes & Andrachuk, 2008). Furthermore, when operating in a host country characterized by strong press and speech freedoms, firms will demonstrate a lesser tendency towards social irresponsibility (Fiaschi, Giuliani, & Nieri, 2017), and when operating in contexts with high issue salience and stakeholder power, MNEs adopt distinct CSR policies in order to manage their overall legitimacy (Rathert, 2016). Further work depicting host-country impacts upon CSR finds that, when home-country distance - that is, between the MNE headquarters and its
subsidiaries - is high, the subsidiaries are less likely to engage in CSR (Campbell, Eden, & Miller, 2012).

Several studies explore the influence of stakeholders on CSR behavior (Judge et al., 2011; Oetzel & Getz, 2012). Studies address this impact upon managerial perceptions of CSR (Kuznetsov & Kuznetsova, 2010) and the impacts of primary (internal) and secondary stakeholders, such as consumers (Zhao, Park, & Zhou, 2014) and subsidiaries (Park, Chidlow, & Choi, 2014; Park & Ghauri, 2015). Although subsidiaries can seek to gain autonomy from their parent firm through CSR (Morgenroth & Luiz, 2017), research shows that the power asserted by the parent firm over its subsidiaries can crowd out local stakeholder voices (Crilly, 2011). Furthermore, shareholder power has been shown to have negative implications for CSR behavior by contributing to CSR suspensions (Liu, Feng, & Li, 2015). Within the domain of corporate political activity, findings show that firms use corporate diplomacy to engage with external stakeholders (Henisz, 2016). Such behavior can take the form of either overt or covert political activity (Uldam & Hansen, 2017), with the intensity of this activity also influenced by country- and firm-specific conditions (Holtbrugge, Berg, & Puck, 2007).

Studies in the category of governance examine the relationship between corporate governance structures and responsible business behavior (e.g. Cuadrado-Ballesteros, Rodriguez-Ariza, & Garcia-Sanchez, 2015; de Graaf, 2016). When investigating the firm-level characteristics that shape corporate governance, research finds that, when there is a high proportion of independent directors, CSR disclosures are higher (Cuadrado-Ballesteros et al., 2015). Gallego-Alvarez and Ortas (2017) investigate the impact of community culture upon sustainability reporting, whilst other studies demonstrate that firms from strong collectivist and feminist societies display greater information integration within their disclosures (Garcia-Sanchez, Rodriguez-Ariza, & Frias-Aceituno, 2013). Furthermore, studies point to the role of government and the ethical decision-making behavior of auditors in shaping CSR disclosures
and corporate governance (de Graaf, 2016; Rodgers, 2009). Finally, institutional characteristics are discussed as impacting corporate governance behavior, with international regimes recognized as facilitating accountability in MNEs (Omoteso & Yusuf, 2017) and standards enforcement mechanisms recognized as increasing the level of CSR reporting in firms (Fortanier, Kolk, & Pinkse, 2011). When investigating the communication of CSR through company web pages, research finds that the manner in which CSR messages are conveyed varies across different countries (Maignan & Ralston, 2002), and these differences in CSR reporting can be explained not just by formal institutional drivers but also by traditional informal factors specific to the national context (Ertuna & Tukel, 2010). Cross-listing leads to better CSR but not governance, and this relationship effect is determined by investor protection regimes (Del Bosco & Misani, 2016).

With respect to environmental responsibility, we identified studies looking into factors influencing firms’ environmental orientation, strategy, and performance (e.g. Leonidou, Fotiadis, Christodoulides, Spyropoulou, & Katsikeas, 2015), such as knowledge and experience acquired from international operations (Aguilera-Caracuel, Hurtado-Torres, & Aragon-Correa, 2012), variations in motivations and attitudes towards corporate responsibility across cultures (Furrer et al., 2010; Mueller et al., 2011), and the effect of national institutional and market characteristics on environmental responsibility and sustainable development (e.g. Hartmann & Uhlenbruck, 2015; Meng, Zeng, Xie, & Qi, 2016; Wagner, 2015), including stakeholder pressures and preferences in a given country (e.g. Grinstein & Riefler, 2015; Tatoglu, Bayraktar, Sahadev, Demirbag, & Glaister, 2014). Further topics are concerned with the impact of international treaties, agreements, and regimes (Rugman & Kirton, 1998), and how environmental challenges can be used as opportunities for developing capabilities and firm-specific advantages (Kolk & Pinkse, 2008).
CSR research further relates to the theme of corporate governance. Despite evidence suggesting that reporting does not necessarily lead to greater company–stakeholder interaction (Barkemeyer, Preuss, & Lee, 2015), firms seek to acquire legitimacy through corporate environmental disclosures (Hu & Karbhari, 2015) and social disclosures (Shinkle & Spencer, 2012). Further evidence finds that increased disclosure of nutritional information may lead to positive CSR behavior (Choi, 2017). When considering the firm-level outcomes, good governance practices can lead to increased profitability (Ngobo & Fouda, 2012), and firms can improve their company image and reputation by integrating social and financial reporting (Polo & Vazquez, 2008). Finally, from an external perspective, the adoption of ethical standards by firms within a nation may also have developmental benefits by encouraging FDI in a host market (Robertson, Gilley, & Street, 2003).

Other sub-themes that have received less attention include ‘CSR and brand-related issues’ and ‘attitudes towards CSR’. Within the sub-theme of CSR and brand-related issues, research finds that firms embed sustainability as a brand differentiation strategy (Gupta et al., 2013). In managing brand reputation, nascent studies have sought to investigate how firms reconcile building a socially responsible brand with selling controversial, harmful products (Gupta, 2016), whereas other studies have shown that, when there is a high host-country distance effect, consumer loyalty and trust in a brand are weakened (Swoboda, Huber, Schuster, & Hirschmann, 2017). When discussing attitudes towards CSR, studies have explored the views of business professionals (Ralston et al., 2015), managers (Furrer et al., 2010), and consumers (Auger, Devinney, Louviere, & Burke, 2010; Grinstein & Riefler, 2015; Hume, 2010), about CSR.
3.3 FDI and economic development

As the label of this cluster suggests, articles can be broadly classified into explicit (e.g. Agbloyor, Gyeke-Dako, Kuipo, & Abor, 2016; Buckley, 2009) and implicit (e.g. Amankwah-Amoah, 2015) explorations of the relationship between FDI and economic development.

Studies dealing with explicit FDI detail its impact on economic development by addressing the benefits that arise from linkages and spillovers (Firth & Ghauri, 2010; Jindra, Giroud, & Scott-Kennel, 2009; Lehrer, Asakawa, & Behnam, 2011; Santangelo, 2009), international ventures (Di Gregorio, Musteen, & Thomas, 2008), university and industry cooperation (Calori, Melin, Atamer, & Gustavsson, 2000), investment in public goods through corporate citizenship programs (Bhanji & Oxley, 2013), and higher employee wages that are implemented to raise income levels (Maksimov, Wang, & Luo, 2017). Several studies specifically address the impact and/or role of FDI and investment in emerging and developing economies (e.g. Agbloyor et al., 2016; Allred & Park, 2007; Osabutey & Okoro, 2015).

Comparative studies often use economic development as a moderating or control variable, or to contextualize a study (Hermes, Smid, & Yao, 2007; Kandogan, 2014), and thus represent a more indirect treatment of the FDI-economic-development relationship. Studies find that economic development of a nation moderates the relationship between parent-firm intangibles and foreign-affiliate performance (Contractor, Yang, & Gaur, 2016). Themes emerging in this cluster include the investigation of factors that encourage/discourage FDI (e.g. Ayentimi, Burgess, & Brown, 2016; Drifffield, Jones, & Crotty, 2013; Osabutey & Okoro, 2015). Studies addressing economic development as a control variable address its role and that of economic disparity on cross-border acquisitions (Lim & Lee, 2017) and channel length, which describes the number of intermediaries between manufacturer and consumer (Jaffe & Yi, 2007). Further studies examine the impact of socio-economic distance (Drogendijk & Martin, 2015) and human mobility (Gao, Liu, & Zou, 2013) on outward FDI. Studies dealing
with economic development as a contextual variable have received relatively significant coverage. A number of studies deal with topics within an emerging/developing-economy context. Studies explore conflict resolution through firm negotiation (Agbloyor et al., 2016), the HRM practices of emerging market MNEs (EMNEs) in Africa (Xing, Liu, Tarba, & Cooper, 2016), the impact of patent strength on innovative activity (Allred & Park, 2007), and the adoption of investment incentive policies to attract FDI in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Ayentimi et al., 2016). Other notable areas of focus include the location choices of firms and location patterns of trade (Suder, Liesch, Inomata, Mihailova, & Meng, 2015), location pattern differences between foreign-owned and domestic US firms (Shaver, 1998), the location choices of firms from newly industrialized economies (Lei & Chen, 2011), and the time effect of location choice on the performance of MNEs (Yuan, Pangarkar, & Wu, 2016).

### 3.4 Institutional dynamics and non-market strategies

Papers in this category are generally concerned with how various institutional dynamics influence the non-market strategies of firms and their degree of responsible business behavior. The NVivo analysis yielded the following sub-themes: (a) the impact of institutional dynamics on the firm; (b) factors shaping corporate governance in different institutional environments and its outcomes; (c) firm responses to institutional voids; and (d) the philanthropic behavior of firms across cultures.

Studies exploring the impact of institutional dynamics upon the firm have addressed the impacts of social values and social justice on firms’ innovation (Carrasco-Monteagudo & Buendia-Martinez, 2013, 2015), legal and cultural characteristics on market financing (Aggarwal & Goodell, 2010), extra-territorial effects of institutions on firms (Meyer & Thein, 2014), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on MNE transaction costs (Vachani, Doh, & Teegen, 2009). Research finds that increased political activity and engagement brings benefits for firm performance (Shirodkar & Mohr, 2015). Other studies addressing the impact
of institutional factors on the firm address the role of political connectedness in reducing information asymmetries (Chen, Ding, & Kim, 2010) and improving the performance of mergers and acquisitions (M&As) as well as influencing their activities (Brockman, Rui, & Zou, 2013). Evidence also demonstrates that firms that are politically connected are more likely to engage in corporate risk taking (Boubakri, Mansi, & Saffar, 2013). The notion of connectedness is also explored in reference to the relationships business owners need in order to acquire new business; evidence shows that companies achieve diversification through ‘economies’ of connectedness (Dieleman & Sachs, 2008).

Institutional convergence (Adegbite, Amaeshi, & Nakajima, 2013), informal institutions (Estrin & Prevezer, 2011), and the ownership structure of a firm (Aguilera & Crespi-Cladera, 2016; Filatotchev, Zhang, & Piesse, 2011) have all been shown to have an impact on corporate governance. Other studies have depicted the implementation of good governance mechanisms in weak institutional settings (Adegbite, 2015), in response to pressure to tighten corporate governance (Windsor, 2009).

Regarding institutional voids, firms use CSR as a tool to compensate for them (Baik, Cho, Choi, & Kang, 2015), with evidence showing there is no definitive business group influence on them (Carney, Van Essen, Estrin, & Shapiro, 2017).

Philanthropy has been shown to be used as a strategic resource (Cowan, Huang, & Padmanabhan, 2016) that positively impacts on firm performance (Gao & Yang, 2016). Market and regulatory uncertainty encourages corporate giving (Gao, Lin, & Yang, 2017), with further evidence showing that philanthropy is used as tool to mitigate environmentally irresponsible behavior (Du, Chang, Zeng, Du, & Pei, 2016), and military executives shown to be less likely to use philanthropy illegitimately (Luo, Xiang, & Zhu, 2017). When discussing the philanthropic behavior of the firm, research indicates that firms with political affiliations
engage in a higher level of philanthropy (Jia & Zhang, 2013), and the institutional ownership of a firm increases the level of philanthropy (Song, Gianiodis, & Li, 2016).

Other studies explore interactions between market and non-market actors (Doh & Lucea, 2013; Franco, Haase, & Fernandes, 2014), the impact of global value chains (GVCs) on economic and social upgrading processes (Omoteso & Yusuf, 2017), and the relationship between institutional characteristics and corruption (Lee, Oh, & Eden, 2010).

3.5 Business models and entrepreneurship in developing markets

Papers in this cluster can broadly be divided into two main themes. The first overarching topic covers micro-level investigations of the role of business in emerging markets’ economic development. The second broad topic covers a range of issues connected to social entrepreneurship.

A more fine-grained analysis of each umbrella theme yielded the following sub-themes. Micro-level investigations of businesses’ developmental role can be broken down into the role of microfinance in enabling business development by fostering the internationalization of micro-enterprises (Mersland, Randoy, & Strom, 2011) and supporting women borrowers (Aggarwal, Goodell, & Selleck, 2015), with other studies detailing the performance, profitability, and mission drift of microfinance institutions (Bruton, Khavul, & Chavez, 2011; Im & Sun, 2015; Serrano-Cinca & Gutierrez-Nieto, 2014). Further studies deal with building markets for the poor through the creation of inclusive markets (Acosta, Kim, Melzer, Mendoza, & Thelen, 2011) and strategies aimed at addressing poverty (Alvarez, Barney, & Newman, 2015; Si et al., 2015). Social embeddedness is depicted as a capability MNEs consider when entering emerging markets (London & Hart, 2004) and which they use as a local legitimization strategy (Gifford & Kestler, 2008). Environment-based issues are also addressed when discussing the environmental orientation of exporting emerging-
Further studies address the factors contributing to enterprise resilience under adverse conditions (Branzei & Abdelnour, 2010; Sinkovics et al., 2014), with studies on entrepreneurship investigating the internationalization of immigrant entrepreneurs (Sui, Morgan, & Baum, 2015) and the export orientation of entrepreneurial activity (Terjesen & Hessels, 2009). Further areas relate to public-private partnerships and collaboration with NGOs (George, Rao-Nicholson, Corbishley, & Bansal, 2015; Gifford & Kestler, 2008), criminal enterprises (Gillespie & McBride, 2013; Wood & da Costa, 2015), humanitarian logistics (Hirschinger, Moser, Schaefers, & Hartmann, 2016), social upgrading in GVCs (Khattak, Haworth, Stringer, & Benson-Rea, 2017; Lee & Gereffi, 2015), and unionization and collective bargaining (Kuruvilla & Zhang, 2016).

Social-entrepreneurship-related issues include conceptualization and operationalization efforts (Carraher, Welsh, & Svilokos, 2016; Mendez-Picazo, Ribeiro-Soriano, & Galindo-Martin, 2015; Peredo & McLean, 2006), responses to institutional challenges (El Ebrashi & Darrag, 2017), issues surrounding indigenous land rights (Anderson, Dana, & Dana, 2006), the impact of commercialization on mission drift in social enterprises (Ault, 2016), scaling up and growth-related issues (Ben Letaifa, 2016; Sharir & Lerner, 2006; Sunduramurthy, Zheng, Musteen, Francis, & Rhyne, 2016), and the role of institutions in social enterprise development and success (Stephan, Uhlker, & Stride, 2015).

### 3.6 Corruption

Studies in this cluster can be divided into two main themes: country-level and firm-level investigations of corruption.
Macro-level studies examine topics such as the role of institutions in tackling corruption through institutional laws that reduce bribery (Cuervo-Cazurra, 2008b) and anti-corruption agencies that transform corrupt countries (Mao, Wong, & Peng, 2013). Other topics explore the antecedents and effects of corruption. Findings show that the bribery level of the firm is impacted by the presence of institutional uncertainty (Li, Yao, & Ahlstrom, 2015) and by the level of state control (Lee et al., 2010). Further evidence shows that corruption levels are higher in collectivist societies (Husted, 1999; Zheng, El Ghoul, Guedhami, & Kwok, 2013). However, other research has found that, when there is greater access to information through information and communication technology (ICT), the level of national corruption is decreased (DiRienzo, Das, Cort, & Burbridge, 2007).

Studies addressing the effects of corruption deal with its impact on FDI (Cuervo-Cazurra, 2006, 2008a; Demirbag, Tatoglu, & Glaister, 2010; Habib & Zurawicki, 2002; Mudambi, Navarra, & Delios, 2013), with evidence commonly suggesting a negative influence (Cuervo-Cazurra, 2006; Demirbag, McGuinness, Wood, & Bayyurt, 2015). Research finds that the level of national corruption influences the entry-strategy choice of a firm (Duanmu, 2011). Although evidence has found that very corrupt countries attract greater foreign portfolio investment than moderately corrupt countries (Jain, Kuvvet, & Pagano, 2017), local corruption may present a market entry barrier (Weitzel & Berns, 2006) and harm human development (Akhter, 2004). Firm-level corruption has been shown to lead to operational inefficiencies (Habib & Zurawicki, 2002), lower creation rates (Jimenez, Puche-Regaliza, Jimenez-Eguizabal, & Alon, 2017), and reduced subsidiary profitability (Lee & Hong, 2012). Other work has shown that managerial control increases the incidence of firm-level bribery (Chen, Cullen, & Parboteeah, 2015), with bribery damaging firm growth in SMEs more than MNEs (Zhou & Peng, 2012).
Studies conceptualizing and operationalizing corruption detail its historic roots (Rowley & Oh, 2016b), provide a critical assessment of it in order to extend theories on the topic (Cuervo-Cazurra, 2016), depict its negative consequences (Rowley & Andrews, 2017), and review existing literature on its antecedents and effects (Judge et al., 2011).

Other studies detailing firm irresponsibility have explored why firms evade tax (Gokalp, Lee, & Peng, 2017) and highlighted how product recalls damage corporate credibility (Fetscherin, Voss, & Gugler, 2010).

3.7 Implementation of non-market strategies

One strand within this cluster includes attempts to theoretically integrate societal failures, CSR, and other non-market strategies (Buckley & Boddewyn, 2015, 2016; Devinney, McGahan, & Zollo, 2013). Another group of papers explores the use of non-market strategies to gain legitimacy and improve firm performance, through environmental labelling (Wang, Cui, & Liang, 2015), the offering of socially valuable goods and services (Darendeli & Hill, 2016), the development of new entrepreneurial technology (de Lange, 2016), and the use of reporting (Marano, Tashman, & Kostova, 2017) and CSR certifications (Husted, Montiel, & Christmann, 2016). Strategies aimed at tackling child labor (Kolk & Van Tulder, 2004) and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Duc & Ba, 2017) emerge at the more critical end of the spectrum. These studies are situated alongside other work discussing corporate social irresponsibility and dubious behavior (Fiaschi et al., 2017; Myers, 1999), product recalls due to design flaws (Beamish & Bapuji, 2008), and the impact of gray-market activity on strategic and economic performance (Myers, 1999).

Further studies addressing firm ownership structures examine the role of cooperatives in facilitating corporate diversity and sustainability and as an alternative form of corporate organizing post the 2008 financial crisis (Michie & Rowley, 2014; Rowley & Michie, 2014).
Findings also demonstrate that institutional investors with a long-term orientation bring about increased CSR rankings (Boubaker, Chourou, Himick, & Saadi, 2017) and further work depicts the negative impact of oligarchic control in increasing corruption and impeding economic growth (Fogel, 2006).

3.8 Under-represented topics in IB

Studies in this cluster can be assigned to one of three categories. The majority of the papers in the first category are related to MNE-NGO collaborations (e.g. Herlin & Solitander, 2017; Marano & Tashman, 2012), and NGOs’ campaigning strategies (Ivanova, 2016; Reis & Guedes, 2017).

The common denominator in the second category is the attempt to raise critical issues. Jagannathan, Selvaraj, and Joseph (2016) deliberate as to how IB creates and maintains inequalities for the marginalized in developing countries. Andersson and Calvano (2015) analyze how the globally mobile elite promote the perception that market-driven solutions are better suited to tackling social problems than national governments and civil society. Chakraborty, Saha, and Jammulamadaka (2017) examine why the voices of Third World NGOs are often not heard in global discourses. Srikantia (2016) discusses the structural violence of globalization, while Yolles (2007) models the pathologies of social collectives, pointing out sociopathic tendencies of corporations and governments.

Studies in the third category are diverse. They discuss a range of ethics- and CSR-related themes, from the benefits of developing ethical capabilities (Buller & McEvoy, 1999), to how MNEs can improve their CSR outcomes through specific language resources (Selmier, Newenham-Kahindi, & Oh, 2015), to taking stock of 50 years of IB research on social-responsibility-related issues in the discipline’s two most important journals, JWB and JIBS (Kolk, 2016).
4 Concluding remarks

This chapter has attempted to provide an overview of the main themes and sub-themes connected to the various forms and degrees of firm-related responsibility discussed in the IB literature. Our stock-taking exercise has yielded the following overall insights. While research on the positive side of the spectrum of responsibility is on the rise, the negative side is comparatively under-represented in the IB literature. Furthermore, a large proportion of studies in our sample look at macro-level relationships. A notable example is the impact of FDI on economic development. In connection with this theme, our investigation has also uncovered that IB studies frequently use economic development as a context variable. Thus, conclusions about the nature of developmental impact of firm activities are more implicit than explicit. As a consequence, there is a need for more micro-level studies documenting the ways businesses can contribute to local, regional, national, and international economic development.

Similarly, research on corruption has been more concerned with country-level analyses than with explicit firm engagement in corruption-related activities including bribery, blackmail, and other criminal activities. Further dimensions of irresponsible firm behavior (cf. Tillmann et al., 2008), including human rights violations, tax evasion, the manufacturing and distribution of harmful products, pollution, etc., also need more attention. Finally, there is room for more studies with a critical and provocative stance to direct attention towards current blind spots in IB research. Relatedly, scholars who want to dedicate themselves to uncovering and unpacking such blind spots are well advised to look to neighboring disciplines for inspiration, such as development studies, political science, and economic geography.

Like any study, our chapter also has limitations. Despite our effort to address what we perceived as shortcomings in other review papers on this topic, no search strategy is perfect. To ensure that no papers are overlooked, future studies may wish to go through all the articles published in the selected journals. Furthermore, as outlined in the methods section, we
omitted two IB journals because they were not included in the Web of Science database.

Future research may wish to extend the search to all 16 journals. We would also like to note, that using these 16 journals as a proxy for the universe of IB publications introduces the problem of not capturing the work of IB scholars published in other journals. Lastly, due to space limitations we are not able to provide the reader with a more comprehensive list of future research avenues. However, we have attempted to provide a synthesis of existing topics and findings. This, together with Table 3.2, offers a starting point for the identification of future research questions.

5 References


6 Appendix

6.1 Appendix 1: Search terms

corporate social responsibility, CSR, responsible business, responsible behavior, responsibility, social responsibility, social performance, society interface, triple bottom line, environmental sustainability, environmentally sustainable, green innovation, green supply chain, green management, social value, social entrepreneurship, social upgrading, social entrepreneur, social business, corporate social entrepreneurship, economic development, bottom of the pyramid, base of the pyramid, BOP, economically marginalized, developmental impact, corporate citizenship, NGO, non-governmental organization, private standard, private regulation, civil society, civil society organization, CSR standard, labor standard, sustainability standard, CSI, CSIR, corporate social irresponsibility, corporate irresponsibility, irresponsible, irresponsible business, irresponsible behavior, business ethics, unethical, ethical, ethics, natural environment, local businesses, working condition, discrimination, labor, overtime, living wage, health and safety, captive, sales practices, worker voice, worker rights, employee voice, unionization, worker union, labor relations, offensive material, pricing policies, pollution, climate change, discrimination, extreme weather, poor, poverty, corruption, tax avoidance, dishonesty, false advertisement, offensive material, working condition, abuse, human rights, forced labor, modern slavery, slavery, bonded labor, downgrading, child labor, insecurity, fraud, bribe, greed, unfairness, social justice, injustice, crime, greenwashing, whitewashing, social exclusion, organizational misbehavior, philanthropy, humiliation, and gender inequality
### 6.2 Tables and Figures

#### Table 3.1 The distribution of publications across journals and clusters

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<td>Sustainability: Brand commitment, HR involvement, Lean production in supply chains, Sustainability in emerging economies, Impact of culture and regulations, Sustainability accounting, Sustainable value creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other: Standards compliance, Social elites, Shared value creation, Responses to ecological issues, CSR implementation in subsidiaries, Reducing greenhouse emissions, Non-market capabilities, Corporate governance and knowledge management</td>
<td>Other: Improvement of CSR language resources, Review of social responsibility in IB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3 Biographical note

Noemi Sinkovics (PhD, Manchester) is Lecturer in International Business and Management at Alliance Manchester Business School, UK and currently Visiting Scholar at Temple University, Fox School of Business, Philadelphia, PA, U.S.A. Her research focuses on international entrepreneurship, supplier capability development and upgrading in emerging markets, and issues related to the business society interface including social value creation, business ethics and responsible innovation. She has published in journals such as International Business Review, International Marketing Review, Journal of Business Research, Critical Perspectives on International Business, Journal of International Management, and European Journal of International Management. Email: noemi.sinkovics@manchester.ac.uk

Rudolf R. Sinkovics (PhD, WU Vienna) is Professor of International Business at The University of Manchester, UK, Visiting Professor at Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland, and Visiting Scholar at Fox School of Business, Temple University. He has published on inter-organizational governance, the role of ICT in firm internationalization, and currently works on rising powers and responsible business. His work has been published in Journal of International Business Studies, Management International Review, Journal of World Business, International Business Review, Critical Perspectives on International Business and International Marketing Review, amongst others. Email: rudolf.sinkovics@manchester.ac.uk

Jason Archie-Acheampong is a Postgraduate Research Student at Alliance Manchester Business School, UK. He obtained a master’s degree in entrepreneurship and works on issues related to SMEs’ responsible behavior. Email: jason.archie-acheampong@manchester.ac.uk